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**Command and Commitment: Terms of Kingship in Western
Zhou Bronze Inscriptions and in the *Book of Documents***

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(Joern Peter Grundmann)

Abstract

What is usually referred to as Zhou kingship in early China studies are the symbolic forms of an enhanced politico-religious identity we find articulated in the Zhou grand narrative in numerous passages throughout transmitted and excavated literary sources. In other words, our understanding of the concept of Zhou kingship in the main mirrors the order of ideas which came to stand for the former in the early Chinese literary tradition (ca. 950 - 350 BCE). How this order relates to historical forms and practices of political organization and their concerns in Western Zhou elite society has so far not been considered systematically.

The present study sets out to analyse the development of the model of Zhou kingship in literary sources from the context of the central issue of political organization addressed in elite Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, namely the conferral and the receipt of royal commands. Based on the analysis of the exchange of speech acts between king and appointee, it aims to show that kingship was first and foremost perceived in these sources as a relational framework within which the king and his allied elites defined their mutual dependency in terms of quasi patron-client relations. It argues that royal commands were not issued on the basis of pre-existent authority relations. Instead they called for the appointee's decision to assume a commitment on which the latter's participation in the institution of Zhou kingship ultimately relied.

From this basic assumption, developed on the basis of texts from early to mid-Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, this study proceeds to analyse how the commemoration of the Zhou alliance's foundational origins as well as the elaboration

of the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate in mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the transmitted *Book of Documents* ultimately built around this contractual element, the dynamics of command and commitment. At the core there always stands a delegation of authority or a perpetuation of authority relations. Yet as we proceed into the mid- and late Western Zhou period, the terms of kingship begin to transcend the implicitness and immediateness of the formulae used to seal the conferral of royal authority in early to mid- Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as they were rendered explicit within a rhetoric of crisis and of motives. The present study describes this process as a transformation of the terms of kingship from the level of the constitutive bond formula onto the level of cultural meta-reflection.

Lastly I will demonstrate how the concept of Zhou kingship delineated in this study was inextricably linked to the idea of the autonomous or self-determined individual as the basic unit in the conception of the Zhou ruling organization. Kinship and marriage alliance, as most scholars suggest, may have constituted the main factor in the overall cohesion of Western Zhou elite society, but at least on the discursive level retained in texts from bronze inscriptions, the autonomous individual, defined through the ability to reach political decisions and to assume commitments, forms the basic unit in the fabric of Western Zhou kingship understood as the sum of proto-political bonds. This point will be illustrated based on a set of concepts centred on the image of the heart (*xin* 心), most prominent among them *de* 德, that entered the idea of Zhou kingship in form of a rhetoric of commitment.

Together, these three points provide a framework to understand the literary construct of Zhou kingship from the perspective of its institutional context and its early historical development.

LAY SUMMARY

This dissertation addresses the interrelation between the ideology of Chinese kingship as it is referred to in contemporary excavated and transmitted literary sources on the one hand, and historical forms of political affiliation on the other. The focus of the analysis lies on the second historical period in Chinese history, the Western Zhou dynasty (ca. 1049/45-771 BCE); the first for which we possess both excavated and transmitted literary sources.

There are two major corpuses of texts this study is concerned with. First it examines texts inscribed on ritual bronze paraphernalia used by the Zhou elites in ancestral sacrifice and in official banquettes. In these texts, the owners of the vessels express their affiliation with the Zhou king by recording their and their forebears' receipt of royal mandates. Based on these accounts, the present study attempts to reconstruct the terms and conditions of the delegation of ruling authority from the king to his vassals in terms of the creation of corporate solidarity. In a second step it asks how these terms and conditions relate to the issues addressed in the dynasty's mytho-historical founding narrative centred on the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate. Here comes into play the second corpus of texts this study is concerned with, the *Book of Documents*. The latter presents us with staged kingly speeches that address the conditions and the *raison d'être* of the Zhou ruling alliance on the level of cultural meta-reflection.

The basic question this study aims to answer is how contemporary political praxis informed the order of ideas expressed in the Zhou founding narrative, which so far has been treated mostly in terms of late Western- and Eastern Zhou (770-221 BCE) *lieux de mémoire* in modern scholarship.

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CONVENTIONS

Historical dates and archaeological periodization

Historical dates for the reigns of the late Shang kings are given after David N. Keightley's "Revised Short Chronology for the Historical Period" in idem, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 228. References to Dong Zuobin's 董作賓 (1895-1963) established archaeological periodization of the late Shang era (ca. 1200-1051 BCE) into Anyang period I-V (Cf. Dong Zuobin, *Jiaguwen duandai yanjiu li* 甲骨文斷代研究例 [Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1963 [1932]]) are made in accordance with Keightley's revised dates in *Sources of Shang History*, 203.

The dates for Western Zhou reigns are given according to the chronology proposed in Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 236-287. The division of the Western Zhou dynasty (ca.1050/45-771 BCE) into archaeological periods, i.e. early-, mid-, and late Western Zhou, follows the chronology adopted in Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006), 6.

Sources, editions and dating

References to passages from Shang oracle bone inscriptions are made by giving the respective numbers under which the bone fragments are listed in *Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Lishiyanjiusuo* 中國社會科學院歷史研究所, ed., *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集, 13 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978-83), hereafter *Heji*, and in *Zhongguo Shekeyuan Lishiyanjiusuo*, ed., *Jiaguwen heji buian* 甲骨文合集補編, 7 vols. (Beijing: Yuwen chubanshe, 1999), hereafter *Bubian*. Unless otherwise noted, my interpretation of graphs and phrases from oracle bone inscriptions follows Hu Houxuan et al., eds., *Jiaguwen Heji shiwen* 甲骨文合集釋文, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehuikexue chubanshe 1999).

Unless otherwise stated, modern transcriptions of texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions are reproduced from the “Digital Archive of Bronze Images and Inscriptions” 殷周金文暨青銅器資料庫, compiled by the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica 中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 2012, <http://www.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/~bronze/>, hereafter referred to as AS database. The numbers for the identification of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions follow the nomenclature used in *Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaoguyanjiusuo* 中國社會科學院考古研究所 ed., *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成, rev. ed., 8 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), hereafter referred to as *JC*, which are similar to those in the AS database. Numbers for inscriptions published after the compilation date of *Jicheng* are given according to the NA and NB nomenclatures used in the AS database. The dating conventions for bronze inscriptions follow the choices made by the *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* project and the AS database which divide the extant corpus into early (ca. 1050-950 BCE), mid- (ca. 950-850 BCE) and late Western

Zhou (ca. 850-770 BCE) artefacts. More specified or diverging dating suggestions for individual texts are given in the relevant contexts throughout this study.

Passages from the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書) are cited after *Shangshu jin- guwen zhushu* 尚書今古文注疏, compiled and commented by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753-1818), edited by Chen Kang 陳抗 and Sheng Dongling 盛冬鈴 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1986 [1815]). Texts from the *Mao Odes* (*Mao Shi* 毛詩) are cited after Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849), ed., *Maoshi zhushu* 毛詩注疏 (1816), in the modern punctuated version with additional philological apparatus compiled and edited by Zhu Jieren 朱傑人 and Li Huiling 李慧玲 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013). The assumed dates for transmitted texts follow the suggestions given in Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993), unless otherwise stated. Transmitted Chinese texts from pre-modern editions will be cited by indicating the *juan* 卷 (roll) number followed by the page number in the respective modern editions. Passages from the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 will be cited giving the name and year of reign of the Patriarch of Lu, followed by the page number given in the Zhonghua shuju edition of the text edited by Yang Bojun 楊伯峻.

Transcriptions

Texts from epigraphic sources are reproduced in this study in their modern transcription, including the interpretative insertion of punctuation marks. In some cases where the direct transcription produces a graph for which there exists no

dictionary definition, an interpretive transcription is added in brackets such as in 𠄎 (干). Illegible graphs in epigraphic sources are indicated with the symbol □ in the transcription. Sometimes a tentative reconstruction is offered in square brackets such as □□[大令].

Phonetic transcriptions of Chinese graphs in this work follow the *Hanyu pinyin* system except in certain personal or place names. Following sinological convention, the name of the modern day province of Shanxi 陝西 is rendered “Shaanxi” in order to differentiate it from the homophonous Shanxi 山西 province. Furthermore, King Yi 懿 of Zhou is transcribed as “Yih” in order not to confuse him with King Yi 夷 of Zhou. The reconstructions of Old-Chinese sound values throughout this study follow the system developed in William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). The transcriptions are taken from Baxter and Sagart, “Baxter-Sagart Old Chinese reconstruction, version 1.1 (20 September 2014),” <http://ocbaxtersagart.lsa.umich.edu/>.

Philological apparatus

The philological notes on texts from epigraphic as well as from transmitted sources throughout this study are not intended to provide a complete evaluation of all possible readings in each case, but mainly to provide evidence for my own interpretation. Alternatives are given and discussed in cases where my interpretations conflict with established readings or in cases where I make a choice between several contested alternative readings.

My basic understanding of the epigraphic texts cited in this study is, where possible, based on the philological analyses in Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Liang Zhou jinwenci daxi tulu kaoshi* 兩周金文辭大系圖錄考釋, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1999 [1935]), hereafter *Daxi*; Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, *Xizhou tongqi duandai* 西周銅器斷代, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004 [1955-56]), hereafter *Duandai*; Shirakawa Shizuka 白川靜, *Kinbun tsūshaku* 金文通積, 56 vols. (Kobe: Hakutsuru bijutsukan, 1962-84), hereafter *Kinbun tsūshaku*; and Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 et al., *Shang Zhou qingtongqi mingwen xuan* 商周青銅器銘文選 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), hereafter *Mingwen xuan*. My reading of passages from the *Documents* is informed by the glosses and discussions compiled in Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Liu Qiyu 劉起鈞, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun* 尚書校釋譯論, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005).

Translations

English translations of Chinese sources are generally my own. However due to established scholarly conventions for translating certain phrases and concepts in the highly formulaic corpus of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, my translations necessarily incorporate other scholars' renderings. In this respect my translations are strongly influenced by Robert Eno's elegant and consistent rendering of a corpus of 129 representative inscriptions from the Western Zhou period, intended as class text readings for a history course he taught at Indiana University between 1988 and 2012, titled "Inscriptional Records of the Western Zhou," last modified January 2017, http://www.iub.edu/~g380/3.10-WZhou_Bronzes-2010.pdf. Where my translations

are adapted from Eno's or another scholar's work, this is indicated in the footnotes.

I further consult the English translations that have recently become available in Constance A Cook and Paul R. Goldin, eds., *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2016), wherever possible. However, due to my approach to texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions being very different from that of Constance Cook, who is responsible for the majority of the translations in the compendium, my own translations differ markedly from those in this book.

In regard the *Odes* and *Documents* as well, my own translations engage with the unrivalled achievements of Victor von Strauß, James Legge, Bernhard Karlgren and Arthur Waley.

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This study has benefited from a number of funding schemes over the years which I would like to acknowledge here and express my gratitude for. Research for this thesis has been greatly facilitated by an AHRC postgraduate studentship, covering my student fees during the first three years of study. A doctoral fellowship from the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, allowed me to conduct extended philological research on texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. A final year of undisturbed writing has been made possible thanks to a doctoral dissertation fellowship from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange (Project Number: DD018-U-16).

For his full support during every stage of this project I owe a great debt of gratitude to my PhD supervisor Prof. Dr. Joachim Gentz, to whom the German term “Doktorvater” applies in every respect. I further like to thank Prof. Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容 for co-supervising my project during my stay at the Institute of History and Philology in Taipei, as well as my second supervisor, Dr. Julian Ward, for carefully commenting on my drafts even at shortest notice. A number of ideas advanced in this thesis have greatly benefitted from the discussions in our Edinburgh and Taipei reading groups. Many thanks to the varying participants (they know) for having created such a great scholarly environment. Last but not least, I would like to thank my examiners Prof. Dr. Kai Vogelsang and Dr. Ian Astley for their valuable criticism on the first submitted version of this dissertation.

Finally, a project such as this cannot come to a successful outcome without the mental support of friends and family. I owe special thanks in this respect to Rens

Krijgsman, who repeatedly convinced me to go on with this project during a time when I had given up any hope of ever reaching satisfactory results with this study. The greatest thanks are due of course to my parents, Anne and Peter Grundmann, and above all to my lovely wife Jinxiu, for supporting me wherever they could, and for enduring my at times terrible moods over the last couple of years. Heartfelt thanks go to all of you.

As much as this study has profited from the work of others, it goes without saying that its shortcomings are my responsibility alone.

INTRODUCTION: THE QUESTION OF ZHOU KINGSHIP AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT IN EARLY CHINESE LITERARY SOURCES

Introduction

Epitomized in the image of Kings Wen 文 and Wu 武 and their alleged receipt of the Heavenly Mandate, the idea of Zhou kingship as it surfaces in the pre-classical Chinese literary tradition (ca. 950 – 4th century BCE) is now mostly viewed in terms of late Western Zhou and early Eastern Zhou cultural memory.¹ As the earliest literary reflections on the founding of Zhou ecumenical rule in datable epigraphic sources appeared, apart from a few significant exceptions, during a period when the dynasty was in actual decline,² those literary accounts have recently been interpreted as part of a constructed textual reality that stood in opposition to the historical reality

¹ The first to adopt this perspective was Wang Mingke 王明柯, “Western Zhou Remembering and Forgetting,” *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 1 (1999): 231-250. Further important studies on this issue are Matsui Yoshinori 松井嘉德, “Western Zhou History in the Collective Memory of the People of the Western Zhou: An Interpretation of the Inscription of the ‘Lai pan,’” *Toyoushi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 66.4 (2008): 664-712; Martin Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou,” in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC to 220 AD)*, eds. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 143-200; Constance A. Cook, “Education and the Way of the Former Kings,” in *Writing and Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar*, ed. Li Feng and David Prager Branner (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2011), 302-336; Maria Khayutina, “Reflections and Uses of the Past in Chinese Bronze Inscriptions from ca. 11th to 5th centuries BC: The Memory of the Conquest of Shang and the First Kings of Zhou,” in *Historical Consciousness and the Use of the Past in the Ancient World*, eds. John Baines et.al., forthcoming; and Khayutina, “The Conquest of Shang in Bronze Inscriptions and Memory Policy of the Zhou Royal House during the Western Zhou Period (ca. mid-11th –early 8th cc. BCE),” forthcoming.

² The most important exceptions are the inscriptions on the He zun 鬲尊 (JC 6014), the Da Yu ding 大盂鼎 (JC 2837) and the Ban gui 班簋 (JC 4341), dating to the early- and early mid-Western Zhou period respectively. For the internal and external factors leading to the decline of the Western Zhou ruling alliance see Herrlee Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China, Volume 1: The Western Chou Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 236-241; Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B. C.*, eds. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 323-332; and Li Feng, *Landscape and Power: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou 1045-771 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 91-192.

of the time when they have been composed and retrieved.³

While this approach helped to historically and functionally contextualize excavated and early transmitted literary sources relating to the Zhou grand narrative, liberating them from the traditional claim that they provide us either with contemporary accounts of the actual events they purport to record or with remnants of early historiographical efforts, the question remains how the idea of Zhou kingship we find depicted in these sources relates to historical forms of political organisation not just during, but also prior to the mid and late Western Zhou period (ca. 950-771 BCE). As Jessica Rawson aptly remarks:

The theories and arguments presented in the *Book of Documents* and in the bronze inscriptions are particularly important as they are the earliest surviving discussions in Chinese of the nature of kingship and the state. They appear without any apparent predecessors. The Zhou have gained their reputation as the founders of the Chinese political theory on the basis of the written evidence and of the failure of the Shang to leave anything comparable for future generations to read. Such well expressed, polished views cannot, however, have come out of nothing.⁴

Following Giambattista Vico's (1668-1744) famous culture-historical axiom that "the order of ideas must proceed from the order of institutions,"⁵ this study aims to

³ Cf. Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*." Kai Vogelsang assumes that the fundamental experience of a break in continuity must have led to an incipient historical consciousness as well as to attempts to deny this break in mid- to late Western Zhou times (Vogelsang, *Geschichte als Problem: Entstehung, Formen und Funktionen von Geschichtsschreibung im Alten China* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007], 118-131).

⁴ Jessica Rawson, "Statesmen or Barbarians? The Western Zhou as seen through their Bronzes," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 75 (1989): 74.

⁵ "L'ordine dell'idee dee procedere secondo l'ordine delle cose." (Giambattista Vico, *Principi di scienza nuova d'intorno alla commune Natura delle Nazioni*, ed. and com. Andrea Battistini [Milan: Mondadori, 2011 (1744)], 153 §239). In translating the word *cose* as *institutions* I follow Robert Pogue Harrison, who remarks in this respect: "The word *institution (cosa)* in Vico's *New Science* refers broadly to whatever serves to *bind* human beings in both the public and private spheres, be it religion, matrimony, customs, laws, the city, the nation, class affiliation, and so on." (Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead* [Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2003], 78. Emphasis in original).

interpret literary references to Zhou kingship within their institutional context as far as the latter can be reconstructed from textual sources.⁶

In order to approach this task, the present study adopts a different perspective from the one just outlined. It sets out to analyse the idea of Zhou kingship in literary sources from the context of the central issue of political organization addressed in elite Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and to a certain degree also in the purportedly earliest strata of the transmitted *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書, hereafter *Documents*),⁷ namely the conferral and the receipt of royal commands. Unlike reflections on the dynasty's foundational past, passages recording the conferral and the receipt of royal commands can be found in bronze inscriptions as early as from the reign of King Cheng 成 (r. 1042/35-1006 BCE). These passages present us with a kind of “bond-formula” that formed the core of most bronze inscriptions referring to points of contact between the vessel donor and the Zhou king throughout the Western Zhou period.⁸ Based on the analysis of the exchange of speech acts between

The term institution will be used in precisely this sense throughout this study.

⁶ I am aware of the fact that a model derived from texts cannot describe historical realities but must remain a model for a possible explanation.

⁷ While the epigraphic sources used in this study can be dated with relative confidence to more or less approximate timeframes within the Western Zhou period (Cf. Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991], 106-155, for the criteria that can be applied to date Western Zhou bronze inscriptions), no single text from the transmitted version of the *Documents* can be securely ascribed a Western Zhou date, or, in fact, any certain date at all. Based on linguistic aspects and on considerations concerning the history of ideas, Herrlee Creel identified twelve passages from the *Documents of Zhou* (*Zhou Shu* 周書) section in the modern text *Documents* to be of possible Western Zhou origin. These include the five “gao” 誥 chapters, the “Zi cai” 梓材, “Duo shi” 多士, “Jun shi” 君奭, “Duo fang” 多方, “Gu ming” 顧命, “Wen Hou zhi Ming” 文侯之命 and “Bi shi” 費誓 chapters. See Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft*, 447-463. Although Creel's selection is still largely accepted (cf. Shaughnessy, “Shang shu 尚書 [Shu jing 書經],” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe [Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993], 376-389), if we accept these transmitted texts for what they are, namely products of a layered process of composition, re-composition, re-contextualisation, compilation and edition that reached their final written form only towards the end of the Eastern Han period (25-220 AD), it becomes evident that we need to define some parameters for how we use these texts in our investigation on the topic of Zhou kingship. See pp. 30-50 below for a detailed source-criticism.

⁸ I follow the established convention in Early China studies to refer to the person who commissioned the casting of a bronze vessel and its inscription as “donor.” The implications behind this term are that

king and appointee that constitute these formulae, this study aims to show that kingship was first and foremost perceived in epigraphic sources as a relational framework within which the king and his allied elites defined their mutual dependency in terms of quasi patron-client relations or proto-political bonds. Hence a basic understanding of Zhou kingship as a constitutive structure in the organisation of a ruling elite shall be achieved here through analysing these “bond-formulae,” their key terms, and their assumptions about the nature of the relation connecting the king with the elites who had these inscribed vessels commissioned.

The results from this step will then be applied as a frame of reference for the analysis of discursive passages in mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the *Documents* that refer to the concept of Zhou kingship in terms of cultural meta-reflection. What this study wants to answer is the question how the conditions of authority relations depicted in the bronzes inform and relate to the reflexive idea of Zhou kingship we know from the pre-classical literary tradition. The goal is to demonstrate that the institutional order couched in the Zhou grand narrative was more than just idealized memory, a counter draft to a changed historical reality. Certainly, the Zhou grand narrative became a kind of *lieux de mémoire* as it entered into the repertoire of Eastern Zhou (770-221 BCE) cultural memory associated first and foremost with the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經, hereafter *Odes*) and the *Documents*.⁹ However, to assume this to be the case already for the instances of the Zhou grand narrative in mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions seems too

the individual who commissioned the bronze would not keep the vessel in his own exclusive possession but consign it for use in the ancestral temple of the lineage he belonged to. Cf. Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006), 294.

⁹ Cf. Michael Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 72-167; and Kern “Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*.” For the concept of *lieux de mémoire* see Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire, ” *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989): 7-24.

early in my view. References to the Zhou founding kings and to the receipt of the Heavenly Mandate appear without exception tightly interwoven with accounts of personal commitments and obligations in the bronzes. They do not yet seem to relate to the self-assurance of a collective identity but to the retrieval and perpetuation of interpersonal authority relations across subsequent generations. Memory, this study will show, appears here still in the form of personal accountability in the context of alliance relationships and their accompanying obligations. It remains to be demonstrated in the following chapters how the numerous personal bonds between the Zhou kings and their allied elites depicted in the bronzes coalesced into a vision of Zhou kingship as a collective politico-religious identity.

Whereas the above raised issues pertain primarily to the analysis of texts in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, the *Documents* are in so far of concern for us as they constitute a transitory corpus in this respect. On the one hand they clearly belong to the literary repertoire of Eastern Zhou cultural memory, yet on the other hand many passages from the *Documents of Zhou* (*Zhoushu* 周書) cannot be properly understood if we look at them as detached from the context of the delegation of authority we find in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. This makes them an especially important source for our investigation.

Presentation of the Problem

If we limit ourselves to datable contemporary Western Zhou sources, literary reflections on the politico-religious conception of Zhou kinship and its foundational past are more or less exclusively confined to accounts from inscriptions cast on mid-

to late Western Zhou bronze vessels that were commissioned by members of the elite for the use in lineage ancestral sacrifice and in entertaining kinfolk and guests.¹⁰ Thus even though other kinds of contemporary textual sources might have existed on perishable materials that perhaps belonged to different contexts, it is evident that the institution of elite lineage ritual and feasts must have played a major role in the perpetuation of Zhou kingship as a form of enhanced collective identity.¹¹ Apart from these two basic facts, however, we know relatively little about the nature and the function of the texts inscribed on the inside of numerous bronze cauldrons and tureens that have been excavated overtly from protective caches in and around the ancestral homeland of the Zhou people in modern day Shaanxi province.¹²

In a recent study, Nick Vogt proposes to regard the praxis of elite lineage ancestral sacrifice, in the context of which many of these vessels have been used, as a kingly institution. He sees in it a reproduction of royal ancestral ritual informed by the reference to the king in elite bronze inscriptions.¹³ Based on similar assumptions, Martin Kern identifies lineage ancestral ritual with the foremost institution for the perpetuation of Western Zhou collective memory.¹⁴ He understands the texts inscribed on bronzes as a sort of display in which the donors present themselves,

¹⁰ I follow the position advocated in Itō Michiharu 伊藤道治, *Chūgoku kodai kokka no shihai kōzō* 中国古代国家の支配構造, (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1987), 13-30, that the inscriptions speak from the standpoint of their named donors. For a discussion on the divergent positions on the topic of perspective and context see Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in early China: Governing the Western Zhou* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11-20.

¹¹ According to Jan Assmann, enhanced structures of a collective identity refer to reflexive forms of socio-political participation that exceed the basic structures of social organization such as kinship structures for instance. Whereas the latter belong to the irreducible conditions of humanity, the former require active reflection into the articulate form of a “we” identity. See Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 114-119.

¹² Cf. *Shaughnessy*, Sources, 156-166; Rawson, “Western Zhou Archaeology,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 414-449.

¹³ See Paul Nicholas Vogt, “Between Kin and King: Social Aspects of Western Zhou Ritual” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012), 1-25.

¹⁴ Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*,” 156-182.

their deeds and legacy in terms of an extension of the royal court.¹⁵

While this approach seems justified in many respects, especially if one takes into account the apparently top-down introduction of unified sumptuary rules in order to create lineage transcending Zhou aristocracy, a process scholars associate with the so-called late Western Zhou the ritual revolution or reform,¹⁶ it fails to explain one defining aspect of the texts we find inscribed on Western Zhou bronzes. In a pioneering analysis of literary form in Western Zhou bronzes, David Schaberg has defined what he calls “formulaic dialogism” as the basic pattern that constitutes the

¹⁵ Idem, “The Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China,” in *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign*, eds. Sergio La Porta and David Shulman, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 159-171.

¹⁶ Scholars have long perceived of major changes in vessel types and ornamentation style among ritual bronze paraphernalia, as well as of the appearance of graded sets of vessels and the increased prominence of bell chimes after the reign of King Mu (r. 956-918) (Cf. Bernhard Karlgren, “Yin and Chou Chinese Bronzes,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 8 [1936]: 9-156; and Robert W. Bagley, “The Transformation of the Bronze Art in Later Western Zhou,” in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. Wen Fong [New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980], 238-248). The archaeologist and art historian Jessica Rawson was the first to interpret these rather sudden changes in the material record in terms of a mid- to late Western Zhou “ritual revolution” (Rawson, “A Bronze-Casting Revolution in the Western Zhou and its Impacts on Provincial Industries,” in *The Beginning of the Use of Metals and Alloys*, ed. Robert Maddin [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988], 228-238; idem, “Statesmen or Barbarians,” 87- 93; idem, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* 2 Vols. [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990], 1.74-125; and idem, “Western Zhou Archaeology,” 433-440). A similar proposition has been voiced independently by Cao Wei 曹瑋 in his “Cong qingtongqi de yanbian shi lun Xizhou qian-houqi zhi jiao de lizhi bianhua” 從青銅器的變化試論西周前後期之交的禮制變化, in *Zhou Qing wenhua yanjiu* 周秦文化研究, eds., Zhou Qin wenhua yanjiu bian weihui 周秦文化研究編委會 (Xi’an: Shaanxi Renmin chubanshe, 1998), 443-456. In a critical assessment and further advancement of Rawson’s finds and conclusions Lothar von Falkenhausen coined the term “late Western Zhou ritual reform” (von Falkenhausen, “Late Western Zhou Taste,” *Études chinoises* 18.1/2 [1999]: 143-178). This fundamental break in the material record, indicating major shifts in ritual praxis, further led to the recognition of significant changes in the elite’s social structure that must have taken place roughly between 950 and 800 BCE. Contemporaneous with their military and geo-political decline on the outside, the Zhou alliance within the Zhou core region in the Wei 渭 river valley encountered the need for internal stratification arising from a sharp increase in the number of members constituting the Zhou aristocracy due to continued lineage segmentation. Cf. Luo Tai 羅泰 (Lothar von Falkenhausen), “You guan Xizhou wanqi lizhi gaige ji Zhuangbai Weishi qingtongqi niandai de xin jiashe: Cong shixi mingwen shuo qi” 有關西周晚期禮制改革及莊白微氏青銅器年代的新假設：從世系銘文說起, in *Zhongguo kaoguxue yu lishixue zhi zhenghe yanjiu* 中國考古學與歷史學之整合研究, ed. Zang Zhenhua 臧振華 [Taipei: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan, 1997], 670-673; von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 29-73; and Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in early China*, 63-95. Nick Vogt also points to a new ritual system that was intended to create and implement internal stratification among the late Western Zhou elites. See Vogt, “Between Kin and King: Social Aspects of Western Zhou Ritual,” 316-332.

deep-structure of most texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.¹⁷ He states:

Though dialogue in the strict sense of the word – as the recorded exchange of two or more statements in direct discourse – is relatively rare in bronze inscriptions, these inscriptions always presume a confrontation of actors, at least one of whom speaks. Thus writing in the bronze inscriptions always makes room for dialogue by virtue of the type of situation it habitually records; even if the words of the speaker are not recorded, the situation is one in which hierarchically different actors exchanged language.¹⁸

Schaberg further identifies two sorts of confrontations, one between king and the bronze commissioning elites and one between the latter and their future descendants.¹⁹ This pattern needs to be taken serious in the process of reconstructing the context or rather contexts of the inscriptions.

The dialogism of the first sort of confrontation relates explicitly or implicitly to the conferral and the receipt of royal commands. The language employed in these speech acts, the present study argues, belongs into the field of political bonds. We can perceive here of an idiom of loyalty and commitment which not just in Early China but in other ancient cultures as well, belongs to the language of patron-client relations. What becomes important in this context is the fact that references to the past, to the former Zhou kings, as well as to the donors' forebears are mostly found within this sort of confrontation between king and elites. This means they are not, or at least not in the first place, intended as a form of commemoration of origin related to the religious legitimacy of the entire dynasty as Kern puts it,²⁰ instead they relate

¹⁷ David Schaberg, "Foundations of Chinese Historiography: Literary Representation in *Zuo Zhuan* and *Guoyu*," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1996), 46-60.

¹⁸ Ibid, 49.

¹⁹ Ibid, 52.

²⁰ Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*," 150.

to the trans-generational retrieval and perpetuation of authority relations between the subsequent generations of vassals and of Zhou kings. Hence what they primarily address are issues of personal accountability.

This now informs the second sort of confrontation Schaberg describes, which is that between the vessel donor and his future descendants. What the latter are called upon to remember is the legacy of an obligation. To be sure, in sum these individual memories must have coalesced into a sort of collective cultural memory at some point as they were all ultimately linked to the same ruling house and to the same foundational events. Yet in the context of ancestral sacrifice the primary purpose of commemoration, as will be argued in this study, was to merge genealogical succession with political legacy, or, in some cases, even to enhance a donor's relatively low position in kinship hierarchy with a political pedigree based on a generation-transcending history of service to the Zhou king.

Hence in order to understand the terms of Zhou kingship that, apart from a few early exceptions, become first perceivable to us in reflexive passages from mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, we have to look at them in the context of the conferral and receipt of royal commands as well as within the development of this institution in the available textual sources.

Context and approach

The depiction of conferrals of royal commands, presented as the appointee's enrolment into the institution of kingship, appears first in texts from bronze inscriptions dating to the time of King Cheng. The very "genre" of bronze

inscriptions in which individual elites define their position in relation to the figure of a “king” (*wang* 王) is first attested for in a few rare instances towards the very end of the late Shang or Anyang period (ca. 1200-1051 BCE).²¹ Thus our investigation has to take its point of departure from the socio-political changes underlying the Shang-Zhou transition,²² changes that may be described best in terms of a transition from a complex chiefdom or conical clan state to a kinship-transcending ruling organization or ruling alliance based on the reflexive theo-political idea of representative ecumenical kingship.²³ Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1924) was perhaps the first to point out and name some of the major changes in socio-political organisation that he thought came hand in hand with the Shang-Zhou transition in his

²¹ For the sake of readability, I shall stick with the sinological convention of translating the word *wang* 王 in an undifferentiated manner as “king,” irrespective of the period and context where it appears in. It remains to be shown what the term actually implies in late Shang and in Western Zhou sources respectively and in how far the English translation “king” is justified in each case. This point will concern us in some detail on pp. 69-84 below.

²² By Shang-Zhou transition I do not mean the Zhou alliance’s mytho-historical conquest over the last Shang king in terms of a punctual event in the mid- 11th century BCE, but a period of major cultural changes beginning with the last Anyang reigns leading up to the solidification of a distinct literary idea of Zhou kingship in epigraphic sources around the latter half of the 9th century BCE. For the major historical events defining this period see the paragraph on chronology, geography and sources on pp. 25-30 below.

²³ Among the studies that define the late Shang polity in terms of a conical clan state are K. C. Chang, *Shang Civilization* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980); David N. Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape: Time, Space, and Community in Late Shang China (ca. 1200-1045 B.C.)* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2000) and Huang Mingchong 黃銘崇, “Wan Shang wangchao de zushi yu zushi zhengzhi” 晚商王朝的族氏與族氏政治, in *Dongya kaogu de xin faxian* 東亞考古的新發現, ed. Chen Guangzu 陳光祖 and Zang Zhenhua 臧振華 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2013), 1-94. For the respective developments in the Western Zhou period see Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 81-100; Léon Vandermeersch, *Wangdao ou La voie royale: Recherches sur l’esprit des Institutions de la Chine archaïque. Tome II: Structures politiques, les rites* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1980), 111-151; Xu Zhuoyun 許倬雲, *Xizhou shi* 西周史, 3rd rev. ed. (Taipei: Lianjing, 1990), 107-137; Huang Mingchong, “‘Yin-Zhou geming’ xin lun: mai xiang ‘renwen de’ guojia” 「殷周革命」新論 – 邁向「人文的」國家, in *Zhongguoshi xin lun: Gudai wenming de xingcheng fence* 中國史新論 – 古代文明的形成分冊, ed. Huang Mingchong (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Lianjing, 2016), 307-378; and idem, “Cong ji yu qinshu de zhengfu dao guanliao de zhengfu – Yin-Zhou biange de yi ge zhongyao mianxiang” 從基於親屬的政府到官僚的政府 – 殷周變革的一個重要面向, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 89.2 (2018): 279-338. The question whether or not the step from complex chiefdoms to kingship has happened independently of the Shang-Zhou transition in earlier contexts in North China is still contested. See Stefan Breuer, *Der Charismatische Staat: Ursprünge und Frühformen staatlicher Herrschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2014), 170-171.

famous “Yin Zhou zhidu lun” 殷周制度論 (“A treatise on the Institutions of Yin and Zhou”)²⁴ from 1917. His synopsis reads:

周人制度之大異於商者，一曰立子立嫡之制。由是而生宗法及喪服之制，並由是而有封建子弟之制，君天子臣諸侯之制。二曰廟數之制。三曰同姓不婚之制。此數者，皆周之所以綱紀天下。其旨則在納上下於道德，而合天子、諸侯、卿、大夫、士、庶民以成一道德之團體。

As to the major points where the System of the Zhou differed from that of the Shang, there is first the institution of primogeniture. From this originated lineage law and the regulations for mourning attires. Furthermore out of this also evolved the custom of enfeoffing one’s sons and younger brothers and of regarding the Son of Heaven as ruler and the many regional lords as ministers. Second, there is the institution of graded numbers of ancestral temples. Third, there is the rule that those of the same surname do not intermarry. Together these are the conditions on grounds of which the Zhou proved able to govern all under Heaven. These institutions have been devised in order to integrate those below and those above within *dao-de* (“morality” i.e. a superimposed structure of mutual obligations),²⁵ in order to bring together the Son of Heaven, the regional lords, the high officials, the *Dafu*, the *Shi* and the multitudinous *min* to form one *dao-de* corporation.²⁶

Wang’s theory, although not unproblematic and by now out-dated in many respects,²⁷

²⁴ Wang Guowei 王國維, *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林 (Taipei: Heluo tushu chubanshe, 1975 [1923]), 451-480.

²⁵ Although my analogous translation of the term *dao-de* 道德 anticipates the findings from chapter three in this study, it clearly fits the purport of Wang’s theory. Moreover, taking into consideration that Wang borrows much of his terminology from Warring States Masters Literature, especially from the three *Classics of Rites* (*San Li* 三禮), it is worthwhile noting that in a historical context we first come across the compound *dao-de* in *Xunzi* 荀子 and in the *Liji* 禮記, where it appears together with such concepts as *li* 禮 (decorum), *ren* 仁 (fellow-kindness) and *yi* 義 (dutifulness) that were devised to govern interpersonal relations and interaction in the socio-political realm. In the same context, *de* 德, as Robert H. Gassmann has shown, takes on the meaning of “obligation” or “to obligate” (Gassmann, “Coming to Terms with 德: The Deconstruction of ‘Virtue’ and an exercise in Scientific Morality,” in *How should one live? Comparing Ethics in Ancient China and Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Richard A. H. King and Dennis Schilling [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011], 92-125).

²⁶ Wang Guowei, *Guantang jilin*, 453-454. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

²⁷ Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 was the first to point out that Wang’s theory is largely based on post-Western Zhou idealizations. He moreover accused Wang of using this treatise to propagate his own political ideals. Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zhongshu* 殷墟卜辭綜述 (Beijing: Kexue

proves remarkable in that it captures some of the core issues we are concerned with in this study, addressing them in a terminology that comes very close to the historical concepts we will encounter in our analysis of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

Leaving the disputed issues in his theory aside, of the Zhou innovations Wang describes in his treatise we will focus mainly on two aspects that so far have found less attention in early China studies: First, there is the politicisation of vertical authority relations between the king and his vassals (*jun Tianzi chen zhuhou zhi zhi* 君天子臣諸侯之制). This will concern us in two ways. On the one hand we will analyse the terms of the initiation and perpetuation of authority relations as they surface in the exchange of speech acts between king and elites on the occasion of royal commands, on the other hand we have to ask how these terms in turn show in the reflexive idea of Zhou kingship, especially in the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate.²⁸

Second, we will focus on the idea of a superimposed structure of obligations that, in textual praxis at least, served to bind all the members of the Zhou ruling organization into a constellation of authority relations, implied by the compound *dao-de* 道德 in Wang's account. In this part as well our approach is twofold. We start by looking at conceptions of personal loyalty and commitment in the relations between the Zhou king and his vassals. In a second step we ask how these

chubanshe, 1956), 629-631. Wang's claim that primogeniture and lineage segmentation as principles of socio-political organization only started to become relevant under Zhou rule has by now been thoroughly disproved. The most important studies in this respect are Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, "Guanyu Shangdai de zongzu zuzhi yu guizu he pingmin liang ge jieji de chubu yanjiu" 關於商代的宗族組織與貴族和平民兩個階級的初步研究, *Wenshi* 文史 17 (1983): 1-26, rpt. in idem, *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji* 裘錫圭學術文集, 6 vols. (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2012), 5.121-152; and Huang Mingchong, "Wan Shang wangchao de zushi yu zushi zhengzhi."

²⁸ Ideology is understood here according to the definition of Clifford Geertz as a normative "cultural idea-system," i.e. an ordered system of interacting symbols that "names the structure of situations in such a way that the attitude contained toward them is one of commitment" (Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in idem, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz* [New York, Basic Books, 1973], 193-233).

conceptions translate into a shared commitment, joining the king and the elites in the task of fulfilling the conditions of the Heavenly Mandate. In other words we are ultimately tracing the institutional origins of a political theology of representation in the sense Jan Assmann defined this concept for the case of ancient Egypt:

In order for two factors to correspond to each other there has to be a third factor which they both equally resemble, or, one could even say, to which both commit themselves. This third factor is the decisive principle of a political theology of representation. In Egypt this third factor was not tantamount with absolute empowerment. Instead it entailed the need for affiliation, commitment and accountability.²⁹

This observation pertains to the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate just as well. Far from merely providing the protagonists in our literary sources with a divine sanction for military conquest and ecumenical rulership, the Heavenly Mandate first and foremost entailed an obligation for the king and the elites to assume a shared theo-political commitment.³⁰ In this aspect, as we will see, the idea of the Heavenly Mandate seems to be directly related to incipient forms of political affiliation that began to emerge during the early Western Zhou reigns.

²⁹ Jan Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil: Politische Theologie in Altägypten, Israel und Europa* (Munich: Hanser, 2000), 38. The translation from German is my own.

³⁰ That the Heavenly Mandate entailed the ruler's obligation to provide for the wellbeing of the ruled populations (*min* 民) according to transmitted literary accounts has been pointed out before. See for instance Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 97. However the ties of commitment between the elites and the Zhou king have so far not been associated with the Heavenly Mandate in sinological literature. Quite to the contrary, all too often, the Heavenly Mandate is solely regarded as the king's responsibility (ibid, 99) to which the king's commands form a parallel or an extension (Virginia C. Kane, "Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions: The Charge, the Gifts, and the Response," *Early China* 8 [1982-83]: 14-28).

Method

The method I apply in this study is that of an interpretive analysis of literary and non-literary texts in the context of their formation and retrieval, as far as these circumstances can be determined with any degree of confidence. Regarding the recorded exchange of speech acts that constitute the conferral and the receipt of royal commands in texts from bronze inscriptions, my approach focuses on the analysis of formal aspects as well as on the identification and interpretation of key concepts. The results from this procedure in turn inform my analysis of discursive passages in both bronze inscriptions and the *Documents*. This strategy of combining form criticism with conceptual- and discourse analysis is aimed at providing an analytical framework within which our heterogeneous source material can be correlated in order to arrive at valid statements concerning the idea of Zhou kingship in relation to its institutional context(s).

The present approach in the light of recent scholarship

By setting our focus on individual bonds between king and elites on the one hand and on their role in the development of theo-political ideas on the other, our approach adopts a perspective that is somewhat different from those we find represented in current scholarship on the topic of Western Zhou kingship. It departs considerably from Li Feng's recent theory of the Western Zhou realm as a "delegatory kin-ordered settlement state" which at its core was administered through a fairly complex model

of bureaucracy.³¹ By stressing the importance of personal authority and individual bonds over an autonomous hierarchy of differentiated bureaucratic ranks,³² the present thesis falls more in line with Li's critics who see Western Zhou bureaucracy still at a very incipient stage while pointing to the preeminent roles of segmentary lineages (i.e. kin-based patrilineal corporate groups) as the basic building blocks in the composition and political organization of the Zhou ruling alliance.³³

Another prominent approach focuses on the role of the late Western Zhou ritual reform in the formation of elite socio-political organisation.³⁴ Lothar von Falkenhausen, who interprets the ritual reform in terms of the beginning of a new archaeological period,³⁵ sees in it the symbolic expression of an internal stratification of lineages and branch-lineages along the lines of descent, culminating in the respective lineage heads. According to him, these apparently centrally planned and top-down enforced sumptuary rules led to a thorough redefinition of elite privileges and thus to a clear stratification of the Zhou ruling class.³⁶ Kai Vogelsang, who devotes an entire subchapter in his *Geschichte Chinas (History of China)* to the ritual reform (he uses the term ritual revolution), emphasises the kinship-transcending and supra-regional nature of these measures. For him, the ritual reform marks the transition from a segmentary to a stratified society in which the

³¹ See Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in early China*, 294-299.

³² This perspective has first been advocated in Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 320; 381-383; 419-425.

³³ Most importantly von Falkenhausen, "Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008 (review article)," *Zhejiang University Journal of Art and Archaeology* 1 (2014): 252-277. For an alternative model taking into account the lineage-based geo-political organization of the Western Zhou polity see Maria Khayutina, "Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity," *T'oung Pao* 96 (2010): 1-73. Among earlier studies stressing the important role of lineages in the organization of the Western Zhou ruling organization are Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, *Zhoudai chengbang 周代城邦* (Taipei: Lianjing, 1979), 93-122; and Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu 商周家族形態研究*, 2nd revised edition (Tianjin: Guji Chubanshe, 2004 [1990]), 390-404.

³⁴ See p. 7 n.16 above.

³⁵ Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 29-73.

³⁶ Ibid.

elite for the first time in early Chinese history emerged as a homogenous social stratum.³⁷

The present study does not disclaim the significance of these developments; neither does it question them marking an epochal threshold in early Chinese cultural history. However, it argues that complementary to this comprehensive, genealogically based ritual system, texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions also reveal a decidedly political dimension of the relation between king and individual elites, developed on the basis of command and commitment.³⁸ Hence while von Falkenhausen's approach defines the individual in terms of gender, lineage, clan, and ethnic affiliation, this thesis focuses on the individual in its capacity to enter into personal political commitments. To a certain degree it questions the role of a stratified genealogical hierarchy as an exclusive model to explain the mid- to late Western Zhou socio-political order. Similarly, while accepting the ritual reform as the beginning of a new archaeological period, the present study questions its proposed implication as an absolute epochal threshold. For instance von Falkenhausen assumes:

[F]or its first two centuries the Zhou essentially continued the traditions of the preceding Shang dynasty (ca. 1600-ca. 1046 BC), and it was only during the Late Western Zhou period, about 850 BC, that they devised their own distinctive rituals, and with them, a new political order.³⁹

Although this assessment may be true in many respects, it ignores several major

³⁷ Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*, 3rd rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2013 [2012]), 68-78. See also his "The Parting of the Gods: Emerging Religion in Ancient China," unpublished manuscript, 2010.

³⁸ Moreover, it is this dimension in particular which we find further developed in transmitted texts such as the *Documents of Zhou*.

³⁹ Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 2.

developments that took place in the period between the last two Anyang reigns and the mid- to late Western Zhou period: Reference to or claims of participation in the royal ancestral cult, frequently witnessed in texts from late Shang bronze inscriptions, almost completely disappear in early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.⁴⁰ Moreover, evidence of a new form of proto-political bond or patron-client relationship, binding the elites to the Zhou king by means of mutual obligations resulting from the issue and receipt of royal commands, began to emerge on a large scale during and after the reign of King Cheng.⁴¹ Most importantly, as far as concerns their underlying political assumptions, these royal commands recorded in early Western Zhou inscriptions do not differ much from those found in the so called appointment or investiture inscriptions, prominent during the mid- to late Western Zhou period.⁴²

At the same time, however, it is undeniable that passages reflecting on the idea of Zhou kingship as well as on the alliance's foundational past, passages I consider to be directly related to the institution of royal commands, appear in a significant number only during the mid- to late Western Zhou period on vessels whose shape, ornamentation and position within sets of vessels constitute the hallmark of the ritual reform. This phenomenon needs to and will be addressed at the end of this study for it raises some very important questions. Not only has it been noted that references to the ritual reform are entirely absent from the transmitted and epigraphic literary

⁴⁰ With the notable exception of the Tian Wang *gui* 天亡簋 (JC 4261) and the Xiao Yu *dǐng* 小孟鼎 (JC 2839) inscriptions. Cf. the discussion on pp. 122-125.

⁴¹ See the beginning of chapter two below.

⁴² For this type of inscription see Chen Mengjia, *Xizhou tongqi duandai* 西周銅器斷代 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 398-409 (hereafter *Duandai*); Musha Akira 武者章. "Sei Shū satsumei kinbun bunrui no kokoromi 西周冊命金文分類のこころみ," in *Sei Shū jidai no seidōki to sono kokka* 西周時代の青銅器とその国家, ed. Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄 et al (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980), 49-132; Chen Hanping 陳漢平, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu* 西周冊命制度研究 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1986); and He Shuhuan 何樹環, *Xizhou xi ming mingwen xin jiu* 西周錫命銘文新究 (Taipei: Wenjin chuban, 2007).

legacy,⁴³ many of the overtly political claims voiced by the protagonist in reflexive mid- to late Western Zhou inscriptions all but ignore the structural changes in socio-political organization which scholars associate with this reform. This may lead one to question whether the stratification of the elite and the institution of royal appointments with its emphasis on collective memory were indeed two sides of the same development or whether they might have actually constituted two separate or perhaps even opposing strings in the organization of late Western Zhou elite society.

Last but not least, based on the recent trend to regard the ritual reform as a watershed not just in the development of a stratified society but also in the formation of Zhou cultural memory and political thought, many scholars tend to marginalize isolated occurrences of reflexive passages on the nature of Zhou kingship in bronze inscriptions that predate the late Western Zhou period. This study, on the contrary, takes these instances, such as the He *zun* 兕尊 (JC 6014), the Da Yu *ding* 大盂鼎 (JC 2837) and the Jing Hou *gui* 井侯簋 (JC 4241) inscriptions very serious. Consider for instance the following passage from the He *zun* inscription, which dates to the early Western Zhou period:⁴⁴

唯王初遷宅于成周，[...]誥宗小子于京室，曰：「昔才！爾考公氏克仇文王。肆文王受茲□□[大令]。」

When the King for the first time took residence in Chengzhou, [...] [he]

⁴³ Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 29.

⁴⁴ The vessel has been accidentally discovered during construction works near Jia cun 賈村 in Baoji county, Shaanxi, in 1963. See *Wenwu* 文物 (1966) 1: 1-6, “Shaanxi sheng Chenggu, Baoji, Lantian chutu he shouji de qingtongqi” 陝西省城固、寶雞、藍天出土和收集的青銅器。It was acquired by the Baoji City Museum in 1965 and is currently housed in the Baoji Bronzeware Museum. The inscription on the bottom inside of the vessel has only been discovered in 1975 when the vessel was thoroughly cleaned and its corrosion removed. See Tang Lan 唐蘭, “He zun mingwen jieshi” 兕尊明文解釋, *Wenwu* (1976) 1: 60-63; and Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, “He zun mingwen chu shi” 兕尊明文初釋, *Wenwu* (1976) 1: 64-65. Only my interpretative transcription is given here. For a discussion of this inscription including the philological choices made in the modern transcription see pp. 110-111, pp. 118-120, and pp. 218-219 below.

addressed the heirs from the princely lineages who were congregated in the Great Hall of the Jing palace saying: “Formerly, your deceased fathers were able to ally with King Wen, whereupon King Wen received this [Great Charge ?].⁴⁵

唯武王既克大邑商，則廷告于天，曰：『余其宅茲中域，自之乂民。』
When King Wu had newly subdued the Great Settlement Shang, he solemnly announced to Heaven the words: ‘I shall reside in this central region and from here protect the *min* (i.e. the populations inhabiting the North China plain).’

烏乎，爾有唯小子亡識。視于公氏有功于天，徹令敬享哉。」 [...]
Alas! You are but un-experienced heirs. Attend to the example of your forebears who have meritorious achievements with Heaven. [Strive to] accomplish the charge and serve reverently!” [...]

Regardless of whether the generally accepted reconstruction of the two illegible graphs in the inscription as *da ling* 大令, the Great Mandate, is correct or not (we will discuss this matter at a later point in this study), the mere fact that the Zhou founding myth and the issues it addresses in this inscription are consistent with late Western Zhou versions of the same mytho-historical account suffices to prove that the reflexive idea of Zhou kingship we know from the literary tradition did not just originate with the ritual reform. As far as bronze inscriptions are concerned, it may have risen to prominence only in late Western Zhou times, but the concept itself predates the ritual reform significantly. If we look in the opposite direction, however, we find that the reflexive conception of the organization of mankind in terms of an ecumenical ruling organization is not only entirely absent from extant Shang sources, neither would it fit the pattern of thought found in surviving oracle bone inscriptions (hereafter OBI) or late Shang bronze inscriptions. This observation justifies

⁴⁵ There is a lacuna in the inscription between the graphs 茲 and 唯. The context-based reconstruction of the two missing graphs as *da ling* 大令, the Great Mandate, has been unanimously adopted by all interpreters of the inscription so far.

contextualizing our topic within the Shang-Zhou transition, understood as a major change in the perception of humanity and its institutions. This transition, it will be argued in this study, resembles the pattern of what Eric Voegelin has termed “a leap in being” from so called cosmological societies, marked by a compact mythological consciousness (i.e. an ahistorical consciousness where man, nature, and the gods are perceived to coexist in a state of consubstantiality and conduration),⁴⁶ to political or historical societies, characterised by a differentiated, reflexive consciousness as well as by possessing a notion of transcendence.⁴⁷

In sum, I doubt that the restructuring of the late Western Zhou elite may hold to fully explain the developments we are concerned with in this study, as the latter relate to considerably broader cultural issues. This thesis therefore assumes the Shang-Zhou transition in the above outlined definition as a meta-context for the genesis of the institution and the ideology of Zhou kingship, with the late Western Zhou structural changes in elite organization forming a part of this overall context.

⁴⁶ For the concept of cosmological societies cf. the contributions by John A. Wilson and Thorkild Jacobsen in Henri Frankfort et al. *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 31-222.

⁴⁷ See Eric Voegelin, *Order and History Volume I: Israel and Revelation*, ed. Maurice P. Hogan (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2001 [1956]). Incidentally this approach also falls in line with Benjamin I. Schwartz’s description of the Shang-Zhou transition in intellectual terms as a breakthrough from a “combination of ancestor worship and nature religion” to a notion of “religious-ethical transcendence” (Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* [Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985], 16-55). See also Vogelsang, “The Parting of the Gods: Emerging Religion in Ancient China,” for this point.

Concepts and terminology

Closely related to the preceding discussion is the use of terms and concepts throughout this study. Unlike many other studies in the field I avoid employing anachronistic modern categories such as “state” and its institutional divisions to characterise the Western Zhou ruling organization. Instead I try to describe the institutions of Zhou kingship as accurate as possible in the context of an incipient political order that developed out of or in distinction to the cosmologically defined late Shang worldview and its kinship based elite social system.

Such an endeavour necessarily has to start with a definition of late Shang rulership, its context and objectives, as well as with a description of the changes these aspects underwent during the Western Zhou period. Hence the first chapter in this study traces the outlines of late Shang rule that scholars have been able to reconstruct from OBI evidence and sets them into contrast with conceptions of Zhou sovereignty as we find them articulated in reflexive passages from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. This operation includes a careful reconsideration of the title *wang* 王, which appears in both late Shang and Western Zhou sources, albeit not necessarily bearing the same connotations.

What needs to be clarified at this point is our understanding of the political and its various conjunctions, as this conceptual field pervades our entire argument. What do I mean by political and where do I see its context? Above we have already identified the political aspect of Western Zhou kingship with the conferral and the receipt of royal commands. I consider this institution political in so far as it presupposed a notion of the individual subject as a voluntary member of a ruling organisation, wherein it was defined by its, however limited, ability to act, to decide

and to assume personal responsibilities.⁴⁸ Of course we cannot speak in this context about more or less equal actors jointly reaching political decisions as it would have been the case between the members of the Greek polis for instance. The Zhou king's commands in any case were not subject to consensus; they were indisputable and demanded unconditional obedience. However, this obedience was not enforced upon the king's agents, it rather rested on a legitimacy agreement between king and appointee,⁴⁹ as vows for loyalty and pledges to assume personal responsibilities in bronze inscriptions suggest. In other words, although royal orders were non-negotiable, their receipt nevertheless involved a personal element of affirmation and commitment on the side of the recipient. Moreover, the king's rhetoric of motives that precedes the conferral of a charge in a number of exceptionally long inscriptions reveals the picture of the appointee and / or his forebears having decided to join the royal cause on their own terms prior to receiving an initial royal appointment and / or enfeoffment. This becomes especially evident in cases where the king is depicted as commanding a chief from a non-Zhou polity based on the latter's and his forebears' decision to serve the Zhou course.⁵⁰ Generally, the farther the relations between an appointee's forebears and the royal house were traced back to the Zhou's legendary receipt of the Heavenly Mandate, the more they resembled political bonds in which the king and his agents appeared as a collective joined in the commitment towards a shared political goal, namely the ordering of the human ecumene according to Heaven's moral design. Even though these bonds can hardly

⁴⁸ Compare for these points the preconditions for the discovery of the political in ancient Greece as identified by Henning Ottmann in his *Geschichte des politischen Denkens Band 1/1, Die Griechen: Von Homer bis Sokrates* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001), 12-18.

⁴⁹ For the concept of legitimacy agreement see Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 441-474.

⁵⁰ So for instance in the inscriptions from the mid-Western Zhou Lu Bo Dong *gui* lid 魯伯莒簋蓋 (JC 04302) and the from the mid-Western Zhou Guai Bo *gui* 夬(乖)伯簋 (JC 4331) tureen. Cf. pp. 211-215 below.

be compared to the political alliances contracted between autonomous Eastern Zhou polities in the accounts of the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 for example, they were certainly more than ascribed, non-voluntary authority relations entirely based on ritually defined roles or enforced through violence. Hence I refer to them as proto-political bonds in this study.

They should be called proto-political also because there was yet no autonomous political system in place during the Western Zhou period. Instead these bonds must be seen in the context of the organisation of the Western Zhou realm in units of segmentary lineages.⁵¹ While the latter define the individual person in terms of his or her fixed position and role within the corporate kinship groups, royal appointments resulted in special personal bonds which transcended the lineages and their internal hierarchies, at times cutting right across them. Devised for assuring the performance of royal tasks by the king's agents, these personal bonds were modelled on the logic of patron-client relations. This point is of utmost importance when compared to Li Feng's theory of the delegation of royal authority along kinship lines. To be sure there was a significant overlap between genealogical proximity to the royal house and political power in the Zhou ruling organisation. However, this should not obscure the fact that proto-political bonds between the king and his agents were fundamentally different from corporate kinship relations as constituted by the lineages and their affinal relatives, including the royal house. Patron-client relations, S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger have pointed out,

are undertaken between individuals or networks of individuals in a vertical

⁵¹ For the identification of segmentary lineages, i.e. patrilineal kin groups with the basic units of social, political and military organization in a Western Zhou context see K. C. Chang, *Early Chinese Civilization: Anthropological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 72-92; and von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 28, 64-73.

fashion (the simplest kind is a strong dyadic one) rather than between organized corporate groups. They seem to undermine the horizontal group organization and solidarity of both clients and patrons, but especially of clients.⁵²

In other words, they “provide a new type of solidary framework for instrumental relations which is different from that of the main groups of society and yet complements them.”⁵³ Accordingly, it will be argued in this study, kinship ties did not function as a guarantor of trust in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Even in cases where the king and the appointee were genealogically related, the basis of trust on which the delegation of royal authority took place had to be created or reconfirmed through the conferral and the receipt of a command itself.

As far as concerns its political dimension, the form of the proto-political bond touches upon a further point that needs to be discussed here. When authority relations are no longer purely ascriptive, but, at least to a certain extent, based on political decisions and personal commitments, the aspect of meaning and of moral principles becomes important.⁵⁴ Here applies Carl Schmitt’s famous statement: “To the political belongs the idea, because there are no politics without authority and no authority without the ethos of conviction.”⁵⁵ It is in this context where I see the development of the notion of the Heavenly Mandate. Whereas the latter’s structural congruence with royal charges have long been pointed out by various scholars, the conclusions drawn from this discovery hardly go beyond the assessment of a mere analogy. The present study takes this find one step further by explicitly linking this concept to the development of the political or proto-political aspect in Western Zhou

⁵² S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, “Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22.1 (1980): 50.

⁵³ S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, clients and friends: Interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 10-11.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cited after Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 36. The translation from German is my own.

elite organisation. More precisely, I understand references to the Heavenly Mandate in the bronzes and *Documents* in terms of a meta-reflection on the purpose and moral principles that underlay the political aspect of the Western Zhou ruling organisation. In doing so, I borrow Assmann's analytical concept of a transfer of concepts from the socio-political into the theo-political sphere.⁵⁶ Theology is understood in this context as the argumentative, doctrinal discourse about a transcendent divine principle, which in our case is informed by and in turn re-informs the Western Zhou proto-political order based on the institution of royal appointments.⁵⁷ I therefore refer to the Heavenly Mandate and, by extension, to the reflexive concept of Zhou kingship as a theo-political ideology. What this ideology implies in particular will be discussed in the first chapter below.

Chronology, geography and sources

Our investigation covers mainly the time from 1100-770 BCE. Within this timeframe we differentiate between the late Shang or Anyang 安陽 period (1200-1051 BCE), and an early- (ca. 1050-950 BCE), mid- (ca. 950-850 BCE) and late Western Zhou (ca. 850-770 BCE) period respectively. These divisions primarily describe an archaeological and art-historical periodization drawn up for analytical purposes.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid, 49-52, 63-71.

⁵⁷ This definition of the term theology in a comparative context follows Heinrich von Stietencron, "Gedanken zur Theologie," in *Theologen und Theologien in verschiedenen Kulturkreisen*, ed. Heinrich von Stietencron (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1986), 9-24.

⁵⁸ Some of our sources and their contexts date to the ensuing Springs and Autumns (Chunqiu 春秋) or early Eastern Zhou multi-state period, which is commonly sub-divided into an early- (770-650 BCE), mid- (650-550 BCE) and late period (550-450 BCE) based archaeological and art-historical

The late Shang period coincides with the time during which the modern-day site of Anyang and its surroundings in northern Henan province functioned as the residence and ritual centre for the last nine Shang kings.⁵⁹ It is also the only period of Shang history for which we possess epigraphic sources in form of OBI and inscribed bronze vessels.⁶⁰ The internal division of the Western Zhou period represents essentially a differentiation of broad stylistic phases based on art-historical developments observed in ritual bronze paraphernalia found throughout the north China plain with a focus on the Plain of Zhou (Zhouyuan 周原).⁶¹ It by and large falls in line with the tripartite political division of the dynasty proposed first by Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (1911-1966), and is now considered the standard archaeological periodization of the Western Zhou era, adopted among others by Jessica Rawson, Lothar von Falkenhausen and the editors of the *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* project.⁶²

In historical terms the late Shang has been a phase of military decline during which the area effectively controlled by the Shang royal house and its princely

considerations as well. Cf. Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, *Shunjū Sengoku jidai seidōki no kenkyū* 春秋戰國時代青銅器の研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1986); and Jenny F. So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes from the Arthur Sackler Collections* (New York: Abrams, 1995).

⁵⁹ Cf. Bagley, “Shang Archaeology,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 183-208. Whereas royal activities were pretty much limited to the area around Anyang, sites associated with material culture of the Shang have been found all over North China. See Li Yongdi 李永迪, “Jiegou ‘zhoubian’ yu ‘zhongxin’: Cong shijie tixi ji quyu hudong kaogu shilun Yinxu de duiwai guanxi” 結構「周邊」與「中心」: 從世界體系及區域互動考古試論殷墟的對外關係, in “*Zhoubian*” yu “*zhongxin*”: *Yinxu shiqi Anyang ji Anyang yi wai diqu de kaogu faxian yu yanjiu* 周邊「與」中心: 殷墟時期安陽及安陽以外地區的考古發現與研究, ed. Li Yongdi (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of History and Philology, 2015), 301-319. In the academic literature on the late Shang we find the Anyang period further sub-divided according to Dong Zuobin’s 董作賓 system of five periods. Cf. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 92-133.

⁶⁰ Bagley, “Shang Archaeology,” 180-183

⁶¹ Cf. Rawson, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes*, 15-125. For the Plain of Zhou and its location see also Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Qingtongqi yu Zhouyuan yizhi” 青銅器與周原遺址, *Xibei Daxue Xuebao* 30.2 (1981): 3-8; and Rawson, “Western Zhou Archaeology,” 390-393.

⁶² However, different periodizations have been proposed. Karlgren, “Yin and Chou Chinese Bronzes,” for instance differentiates merely between an early and a late Western Zhou period, whereas Hayashi Minao, *In Shū jidai seidōki no kenkyū* 殷周時代青銅器の研究, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1984) further subdivides the tripartite model in six sub-periods.

sub-lineages was more or less confined to Anyang and its immediate surroundings.⁶³ Especially the last two Shang reigns, coinciding with Dong Zuobin's Anyang period V (1100-1051 BCE), have been identified by some scholars in terms of a late Shang "ritual revolution," marked by the self-enhancement of the last two kings who apparently claimed divine status by adopting the title *di* 帝, which in OBI stood for the highest deity, or a collective of highest deities in the Shang pantheon.⁶⁴ The period further witnessed an increased emphasis on royal ancestral ritual, which had grown to lavish proportions during that time.⁶⁵ These changes in particular might have prompted the polemic condemnation of the last Shang king and his excesses in Western and Eastern Zhou literary sources. Concurrently, the late Shang also saw a significant reduction of divinatory topics, the disappearance of positive and negative charge pairs as well as of inauspicious prognostications, with the remaining divinations, mostly concerning the ritual schedule, more and more taking on the character of announcements rather than questions or requests.⁶⁶ This development may have foreshadowed the nascent division between the spheres of man of the gods in Western Zhou times.

The early Western Zhou period falls together with the Zhou alliance's first and second conquest over the Shang (i.e. the Zhou's initial victory over the Shang at Muye 牧野 around 1045 BCE and the suppression of the Wu Geng 武庚 rebellion in 1042-1039 BCE), a possible succession crisis after the death of King Wu 武

⁶³ See Keightley, "The Shang: China's First Historical Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 275-277.

⁶⁴ Compare Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 38.

⁶⁵ Keightley, "The Shang," 268.

⁶⁶ Cf. Keightley, "Late Shang Divination: The Magico-Religious Legacy," in *Explorations in Early Chinese Cosmology*, ed. Henry Rosemont Jr., *Journal of the American Academy of Religious Studies* 50.2 (1984): 11-34.

(r. 1049/45-1043 BCE) in between those two conquests,⁶⁷ as well as with a general phase of military expansion and colonisation which ended with King Zhao's 昭 (r. 977/75-957 BCE) disastrous southern campaign during which the king purportedly lost his life.⁶⁸ The mid- Western Zhou period, beginning with the reign of King Mu 穆 (r. 956-918 BCE), witnessed the fragmentation of the Zhou ruling alliance and an increase of the elite due to demographic dynamics. At the same time the dynasty faced repeated invasions from Eastern peoples, eventually resulting in the Zhou alliance losing control over its eastern territories and having to retreat to the Zhou's homeland in the Wei river valley. Both these developments, leading to a contraction in the supply of available land combined with an increased demand for it due to the splitting of families into branch lineages, triggered a series of social and military reforms, especially changes in land tenure.⁶⁹

The latter half of the mid- Western Zhou period, comprising the reigns of King Gong 共 (r. 917/15-900 BCE) to King Yi 夷 (r. 865-858 BCE), saw a further decline of Zhou royal power due to repeated incursions of bordering populations into the Zhou capital region.⁷⁰ In addition, after the reign of King Gong irregularities in the line of royal succession seem to have occurred, most likely having caused the dynasty to temporarily split into two contenting rival houses, each with its own royal

⁶⁷ The historical outline of the Western Zhou period is based primarily on information from transmitted texts, such as the *Current Bamboo Annals* (*Jinwen Zhushu jinian* 今文竹書記年), the *Odes* and *Documents*, the *Guoyu* 國語 and the *Shiji* 史記. However, scholars have been able to confirm or amend these accounts based on data from epigraphic sources. Cf. Shaughnessy, "New Evidence on the Zhou Conquest," *Early China* 6 (1980-81): 57-79; David S. Nivison, "Western Chou History Reconstructed from Bronze Inscriptions," in *The Great Bronze Age of China: A Symposium*, ed. George Kuwayama (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), 44-55; Shaughnessy, "The Role of Grand Protector Shi in the Consolidation of the Zhou Conquest," *Ars Orientalis* 19 (1989): 51-77; and idem, "Western Zhou History," 310-318.

⁶⁸ Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 179-183; Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," 322-323.

⁶⁹ Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," 323-328. These reforms are dealt with in great detail in Itō Michiharu, *Chūgoku kodai kokka no shihai kōzō*, 154-230.

⁷⁰ Cf. Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 186-189.

calendar.⁷¹ However, as a general trend it has to be noted that the decline of royal authority went hand in hand with the growth of aristocratic power that apparently helped to stabilise the dynasty.⁷² In Bronze inscriptions from this period lineage elites claim to have received ever greater responsibilities from the king during royal appointments, including at times the administration of the royal household. This trend continued into the late Western Zhou period, beginning with the reign of King Li 厲 (r. 857/53-842/28),⁷³ which was marked by an unprecedented increase in the power of the big aristocratic lineages populating the Wei river valley. It was also during that time when the ritual reform purportedly came into effect. Von Falkenhausen states:

The Late Western Zhou Ritual Reform, instituted about 850 BC—a century or so after the onset of pervasive lineage splitting in Zhou elite society—appears to have been an attempt to deal with the social consequences of this essentially demographic phenomenon. In particular, the new sumptuary rules devised at that time may have aimed to give clear expression to the rank differences between trunk lineages and branch lineages of differing grades of seniority.⁷⁴

Thus despite the dynasty's geopolitical decline we perceive of a high level of elite integration in late Western Zhou times, which indeed can be interpreted to imply a

⁷¹ Cf. Nivison, "The Dates of Western Chou," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43.2 (1983): 481-580; idem, "Western Chou History Reconstructed from Bronze Inscriptions," 49-50; and von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 63-64.

⁷² Cf. Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 406-411. Li Feng notes that "[t]he relationship between royal authority and aristocratic power was twofold: on the hand, the strength of royal power rested on the support of the aristocracy; and on the other, the growth of the political and economic power of the aristocracy could endanger royal authority. This, however contradictory it may be, was the inescapable dynamic of court politics in the Western Zhou state. (*Landscape and Power*, 126-127). For this "Dilemma of Western Zhou" see also Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 417-443.

⁷³ King Li himself was forced into exile in the year 842 BCE, which, according to Shaughnessy, "Calendar and Chronology," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 21-23, is the first generally agreed on date in Chinese history. For an interpretation of this event in terms of a struggle between royal power and influential lineages see Li, *Landscape and Power*, 131-134.

⁷⁴ Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 70.

transition from a segmentary to a stratified society, at least in the Zhouyuan area.

Nevertheless, after a revival of royal power under King Xuan 宣 (r. 827/25-782 BCE), including the king's military capacities to deal with hostile incursions as well as his ability to re-gain recognition from allied non-Zhou polities,⁷⁵ the elites under King You 幽 (r. 781-771 BCE), weakened by internal power-struggles, had to flee the Plain of Zhou due to an invasion of nomadic peoples from the north-west in the year 771 BCE, leaving behind many of their precious inscribed bronzes in protective hoards underground.⁷⁶ After having resettled in the region around Luoyang 洛陽 in present-day western Henan province, many of the powerful lineages continued to play important roles in the Eastern Zhou multistate world in which the Zhou kings still functioned as symbolic figureheads whereas actual power lay in the hands of changing hegemon or overlords who were leading a changing state alliance nominally on behalf of the Zhou king.⁷⁷

Bronze Inscriptions

Our main sources in this study are texts from inscriptions cast on ritual bronze vessels that were used in ancestral ritual. The source situation for the period under investigation mirrors the historical outline drawn up above. Inscribed late Shang bronzes featuring grammatically coherent texts are overtly related to tomb finds in

⁷⁵ Cf. Li, *Landscape and Power*, 134-139. For the War against the Xianyun 玁狁, see *ibid.*, 141-192.

⁷⁶ See Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 287-315; and Li, *Landscape and Power*, 193-232.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 234-262; Cho-yun Hsu (Xu Zhuoyun 許倬雲), *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722-222 B.C.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 78-106; and *idem.*, "The Spring and Autumn Period," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 551-566.

the Anyang area.⁷⁸ This geographical confinement stands in sharp contrast to inscribed early Western Zhou bronzes having been found throughout much of north China.⁷⁹ Noteworthy in this respect is the level of homogeneity that can be observed in bronze finds from regions lying far apart from each other. What this tells us about the production of early Western Zhou bronzes and its necessary preconditions has been speculated about by Rawson:

By whatever means it was achieved, an extraordinary uniformity of bronze work spread across the whole of the Zhou territory throughout most of the period. [...] It may be surmised that a well-developed organization of bronze casting must have existed in the early Zhou period. The inscriptions underline this need. Whether bronzes were transported from centralized foundries, for example, at Feng, Hao, or Chengzhou, or whether foundries capable of highly sophisticated casting were located in several areas, close contact between the royal household and the owner of the bronzes is implied.⁸⁰

Rawson further conjectures:

If all such casting was centralized, then close communication would have been necessary between the centers Xi'an and Luoyang and the more distant cities in Yan near Beijing, or Yu near Baoji. If casting of inscribed was not centralized, then close communication between different centers would have been needed to ensure the adoption of standard language and calligraphy. In either case, a formidable unity of purpose and practice seems to have linked the diverse parts of the Zhou realm in its early phases.⁸¹

This picture matches the overall tendencies historians have ascribed to the Zhou's

⁷⁸ Bagley, "Shang Archaeology," 180-183.

⁷⁹ See Beijing Daxue lishixi kaogujiaoyanshi Shang Zhou zu 北京大學歷史系考古教研室商周組, eds., *Shang Zhou kaogu* 商周考古 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1979), 154-166.

⁸⁰ Rawson, "Western Zhou Archaeology," 359-365.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 366.

initial phase of territorial expansion.⁸² Yet as it is the case in the history of events, the material record too shows some major changes after the reign of King Zhao. The most striking one being a contraction of the geographic space where bronzes dating to the mid- and late Western Zhou periods have been overtly unearthed from to the Zhouyuan area as Shaughnessy notes:

Virtually all important inscribed bronzes from about the time of King Mu have been discovered only in the western capital area along the Wei 渭 River valley in Shaanxi province.⁸³

Shaughnessy interprets this contraction as a direct consequence of the Zhou alliance having lost control over its eastern territories after the failed southern campaign under King Zhao.⁸⁴

Moreover, while early Western Zhou bronzes display a variety of vessel styles and ornamentations, many of them continuing late Shang traditions, the era starting with King Mu witnessed large-scale standardizations in vessel shape and ornamentation,⁸⁵ to which Rawson remarks:

Such a uniform system, in which the shapes of the vessels conformed to a single standard and the decoration seems to have been graded to some degree, may suggest that vessel casting was under some sort of centralized control or direction and that it supplied an appropriately ordered elite society.⁸⁶

⁸² Cf. Xu Zhuoyun, *Xi Zhou shi*, 107-173

⁸³ Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, 165-166, with reference to the initial mentioning of this phenomenon in Itō Michiharu, *Chūgoku kodai ōchō no keisei* 中国古代王朝の形成 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1975), 307.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 166; and *idem*, “Western Zhou History,” 325.

⁸⁵ See Rawson, “Western Zhou Archaeology,” 414-423.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 417.

This might have been related to the growth of the elite due to lineage segmentation, foreshadowing to an extent the sumptuary rules implemented during the ritual reform.

A third important development with respect to the content of bronze inscriptions took place during the transition from the early to the mid- Western Zhou period as well. Shaughnessy states:

One can again discern a significant difference between inscribed vessels from the early years of the dynasty and those after about the time of King Mu, when the investiture ceremony came to be the standard occasion for casting a vessel.⁸⁷

Investiture or appointment inscriptions,⁸⁸ or more generally, inscriptions recording the receipt of royal commands, are those which concern us in this study. Most but not all of them date from the mid- to late Western Zhou period and have overtly been discovered in the Zhouyuan region straddled between the counties of Fufeng 扶風, Qishan 岐山 and Mei 眉, as well as in the neighbouring Baoji 寶雞 area.⁸⁹ While many Western Zhou bronzes have been excavated in the context of burials, most mid- to late Western Zhou bronzes bearing long inscriptions, especially appointment inscriptions, were kept and used in lineage temples over many generations and have therefore been retrieved from protective hoards in which lineages hid their most

⁸⁷ Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, 169.

⁸⁸ Compare p. 17, n. 42 above.

⁸⁹ Cf. Wu Zhenfeng 吳鎮烽, "Shaanxi Shang Zhou qingtongqi de chutu yu yanjiu" 陝西商周青銅器的出土與研究, *Kaogu yu Wenwu* (1988) 6: 71-89; and the collected essays in Beijing Daxue gudai wenming yanjiu zhongxin 北京大學古代文明研究中心, eds., *Ji jin zhu guo shi: Zhouyuan chutu Xizhou qingtongqi jingcui* 吉金鑄國史：周原出土西周青銅器精粹 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002). For a recent catalogue assembling the Zhouyuan bronzes see Cao Wei, ed., *Zhouyuan chutu qingtongqi* 周原出土青銅器, 10 vols. (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2005). For a periodization of the Zhouyuan bronze finds see idem, "Zhouyuan Xizhou tongqi de fenqi" 周原西周銅器的分期, in idem, *Zhouyuan yizhi yu Xizhou tongqi yanjiu* 周原遺址與西周銅器研究 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2004), 9-38. For the geographic distribution of the Western Zhou vessels used in this study see maps I-IV in appendix two.

precious bronzes prior to their flight from the area in 771 BCE.⁹⁰ Indeed, a considerable portion of the inscriptions dealt with in this study can be ascribed to individuals from one of the approximately fourteen known major lineages that populated the area during the mid- to late Western Zhou period.⁹¹

As far as concerns the authenticity of bronzes and their inscriptions, we need to differentiate between several grades of reliability. The most unproblematic are inscriptions from vessels which have been excavated under archaeological conditions since the 1950's.⁹² Unfortunately many of the most important vessels do not fulfil these premises as they have either been discovered in pre-modern excavations, in chance finds or through grave robberies. For a number of vessels affected by these circumstances we possess at least some reported information about their origins that sometimes can be verified based on related archaeological finds. Yet for the majority of them we simply lack the means to reconstruct their pedigree.

Many more inscriptions, unfortunately, only exist in rubbings or hand-drawn copies as the vessels bearing them are already lost. Some of these rubbings and drawings are preserved in catalogues dating back as far as the Northern Song dynasty

⁹⁰ Cf. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, 156-157; and Rawson, "Western Zhou Archaeology," 371-375. Robert Eno remarks in this respect: "It may well be the case that some caches were buried well before 771. As more caches are discovered, the situation may prove to be too complex to be explained by any single historical event" (*Source Book*, 84, n. 1).

⁹¹ For these lineages, their history and geography, as well as for their relations with the royal house see Zhu Fenghan, "Cong Zhouyuan chutu qingtongqi kan Xizhou guizu jiazu" 從周原出土青銅器看西周貴族家族, *Nankai Xuebao (zhexue shehuixue ban)* 南開學報 (哲學社會科學版) 4 (1988): 49-69; Liu Shi'e 劉士義, "Zhouyuan qingtongqi zhong suo jian de shiguan shizu" 周原青銅器中所見的世官世族, in *Zhou Qin wenhua yanjiu*, 394-408; Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazu xingtai yanjiu*, 338-389; Shaughnessy, "Toward a Social Geography of the Zhouyuan during the Western Zhou Dynasty: the Jing and Zhong Lineages of Fufeng County," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo and Don J. Wyatt (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 16-34; idem, "Western Zhou Hoards and Family Histories in the Zhouyuan," in *New Perspectives on China's Past: Chinese Archaeology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Xiaoneng Yang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 255-267. Especially for those Zhouyuan lineages that were not genealogically related to the royal house see Cao Wei, "Zhouyuan de fei Jixing jiazu yu Guo Shi jiazu" 周原的非姬姓家族與虢氏家族, in idem, *Zhouyuan yizhi yu Xizhou tongqi yanjiu*, 39-49.

⁹² See Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, 17-20

(960-1127 AD).⁹³ To complicate the picture even more, at least since the eleventh century AD, when ancient Chinese bronze vessels became sought after items by antique collectors, numerous fakes have been produced and circulated on the market.⁹⁴

In order to avoid relying on questionable evidence, this study only works with inscriptions that have been accepted as authentic by the editors of the *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* and of the AS database. In a few cases where there nevertheless exist doubts about the authenticity of a certain vessel and its inscription, these issues will be addressed. In addition, a basic pedigree for each bronze cited in this study is provided in the respective footnotes, except in the general introduction.

A note on the use of bronze inscriptions as source material

Apart from dealing with the question of authenticity, it is perhaps even more important to consider the terms on which texts from bronze inscriptions can serve as evidence for our topic. As already mentioned in passing, late Shang and Western Zhou inscribed ritual bronze vessels were cast mainly for the use in ancestral sacrifice and adjacent feasts. Hence first of all we need to clarify how the articulate identification of named individuals with the figure of a king as a shared point of reference and sovereign authority relates to this context.

For the late Shang, the situation is rather complicated as kingship and kinship are

⁹³ Ibid, 8-10.

⁹⁴ On confirmed fake bronzes and the methods of their identification see Rong Geng 容庚, *Shang Zhou yiqi tongkao* 商周彝器通考 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 2008 [1941]), 148-180; Rong Geng and Zhang Weichi 張維持, *Yin Zhou qingtongqi tonglun* 殷周青銅器通論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012 [1958]), 133-138; and Zhu Fenghan, *Zhongguo qingtongqi zonglun* 中國青銅器綜論, 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 1.807-827.

not yet separated in late Shang bronze inscriptions.⁹⁵ By contrast, inscribed Western Zhou ritual bronze vessels that mention the Zhou king always combine two different contexts within their materiality and function. These contexts are lineage ancestral cult on the one hand and the symbolic order of Zhou kingship on the other. The former, being the institution for the perpetuation of corporate identity on the basic level of human socialization in early China, the lineage, has been defined by von Falkenhausen as follows for the mid- to late Western Zhou period:

The ancestral cult provided a platform for the iterative reconstitution of the lineage and its self-representation both to the human and to the superhuman realm. It enabled living lineage members to reaffirm their ties with one another, to reaffirm their own position in the history of their lineage, and thereby to create and shape collective memory. In other words, it created corporate solidarity.⁹⁶

Ancestral ritual in this sense is more than the commemoration of dead kin. It is, in the words of the anthropologist Meyer Fortes, “a representation or extension of the authority component in the jural relations of successive generations.”⁹⁷ While bronze vessels have been employed in this context as ritual paraphernalia for offering sacrifices, the objects themselves, both their shape and ornamentation, their origin and the material they were made of, symbolised the superimposed authority of the Zhou court, at least in cases where the casting of a vessel resulted from a royal command and / or bestowal.⁹⁸ Being placed physically at the heart of individual lineage identities, the ancestral temple, they marked the intersection of genealogical

⁹⁵ See the discussion in chapter one below.

⁹⁶ Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 71.

⁹⁷ Meyer Fortes, “Pietas in Ancestor Worship,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 91.2 (1961): 166-191.

⁹⁸ See also Rawson, “Western Zhou Archaeology,” 366, for this point.

authority with a superimposed political authority. The texts inscribed on these vessels, and this is where I see their primary function, serve to relate both spheres of authority to each other from the perspective of the vessel donor.

In the majority of cases, these texts merely express the recognition of a royal command and / or bestowal, followed by a casting statement in the form of a dedication to the donor's forebears. In some cases, however, and these are the ones concerning us in this study, the inscriptions include portions of marked direct speech either ascribed to the king (sometimes in the form of a verbatim report by delivered by a court official) or to the donor, which further specify the relation between king and appointee in reflexive (proto-) political terms.⁹⁹ Let us consider the text from the mid- or late Western Zhou Xun *gui* 鬲簋 (JC 4321) inscription as a generic example of a bronze text including an announcement purportedly delivered by the king:¹⁰⁰

王若曰：「鬲，不(丕)顯文武受令，則乃且(祖)奠周邦。今余令女(汝)畜(敵)

⁹⁹ These cases have been assembled and studied from the perspective of the recording and rewriting of oral utterances from court ceremonies in von Falkenhausen, "The Oral Subtexts of Zhou Bronze Inscriptions (including an appendix listing all instances of the word *yue* 曰, to proclaim, in bronze inscriptions covering the time from the late Shang to the Warring States period)," unpublished MS presented at the Religion, Poetry, and Memory in Ancient and Early Medieval China conference at Princeton University on May 20-22, (2004); and in idem, "The Royal Audience and Its Reflections in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions," in *Writing and Literacy in Early China*, 239-270. Most scholars, including von Falkenhausen himself, interpret these passages in terms of extracts from archival documents long since lost, purportedly recording the exchange of speech uttered during appointment ceremonies. I tend to agree with Barend J. ter Haar, who suspects "that the bronzes with the inscriptions are the real archives. After the object had been created and the largely oral ritual performed, there would have been no need to keep a written aide-mémoire. The assumption of an archive is much too modern, and without explicit evidence we cannot just assume that it "must" have existed" (Ter Haar "Toward Retrieving Early Oral Traditions: Some Ruminations on Orality and Textuality in Early Chinese Culture," in *New Perspectives on the Research of Chinese Culture*, ed. Pei-kai Cheng and Ka Wai Fan [Singapore: Springer, 2013], 54, n. 26.) Moreover, instead of assuming that the bronzes record the actual words spoken by the king and or / or the donor on the occasion of a court audience, I interpret these passages as prosopopoeic images. What is gained by this is the possibility of regarding bronze inscriptions, at least partly, as literary texts, devised by the donors in order to enhance their own positions. The fact that announcements made by the king and the donor concerning the latter's merits resemble each other in both content in style seem to confirm this assumption.

¹⁰⁰ See Constance A. Cook and Paul R. Goldin, eds., *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2016), 108-109 (hereafter *Source Book*) for the dating of this inscription.

官，嗣(司)邑人，先虎臣後庸：[...]。易(賜)女(汝)[...]，用事。」

The King spoke approvingly (i.e. approving of the vessel donor's appointment).¹⁰¹ “Xun, that the greatly illustrious [King's] Wen and Wu received [Heaven's] Charge was because your forebears [helped to] establish the Zhou polity.¹⁰² Now I appoint you as chief officer in charge of administering the people of the settlement, first the tiger guards, then the ordinary men:¹⁰³ (it follows a specification of Xun's duties) [...]. I bestow on you (it follows a list of gifts) [...], use these to serve.”

匄頤(稽)首對揚天子休令，用乍(作)文且(祖)乙白(伯)、同姬疇(尊)殷(簋)，匄萬年子子孫永寶用。 [...]

Xun bowed prostrate, responding to and extolling the Son of Heaven's gracious charge, wherefore he had cast this *zun*-tureen for his cultured ancestors Yi Bo

¹⁰¹ The interpretation of *ruo* 若, old-Chinese *nak, as *nuo* 諾, old-Chinese *nʰak, to approve, follows a phonetic gloss in Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉, *Zengding Yinxu shuqi kaoshi* 增訂殷墟書契考釋 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1969 [1916]), 2.56. For the interpretation of the phrase *ruo yue* 若曰 in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as a statement of approval see von Falkenhausen, “The Royal Audience and Its Reflections in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” 264-267.

¹⁰² I suspect the phrase 則乃祖奠周邦 to be a contracted form of 則(繇)唯乃祖奠周邦 “[...] *was because* your forebears [helped to] establish the Zhou polity.” Compare the formulation in the late Western Zhou Shi Ke *xu* 師克盥 (*JC* 4467) inscription: 「王若曰：師克，不(丕)顯文武，雁(膺)受大令，匍有四方，則繇(繇)唯(唯)乃先且(祖)考又(有)舜(功)于周邦」 (The King approvingly spoke: “Commander Ke, that the greatly manifest [Kings] Wen and Wu [were able to] receive and shoulder the Great Mandate, that [they were able to] spread it throughout the four cardinal regions, *was because* your forebears had meritorious achievements in the Zhou polity). For the interpretation of the syntagma *ze wei* 則唯 or *ze yao wei* 則繇唯 as “because of” see Zhang Zhenlin 張振林, “Ze yao wei’ jie” 「則繇唯」解, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 26 (2005): 172-178. Qin Xiaohua 秦曉華, “Xizhou jinwen ‘ze yao’ shixi” 西周金文“則繇”試析, *Guwenzi luntan* 古文字論壇 2 (2016): 189-192, argues instead that *yao* and *ze yao* function as time words, meaning “formerly.” As such they form a contrastive pair with *jin* 今, now. While this interpretation does not necessarily conflict with Zhang’s rendering, the context within which the construction “*ze yao (wei)...jin...*” occurs in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions almost always suggests a cause and effect relationship between the states of affairs or actions thus correlated. Compare further the discussion on page 122, n. 198 below.

¹⁰³ Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 150.; and Chen Hanping, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu*, 145, have proposed to interpret graph *chi* (*s-kʰe-s) 𡗗 as *di* (*tʰek) 嫡, standing short for the compound *dizhang* 嫡長, “the eldest son of the principal wife.” Hence the compound 嫡官 would literally mean something in the sense of “to succeed one’s forebear in office in one’s capacity as the eldest son of the latter’s principal wife.” Zhu Fenghan by contrast interprets the graph 𡗗 as *di* (*[d]ʰek) 敵, which he translates according to an entry in the *Erya* 爾雅 as *zhu* 主, “chief,” “principal.” See Zhu Fenghan, “Xizhou jinwen zhong de ‘qu x’ yu xiangguan zhu wenti” 西周金文中的「取徹」與相關諸問題, in *Guwenzi yu gudai shi 1* 古文字與古代史 (一), ed. Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of History and Philology, 2007), 194. Zhu’s suggestion seems to fit the context better, especially as there are examples where the appointment to the position of *diguan* is preceded by the command to continue one’s forebears’ service. In these cases the interpretation of Chen and Chen would amount in a redundancy which is foreign to the economic nature of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

and Tong Ji. May Xun and his sons and grandsons forever cherish and use it.¹⁰⁴

A typical example of a bronze text build on the donor's oral statement can be found in on the four identical late Western Zhou Qiu *zhong* 逯鐘 (NA 772-774 + NB 779) bells, dated to the reign of King Xuan:¹⁰⁵

逯曰：「丕顯朕皇考克彞明厥心，帥用厥先祖考政德享辟先王。逯禦厥辟，不敢惰，虔夙夕敬厥死事。」

Qiu spoke: “Greatly illustrious, my august deceased father was able to make his heart manifest and bright, to emulate his forebears’ upright *de* and to serve the former kings as his sovereigns. [Now] I, Qiu, [succeed] to protect my ruler, not daring to be neglecting. Reverently from dawn till dusk I devote myself to my lifelong responsibilities.

天子丕(經)朕先祖服，多錫逯休，令籍司四方虞林。逯敢對天子丕顯魯休揚，用乍朕皇考龔叔龔鐘。[...]」

The Son of Heaven remembers my forebears’ service.¹⁰⁶ Abundantly bestowing his munificence on me, he charges me to comprehensively administer the inspectors of the forests in the four cardinal regions. Qiu dares to respond to and to extoll the Son of Heavens illustrious munificent grace, wherefore I had these harmonizing bells cast for my august deceased father Gongshu. [...]”¹⁰⁷

It is exclusively in constellations such as these, where either the king is depicted as explaining his motives for bestowing a charge on the appointee or where the donor renders account of why he is worthy of receiving the king’s charge, that the terms of

¹⁰⁴ Compare the English translation by Maria Khayutina in *Source Book*, 109-110.

¹⁰⁵ There are only a few cases of announcements ascribed to the vessel donor in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. All of them have been assembled in Chen Yingjie 陳英傑, *Xizhou jinwen zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu* 西周金文作器用途銘辭研究 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2008), 818-835.

¹⁰⁶ See Dong Shan 董珊, “Lüe lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen” 略論西周單氏家族窖藏青銅器銘文, *Zhongguo Lishi Wenwu* 中國歷史文物 (2003) 4: 44, for the interpretation of *jing* 丕(經) as *nian* 念, “to recall,” “to remember,” in a similar formulation found in the Qiu *pan* inscription.

¹⁰⁷ Compare the English translation in von Falkenhausen, “The Royal Audience and Its Reflections in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” 244.

Zhou kingship emerge as a reflexive topic in epigraphic sources. This bears some very important implications for how we should define our source corpus and how this decision impacts the representativeness of epigraphic data for our analysis.

If one were to take the entire corpus of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as a single homogenous body of writing, one would be compelled to point out that references to the idea of Zhou kingship, including the Heavenly Mandate and the Zhou founding myth, are indeed vanishingly few. This observation is in fact due to a general scarcity of passages of marked direct speech within the overall corpus of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, especially before the time of King Mu.¹⁰⁸ Thus in order to be able to meaningfully assess our data, we should reduce our investigation area to those inscriptions which feature passages of marked direct speech. We need to recognize that we are dealing with a specific sub-genre of bronze writing, marked as such by the particle *yue* 𠄎. Even within this group it makes sense to further differentiate between illocutionary acts or performative utterances,¹⁰⁹ such as the conferral of charges and gifts as well as their receipt, on the one hand, and reflexive utterances on the other. If we do so, not only will we find that references to the symbolic order of Zhou kingship appear in a relevant number within *reflexive passages* from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, we will also note a remarkable consistency in the image of the Zhou founding myth and its use from the earliest extant version in the He *zun* inscription to those found in the inscriptions from the Qiu bronzes dating from the reign of King Xuan.

¹⁰⁸ Von Falkenhausen counts sixteen instances of the word *yue* 𠄎 in inscriptions from the early Western Zhou period, in contrast to 58 from the mid- and 57 from the late Western Zhou period (“The Oral Subtexts of Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” 9). All of the ten instances of *yue* related to announcements made by vessel donors in Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 824-826, date to the mid- and late Western Zhou period respectively.

¹⁰⁹ For the concept of performative utterances see J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1967).

By limiting our scope of investigation to passages of direct speech from the context of the conferral and receipt of royal commands, it further becomes possible to meaningfully compare material from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions with a group of texts from the transmitted *Documents of Zhou*, which take the form of announcements delivered by the by the Zhou king. Such a comparison, however, is subject to a number of conditions and limitations.

The Documents and the Odes

Among the rather intricate issues involved in comparing Western Zhou epigraphic data with purportedly contemporaneous transmitted texts, the most crucial one has already been mentioned in footnote number seven on page three above: No single text from the transmitted *Documents*, we said, can be securely ascribed a definite date of composition, let alone a Western Zhou date. The reason for this is quite obvious. Early Chinese foundational or cultural texts from the pre-Han era,¹¹⁰ such as the *Odes* and *Documents*, underwent a layered process of composition, re-composition, re-contextualisation, compilation and edition before they reached their present form.¹¹¹ During this process they were most likely retrieved and

¹¹⁰ For the concept of foundational or cultural texts see Jan Assmann, “Cultural Texts Suspended between Writing and Speech,” in idem, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 101-121.

¹¹¹ Cf. Michael Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics*. In the case of the *Documents* we are furthermore confronted with two different extant traditions of the text, the so called New Text (*jinwen* 今文) edition transmitted in 28 chapters, supposedly compiled in early Han times, and the slightly later Old Text (*guwen* 古文) edition, comprising an additional 16 chapters purportedly discovered by Kong Anguo 孔安國 (ca. 156~74 AD) in the walls of the Kong family estate several decades later. While both traditions were lost after the sack of Luoyang in 311 AD, the 44 chapter Kong Anguo edition is said to have resurfaced in Jin times after which it was established as one of the *Five Classics* in the Tang Dynasty. However beginning with the era of Qing critical philology, the additional 16 chapters associated with the Old Text tradition have been subsequently identified as a fourth century

transmitted, both orally and in writing, in terms of changing instantiations of textual repertoires.¹¹² Thus prior to the eventual canonization or closure of the *Odes* and *Documents* during the Han dynasty, we cannot actually refer to them as fixed bodies of texts.¹¹³ Accordingly, their current chapters, in Kern's words, are not "discrete entities that in some inexplicable way survived over centuries in more or less pristine form and that therefore can be dated individually on the basis of their linguistic properties."¹¹⁴

AD forgeries compiled and re-composed on the basis of *Shu* citations in transmitted pre-Qin texts. Cf. Yan Ruoju 閻若璩, *Shangshu Guwen shuzheng* 尚書古文疏證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987 [1745]). For the New Text and Old Text traditions of the *Documents* in their historical developments see and Liu Qiyu 劉起鈞, *Shangshu yuanliu ji chuanben kao* 尚書源流及傳本考 (Shenyang: Liaoning Daxue chubanshe, 1987), 25-116. See *ibid*, 130-325, for a critical account of the Document's editions from Han times until the modern era.

¹¹² Cf. the essays by Martin Kern and Dirk Meyer in *idem*, eds., *The Classic of Documents and the Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). For an interpretation of the Harangue (*Shi* 誓) chapters from the *Documents* as instantiations of a shared underlying repertoire see Nomura Shigeo 野村茂夫, "Senshin ni okeru Shōsho no ruden nit suite no jakkan no kōsatsu 先秦のおける尚書の流伝についての若干の考察," *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 日本中国学会報 17 (1965): 1-18. This point becomes furthermore quite obvious if one looks at the various quotations from the still floating repertoires referred to as *Shu* 書 or *Shi* 詩 in pre-Qin and even in Han texts. While many of them differ in orthography and / or wording from the respective passages in the received texts, some quotes have no counterpart in the transmitted versions at all. See for instance Chan Hung Kan 陳雄根 and Ho Che Wah 何志華, eds., *Xian Qin liang Han dianji yin Shangshu ziliao huibian* 先秦兩漢典籍引《尚書》資料彙編 (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003); and David Schaberg, "Speaking of Documents: *Shu* Citations in Warring States Texts," in *The Classic of Documents and the Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy*, 320-359. For pre-Qin and Han quotations from the *Odes* see Chan Hung Kan and Ho Che Wah, eds., *Xian Qin liang Han dianji yin Shijing ziliao huibian* 先秦兩漢典籍引《詩經》資料彙編 (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004). Two revealing studies taking into consideration the numerous *Odes* quotations found in recently excavated Warring States manuscript finds are Kern, "The *Odes* in Excavated Manuscripts," in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 149-193; and *idem*, "Lost in Tradition: The *Classic of Poetry* We Did Not Know," *Hsiang Lectures on Chinese Poetry* 5 (2010): 29-56. In comparing multiple instances of prominent passages, Kern attests a relative phonetic stability underlying the orthographic fluctuation of the *Odes*' written text in Warring States times. For a similar conclusion regarding the situation of the text in Former Han times see Ulrich Unger, "Die Shī-king-Zitate in Shuo-wen und Han-shī Wai-chuan: Ein Materialbeitrag zur Textkritik des Shī-king," in *Asiatica: Festschrift Friedrich Weller*, eds., Johannes Schubert and Ulrich Schneider (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1954), 768-807. The *Odes*' phonetic stability in the centuries preceding their final written fixation suggests a strong oral element in their composition and transmission. For an insightful attempt to apply Milman Parry's and Albert Lord's oral-formulaic composition theory to the transmitted text from the *Odes* see C.H. Wang (Wang Jingxian 王靖獻), *The Bell and the Drum: Shih-ching as Formulaic Poetry in an Oral Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

¹¹³ For the process of the canonization or closure of foundational texts see Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 78-81.

¹¹⁴ Hence what matters for the dating of texts in their transmitted form is the point of their final edition as Jiang Shanguo 蔣善國, *Shangshu zongshu* 尚書綜述 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe,

However, this does not mean language and content from earlier stages in their textual formation are irretrievably lost to us and that passages from the *Odes* and *Documents* should thus be entirely discarded as source material for the context in which they initially took shape. In the case of the *Documents of Zhou*, it is mainly through linguistic and literary comparison with uncorrupted epigraphic Western Zhou sources as a control group that twelve chapters from the modern text version of the *Documents of Zhou*, the five “gao” 誥 chapters, the “Zi cai” 梓材, “Duo shi” 多士, “Jun shi” 君奭, “Duo fang” 多方, “Gu ming” 顧命, “Wen Hou zhi Ming” 文侯之命 and “Bi shi” 費誓, can still to an extent be associated with a Western Zhou context. Not only do many of the basic ideas and concepts presented in them concur with those we find in reflexive passages of direct speech in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, to a significant degree they also share a common lexicon, syntax and grammar.¹¹⁵ Although we can hardly treat the *Documents of Zhou* and texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as one single corpus,¹¹⁶ their linguistic contiguity

1988), 133, has pointed out. This also leads to the question what do we mean by authentic when differentiating between so called forgeries and reliable texts.

¹¹⁵ Their common lexicon stands out most clearly on the level of syntagma and stock expressions as has been shown in Wang Guowei, “Yu youren lun *Shi Shu* zhong chengyu shu” 與友人論詩書中成語書, in idem, *Guantang jilin*, 75-84; Yu Xingwu 于省吾, *Shuangjian Chi Shangshu xin zheng* 雙劍謠尚書新證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009 [1934]); and in Jiang Kunwu 姜昆武, *Shi Shu chengci kaoshi* 詩書成詞考釋 (Ji’nan: Qi Lu shushe, 1989), to name only the most important studies. For the similarities in syntax see Pan Yukun 潘玉坤, *Xizhou jinwen yuxu yanjiu* 西周金文語序研究 (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2005), passim. The grammar of the inscriptions and the *Documents of Zhou* has been described in terms of a single coherent system, based however on a sample of only five passages from the latter and fourteen inscriptions, in W. A. C. H. Dobson, *Early Archaic Chinese: A Descriptive Grammar* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962). For a more recent description of “Western Zhou grammar” based on a significantly broader corpus of inscriptions and transmitted texts see Zhang Yujin 張玉金, *Xizhou hanyu yufa yanjiu* 西周漢語語法研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2004). Even Studies dealing with the grammar of only one of the groups in question in isolation, such as Guan Xiechu’s 管燮初, *Xizhou jinwen yufa yanjiu* 西周金文語法研究 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1981); and Qian Zongwu’s 錢宗武, *Jinwen Shangshu jufa yanjiu* 今文《尚書》句法研究 (Kaifeng: Henan Daxue chubanshe, 2011), frequently stress the close similarities between both groups.

¹¹⁶ Even within the twelve “authentic” chapters from the *Documents of Zhou* one can to a certain degree identify different layers and sub-groups based on differences in the use of pronouns, conjunctions, particles and idiomatic expressions as He Dingsheng 何定生, “*Shangshu de wenfa ji qi*

appears striking, even more so given the fact that the language of the *Documents of Zhou* differs markedly from that of later Eastern Zhou writings.¹¹⁷

However, without any restrictive parameters, a juxtaposition of the *Documents of Zhou* with texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions might lead to a completely different picture as well. Questioning the suitability of the five “gao” chapters in the *Documents of Zhou* as reliable historical sources for the Western Zhou period, Vogelsang points out some major inconsistencies in the argumentation of those who assume that the twelve “authentic” chapters from the *Documents of Zhou* form one more or less uniform linguistic corpus with the texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.¹¹⁸ In particular, he criticises the widespread praxis among scholars to blindly trust orthodox claims for the “authenticity” of these chapters, or to stress certain similarities between them and texts from bronze inscriptions in a pars pro toto fashion, mostly based on rather limited samples, while at the same time not taking into account apparent differences in grammar and lexicon that would lead one to question their linguistic contiguity. Important as Vogelsang’s objections against such uncritical assertions are, his own analysis, in which he aims to show that the language of the five “gao” chapters differs significantly from that of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, proves to be no less problematic. The method he chooses is to subject the written text of the transmitted “gao” chapters in the new text *Documents*

niandai” 《尚書》的文法及其年代, *Guoli Zhongshan Daxue yuyan lishixue yanjiusuo zhoukan* 國立中山大學語言歷史學研究所週刊 5.49-51 (1928): 1-189, has shown. However, He’s rather late dating of most of the twelve “authentic” chapters into the early Eastern Zhou period rests purely on assumptions based on the material of the *Documents* itself. A preliminary comparison of the use of a number of particles and pronouns in *Documents of Zhou* and in a body of twenty-four Western Zhou bronze inscriptions by Shaughnessy suggests an earlier dating for at least some of the chapters (Xia Hanyi 夏含夷 [Edward L. Shaughnessy], “Lüe lun Jinwen Shangshu ‘Zhoushu’ ge pian de zhuzuo niandai” 略論今文《尚書》〈周書〉各篇的著作年代, in *Zhou Qin wenhua yanjiu*, 907-917).

¹¹⁷ See He Dingsheng, “Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai,” 128; and Dobson, *Early Archaic Chinese*, 237-272.

¹¹⁸ Vogelsang, “Inscriptions and proclamations: on the authenticity of the ‘gao’ chapters in the *Book of documents*,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002): 138–209.

to a thorough statistical comparison with a substantial body of texts from late Shang to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions:

Their text was checked character by character against the evidence of the inscriptions. For the latter, a concordance to 5758 inscriptions of Shang and Western Zhou times served as the primary reference work.¹¹⁹

It goes without saying that the results of such an operation are inevitably marred by the fact that the “gao” chapters in their present form represent products of Han edition and thus likely contain elements, both graphic and linguistic, that are not to be found in the epigraphic control group.¹²⁰ More importantly, Vogelsang’s approach also presumes that both groups constitute more or less the same sort of texts, dealing to an equal extent with a comparable subject matter.¹²¹ Yet of the 5758 inscriptions Vogelsang includes in his sample, less than 113 feature passages of marked direct speech.¹²² While only a fraction of the latter address the topic of Zhou kingship in a reflexive manner, the discursive treatment of this very topic conversely constitutes the core of the material from the *Documents of Zhou*, which, not incidentally, consist overtly of passages marked as direct speech. By the same token, casting statements and prayer sections, accounting for the bulk of the epigraphic material, are not to be found at all in the *Documents of Zhou*. Thus Sarah Allan rightly objects that the

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 151

¹²⁰ The same would be true if one were to compare the text of the transmitted *Mao Odes* character by character against the inscriptions. “The *Shijing* as we now have it,” says William H. Baxter, “is a Zhou text in Han clothing” (Baxter, “Zhou and Han Phonology in the *Shijing*,” in *Studies in the Historical Phonology of Asian Languages*, eds. William G. Boltz and Michael C. Shapiro [Seattle: University of Washington, 1991], 30). “Both the text itself and the script in which it is written evolved until more or less standardized in late Han dynasty” (Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* [Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992], p. 343).

¹²¹ Vogelsang, “Inscriptions and proclamations,” 193.

¹²² As can be inferred from von Falkenhausen’s count of 113 instances of *yue*-constructions in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions based on an even larger body of texts that includes Vogelsang’s control group.

different subject matter dealt with in both samples necessarily skews Vogelsang's statistical count."¹²³ The same reason should also account to a significant extent for the disparity in the occurrence of certain syntactical constructions, particles and function words, setting both groups apart from each other.¹²⁴ Even the absence in the bronzes of certain words or grammatical structures we know from the *Documents* should not automatically be taken as dating criteria for the latter, as this might simply be related to the absence of certain literary categories in the former. For instance in 1928 He Dingsheng 何定生 observed that the personal pronoun, *er* 爾, you, commonly used in an appellative sense in addressing groups of people in the announcements from the *Documents of Zhou* (for example in the “Dao gao” 大誥 chapter we read: “猷大誥爾多邦越爾御事” [I will greatly announce to you, (princes of) the numerous polities, and to you, managers of affairs]),¹²⁵ was then completely absent in known texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. He took this as a sure sign that the composition of the *Documents of Zhou* must postdate the Western Zhou period.¹²⁶ However, with the discovery of the He *zun* inscription in 1975 we

¹²³ Sarah Allan, “On *Shu* 書 (*Documents*) and the origin of the *Shang shu* 尚書 (*Ancient Documents*) in light of recently discovered bamboo slip manuscripts,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75.3 (2012): 549, n. 6. The same point has been objected by Thomas Crone in regard to Vogelsang's conclusion concerning the discrepancy in the use of *min* 民 in the “gao” chapters and in the Bronzes respectively. See Crone, “Der Begriff *min* 民 in Texten der Westlichen Zhou-Dynastie (1050-771 v. Chr.),” *Orientierungen* (2014) 1:33-53.

¹²⁴ Behr states in this respect: “There are very few constructions in either Western or Eastern Zhou BI which are not encountered in some parts of the early literature as well. “The differences are more a matter of frequency, triggered by the pragmatic context and the syntactic preferences it entails. Thus, interrogative phrases, along with a set of corresponding pronouns and final particles do exist, but they are fairly rare, because in an investiture setting or in a prayer-like communication with the ancestors, there is little room for questions. Passive, ditransitive and disposal constructions, verb serialization, and complex predicates with numeral, prepositional or nominal complements are all attested, but are more restricted in their occurrence and in the syntactic means used to mark them. Many function words, known from the *Shangshu* and other early edited texts, do occur, but often, and usually with somewhat more confined ranges” (Behr, “The language of Bronze Inscriptions,” in *Imprints of Kinship: Studies of Recently Discovered Bronze Inscriptions from Ancient China*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy [Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2017], 14-15).

¹²⁵ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.342-343.

¹²⁶ He Dingsheng, “Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai,” 37.

suddenly have an epigraphic statement from the early Western Zhou period that reads: “烏乎，爾有唯小子亡識” (Alas! You are but un-experienced heirs). Not incidentally, with the He *zun* inscription we also possess the first and, so far, the only Western Zhou epigraphic source in which the king is depicted as addressing a group of people rather than just the vessel donor alone.¹²⁷

In sum, while some of the inconsistencies Vogelsang points out in his analysis may indeed indicate significantly different dates of composition, many of the linguistic and thematic discrepancies setting the *Documents of Zhou* chapters apart from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions more likely amount to differences in genre and subject matter.¹²⁸ Thus a meaningful literary comparison of texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and transmitted texts from the *Documents of Zhou* would have to restrict itself to a juxtaposition of royal proclamations from both sources. Vogelsang himself actually refers specifically to these passages when he states that the inscriptions and the “gao” chapters belong to the same literary genre.¹²⁹ He points to Chen Mengjia’s study of the formula “The king approvingly spoke” (*wang ruo yue* 王若曰) which compares as it appears both in the bronzes and in the *Documents*.¹³⁰ He further cites Michael Nylan stating that “many of the formulae they [the “gao” chapters] employ, though not all, echo the ceremonial utterances of

¹²⁷ This scarcity is unlikely to be explained in terms of an anachronism or fake, as for the entire Spring and Autumns period too there are only two instances of this particular use of *er* attested for in epigraphic sources. Those are the Jin Gong *pen* 晉公盆 (*JC* 10342) inscription, dating from the mid-Springs and Autumns period, and the text from the two identical Huanzi Meng Jiang *hu* 洹子孟姜壺 (*JC* 9729+9730) inscriptions, dating from the late Springs and Autumns period. It simply seems that speeches addressed at groups of people were unlikely to appear in texts from both Western and Eastern Zhou bronze inscriptions.

¹²⁸ The same point applies to an extent also to studies such as Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*,” that ascribe these chapters a late Western Zhou date as terminus post quem for their composition, based on the observation that references to the Zhou founding narrative occur in a significant number only in texts from late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

¹²⁹ Vogelsang, “Inscriptions and proclamations,” 193.

¹³⁰ Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun* 尚書通論 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2005 [1957]), 143-166.

the rulers recorded in the early Zhou bronze inscriptions.”¹³¹ Together with the few instances of direct speech purportedly delivered by the vessel donors during audiences with the king, those are exactly the passages which concern us in our investigation. However, not only do these instances, marked by the particle *yue*, amount to merely 113 inscriptions according to von Falkenhausen’s count, these passages are also much more economic and thematically restrictive than the “gao” chapters in the *Documents*.

This brings us back to defining the parameters for juxtaposing literary material from the *Documents* to Western Zhou epigraphic sources in our investigation. Although a Western Zhou context does seem likely for the initial formation of the twelve above mentioned chapters from the *Documents of Zhou*, we are ultimately unable to make any definite statements about the temporal and, in fact, also the spatial connection between passages from the *Documents* and any of the epigraphic sources that resemble them in content and language. However there are other parameters which allow us to refer to them within a single symbolic and institutional context. First, in our analysis we only compare passages of marked direct speech from both groups that basically deal with the same subject matter, albeit in various implementations. Second, the internal point of reference in each of these passages is always the initiation or the retrieval and perpetuation of a bond relation, concerning either the proto-political bonds between king and elites, and / or the theo-political bond between the Zhou ruling alliances and Heaven or Di. These bond-relations mark the generic institutional context for all our sources and the symbolization of order developed in them. They constitute the one irreducible point of reference without which the texts would lose their meaning.

¹³¹ Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics*, 133.

Methodologically we must of course differentiate between texts from bronze inscriptions as context-dependent texts, bound to actual historical settings and constellations of actors as well as to the materiality and function of their carriers on the one hand, and passages from the *Documents* as purely literary texts on the other. However the switch from a context dependent text to a literary text, this study argues, happens already within the epigraphic sources themselves in cases where meta-reflection touches upon images from collective memory such as the Zhou grand narrative. While still grounded in the context of concrete historical bonds, these passages equally already form part of the literary discourse unfolded in the *Documents of Zhou*. Conversely, through that same link, this study wants to prove, texts from the latter can also be related to the generic context of the conferral and the receipt of royal commands. Thus even though the pragmatic context(s) leading to the (re-)composition and retrieval of certain passages from the *Documents* may significantly exceed the spatio-temporal confines of the Western Zhou period, the basic institutional context from which the ideas expressed in them are developed, and this is what this study ultimately aims to show, is to be found in the conditions and dynamics of Western Zhou royal appointments.¹³²

The same considerations apply of course to the use of the *Odes* as source material in our investigation as well. In this corpus too, there are groups of texts with a possible Western Zhou origin that relate to the issue of royal commands and the theo-political bond with Heaven.¹³³ Some of them will concern us in terms of

¹³² Compare the argument in chapter two in this study.

¹³³ For the literary contiguities between the *Odes* and texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions see Chen Zhi 陳致, “Cong ‘Zhou Song’ yu jinwen zhong chengyu de yunyong lai kan gu ge shi zhi yongyun ji siyan shiti de xingcheng” 從「周頌」與金文中成語的運用來看古歌詩支用運及四言詩體的形成,” in *Kua xueke shiye xia de Shijing yanjiu* 跨學科視野下的詩經研究, ed. Chen Zhi (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 17-59; idem, “‘Bu wu bu ao’ yu ‘bu kan bu te’ – *Shijing* yu jinwen zhong chengyu lingshi” 「不吳部敖」與「不侃布忒」—《詩經》與金文中成語零釋, *Gudian*

supporting evidence a couple of times throughout this study.

Structure of the study

We start our investigation by probing into the beginnings of elite identification with the figure of a king in the earliest grammatically coherent texts from late Shang bronze inscriptions. We want to know what the conditions and terms of this affiliation were and how they fit with the picture of late Shang kingship that scholars have been able to reconstruct from the OBI. Next we have to ask how Zhou kingship emerged against the late Shang background as a reflexive idea of human rule in which the king represented a transcendent ordering force within a heterogeneous human ecumene. This includes a search for the factors most that enabled Zhou kingship to become an institution one could affiliate with politically. At this stage we approach the concept of Zhou rule from meta-reflections found in texts from mainly mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. The results will necessarily reveal a rather syncretic picture of the Western Zhou period, which nevertheless needs to be drawn in order to contextualize the following analyses.

In the second chapter we resume our initial focus and investigate the development of dialogical patterns in early to mid- Western Zhou bronze inscriptions

wenxian yanjiu 古典文獻研究 13 (2010): 4-19; and idem, “‘Ri ju yue zhu’ yu ‘ri jiu yue jiang;’ Zaoqi siyan shi yu jisi lici shili” – *Shijing yu jinwen zhong chengyu* 「日居月諸」與「日就月將」：早期四言詩與祭祀禮辭釋例—《詩經》與金文中成語, in idem, *Shi Shu li yue zhong de chuantong*: Chen Zhi zi xuan ji 詩書禮樂中的傳統：陳致自選集 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 2012), 42-64. For a tentative ascription of the *Zhou Song* Hymns and *Ya* Odes from the *Mao Odes* to a, mostly late, Western Zhou socio-political context see Sun Zuoyun 孫作雲, *Shijing yu Zhoudai shehui yanjiu* 《詩經》與周代社會研究 (Beijing: Zhounghua shuju, 1966). For passages from the *Odes* that are exclusively concerned with commands, see Chen Hanping, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu*, 14-15.

from a chronological perspective. By analysing the speech acts underlying the issue and the receipt of royal commands in Western Zhou bronzes, as well as by identifying a number of core concepts that capture the terms of elite-royal affiliation, we attempt to reconstruct a kind of bond formula or template that served to determine the authority relations between king and elites on the level of textual practise. In a next step we switch sources and focus on discursive reflections on the concept of Zhou kingship, its foundational past and the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate as they appear in passages from the *Documents of Zhou*. Our goal is to find out in how far the concerns expressed in these passages mirror the conditions addressed in the bond formula discussed in the preceding part. In a final step in this chapter, we will analyse how both these aspects relate to each other in the context of the perpetuation of authority relations by closely examining how they are interwoven in a number of rare Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that combine bond formulae with passages of meta-reflection.

In the third chapter we address the issue of a shared commitment or *sensus communis* which, at least in the texts, guaranteed the cohesion and perpetuation of the Zhou ruling alliance. This relates closely to the question of whether or not there existed a concept of a political individual in Western Zhou literary sources. Our approach in this case is quite similar to the procedure adopted in chapter two. We start by investigating in how far the individual appears in a political capacity within the exchange of speech acts between king and elites in the bronzes. Next we will examine how the aspect of a shared commitment informed political genealogies and historical relations between subsequent generations of kings and elites. In a final step we demonstrate how the factor of politico-religious commitment, parallel to the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate, allowed for the king and his allied elites to

coalesce into one community of purpose on the meta-level of cultural reflection.

In the conclusion to this study we address the issue of how our finds may be integrated with the picture of the socio-political organization of late Western Zhou elite society based on the dynamics of the ritual reform.

1. THE SHANG – ZHOU TRANSITION AND THE EMERGENCE OF REPRESENTATIVE KINGSHIP

1.1 Introduction

The topic of this study, the creation of an enhanced political identity based on alliances informed by the commitment to a shared politico-religious idea, is a phenomenon we encounter first in a Western Zhou context in early China. However many of the institutional premises that made the Zhou Chinese cultural formation possible have their roots in the late Shang or Anyang culture. Especially the orientation of elite groups towards the figure of a king (*wang* 王) is well attested for in late Shang sources.¹ Yet what seems to be one of the most obvious continuities between Shang and Zhou culture also bears in it the most striking differences that set the Zhou apart from their predecessors. Hence it is important to look at Shang and Zhou kingship as forms of socio-political organization not just in terms of their commonalities but also to contrast them. For it is in comparison with Shang kingship that many of the aspects we are concerned with in this study emerge as significant factors in the cultural formation of Zhou China.

In the vast and comparatively well studied corpus of Shang OBI we encounter the Shang king as leading agent in divination, ritual and warfare.² Scholars have been able to reconstruct certain aspects of Shang kingship that concern the king's agency

¹ Based on my own count using the AS database there are forty three extant late Shang bronze inscriptions that depict the king as bestowing rewards on and / or commanding the vessel donor.

² Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zhongshu*, passim.

in these contexts.³ Much less is known about the king's role in the socio-political organization and orientation of the elites that constituted the Shang polity, let alone an idea or conception of kingship.⁴ Only a very limited corpus of late Shang bronze inscriptions allows us to view the Shang king from the perspective of those who claimed their participation in the institution of Shang kingship. We will therefore start our investigation with an analysis of how affiliation with Anyang kingship is depicted in late Shang bronze inscriptions. This step also serves to introduce some basic patterns of elite identification with the royal house in the medium of inscribed ritual bronzes that persisted throughout late Shang and Western Zhou times. At the same time the analysis will show that the mode of affiliation we find in late Shang bronze inscriptions in many respects differs markedly from the Western Zhou model we have outlined in the introduction. In the former we do not find any kind of political or proto-political relations but only the vessel donors' claims of ritual and genealogical proximity to the royal line.⁵

Hence in order to be able to meaningfully compare the information from late Shang bronze inscriptions with those of Western Zhou inscriptions we have to ask about the very nature of kingship in Shang and in Zhou sources respectively. In this step we will integrate our findings from the analysis of late Shang bronze inscriptions

³ See for instance David N. Keightley, "The Shang State as seen in the Oracle-bone Inscriptions," *Early China* 5 (1979-80): 25-34. However, the rich corpus of Shang OBI does not really help us with our undertaking. The OBI must be seen as remnants of the operative side of Shang kingship, reflecting the perspective of the king and his group of diviners. They do not answer questions concerning cultural identity, affiliation, and foundational memory.

⁴ On the nature of the late Shang polity see Roderick B. Campbell, "Toward a Networks and Boundaries Approach to Early Complex Polities: The Late Shang Case," *Current Anthropology* 50/6 (2009): 821-848; and Huang Mingchong, "Wan Shang zhengti xingtai de yanjiu – kongjian moxing de kaocha," 晚商政體形態的研究 – 空間模型的考察, *Xin Shixue* 新史學 22.3 (2011): 161-207; idem, "Wan Shang Wangchao de zhengzhi dijing" 晚商王朝的政治地景, in *Zhongguoshi xin lun: Gudai wenming de xingcheng fence*, ed. Huang Mingchong (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Lianjing, 2016), 165-305. For the role of elite lineages in the Shang polity see Huang Mingchong, "Wan Shang wangchao de zushi yu zushi zhengzhi."

⁵ See also Vandermeersch, *Wangdao ou La voie royale: Tome II*, 116-119, for this point.

within the model of Shang kingship that scholars have drawn from the OBI evidence and point out the basic differences that set Zhou kingship apart from its predecessor in terms of worldview and context of socio-political organisation. Here I argue that the Shang saw human organization embedded in and as an analogue of the cosmos, with the dominant lineage extending into the realm of the ancestral spirits and gods. It was only through a series of differentiations introduced into this worldview that the Zhou were able to perceive of human organization in political terms and of themselves as representatives of a divine ordering instance.

1.2 The King and the elites in late Shang bronze inscriptions

1.2.1 The emergence of collective symbols on ritual bronze vessels

Both ancestral sacrifice and the custom of having ritual bronze vessels cast significantly predate the Anyang period (ca. 1200-1051 BCE),⁶ neither were these traditions in any way confined to the Shang royal power centre.⁷ However, it was not until the reign of King Wu Ding 武丁 (ca. 1200-1181 BCE) that inscribed bronze vessels came into use, and, as far as we know today, mainly so in the context

⁶ Cf. the contributions by Li Boqian 李伯謙, Wu En 烏恩, Peng Shifan 彭適凡 and Robert L. Thorp in *New Perspectives on China's Past: Chinese Archaeology in the Twentieth Century, Volume 1: Cultures and Civilizations Reconsidered*, ed. Xiaoneng Yang (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 188-246

⁷ See Robert W. Bagley, "Shang Archaeology," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 124-231; and Roderick B. Campbell, *Archaeology of the Chinese Bronze Age: From Erlitou to Anyang* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2014), 128-183. For the origins of ancestral sacrifice in Neolithic China see Keightley, "Shamanism, Death, and the Ancestors: Religious Mediation in Neolithic and Shang China (ca. 5000-1000 B.C.)," *Asiatische Studien* 52.3 (1998): 774-93.

of Anyang.⁸ So far the Academia Sinica bronze database (hereafter AS database) counts more than 6000 inscribed bronze vessels dating from the Anyang period,⁹ the vast majority of them merely bearing collective emblems consisting of no more than one to four graphs in modern transcription.¹⁰ If we were to follow K. C. Chang 張光直 (1931-2001) and others in interpreting these emblems as tokens for social group identification,¹¹ we would already at this stage be able to identify one basic aspect common to most Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, namely the contextualization of the donor's identity within a larger symbolically defined socio-political group, in this case the bronze using Anyang elite, which might have

⁸ The earliest, and for a long time the only datable inscribed Shang bronze vessel has been excavated in 1946 near the site of the royal cemetery at Xi Beigang 西北岡, the so called Si Mu Wu *fangding* 司母戊方鼎 (JC #1706). The name given in its inscription identifies it as a vessel posthumously cast for one of Wu Ding's consorts. See Virginia C. Kane, "The Chronological Significance of the Inscribed Ancestor Dedication in the Periodization of Shang Dynasty Bronze Vessels," *Artibus Asiae* 35/4 (1973): 340-342. Moreover, a large number of inscribed royal vessels testifying the praxis of casting commemorative bronzes inscribed with collective emblems (see note 10 below) during the reign of Wu Ding came to light in 1976 when the undisturbed tomb of Fu Hao 婦好, another one of Wu Ding's consorts deceased during his lifetime, has been found close to the ruins of the Xiao Tun 小屯 palace complex. See Bagley, "Shang Archaeology," 194-202. Interestingly inscriptions on oracle bones started to appear around the same time in the context of King Wu Ding's reign. Bronzes with collective emblems however were not confined to the Anyang elites as they have also been attested for several *fang* 方, *hou* 侯 and *bo* 伯 regions. See Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, "Inshū jidai no zuzō kigō" 殷周時代の図像記号, *Tōhō Gakuhō* 東方学報 39:1 (1968): 36-38.

⁹ By the time of access the total number accounts to 6295 artefacts.

¹⁰ In most studies these emblems are referred to as lineage emblems (*zu hui* 族徽) or lineage inscriptions (*zushi hui* 族氏徽). However by analysing groups of similar inscriptions within their archaeological context, Olivier Venture concludes that although these emblems symbolize group identities, the latter are very unlikely to be completely congruent with lineage identities. See Olivier Venture, "Shang Emblems in Their Archaeological Context," in *Imprints of Kinship*, 33-46. I follow Venture in referring to these inscriptions as "collective emblems." The scholarly literature on this topic is vast. For a recent comprehensive study of these kind of inscriptions in both, the Shang and the Zhou period, see He Jingcheng 何景成, *Shang Zhou qingtongqi zushi mingwen yanjiu* 商周青銅器族氏銘文研究 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 2009).

¹¹ See Kwang-chih Chang 張光直, "Tan Wang Hai yu Yi Yin de ji ri bing zai lun Yin Shang wangzhi" 談王亥與伊尹的祭日並再論殷商王制, *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica* 35 (1973): 111-127; Venture, "Shang Emblems in Their Archaeological Context." However the import of these emblems is far from certain, as is their status as fully developed forms of writing. Cf. the discussions in Zhang Maorong 張懋鎔, "Shi lun Shang Zhou qingtongqi zuhui wenzi dute de biao xian xingshi" 試論商周青銅器族徽文字獨特的表現形式, *Wenwu* 文物 (2000) 2: 46-51; Chen Jie 陳潔, *Shang-Zhou xing shi zhidu yanjiu* 商周姓氏制度研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2007), 117-219; and Luo Youcang 雒有倉, "Shi lun Shang Zhou qingtongqi zuhui wenzi bu tong yu yi ban mingwen de tedian" 試論商周青銅器族徽文字不同與一般銘文的特點, *Kaogu yu Wenwu* 考古與文物 (2012) 2: 29-34.

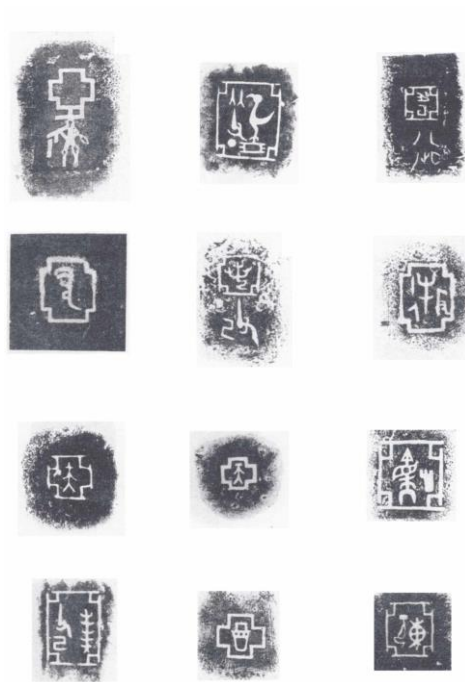
constituted something like a late Shang nobility.¹² Noteworthy in this respect is the peculiar form some of these emblems take, featuring a 亞-shaped column with a collective emblem inscribed inside or next to it. The graph 亞, written as 亞 or 亞 on Shang bronzes, is perhaps the oldest ordering symbol we can trace in the medium of early Chinese bronze inscriptions. Appearing not just in bronze inscriptions but also in the shape of elite tombs, it represents the centre of the cosmos defined in relation to the four cardinal directions or regions.¹³ This symbol is apparently applied in late Shang bronze inscriptions as a means of associating the donor with the centre of the Shang cosmos and thus with the royal lineage (*wang zu* 王族) who, in the politico-religious logic of the OBI, embodies this cosmological centre.¹⁴ Compare for this the following examples of bronze rubbings reproduced in Luo Zhenyu's 羅振玉 (1868-1949) *Sandai jijin wencun* 三代吉金文存:¹⁵

¹² Huang Mingchong 黃銘崇 speaks about a warrior nobility (*zhanshi guizu* 戰士貴族) in this context. See Huang Mingchong, "Wan Shang wangchao de zushi yuzushizhengzhi", 1-94.

¹³ Cf. Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 74-111; Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zhongshu*, 319-321; and Nancy Thompson Price, "The Pivot: Comparative perspectives from the Four Quarters," *Early China* 20 (1995): 93-120.

¹⁴ See for this point Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37-46. As to the nature of the royal lineage, Zhu Fenghan defines it as a descent group based on the reigning King and his sons that further comprised those of the king's brothers, together with their kin, who had not yet founded their own lineages. Cf. Zhu Fenghan *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 69.

¹⁵ This image is reproduced from Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 45.



We see here a series of collective emblems presumably representing different individuals or socio-political groupings. Yet all of them appear in conjunction with the 亞-symbol which acts as a superimposed structure or, indeed, as a frame of reference defining the individuals or groups behind each emblem to belong to a larger corporate group.

The extent to which one can speak of enhanced structures of collective identity in these cases remains difficult to decide. Based on archaeological and textual evidence, Wang Aihe 王愛和 assumes that the 亞-shaped component in collective emblems most likely indicated blood ties relating their users to a common ancestry with the royal line.¹⁶ In this case, the 亞-component would merely signify kinship affiliation. Yet given the fact that lineages constituted the biggest social units within which kinship factors defined one's social status,¹⁷ for the casters to identify with

¹⁶ Ibid, 37-39.

¹⁷ Cf. Campbell, "Toward a Networks and Boundaries Approach to Early Complex Polities," 826-831.

their (real or forged) remote royal ancestry would acquire symbolic meaning to some degree.¹⁸ Remaining uncertainties in the reconstruction of the Shang kinship system however, do not allow for a definite conclusion at present.

1.2.2 The emergence of grammatically coherent texts on bronzes from the late Anyang period: Perspectives and protagonists

Inscriptions of the type outlined above account for the vast majority of late Shang bronze texts. Far more relevant for our study, however, are only a small number of inscribed Shang bronzes that feature grammatically coherent texts between ten to forty graphs in length, including date notations. These rare inscriptions, of which fewer than one hundred have been recorded so far, all date to the late Anyang period.¹⁹ What makes them significant for our purpose is the fact that they present us with the first and only images of socio-political interaction at the Shang court, envisioned from a perspective other than the king's.

We possess ample information pertaining to the king's role and his activities from divination records inscribed on oracle bones. That the same topics, couched in

¹⁸ In making this distinction we have to keep in mind that kinship is not to be confused with biological rules of descent. The former describes a constructed code devised to define social status. Hence Marshall Sahlins defined kinship as intersubjective relations of being, comprising both performative or "made" kinship as well as relations of procreation. Cf. Sahlins, *What Kinship Is – And Is Not* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013). Hence our differentiation between lineage internal kinship and lineage-transcending kinship is really a question of different levels of social organization. Looked at from this perspective, articulated kinship affiliations across lineage boundaries would account for enhanced structures of collective identity.

¹⁹ See Robert W. Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 525. Bagley's argument is based on significant stylistic similarities between these bronze texts and oracle bone inscriptions from the reign of King Di Yi and Di Xin. For a comprehensive treatment of these inscriptions including all examples recorded until the mid- 1970s, see Akatsuka Kiyoshi 赤塚忠, *Chūgoku kodai no shūkyō to bunka* 中国古代の宗教と文化 (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1977), 611-864.

the same idiom appear in a small number of bronze inscriptions as well might simply be taken as further evidence for the king's military and ritual activities. Yet there is an important difference in social perspective that has to be considered. While oracle bone divination records were written from the perspective of the king to be consulted by the same, in extant late Shang bronze inscriptions, the king and his activities become a point of reference, a common frame of identification, employed by presumably non-royal vessel donors in order to claim their participation in the institution of Shang kingship. Consider for instance the Zuoce Ban *yan* 作冊般鬲 inscription (*JC* 944):²⁰

王宜(徂)人方，無救，咸。王商(賞)乍(作)冊般貝，用乍(作)父己鬲。〔來冊〕。
 The king conducted a military campaign and a sacrifice within the *ren fang* territories,²¹ there was no insult (harm?). Upon its accomplishment the king bestowed cowries on me, Zuoce Ban. I used them to have this *zun* vessel cast for Father Yi. [emblem]²²

The first sentence reads almost like a verification line (*yan**ci* 驗詞) from a royal divination record. Yet the text's main focus clearly lays on the donor's, Zuoce Ban's, reception of a royal gift or reward, and the subsequent casting of a vessel for his father. The initial statement provides merely the context for the bestowal. It can be assumed that Zuoce Ban played a part in the king's successful campaign and therefore received a reward from the latter.

What we have here is the core pattern of elite bronze inscriptions recording

²⁰ This vessel from the former collection of Chen Chengqiu 陳承裘 (1827-1895) is now housed in the National Museum of China in Beijing. Its inscription was first recorded in Wu Shifen 吳式芬, *Mei gu lu jinwen* 攔古錄金文, 9 vols. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004 [1895]), 2.2.86.1. Nothing is known about the place, date and the circumstances of its discovery.

²¹ Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 believes *yi* 宜 in this context to describe a military campaign combined with a sacrifice at the altar of the earth, see *Mingwen xuan*, 6.

²² Cf. *Mingwen xuan* #8; Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes*, 530.

points of contact with the king, which persist in this basic form from the late Shang until the time of King Cheng (r. 1042/35-1006 BCE) in the early Western Zhou period: The vessel donor receives a reward from the king as a result of military services rendered to the latter, which he then transforms materially and verbally into a token informing his own lineage cult. The main information which is almost always displayed in these inscriptions includes the bestowal itself and the casting statement. Additional information relating to the context of the bestowal may or may not be written out.²³ Where it is given, we might conjecture, the reference to royal affairs did not only serve as a context for the bestowals commemorated in bronze inscriptions, but, and perhaps more importantly, also acted as an index for the donor's and his lineage's degree of participation in the politico-religious order centred on the king.

1.2.3 Affiliation through ritual participation: Elite synchronization with royal ritual

In late Anyang times, Shang kingship came to be defined more and more with the royal ancestral cult and the fulfilment of a rigorous sacrificial schedule.²⁴ It is

²³ While the formal pattern of the few longer late Shang bronze inscriptions largely resembles the three examples cited in this chapter, there is greater variation to be observed in texts from Western Zhou inscriptions. For a classification of the formal elements to be found in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 73-85. For a different account developed as a critique of Shaughnessy's argumentation see Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies: A Review Article," *Early China* 18 (1993): 152-161. Von Falkenhausen's account, especially his proposed "tripartite scheme" model will concern us at a later point in this study.

²⁴ The development of a "religious bureaucracy" characterizing as well as informing the late Shang political order has been proposed and described by David N. Keightley in his "The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture," *History of Religions* Vol. 17, No. 3/4 (1978): 211-225; and in idem, "The making of the Ancestors: Late Shang Religion and Its

therefore not surprising that in late Shang bronze inscriptions scenes from royal ritual often provided the context for aristocratic contacts with the king. See for example the X fang *ding* 𩇛方鼎 (NA 1566):

乙未，王賓文武帝乙多(彤)日。自鬻(闌)侁，王返入鬻(闌)。王商(賞)鬻貝，用乍(作)父丁寶鬻彝。在五月，隹(惟)王廿祀又二。〔魚〕

On *yi-wei* day, the King hosted Wen Wu Di Yi for the *rong* sacrificial day. Setting out from *lan* [...], the King returned and (re-)entered *lan*.²⁵ The King bestowed cowries on X. (I, X,) used them to have this precious *zun* vessel cast for Father Ding. It was the fifth month, in the King's twenty second year. [emblem]²⁶

What strikes one as noteworthy in this example is the fourfold identification with the royal calendar.²⁷ The date given right at the beginning, *yi-wei* or the fifty sixth day of the sexagesimal cycle, is further specified as concurring with the day of the King's *rong* sacrifice to his royal ancestors,²⁸ the event directly associated with the vessel donor's bestowal. Along with a switch to a broader frame of temporal orientation, the bestowal is then located within the respective month and the year of the King's reign. This mode of identification of events becomes even more explicit in two further inscriptions from this period. The text from the X Zi fang *ding* 宰孳方鼎 (NA 924) inscription reads as follows:

Legacy," in *Religion and Chinese Society Volume I: Ancient and Medieval China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), 3-63.

²⁵ The meaning of this sentence is not quite clear. It seems the King is setting out from a place or building structure named *lan* 闌 or *lan* X 闌侁, in order to perform the *rong* sacrifice to his predecessor Wen Wu Di Yi, after which he returns to *lan*. Judging from its further appearances in late Shang inscriptions, the place or building designated by *lan* might have served as a location where royal bestowals have been frequently conducted. See Li Xueqin (2005): 62.

²⁶ My translation mostly follows the interpretation by Li Xueqin 李學勤 developed in idem, "Shi lin xin faxian de X fang *ding* he Rong Zhong fang *ding*" 試論新發現的𩇛方鼎和榮仲方鼎, *Wenwu* 文物 (2005) 9: 59-69.

²⁷ For the Shang royal calendar see David N. Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape*, 37-53.

²⁸ The *rong* sacrifice was part of the five ritual cycle. The latter is explained in Keightley, "The making of the Ancestors," 20-26.

甲子，王易(賜)寧孳(孳)商(賞)，用乍(作)父辛尊(尊)彝。才(在)十月又二，邁且(祖)甲魯日。隹(唯)王廿祀。

On *jia-zi* day (day 1), the King made a bestowal on X Zi. (I) used this to have a sacrificial vessel cast for Father Xin. This was in the twelfth month, coinciding with the *xie* sacrificial day for (the royal ancestor) Zu Jia. It was the King's twentieth year.²⁹

Here again, the time of the bestowal and casting of the vessel is contextualized in a fourfold way with reference made to the sexagesimal cycle, the month, a position in the royal ritual cycle, and, finally, to the year of the king's reign. These dating conventions in combination with the names of rites, forming in their entirety the cycle of the Shang ritual year, point to a topic area we are familiar with from Anyang oracle bone inscriptions.³⁰ In the latter, meticulous dating methods mapping the annual sequence of sacrifices reveal the Shang King's preoccupation with maintaining a cyclic ritual continuity thought necessary to attune the human order to the order of the cosmos.³¹ Judging from the OBI evidence, maintaining this coherence (which also included hunting and warfare) must have been tantamount to the very substance of Shang kingship. The fact that presumably non-royal bronze inscriptions imitate these dating conventions reveals the donor's desire to

²⁹ This vessel has been excavated from a Zhou tomb near Quwo 曲沃, Shanxi, in 1981. Its artistic features as well as the inscription however clearly identify it as a late Shang vessel from an Anyang context. For a more detailed analysis of this inscription and the circumstances of its excavation in a Zhou tomb see Zhang Han 張頴, "X zi fang ding mingwen kaoshi" 寧孳方鼎銘文考釋, *Wenwu* 文物 (1990) 1: 4-8.

³⁰ Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zhongshu*, 217-237; and Keightley, *Sources*, 28-30.

³¹ For the concept of ritual continuity see Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 70-74. The term attunement in this usage has been coined by Eric Voegelin. Attunement describes the adjustment of early man to the cosmos, i.e. world, society and the gods, in terms of an adjustment to the level of participation in cosmic being. See Voegelin, *Order and History Volume I: Israel and Revelation*, ed. Maurice P. Hogan (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 41-43. Although used by Voegelin in the context of early Middle Eastern cultures, the Shang kings' rituals to influence natural phenomena in a favourable way as well as their hosting rituals, extending from the ancestors to the high god Di, justifies this borrowing in my view.

contextualize his contact with the king within this royal cycle. The dedication of the vessel to the donor's father or mother resembles in a similar way an extension of royal ritual to include the donor's own ancestral cult.

Thus defining late Shang bronze inscriptions, as far as the limited corpus allows us to, we may speak of attempts to synchronize non-royal cult with the ritual cycle of the Shang kings.³² The imitation of royal dating formulae in this case has to be understood as a form of rhetoric in its own right.

1.2.4 Affiliation beyond kinship: The possibility of supra-lineage rituals as a means to create corporate solidarity

The following text from the Si zuo Fu Yi *gui* 隹作父乙簋 inscription (JC 4144) closely resembles the pattern introduced in the preceding two examples, yet it goes one step further in that it includes a description of sacrificial details:³³

戊辰，弼師易(賜)隹畀戶賁貝，用乍(作)父乙寶彝。才(在)十月一，隹(唯)王廿祀癸日，遘玆(于)匕(妣)戊武乙奭、豕一。〔牽旅〕

On wu-chen day (day 5), Bi Shi presented Si with [...] cowries.³⁴ (I, Si,) used them to have a precious vessel cast for Father Yi. It was during the eleventh

³² This touches upon the problem of social interaction and intersubjective time dealt with in Thomas Luckmann, "The Constitution of Human Life in Time," in *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time*, ed. John Bender and David E. Wellbery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 151-166.

³³ Nothing is known about the place, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel, which is currently housed in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C. Its inscription was first recorded in Wu Shifen, *Mei gu lu jinwen*, 2.3.86.

³⁴ Bi Shi 弼師, Bagley conjectures, "was probably a royal officer charged by the king to reward Si" (*Shang Ritual Bronzes*, 522). There is, in my opinion no reasonable alternative explanation, neither do I know of any diverging suggestions. No consensus has been reached as to the transcription and the meaning of the four graphs following the verb *ci* 賜. The reader is referred to the discussion in Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes*, 534, n. 2. For convenience, the above transcription follows the choice made in *Mingwen xuan*, 4. The passage, however, is left un-translated.

month in the King's twentieth year on the *xie* sacrificial day. This coincided with the sacrifices for ancestor King Wu Yi's consort Bi Wu. One Pig has been offered. [emblem]³⁵

In addition to the complex dating formula we have already witnessed in the X fang *ding* and the X Zi fang *ding* inscriptions above, the vessel donor in this case even reports the particulars of a royal sacrifice conducted on the day of his bestowal. Although it is not entirely clear whether Si merely reports a scene from royal sacrifice, it seems that he actually participated in the offering to Bi Wu himself, contributing one pig. Based on the rather unambiguous identification of Bi Wu with the royal consort of King Wu Yi, most scholars conclude that the vessel donor in this case must have been a member of the royal house as well.³⁶ Yet this constellation would to some extent betray the logic of a royal bestowal (especially when it is conducted by a high official on the king's behalf as it is the case here), where the king acknowledges loyalties and services rendered to him by subordinates.

There are indeed other plausible explanations for Si's affiliation with the Shang regarding his possible partaking in royal ritual. One might reasonably assume that Si belonged to one of the many Zi- 子 lineages (*duo Zi zu* 多子族) or their branches.³⁷ At some point differentiated from the royal line (*wang zu* 王族) due to lineage segmentation,³⁸ these princely lineages constituted the higher echelons of the

³⁵ Cf. *Mingwen xuan* #6; and Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes*, 521-523

³⁶ See for instance Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 73-75.

³⁷ See K. C. Chang, *Shang Civilization* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 189-194; Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 39-60.

³⁸ For possible internal differentiations along kinship and ritual categories within the royal line see Chang, *Shang Civilization*, 175-188 and especially the literature given in p. 183, n. 65 for views diverging from Chang's suggestions. As for the differentiation between the royal lineage and the Zi-lineages, Zhu Fenghan suggested the following working definition: "There is a difference between the many Zi-lineages and the royal line, the former are not part of the latter. Zi-lineages, i.e. the princely lineages, designate those lineages that are founded by those among a deceased king's sons who are not heirs to the throne by means of lineage segmentation. [...] The royal line consists of the reigning king, his sons and other close kin. (*Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 69 [the English

extended Shang clan. As Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚 has shown, these lineages all formed autonomous ritual as well as economic entities, each invested with territorial sovereignty, and each conducting their own ancestral cult.³⁹ On the one hand this constellation would explain the necessity for the king to requite their services through royal bestowals; on the other hand it would also provide the motives for a supra-lineage cult, allowing the Zi-lineage aristocracy to identify with their common royal ancestry. Another observation made by Zhu Fenghan in this context goes precisely in this direction:

During Shang times, the royal house and the important Zi- 子 lineages still formed a kind of organic corporate kinship group defined through common descent and mutual commitment to a shared economic and administrative network. The King, in the role of lineage leader (or lineage leader of lineage leaders in the words of another scholar [A/N]),⁴⁰ presided over and directed these lineages' aristocratic representatives' sacrifices to their common royal ancestors.⁴¹

In a similar fashion one could imagine recent royal ancestors, such as the consort of King Wu Yi, to have formed the subject of communal Shang elite worship transcending the boundaries between individual lineages.⁴²

Even if the vessel donor, Si, did not belong to any of the Zi-lineages, his participation in royal ritual could still be explained by what Shaughnessy assumes to have constituted a practice of extra-lineage cult, devised to bind the Shang kings to

translation is my own]).

³⁹ Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 138-209.

⁴⁰ See Campbell, "Toward a Networks and Boundaries Approach to Early Complex Politics: The Late Shang Case," 828.

⁴¹ Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 211. The English translation is my own.

⁴² This suggestion can be further substantiated by Zhu Fenghan's finding that in royal oracle bone inscriptions Zi-lineage leaders are frequently described to offer to the two most recent generations of direct ancestors of the present king, like it is the case in the *Si zuo Fu Yi gui*. See *Shang Zhou jiazhu*, 49.

their non-consanguineous allies.⁴³ In the context of the scholarly debate on the Zhouyuan 周原 oracle bone inscriptions, which are now generally believed to have been produced by the Zhou during the late Anyang period,⁴⁴ Shaughnessy has identified several instances in both Zhou and Shang OBI where leaders from allied non-Shang polities, such as the Zhou themselves, were entitled to participate in the ancestral cult of the royal line. While some passages from the Zhouyuan fragments apparently show the Zhou king divining about his offerings to the former Shang kings, several Shang inscriptions as well, record divinations about presumably non-Shang individuals' presenting offerings to Shang royal ancestors.⁴⁵

If Shaughnessy is right, which I believe he is,⁴⁶ it would seem that alliances between the Shang kings and non-Shang lineage leaders were thought of and expressed in terms of ancestral adoption, which means they were transformed into actual membership in the extended Shang clan.⁴⁷ Hence it lies well within the bounds of possibility that Si was originally not a member of the royal house at all. In this case one could assume that similar to the rhetorical use of royal dating formulae, the “performance of kinship” as well, might have been employed as a tool in the

⁴³ See the discussion on the Zhouyuan Oracle-Bone Inscriptions by Edward L. Shaughnessy et al. in “The Early China Forum,” *Early China* 11-12 (1985-1987): 146-194.

⁴⁴ See the discussion in Cao Wei 曹璋 ed., *Zhouyuan Jiaguwen* 周原甲骨文 (Beijing: Shijie tushu, 2002), 1-11.

⁴⁵ See Shaughnessy, “Extra-Lineage Cult in the Shang Dynasty: A Surrejoinder,” in “The Early China Forum,” *Early China* 11-12 (1985-1987): 182-190.

⁴⁶ Shaughnessy has convincingly demonstrated that the fragments which Chinese scholars doubt to be of Zhou origin show the same features on grounds of which they identify the rest of the corpus as uniquely Zhou. Moreover their argument against cross-lineage cult is based entirely on positions from Warring States and later texts. See Shaughnessy, “Zhouyuan Oracle-Bone Inscriptions: Entering the Research Stage?,” in “The Early China Forum,” *Early China* 11-12 (1985-1987): 146-163.

⁴⁷ Cf. Marshall Sahlins who states: “[A]ny relationship constituted in terms of procreation, filiation, or descent can also be made postnatally or performatively by culturally appropriate action. Whatever is constructed genealogically may also be constructed socially. (*What Kinship Is – And Is Not*, 2). Keightley remarks in this regard: “[T]here is little doubt that when a leader, whose name suggests he was not a member of the Shang lineage, participated in Shang ancestral sacrifices he was considered to be part of the Shang theocratic state, bound by the privileges and obligations, religious, political, and kin, that such participation implied for the lineage members themselves.” (Keightley, “The Shang State as seen in the Oracle-bone Inscriptions,” 29).

creation of a corporate Shang identity.

1.2.5 *Late Shang bronze inscriptions as a new form of writing*

Although uncertainty still prevails over many aspects concerning the relations between king and vessel donor depicted in late Shang bronze inscriptions, we can at least state with some confidence that most of the dated texts directly or indirectly commemorate royal bestowals (which could also be performed by high officials such as Bi Shi in the above example) received in response for services rendered to the king.⁴⁸ This situation implies the contact between the king (in some cases a Zi-lineage patriarch) and a second, presumably non-royal, individual who affiliated with the former from a subordinated position. In this regard we may recall a still valid observation made by Robert Bagley:

Surviving (Shang) bronzes with dated inscriptions were cast and inscribed by subjects. The texts borrow their wording from royal inscriptions, since subjects, like kings, had ancestors attentive to the deeds of their posterity, but the event to be commemorated was an award from the king and the use of bronze vessels as a vehicle for the text seems to be a new departure without royal precedents.⁴⁹

“Subjects” is of course a rather misleading term in this context, for late Shang vessel donors must have belonged exclusively to those powerful lineages who had access to

⁴⁸ One notable exception are inscriptions commemorating bestowals from a Zi-lineage leader to a branch lineage founder (*xiao zi* 小子) (cf. Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 41 for the term *xiao zi*) as is the case in *Jicheng* numbers 2648, 3904, 5394, 5417, 5965 and 5967. Except for the missing references to royal ritual, these inscriptions pretty much resemble commemorations of royal bestowals.

⁴⁹ Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes*, 531.

the royal bronze industry, and who were entitled to participate in royal activities.⁵⁰

Neither did they see themselves as Shang subjects but rather, so it seems, as members of an extended kinship group headed by the Shang king.

What is important to keep in mind, however, is the fact that in late Shang bronze inscriptions the king and his activities, presumably for the first time, emerge as points of reference for an elite group which seeks to articulate its affiliation with the royal line.⁵¹ Not just the use of bronze vessels as a vehicle for these texts seems to have constituted a new departure without royal precedents, the texts from the inscriptions themselves must be seen as a new form of writing, devised for the purpose of elite affiliation with the royal line and its ancestral spirits. This new form of writing is the ultimate precursor of the forms we will come across in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

1.3 From chieftdom to kingship

Before proceeding to a Western Zhou context from here, we should mention once more that the inscriptions dealt with above belong to a highly exceptional

⁵⁰ I would even go so far as to suggest that the very concept of a “subject of rule” was foreign to the Shang kings.

⁵¹ David Keightley provides a very coherent explanation for how Shang ancestor worship, its cognitive structures and underlying theological assumptions came to inform the identity of possible non-royal Shang elites. He states: “With regard to the cultural impact of such a religious system, the complexity of the five ritual cycle, to say nothing of the practices of Shang divination, would presumably have required a considerable degree of training. The overlapping schedules of the ancestors, ancestresses, and their sequential sacrifices would have had to be mastered by the liturgists and at least understood by the elites who attended the king’s court. The engravers, if not the diviners, would have had to learn how to write so that they were at least functionally literate where the ancestral cult was concerned. Certain elites, in other words, were being trained in the assumptions and skills that underlay the structure of Shang ancestor worship, and were being rewarded, with occupation and status, for what they had learned and what they performed (Keightley, “The Making of the Ancestors,” 29).

corpus dating from the very end of the Shang period. They might tell us more about developments that took place during the last two Anyang reigns than about Shang elite culture throughout the preceding centuries.⁵² If we accept these inscriptions as forebears of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, we have to do so with reservations as well. Apart from the basic pattern of recording contacts between the king and individual elites, these texts are still very much different from Western Zhou, especially mid- to late Western Zhou elite bronze inscriptions.⁵³ While late Shang bronze inscriptions depict the relations between king and vessel donors in terms of vertical relations within a conical clan structure,⁵⁴ Western Zhou inscriptions, starting at least with the reign of king Cheng, address these relations in terms of proto-political alliances or bonds.⁵⁵ The former emphasize existing genealogical

⁵² According to David Keightley, The late Shang witnessed a “shift from an advanced tribal polity in Wu Ding’s reign (Period I) to an incipient dynastic state” by the reigns of Di Yi and Di Xin (Period V), characterized by a “dynastic lineage ruling in proto-bureaucratic, patrimonial style over a central and perhaps shifting nucleus, and beyond that operating still by a series of chiefdom-like forays.” (“The Late Shang State,” 556-558). This might indeed have constituted a likely context for the kind of aristocratic affiliation with the royal line we have noticed in late Shang bronze inscriptions.

⁵³ Yet as we will see below in chapter two, even the Western Zhou concept of a royal bestowal is radically different from royal gift giving in a late Shang context.

⁵⁴ The social reality addressed in late Shang bronze inscriptions can only be conjectured about. Stefan Breuer’s definition of the conical clan model might come close to the historical reality of the Shang. Breuer says that in an animistic worldview, such as we perceive it in Shang OBI, the world’s segmentary structure extends into the world of the ancestral spirits, so that a certain household’s or lineage’s “success in production, especially each increase in surplus product, indicated the respective household’s or lineage’s proximity to the oldest and highest ancestral spirits, whence it became a source of prestige or charisma. The probation of this charisma was customarily achieved through feasting, i.e. by distributing the surplus product among the other lineages.” This we find mirrored in the fact that most late Shang bronze inscriptions record royal rewards and gifts. “At the end of this process,” Breuer continues, “stands the identification of the dominant lineage and its patriarch with the highest ancestral spirits and gods, together with a reinterpretation of a relative hierarchy into an absolute one, where all collateral lines of descent [...] were graded according to their proximity to the main line of descent.” This is what Breuer associates with Paul Kirchhoff’s anthropological concept of the “conical clan.” Cf. Paul Kirchhoff, “The Principles of Clanship in Human Society,” in *Readings in Anthropology 2*, ed. Morton H. Fried (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 260-270. In the last consequence, Breuer concludes, “it is the oldest lineage that henceforth not only provided the chief, but which also developed into the intermediary between the gods and the other lineages. Hence it became the recipient of tributes and workfares that previously had been offered to the ancestors and gods of the individual lineages” (Breuer, *Der charismatische Staat*, 27. The translation into English is my own). This might explain why we find references to elite participation in royal ritual in late Shang bronze inscriptions.

⁵⁵ See chapter two in this study.

hierarchies through the recording of royal rewards and claims of ritual participation. The latter record the initiation of political authority relations, achieved through the conferral of ruling authority on the part of the king, and through the assumption of an obligation on the part of the vessel donor. Moreover, while texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions address the cooperation between king and elites in terms of a shared commitment to a politico-religious ideology, none of the extant late Shang bronze inscriptions articulate any conception of sovereignty at all. It seems that the concept of Shang rule was not yet reflected upon as such during the Anyang period, at least not in any of the extant uncorrupted sources.

In other words the Shang-Zhou transition must have gone hand in hand with a major change in the conception of sovereignty and thus in the form of affiliation it entails for its members. This difference needs to be addressed before we can meaningfully compare texts from late Shang bronze inscriptions with those of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

1.3.1 Kingship in the Shang

The question of how Shang kingship was actually perceived is not easy to answer. Apart from the bronze inscriptions considered above, our limited knowledge on the subject derives solely from implicit information revealed in operative texts from the retrieved OBI corpus. Nevertheless the picture that scholars have been able to reconstruct from this cryptic source material proves quite instructive. In the divination records, the order of the Shang community is not a moral or ethical order that follows any kind of political agenda, instead it appears entangled with the







spheres of both the natural and the supernatural world, with the success or failure of human undertakings left dependent on the changing moods of gods and ancestors.⁵⁶ Attuning the human order to these conditions by disclosing the ancestors' and gods' dispositions through divination, as well as striving to control the community's fate through the performance of a meticulously arranged ritual cycle (including sacrifice, hunting and warfare), was tantamount with the unpronounced idea of Shang Kingship.⁵⁷ In other words Shang "rule," as far as concerns its charismatic aspects, exhausts itself in divinatory and ritual praxis aimed at determining and shaping the community's fate in its interdependency with divine and cosmic factors and the imponderabilities these bear for the course of human conduct.⁵⁸ Accordingly we do not yet find any political agenda or motivating sense articulated in uncorrupted Shang sources that would define Shang kingship as sovereignty based on a reflexive political idea.






The question arises: can we actually speak of kingship in this context? Or better, how do we define kingship in order to be able to use the concept as a parameter in differentiating between Shang and Zhou forms of supremacy? Let us approach this issue from a definition of the term *wang* 王 in its earliest known institutional context, the late Shang polity. While the etymology of the word *wang*, old-Chinese

⁵⁶ Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape*, 97-119.

⁵⁷ Compare for this point Keightley "The Religious Commitment," 212.

⁵⁸ The charismatic element in the Shang king's rule must be seen in his monopoly to gain access to the divine world through his royal ancestors. Divination as well had a charismatic aspect to it as Keightley notes: "Much Shang divination was concerned with forecasting the future, or with understanding the present with a view to shaping the future successfully. It seems likely however, that the king's production of 'lucky' cracks was also thought to play a magical role, so that the royal diviner did not simply forecast the future, he also helped to induce it. [...] Such incantations, in fact, had become entirely routine by the reign of the last two kings, Di Yi 帝乙 and Di Xin 帝辛 (ca. 1100-1045 BC)." ("Science' of the Ancestors," 146-147) However, even in the earliest divination records from the reign of King Wu Ding, the possibly outcomes of divinations were not indefinite but positive-negative possibilities to concrete concerns. Cf. Keightley, "Shang Divination and Metaphysics," 374.


*G^waŋ, is uncertain,⁵⁹ many palaeographers interpret the graph 王, mostly written , ,  or  in the OBI, as depicting the head of a battle-axe, thus symbolising the king's role as the supreme leader of a military alliance. Others suggest that its shape is related to the graph 火, writing the word *huo* (*[q^{wh}]ʕəjʔ), “fire,” written  or  in OBI, indicating the king's charisma in terms of radiance.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, both these interpretations lack a credible etymological explanation. Neither do we find a sufficient institutional context in the OBI that would support these conclusions.⁶¹

By contrast Guo Moruo 郭沫若 chooses a much more reasonable approach by looking at the issue from the perspective of Shang kinship organisation. He argues that both 王 and the graph *zu* (*[ts]ʕaʔ) 且 (祖), “ancestor,” written  or a  in the OBI, have developed graphically and semantically from the phallic element , indicating virility in compound graphs such as *mu* (*m(r)uʔ)  (牡), “male (of birds and beasts)” and *ji* (*C.qi[t])  (吉), “auspicious,” in Shang OBI, and which during Western Zhou times came to write the word *shi* (*[m-s-]rəʔ) 士, “male person.”⁶² Guo attributes the genesis of the conceptual pair *wang* – *zu* from the basic meaning of virility to a switch from matrimony to patrimony in early Shang kinship organisation, after which the principal male ancestor was referred to as *zu* while the

⁵⁹ Cf. Axel Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 507-508.

⁶⁰ See the entries in Yu Xingwu 于省吾, ed., *Jiaguwenzi gulin* 甲骨文字詁林, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 4.3270-3278; and in Guwenzi gulin bianzuan weiyuanhui 古文字詁林編纂委員會, ed., *Guwenzi gulin* 古文字詁林, 12 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 1.206-222.

⁶¹ Although military leadership did constitute an important part of his activities, it only accounts for one aspect of the Shang king's role. The interpretation of his title as head of a military alliance would not explain why he was also addressed as *wang* by the members of his extended kinship community in non-military contexts.

⁶² For this interpretation of the graph  as *shi* 士 see Wang Guowei, “Shi ‘mu’” 釋牡, in idem, *Guantang jilin*, 287-288; and Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Zhongguo kaogu baogaoji zhi er: Xiaotun*, vol. II: *Yinxu wenzi jia bian kaoshi* 中國考古報告集之二：小屯，第二本：殷墟文字甲編考釋 (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1961), 444-445.

living patriarch would have been addressed as *wang*.⁶³ Furthermore he demonstrates that the element 王 in the cognate graph 𠩺 (皇), writing the homophonous word *huang* (*Gʷaŋ), “august,” “sovereign,” is overtly written 士 (士) in examples from early to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, where it figures as an epithet for male ancestors in the compounds *huangkao* 皇考 and *huangzu(kao)* 皇祖(考), meaning “august ancestor.”⁶⁴

Based on Guo’s much more convincing analysis, Léon Vandermeersch defines Shang kingship in terms of a development from a familial type of proto-kingship to an actual political kingship. Stressing the significance of the element *shi* 士, “virility,” in the graph 王 he states:

Virility has to be understood here in the sense of paternity. The king is referred to as *the virile wang* because he is considered the father of the ethnic group, the inheritor of the founding ancestor’s potency. In this sense, he is the only real father of the members of the community; all other fathers were merely addressed as *fu* 父, an appellation granted equally to all individuals from the most senior generation.⁶⁵

This picture falls in line with the description of Shang elite organisation as an extended (pseudo-) kinship group centred on the king and his lineage, with the

⁶³ Guo Moruo, “Shi Zu Bi” 釋祖妣, in idem, *Jiaguwenzi yanjiu* 甲骨文字研究 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1975 [1929]), 15-60. See also L. C. Hopkins, “Symbols of Parentage in Archaic Chinese. Part I,” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1940) 3: 351-362, for a discussion of Guo’s argument.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Compare for example the Western Zhou forms 𠩺 (JC 2759), 𠩺 (JC 2760), 𠩺 (JC 2812) and 𠩺 (JC 2833), arranged in chronological order. Of special interest in this regard is the form 𠩺, found in the inscription from the early Western Zhou X you 鬲, where the graph is transcribed as 𠩺 (皇) in the direct transcription, explicitly retaining the element 士. In 1934, Xu Zhongshu 徐中舒, without reference to Guo, came to the same conclusion that the cognate graphs 王 and 皇 are based on the element 士, which in his opinion symbolizes the image of a sitting person. As does Qu, Xu interprets the word *shi* 士 in its earliest usage as a generic term denoting a male person (Xu Zhongshu, “Shi, wang, huang, san zi zhi tanyuan” 士王皇三字之探原, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 4.4 [1934]: 441-446).

⁶⁵ Vandermeersch, *Wangdao Tome II*, 15-16. The translation from French is my own.

collateral *Zi* 子-lineages connected to the former in terms of actual or forged lines of filiation.⁶⁶

For Vandermeersch, this sort of enhanced patriarchy turns into “political” kingship with the establishment of military supremacy over alien populations and the expansion of the Shang domain which purportedly began around 1570 BCE under the “dynasty’s” mythological founder Cheng Tang 成湯, posthumously addressed as Da Yi 大乙 in the OBI.⁶⁷ Without doubt, the military alliances lead by the Shang kings, at least by the historical Anyang kings, can hardly be explained in terms of kinship organization alone.⁶⁸ However, it would be misleading to infer from this point the existence of an autonomous political ruling organisation or “state” at any point during the Shang period. Quite to the contrary, as Keightley remarks, it was only towards the very end of the late Shang period, when the king’s actual power was more or less limited to region around Anyang that Shang developed from an “advanced tribal polity” into an “incipient dynastic state.”⁶⁹ Moreover, the genealogical identification with the royal lineage, the King and his royal ancestors, continued to constitute the dominant factor of affiliation with Shang kingship throughout the late Shang period. Hence Keightley writes:

The Shang polity was a patrimonial theocracy ruled by a lineage head, the king, “I, the one man,” whose authority derived from his unique relationship to the ancestors, and who relied on the socio-religious ties of patriarchal authority and

⁶⁶ Cf. Qiu Xigui, “Guanyu Shangdai de zongzu zuzhi yu guizu he pingmin liang ge jieji de chubu yanjiu;” Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhi xingtai yanjiu*, 27-211; and Huang Mingchong, “Wan Shang wangchao de zushi yu zushi zhengzhi.” For a different view on the composition of Shang elite society see Lin Yun 林澧, “Shang wangguo de shehui jiegou” 商王國的社會結構, in idem, *Shang shi san ti* 商史三題 (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 2018), 47-94.

⁶⁷ Vandermeersch, *Wangdao Tome II*, 18.

⁶⁸ For these alliances see Lin Yun, “Shangdai de guojia xingshi” 商代的國家形式, in idem *Shang shi san ti*, 1-46.

⁶⁹ See p. 72, n. 52 above.

filiality to bind his dependents to the dynastic enterprise. The degree to which lineages were key elements in the state, so that political status was frequently based on kin status rather than assigned title, suggests that the Shang polity still shared some of the features of the complex chiefdoms that had appeared in the Late Neolithic. The large numbers of princes and other leaders about whose activities a king like Wu Ding divined suggests both a lack of routine administrative delegation and the great importance attached to such quasi-personal attention on the part of the king, who, in this regard, was still functioning like the "big man" of a pre-state chiefdom. In social terms, the "conical clan" provides an appropriate model to describe the Shang evidence. This was a kinship unit that used familial ties to bind its members, but that allocated wealth, social standing, and power unequally among those members, favoring the lineal descendants, in this case the kings on the main line of descent, over the collateral lines.⁷⁰

Although, according to Marshall D. Sahlins, clanship becomes political in the context of the conical clan, he also notes that "where kinship is king, the king is in the last analysis only kinsman, and something less than royal."⁷¹ What then differentiates the function of a "true" king from the role of a chieftain or "big man"? To be sure there are many aspects found in current comparative definitions of archaic kingship that would justify referring to both, the Shang *wang* and the Zhou *wang* as kings.⁷² Perhaps the most generic feature in which the Shang *wang* resembles the archetype of cosmic or sacral kings in other archaic civilisations was his capacity to unite all rituals of the community on his person, so he alone controlled access to the world of the supernatural, and he alone could communicate with the forces thought

⁷⁰ Keightley, "The Shang," 289-290. See also Qi Wenxin 齊文心, "'Wang' zi benyi shitan" 王字本意試探, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 (1991) 4: 141-145, who attempts to trace the root meaning of the graph 王 to the idea of a "big man."

⁷¹ Marshall D. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 24, 93.

⁷² Compare for instance Bruce G. Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 71-91; and Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 10-67.

responsible for the wellbeing of the community.⁷³

However, there is one specific parameter which allows for a definite differentiation between chieftain and king that is applicable to our context. This parameter touches upon the very definition of the Shang term *wang* as enhanced patriarch. In his seminal study on early forms of sovereignty and archaic statehood, the sociologist Stefan Breuer locates the beginning of kingship at the crucial turning point where the role of a sovereign switches from a chieftain who represents his descent group in front of the gods to a kinship-transcending sovereign who represents a divine authority in front of a potentially diverse human community.⁷⁴ If we follow this definition, we find that the Shang kings, even the last ones, indeed come closer to the image of chieftains in that they stood at the apex of their own extended kinship community, representing the latter before the gods.⁷⁵ Their charisma lay not in the appropriation or representation of divine authority but in their exclusive access to the divine sphere in terms of forecasting and providing for their community.

The Shang kings' primary occupation with divination and ancestral sacrifice makes this point very clear: The logic of Shang divination and sacrifice presupposed a "world [that] was conceived in sharply delineated alternatives which either prevailed or did not."⁷⁶ The balance between the alternatives was transitory and ultimately contingent on the decisions of a provident yet capricious divinity, the High God Di or Shang Di.⁷⁷ Di's inclinations concerning the development of weather

⁷³ Compare for this view Jonathan Friedman, *System, Structure and Contradiction in the Evolution of 'Asiatic' Social Formations*, 2nd rev. ed. (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press 1998 [1979]), 274-293.

⁷⁴ See Breuer, *Der charismatische Staat*, 9-37.

⁷⁵ See Keightley, "The Shang," 289-290, for aspects of complex chiefdoms pervading throughout the Shang period.

⁷⁶ Keightley, "Late Shang Divination," 17.

⁷⁷ Some scholars assume that Di stood as a generic term designating the ancestors as a collective

patterns and other natural phenomena on which human survival depends as well as his approval or disapproval of human undertakings could be divined about in a binary fashion. His course of action and his decisions could even be influenced through briberies mediated with the help of royal ancestors.⁷⁸ Yet in the end Di's inclinations did not follow a discernable design. Moreover, as a cosmic deity, Di was largely indifferent to the specific ethical concerns of human organization. Neither did he provide a moral ideal for the Shang king to pattern his actions on, nor did he function as the ultimate instance of moral judgement for human rule.

This point is important for it renders obvious the fact that the Shang king neither embodied nor represented the High god Di within the Shang community. Although we do perceive an analogy between the Shang king and Di when it comes to the king's sovereign power to issue commands (*ling* 令), it is crucial to understand that this remains an analogy only, without indicating any sort of divine-human partnership. In late Shang bronze inscriptions the king is depicted as commanding his minions the same way as Di commands the natural forces in the OBI.⁷⁹ However, their commands clearly concerned different ontological spheres. In commanding human affairs, the king did not act in the name nor on behalf of Di; neither did he stand in any other way as a "reference figure" for the latter. As far as concerns divine-human interaction, the king's function and power lay solely in his ability to gain limited insight into divine providence and to influence the run of events through

rather than naming one particular High God. See for instance the argument in Robert Eno "Was there a High God Ti in Shang Religion?" *Early China* 15 (1990): 1-26.

⁷⁸ Keightley, "Shang Divination and Metaphysics," 374.

⁷⁹ For the role of Di in commanding natural forces in the OBI see Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu*, 561-573. The analogy perhaps results from an animistic conception of natural as well as supernatural forces following the definition of animism as "the attribution by humans to non-humans of an interiority identical to their own" in Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 129.

sacrifices made on behalf of his community.⁸⁰ This is also the context in which the Shang royal ancestors became significant. In his seminal article on Shang theology David Keightley writes:

Shang religious practice rested upon the *do ut des* (“I give, in order that thou shouldst give”) belief that correct ritual procedure by the Shang kings would result in favors conferred by Di. Di stood at the apex of the spiritual hierarchy. Beneath him were the royal ancestors, who were to intercede with Di as the result of sacrificial payments offered to them, often as a promise or contract, by the living kings at a still lower rank. [...] The ancestors, despite their generational ranks, were still ancestors, still members of the royal family, and thus they responded to the bribes offered by their descendants below, partly because they were bribes, but mainly, perhaps, because they were offered by the descendants.⁸¹

In sum, the Shang king represented his kinship community in inquiring with the gods about the course of action to be taken in matters of agriculture, ritual, hunting, warfare, settlement building and so on; he presided over his kinship community when offering cult to the royal ancestors in order to receive the latter’s assistance and blessings. Correspondingly, the Shang king legitimated his power genealogically through his position in the dynastic line. Due to its extension into the world of the gods, the line of royal ancestors enabled the king to consult the oracle and to conduct sacrifices on behalf of the Shang community.⁸²

⁸⁰ Cf. Rowan K. Flad, “Divination and Power: A Multiregional View of the Development of Oracle Bone Divination in Early China,” *Current Anthropology* 49 (2008): 406

⁸¹ David N. Keightley, “The Religious Commitment,” 213, 215.

⁸² Cf. *ibid.* 211-225; and *idem*, “The Science of the Ancestors: Divination, Curing, and Bronze-Casting in Late Shang China,” *Asia Major* 14 (2001): 143-187.

1.3.2 *Kingship in the Zhou*

With the Zhou conquest over the Shang this situation changed completely. Not only did the Zhou elite develop out of a military alliance consisting of various ethnic and genealogical groups, the establishment of Zhou supremacy in Shaanxi and other parts of the North China Plain also went hand in hand with the parcelling out of royal authority to the heads of, mostly but not exclusively, collateral lineages of the royal house, who came to rule the so called “regional states” as patriarchs in their own right.⁸³ While the ties between the royal house and the patriarchs rested on proto-political bonds informed by the shared commitment to a theo-political idea, genealogical authority became purely a matter of lineage-internal organisation. In this constellation, the role of the king changed from that of an enhanced patriarch to that of the exclusive representative of a universal ordering force within a kinship-transcending ecumenical context. Although still bearing the designation *wang*, by adopting the epithet “Son of Heaven” (*Tianzi* 天子), the Zhou king claimed to actually represent the gods within the human world. This fact is nothing entirely new of course, but neither has it been contrasted with the role of the Shang king as it appears in uncorrupted epigraphic sources, nor has it been considered together with the radical changes in worldview that accompanied the Shang-Zhou transition.

What is more, not only the role of the king has been reversed in Western Zhou sources, Heaven and Di too necessarily were no longer morally indifferent cosmic deities associated with the imponderable forces of nature. Exclusively concerned with the ethical organization of the human ecumene, Heaven and Di became the

⁸³ Cf. Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 139-173.

divine arbiters of a universal human order to be implemented by the human sovereign. In other words the Zhou king, as “Son of Heaven,” represented a moral authority perceived as universal and binding for the known mankind.⁸⁴ Consequently he was entitled, or even obliged to represent this authority not just within his own descent group, but in front of the entire Zhou lineage alliance, and also with regard to those populations the Zhou claimed sovereignty over, referred to as *min* 民 in both excavated and transmitted sources.⁸⁵ Within this constellation, the Zhou king’s commands were not analogues to the Heavenly mandate, but were thought to be extensions of it. The Son of Heaven was perceived to actually rule the human community by acting on Heaven’s behalf. Hence with the Zhou king there emerged for the first time in recorded early Chinese history a true reference figure, representing a divine concept of order in the human realm. This is also important if we consider the topic of son-ship expressed in the term *Tianzi*. It is not the genealogical aspect which the term emphasizes, but son-ship as a metaphor for a human-divine bond. By the same token, the Zhou king’s allied elites did not see the king as their patriarch and high priest, neither did they worship the royal ancestors as if they were kin, but they identified with the Zhou king as a politico-religious leader, aspiring to participate in the kinship-transcending corporate identity created through the expansion of Zhou kingship.

Genealogy and ancestral sacrifice did of course continue to play an important role throughout the entire Zhou period. Yet for the elites, effective lines of descent

⁸⁴ The custom to address the Zhou king as “Son of Heaven” seems to date back to the early Western Zhou period. The AS database counts nine instances of the term *Tianzi* in early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Thus the oldest idea behind the notion of Zhou kingship might have been the idea of Heaven adopting the Zhou king as his Son, which was interpreted on the basis of political alliances, revealing its contractual character.

⁸⁵ For the interpretation of *min* as a collective term denoting the entirety of an ecumenic subject population see my “The Term *min* 民 as a Political Concept in Western Zhou Thought,” *Bulletin of the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology* 4 (2017): 111-135.

did not go beyond their individual trunk-lineage founders.⁸⁶ This change is of utmost importance regarding the conception of authority in a late Shang and Western Zhou context respectively as Vandermeersch notes:

Under the Yin, when the cult of the ancestors was exclusively associated with the royal cult, political power was confirmed through the honour of representing the king in fulfilling his priestly functions. Since there was only one cult there could have only been one priest and one real patriarch: all the other patriarchs were deprived of their position. Hence political power, which was but an amplification of familial power, could only rest on king-patriarch's consent to allow the most dignified members of the ethnic group to act on his behalf [...]. Starting with the Zhou [...], however, it was conversely by granting those the honour of maintaining their own distinct ancestral cult whose authority the sovereign wanted to establish. [...] With the institutionalisation of the private ancestral cult, the Zhou rendered actual authority to the patriarchs.⁸⁷

Besides this “privatisation” of the ancestral cult, the nature of the ancestors changed significantly in comparison to Shang beliefs as well. For the Zhou, both royal and elite ancestors were more than deceased kin residing in the realm of the gods with the ability to bless or to curse the living. With the assumption of the Heavenly Mandate, King Wen and his allies became “actual” ancestors in the sense of role-models or archetypes to be emulated by their heirs. Other than in late Shang ancestral sacrifice, the Zhou ancestors did not enter the super-human realm as de-personalized ex-humans, but on the contrary remained inseparably connected with their personal deeds gained and obligations assumed during their lifetime, which continued to pose a commitment for their living descendants. Hence as Michael J. Puett remarks, in the Zhou,

⁸⁶ Cf. von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 64-70.

⁸⁷ Vandermeersch, *Wangdao Tome II*, 118-119.

[...] the entire relationship between ancestors and descendants that prevailed in the Shang appears to have been turned upside down. Instead of having the kings determine the ancestors, living kings are frequently presented in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as simply following the models and paradigms of the ancestors.⁸⁸

Therefore it can be said that the Zhou king stood as a reference figure in a second sense as well in that each successive king re-enacted the model set by the founding Kings Wen and Wu. In other words there are two spheres of reference defining Zhou kingship as a form of representative sovereignty: a theo-political one, ascribing its source of authority to a universal divinity, and a historical one, relating the receipt of this authority to founding figures located within a foundational past.

Such a historical dimension is notably lacking in autochthonous Shang sources. Even though the list of royal ancestors amounts to six pre-dynastic and twenty-nine dynastic genealogical positions in the extant OBI corpus,⁸⁹ none of these kings and pre-dynastic ancestors was actually associated with any foundational deeds. In fact the transformation of dead kings into ancestors by assigning to them temple names and a special day in the ritual schedule of Shang ancestral sacrifice “de-emphasized their individual personalities.”⁹⁰ In the same vein, neither did their genealogical line lead back into some sort of formative antiquity which necessarily would have been associated with the exemplary personalities of the respective kings when alive. Hence the sequence of former kings was not related with a historical development in any of the extant Shang sources. The kings were not even remembered as humans,

⁸⁸ Michael J. Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 59.

⁸⁹ See Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape*, 132-133.

⁹⁰ Keightley, “The Making of the Ancestors,” 16.

they were transformed into “ex-humans”⁹¹ arranged within a hierarchy of accessibility in which the ancestors were not much more than genealogical positions.⁹²

These basic observations tell us that while the Zhou inherited many aspects of Shang elite culture, including its symbolic appropriation of the world, the Shang-Zhou transition must have gone hand in hand with significant modifications in the conception of sovereignty and socio-political organization that point to fundamental changes in the perception of human existence and human co-existence in general. Before we look at the institution of royal appointments in Western Zhou sources, we will have to concern ourselves with these changes and with the concrete effects they had on the formation of a Western Zhou collective identity. For it were these changes that ultimately created the conditions for our topic, the proto-political bond as a form of cultural and ethno-political formation, to emerge as the decisive factor in the creation and perpetuation of a collective Zhou identity.

1.4 From attunement to the cosmic order to theo-political rule

The main problem we are faced with is to reconstruct how the decisively political notion of Zhou kingship could have emerged out of and in relation to the late Shang worldview. In the introduction to his seminal work, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature*, Henri

⁹¹ Keightley, “‘Science’ of the Ancestors,” 168.

⁹² Borrowing from David Keightley again, we can say that “the Shang conceived of the Nature and the Ancestral Powers as occupying a hierarchy of negotiability, with the close ancestors and ancestresses of the pantheon being most open to this kind of pledging, and the higher Powers, both ancestral and natural, being less approachable in this way” (Keightley, “The Making of the Ancestors,” 11).

Frankfort makes an important remark in this respect:

[I]f we refer to kingship as a political institution, we assume a point of view which would have been incomprehensible to the ancients. We imply that the human polity can be considered by itself. The ancients, however, experienced human life as part of a widely spreading network of connections which reached beyond local and the national communities into the hidden depths of nature. [...] Whatever was significant was imbedded in the life of the cosmos, and it was precisely the king's function to maintain the harmony of that integration.⁹³

This archaic concept of kingship is what Eric Voegelin, in his opus magnum *Order and History*, has defined as a “cosmological order,” for which reason he refers to the ancient Middle Eastern empires as “cosmological empires.” It is such a primordial “compact mythological consciousness” which Frankfort describes in the passage quoted above, that causes man to create the human communal order in analogy to the cosmos as it is perceived by the former. Reflexive political ideologies of human organization, “historical orders” in Voegelin’s terminology, are the result of differentiations introduced into this compact image of the world and into the compactness of human experience.⁹⁴

According to Voegelin’s model, in order for the idea of political rule to appear, the human ecumene must be considered as a sphere that is distinct from nature, the cosmos and the divine, a sphere that is subject to human moral order. My argument in the following will be that this interweaving of human organization with the cosmos into an all-embracing perception of human *consubstantiality* (Voegelin) with the myriad cosmic phenomena must to an extent break open and fall into clearly

⁹³ Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), 3.

⁹⁴ Cf. Maurice P. Hogan’s introduction to Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, 1-14, as well as Voegelin’s own introduction (Ibid, 39-53).

separate spheres which man can reflexively relate to, in order for a politico-religious idea and a notion of representative sovereignty to appear.⁹⁵ In other words we are looking for the differentiations that Zhou rhetoric introduced into the inherited Shang worldview that made possible and at the same time defined the idea of Zhou kingship.

In order to do so we will first need to outline the conception of Shang as a cosmological polity, based on the models scholars have been able to draw from the limited traces of Shang ritual praxis.

1.4.1 The Shang cosmos and the experience of compactness

Let us begin with what we already know. In extant late Shang bronze inscriptions boundaries between the royal line and other lineages are, as we have seen, in many cases not clearly articulated. Indeed, Zhu Fenghan speaks about the Anyang elites as one “organic corporate kinship group.” Although the institution of Shang royal ancestral ritual clearly constituted a sort of superimposed, enhanced structure of identification for the Anyang elites, their participation in it was nevertheless thought of in terms of common descent. Thus David Keightley strikingly remarks that Shang was in a sense “a theocratic polity in which religion, politics, and kinship were not simply entwined but were metaphysically fused.”⁹⁶

On an even broader level, this pertains to the relation between the political and the cosmological order as well. The Shang kings were believed to be “organically”

⁹⁵ See p. 89, n. 105 below for the concept of consubstantiality.

⁹⁶ Keightley, “The Shang State as seen in the Oracle Bone Inscriptions,” 29.

connected to the world of the gods and to the animated cosmos. In the *bin* 賓 ritual for instance, the royal ancestors, who were envisioned to populate the divine sphere, would act as media between the king and the non-ancestral deities and natural forces.⁹⁷ The whole scope of the king's engagement with the universe becomes visible in the so called *sifang* 四方 cosmology, or the cosmology of the four cardinal quarters, which constituted the ritual structure for the king's interaction with the myriad cosmic phenomena.⁹⁸ Although not yet referred to as a concept in uncorrupted Shang sources,⁹⁹ this orientation framework reveals itself in divinatory praxis recorded in the OBI.¹⁰⁰ Wang Aihe 王愛和, who traced the interrelated developments of cosmology and political thought in early China defines the Shang notion of *sifang* as follows:

While *fang* represents the others and the periphery in political geography, the meaning of *Sifang* (four *fang*) extends to a more comprehensive spatial structure of cosmology in which geography is included. [...]

Sifang as a cosmological structure classified all forces of the universe, including spirits, beings, and natural powers, as well as alien polities, on the basis of the

⁹⁷ See Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, "Yin buci zhongde Shang Di he Wang Di" 殷卜辭中的上帝和王帝, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 9-10 (1959): 23-50, 89-11. See also Wang *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 39.

⁹⁸ Borrowing Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah's definition, I understand cosmologies as "frameworks of concepts and relations which treat the universe or cosmos as an ordered system, describing it in terms of space, time, matter, and motion, and peopling it with gods, humans, animals, spirits, demons, and the like" (Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* [Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1985], 3).

⁹⁹ In the few cases where the compound *sifang* actually appears in OBI, it suggests that sacrifices are to be conducted towards each of the cardinal directions or, that something is reaching the centre from each of the four cardinal directions, either simultaneously or consecutively. Shima Kunio 島邦男 counts no more than six instances scattered around six different diviner groups. In all of these instances the topic of divination are rituals conducted towards *sifang*, or better towards each of cardinal directions in sequence. See Shima Kunio, *Inkyo bokuji sōrui* 殷墟卜辭綜類, 2nd rev. ed. (Tokyo: Kyūko, 1971 [1967]), 458; and Yao Xiaosui 姚孝遂, and Xiao Ding 肖丁, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan* 殷墟甲骨刻辭類纂, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 3.1204-1205.

¹⁰⁰ See for instance Hu Houxuan, "Shi Yindai qiu nian yu sifang he sifang feng de jisi" 釋殷代求年于四方和四方風的祭祀, *Fudan xuebao* 復旦學報 (Renwen kexue 人文科學) (1956) 1: 49-86; and Yu Xingwu, *Jiagu wenzi shilin* 甲骨文字釋林 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2010 [1979]), 123-129.

four cardinal directions. For the Shang people, all these forces were commanded by the high god *Di* 帝, who used them to determine the well-being of the Shang. [...]

It is in this capacity – connecting human beings to the world of the gods – that *Sifang* as four cardinal directions points to a center. It was at this center that political power was rooted, access to the world of the gods was monopolized, and divine knowledge – of the cosmos and of the world of gods and spirits – was achieved through divination and ritual. [...] The royal ancestral line in the world of the Shang was seen as the cosmological center and as the juncture of the four *fang*.¹⁰¹

David Keightley provides us with a similar outline of the cosmological dimensions of Late Shang kingship. He states:

The king looked out upon the North China plain, from the core of his enduring lineage, from the center of the settlement, from the center of the *tu*-lands and *fang*-regions, observing, forecasting, and recording the numerous directional phenomena, mundane and spiritual, on the time-space grid of Late Shang cosmology. That grid was built upon the cardinal directions, upon the seasonal changes in weather and in the motions of the sun, moon, and stars, and upon the repetitive cycle of *ganzhi*-days and *xun*-weeks that was sanctified by the numinous presence of the Shang ancestors as their emblematic days and suns appeared in orderly sequence. And within this grid moved the king, his diviners, and all the peoples, animals, and events of the land that he was seeking, through divination, ritual, and sacrifice, to understand, forecast, and dominate.¹⁰²

Thus the phenomenon of overlapping spheres of order and identity centred on the royal lineage applies not just to the socio-political level of the Shang polity but extends into the cosmic and numinous realms as well. As Wang aptly put it, “it was through this [*Sifang*] cosmology that power relations and the knowledge of the

¹⁰¹ Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 28; 30-31; 37-38.

¹⁰² Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape*, 121-122.

universe formed a single social composition, and that the domains of the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ fused into a continuity of being in the king’s body, an unbroken chain in the royal ancestral line.”¹⁰³

It seems in a world where cosmic and socio-political order were not yet differentiated, the Shang kings naturally must have perceived their purpose in attuning human affairs to the phenomenal cosmos, to its substance and to its cyclic movements.¹⁰⁴ Borrowing two concepts devised by John A. Wilson and Eric Voegelin respectively to describe similar phenomena in the ancient Near-East, we could say that the Shang elites perceived themselves in consubstantiality and conduration with the cosmos and its phenomena, as well as with the gods and ancestral spirits.¹⁰⁵ This compactness in the experience of being in turn constituted the conditions and limitations for the symbolization of order and collective identity we have been analysing in late Shang bronze inscriptions above. For those involved, Shang kingship was not an idea one could profess to or not, it was not a superimposed institutional structure one could choose to participate in or not. One was a part of it by virtue of being a part of the same cosmos and the same kinship

¹⁰³ Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 56.

¹⁰⁴ Jan Assmann identifies this mode as a common pattern in early civilizations, he states: “The pattern underlying such cyclic congruity is the cosmos in its circularity of astronomic, meteorological, and vegetative cycles. Thus the creation of cyclic time serves first and foremost the purpose of attuning the order of society with the order of the cosmos.” (Jan Assmann and Klaus E. Müller, eds., *Der Ursprung der Geschichte* [Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005], 11). The translation from German is my own.

¹⁰⁵ See John A. Wilson, “Egypt,” in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, 62-69; And Eric Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, passim. A similar claim for the Shang case has already been raised by Mu-chou Poo: “In the [Shang oracle bone] inscriptions one senses that the diviner addressed the deities, or ancestors, as if they were immediately accessible. In fact, since man believed so firmly that the deities and ancestors actually extended care and power to the propitiator directly, the world of extra-human powers in the conception of the Shang diviners should be seen as having been either conterminous with the human world or a continuous extension of it.” (*In Search of Personal Welfare* [Albany: State University of New York, 1998], 28). Elsewhere Poo further remarks: “Bronze inscriptions of the late Shang reveal that, similar to what was found on the oracle bones, the deities and ancestors existed in the same time frame as the living [...]” (“The Formation of the Concept of Antiquity in Early China,” in *Perceptions of Antiquity in Chinese Civilization*, ed. Dieter Kuhn and Helga Stahl [Heidelberg: Edition forum, 2008], 87).

group.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, Shang rule in a “political” sense (i.e. in the sense of exercising power and control over populations and resources) as Vandermeersch understands it, went hand in hand with the endeavour to control and physically incorporate the surrounding wilderness into the Shang domain. Shang rule was as much a socio-political affair as it was an endeavour to domesticate the Shang cosmos through scheduled ritual hunts.¹⁰⁷

With this in mind, we have to see how Zhou rhetoric introduced differentiations within this cosmological compactness and how these served as the conditions for the appearance of reflexive theo-political meaning and the notion of representative sovereignty that would enable the Zhou lineage alliance to define themselves as a community of purpose in politico-religious terms.

¹⁰⁶ In making this point I clearly differentiate between late Shang cosmological self-perception and the Shang kings’ knowledge about the regions and peoples surrounding them, which must have been quite extensive. There is also no reason to assume that the Shang were unaware of the numerous competing politico-religious centres co-inhabiting the greater North Chinese cultural area. This bias between the Shang kings’ cosmological self-perception and their socio-political interaction with surrounding peoples has been pointed out by David Keightley: “The frequent peregrinations of the king and his entourage [...], combined with the reports, tribute payments, court visits, marriage alliances, and so on made by his dependents, officers, and allies, indicate that the Shang court’s knowledge of a wider geography must have been extensive. The well over five hundred place-names that appear in the inscriptions reveal Shang knowledge of a far-flung series of settlements and their human and spiritual inhabitants. But the basic peasant perception, that of the parochial inhabitant anxiously scrutinizing the surrounding borders, attempting to understand and control the irruptions of benevolent or hostile Powers that lurked beyond, may still be discerned in the diviner’s cosmological conceptions” (Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape*, 55).

¹⁰⁷ For this important purpose of the Shang royal hunt see Magnus Fiskesjö, “Rising from Blood-stained Fields: Royal Hunting and State Formation in Shang China,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 73 (2001): 49-189.

1.4.2 *The Zhou cosmos and the experience of difference: The conceptualization of Sifang*

The differences setting the Zhou worldview apart from that of the Shang can be observed best perhaps if we follow the conceptual change that *Sifang* underwent from late Shang to the mid- to late Western Zhou period. In late Shang sources, as we have stated, *Sifang* describes a “cosmology of time and space,” suggesting the oneness of Heaven and Earth, spirits, natural forces and man in the cosmic fabric.¹⁰⁸ As an orientation framework and ritual structure for the king’s actions, conducted from his position at the pivot of the cosmos,¹⁰⁹ it allowed the king to treat the myriad phenomena as part of an organic cosmic unity.

Western Zhou sources in turn refer to *Sifang* as part of a differentiation between several spheres. In fact it was only in Western Zhou times that *Sifang* became a discursive concept the moment it came to designate one particular sphere in distinction to other spheres.¹¹⁰ The first of these differentiations concerns the conceptual distinction between Heaven, or the divine sphere, and the socio-political geography of man which the term *Sifang* exclusively designates in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as well as in the oldest strata from the *Odes* and *Documents*.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 46-54.

¹⁰⁹ Earlier studies, such as Paul Wheatley’s *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971) associate the centre of *sifang* with Anyang as a geographically fixed ceremonial complex. Based on earlier observations by David Keightley concerning the mobility of the Shang kings and the centrality of the royal lineage rather than of a specific locality made, Nancy Price Thompson Price concludes: “Late Shang cosmology, organized according to the basic principles of the cardinal points and not centered on a specific ‘permanent’ locale, suggests accommodation to mobility by means of orientation to the framework rather than to any specific place within it.” (Price Thompson, “The Pivot: Comparative perspectives from the Four Quarters,” 116).

¹¹⁰ Never, to my knowledge, does *sifang* imply the idea of an objective whole in any passage found in the Shang OBI corpus. It becomes tangible in its positions, as they are referred to from the perspective of and in terms of their reciprocal relation to the Shang royal center.

¹¹¹ As we will see below, *sifang* forms a conceptual pair with *min* 民, the subjects of sovereignty, in

1.4.2.1 *The first differentiation: sifang and superhuman realm of Heaven and Di*

The distinction between the divine sphere and the socio-political geography of man led to a constellation that proves to be completely different from what we have witnessed in late Shang sources. Removing the world of the gods from human reach, elevating it into the sphere of transcendence, marks a first step towards considering human society as such. At the same time, however, divine authority did not cease to determine the order of humanity. Quite the contrary, by freeing the gods from the exclusive access of one lineage and its diviners, the cosmic divinities became universal, a change which is indicated in the Shang-Zhou transition by the appearance of Heaven as the supreme Deity alongside Di.¹¹² This elevation further witnessed the identification of Heaven and Di with the universal pattern for human order and the attribution to it of the ultimate judgement over the course of human conduct. Benjamin I. Schwartz was arguably the first to point out this phenomenon:

What strikes one is the clear elevation of Heaven or the high god to a central and transcendent position in the cosmos and in the ethical life of society. This may have been [...] in direct reaction against a late Shang reassertion of the centrality of the royal ancestral cult. The attribution to the high god of the ultimate powers of judgement for the ethical and ritual performance of those

Western Zhou sources.

¹¹² Mircea Eliade remarks in this respect: “The vault of Heaven is, more than anything else, “something quite apart” from the tiny thing that is man and his span of life. [...] Even before any religious values have been set upon the sky it reveals its transcendence. The sky “symbolizes” transcendence, power and changelessness simply by being there.” (Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative religion* [New York: Meridian, 1958], 39).

who rule the human order seems to introduce a truly new dimension of transcendence.¹¹³

This is the same shift of socio-political aspects into the theological sphere that Jan Assmann has detected in the conception of the god of Israel:

The socio-political sphere of action delineated by the concepts of justice and righteousness is being transferred into the theo-political sphere. Here appears the radically new idea to elevate God into the role of legislator. In this function god replaces the old-oriental Kings.¹¹⁴

In the Chinese context this shift or transfer made the role of the king as diviner and high priest largely obsolete. Instead with Di and / or Heaven acting as legislators, the Zhou king became their representative in the human realm. Moreover, as the conceptual pair “Heaven” – “All under Heaven” (*tian* 天 – *tianxia* 天下) in the transmitted literature suggests, the idea of Heaven as a transcendent universal divinity concerned with the human order coincides with the conception of humanity as a world-immanent ecumenical unity in early China.¹¹⁵ Ultimately this created the conditions for the Zhou king to appear as a king in the sense of a sovereign who represented the universal divine order within the human realm.

What made such a representative sovereignty possible in the end, however, was not just the differentiation between divine transcendence and human world-immanence, or the charging of Heaven with a model of human order and the power of moral judgement, but a redistribution of authority following from that

¹¹³ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 48.

¹¹⁴ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 68. The translation from German is my own.

¹¹⁵ For the conception of *tianxia* as human ecumene see Peter Weber-Schäfer, *Oikumene und Imperium: Studien zur Ziviltheologie des Chinesischen Kaiserreichs* (Munich: List, 1968), 11-20.

distinction. By removing the gods from human reach, the course of divinity consequently could no longer be directly accessed or influenced by human sovereigns either through divination or with the help of lavish rituals aimed at controlling the divinity's course. As Schwartz rightly points out:

[T]he will of Heaven is in no sense “controlled” by rituals. Heaven rather stands free in transcendent judgement of how the rulers of men perform both their ritual and moral duties.¹¹⁶

One indicator of this development in early China is the fact that divination and large scale sacrifices in the *do ut des* fashion seem to have largely disappeared from the agenda of the King by mid-Western Zhou times.¹¹⁷ With this the human appropriation of divine authority did not come to an end, it merely changed its form. Here comes into play the notion of the Heavenly Mandate or the Great Charge (*da ling* 大令 or *da ming* 大命 as it is referred to in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions).

While the concept is rarely referred to in epigraphic texts from the early Western Zhou period,¹¹⁸ at least by late Western Zhou times, the receipt of the Great Charge

¹¹⁶ Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 50.

¹¹⁷ For changes in Western Zhou ritual praxis over time see Vogt, “Between Kin and King: Social Aspects of Western Zhou Ritual,” 288-334. For the development of Oracle Bone divination throughout the Zhou period see Rowan K. Flad, “Divination and Power: A Multiregional View of the Development of Oracle Bone Divination in Early China,” *Current Anthropology*, 49:3 (2008): 414-418. “The practice was widespread and still involved relatively elaborate procedures. Some diviners remained attached to leaders of various states, but the manipulations initiated by the Shang were no longer uniform or ubiquitous even in these contexts. Zhou diviners seem to have been relying as much on the power associated with a past tradition as they were on the practical mastery involved in maintaining a monopoly on divining practices” (ibid. 415).

¹¹⁸ It is explicitly mentioned only in the Da Yu *ding* (JC 2837) and in the He *zun* (JC 6014) inscription, given that the reconstruction of the two destroyed graphs in the latter as *da ling* 大令 is correct. See further the discussion on pages 113-115 for this point. Depending on how one interprets the text, it may also be implicitly referred to in the Jing Hou *gui* 井侯簋 (JC 4241) inscription as Di's Mandate (*Di ling* 帝令). Cf. pages 152-155 below. Again, the rareness of references to the Heavenly Mandate and to the narrative of its receipt in epigraphic sources from the early part of the dynasty is directly linked to general scarcity of reflexive passages of marked direct speech in texts from early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. This does not necessarily imply that the concept was not yet prominent during that time.

by King Wen or by Kings Wen and Wu qualifies as a formulaic topic in bronze inscriptions. The most common version of this formula can be found in the identical inscriptions from the two Shi Ke *xu* 師克盥 (*JC* 4467 + *NA* 1907) vessels and one Shi Ke *xu lid* 師克盥蓋 (*JC* 4468).¹¹⁹ It appears further in most versions of the text inscribed on the sets of 42nd and 43rd year Qiu *ding* 逯鼎 (*NA* 0745 - 0756) tripods as well as in the inscription from impressive Qiu *pan* 逯盤 (*NA* 0757) basin, all of them late Western Zhou bronzes from the reign of King Xuan, excavated from the same cache in Yangjiacun 楊家村, Mei 眉 county, Shaanxi, in 2003.¹²⁰ The formula reads as follows:

不(丕)顯文武，雁(膺)受大令，匍(敷)有四方。

Greatly illustrious [Kings] Wen and Wu received and shouldered the Great Mandate, which they spread throughout the four cardinal regions.¹²¹

This short passage claims the transferral of divine authority from the divinity onto its human representative who then implements this authority throughout the four cardinal regions, i.e. the human realm. This point is crucial for the entire argument to be developed throughout this study. The Zhou kings no longer needed to disclose Di' / Heaven's will through divination, they did not need to bribe the gods in order to receive their assistance. With the assumption of the Great Mandate, King Wen and

¹¹⁹ The vessels are said to have been excavated under unknown circumstances between 1875 and 1908 in Fufeng county, Shaanxi, after which they were separated at some point. Cf. *Wenwu* (1959) 3: 64; *Wenwu* (1962) 6: 9-14; and *Kaogu* 考古 (1994) 1: 70-73.

¹²⁰ Cf. Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 陝西省考古研究所, Baoji shi kaogu gongzuodui 寶雞市考古工作隊, Yangjiacun lianhe kaogudui 楊家村聯合考古隊, and Mei xian wenhuaguan 眉縣文化館, "Shaanxi Mei xian Yangjiacun Xizhou qingtongqi jiaocang fajue jianbao" 陝西眉縣楊家村西周青銅器窖藏發覺簡報, *Wenwu* (2003) 6: 4-42; and Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 陝西省考古研究院, Baoji shi kaogu yanjiusuo 寶雞市考古研究所, and Mei xian wenhuaguan, ed., *Ji jin zhu hua zhang: Baoji Meixian Yangjiacun Shanshi qingtongqi jiaocang* 吉金鑄華章：寶雞眉縣楊家村單氏青銅器窖藏 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), for the Yangjiacun find.

¹²¹ For the interpretation of fu 匍 (敷) see *Mingwen xuan*, 3.39, n. 6.

his descendants turned into the bearers of divine authority which enabled them to act autonomously in their efforts towards fulfilling the reflexive conditions of the Heavenly Charge within the human world. This autonomy of human agency however was bound to an obligation, indicated in the above passage by the morpheme ying 膺, which in the compound *yingshou* 膺受 means so much as to assume or to shoulder the burden of a responsibility.¹²²

Especially revealing in this respect is the beginning of the text from the mid-Western Zhou Shi Qiang *pan* 史牆盤 (JC 10175) inscription, named after its the donor, Commander Qiang, a member of the prestigious Wei 微 lineage.¹²³ Here it is not Heaven who bestows the Great Charge on King Wen but Di on High, which shows that the Shang concept of Di has been adapted in a Western Zhou context in order to fit the idea of a universal divine authority and its representation through the Zhou king:¹²⁴

曰：「古文王初盤(戾)夤(和)于政，上帝降懿(懿)德大粵(屏)，匍(敷)有卡(上下)，匄(會)受萬邦。緡(緡=疆)圉武王，適征(正)四方，達殷峻(允)民。[...]」
[Shi Qiang] declares:¹²⁵ “In antiquity, when King Wen first brought stability and harmony into the affairs of his government, Di on High sent down *yi-de* (a gracious exclusive obligation?) and great protection [on King Wen]. Spreading

¹²² The aspect of responsibility and accountability in Zhou kingship will concern us in greater detail shortly below.

¹²³ For this and related bronzes excavated in 1976 from the Zhuangbai 莊白 hoard in Fufeng 扶風 county, see Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui 陝西周原考古隊, Yin Shengping 尹盛平 eds., *Xizhou Wei shi jiazhu qingtongqi qun yanjiu* 西周微氏家族青銅器群研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1992). For the Wei lineage and its bronzes see further Luo Tai, “You guan Xizhou wanqi lizhi gaige ji Zhuangbai Weishi qingtongqi niandai de xin jiashe;” and von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 29-73.

¹²⁴ The transcription of this passage follows with minor adaptations that of Dong Shan in Cai Meifen 蔡玫芬 ed., *Hehe Zongzhou: Xizhou wenhua tezhan* 赫赫宗周 – 西周文化特展 (Taipei: Gu Gong, 2012), 24. Compare also the slightly different transcription in Qiu Xigui, “Shi Qiang *pan* ming jieshi” 史牆盤銘解釋, *Wenwu* (1978) 3: 25, rpt. in idem, *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji*, 3.9.

¹²⁵ I agree with Chen Yingjie who interprets the *yue* 曰 here as indicating a statement made by the vessel donor himself. See Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 833.

[this *yi-de*] from above to below,¹²⁶ [King Wen] convened and received the myriad polities [into his command]. Resolute and firm,¹²⁷ King Wu proceeded to set in order the four cardinal regions,¹²⁸ penetrating the Yin and gaining the trust of the *min*.¹²⁹ [...]”¹³⁰

We find the first four phrases from this passage almost verbally repeated in the inscription cast across the six bells from the mid- to late Western Zhou Xing *zhong* 癸鐘 III (JC 251-256) chime, commissioned by Commander Qiang’s son, Xing:¹³¹

曰：「古文王初盤(戾)龢(和)于政，上帝降 戡(懿)德大粵(屏)，匍(敷)有四方，匄(會)受萬邦。 [...]」

[Xing] declares: “In antiquity, when King Wen first brought stability and

¹²⁶ For this verbal interpretation of the compound *shangxia* 上下 see Jiang Kunwu, *Shi Shu chengci kaoshi*, 298-302.

¹²⁷ My interpretation of the graphs 強圉 follows Wang Ning 王寧, “Shi Shi Qiang *pan ming de* ‘qiang yu’” 釋史牆盤銘的「強圉」, Wuhan Daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心, http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=2047 (accessed March 29, 2017).

¹²⁸ While most scholars understand the graph 征 to write the word *zheng*, “to campaign,” “to attack,” Lian Shaoming 連劭名 and Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 have pointed out that 征 might well be a loan graph used to write the word *zheng* 正, “to set in order,” “to regulate.” Both scholars show that whereas the four cardinal regions are never mentioned as the subject of military campaigns in either the excavated or the transmitted literature from the Western Zhou, there are numerous examples where the Zhou king is said to set the four cardinal regions in order. See Lian Shaoming “Shi Qiang *pan mingwen yanjiu*” 史牆盤銘文研究, in *Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazhu qingtongqi yanjiu*, 362-363; and *Mingwen xuan*, 3.222. For further arguments against a military understanding of 征 see also *Kinbun tsūshaku* 50.338.

¹²⁹ My rendering of the graph 允 as *yun* 允, “trustily,” “aptly” or “to gain trust,” in this and other instances in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions follows an assumption voiced by Chen Zhi, which has been raised earlier in an unpublished statement by Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 as well. See Chen Zhi, “‘Yun,’ ‘yun,’ ‘jun’ shi shi” 「允」、「允」、「峻」試釋, *Bulletin of the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology* 1 (2014): 135-159.

¹³⁰ Cf. the interpretations by Tang Lan 唐蘭, Li Xueqin, Xu Zhongshu, Yu Xingwu and others in *Xizhou Wei shi jiazhu qingtongqi qun yanjiu*, 111-369; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 50.331-393; *Mingwen xuan* #225; Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #72; *Source Book*, 93-100. See also the annotated translation in Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 183-192.

¹³¹ While Li Xueqin, “Xizhou zhongqi qingtongqi de zhongyao biaoqi: Zhouyuan Zhoungbai, Qiangjia liang chu qingtongqi jiaocang de zonghe yanjiu” 西周中期青銅器的重要標尺— 周原庄白、強家兩處青銅器窖藏的綜合研究, *Zhongguo Lishi Bowuguan guankan* 中國歷史博物館館刊 1 (1979): 29-36, dates the chime to the mid- Western Zhou period, von Falkenhausen, “You guan Xizhou wanqi lizhi gaige ji Zhuangbai Weishi qingtongqi niandai de xin jiashe: Cong shixi mingwen shuo qi,” argues for a late Western Zhou date. The discrepancy rests on different reconstruction of the Wei genealogy from the account in the Si Qiang *pan* inscription. Von Falkenhausen’s reconstruction seems not only more plausible, his dating also concurs with Hayashi’s periodization of the chime based on art-historical considerations.

harmony into the affairs of his government, Di on High sent down *yi-de* (a gracious exclusive obligation?) and great protection [on King Wen]. Spreading [this *yi-de*] throughout the four cardinal regions, [King Wen] convened and received the myriad polities [into his command]. [...]”¹³²

At first sight the phrase “*Shang Di jiang yi-de da ping* 上帝降懿德大屏” appears to be similar to passages in the OBI where Di is described to send down support or harm in the form of various natural phenomena or military movements by foreign tribes reaching the king through the *sifang* structure.¹³³ In this passage, however, Di is perceived as directly investing King Wen with the capacities to fulfil a theo-political task. It is the latter, followed by his successor King Wu, who then turns into the agent who spreads this divine authority throughout *sifang*, which here clearly implies the human geography as can be inferred from the terms juxtaposition to the myriad polities in the following clause. Moreover the penultimate phrase in the passage from the Shi Qiang *pan* inscription leaves no question about the concept’s geo-political nature.

Uncertainty still prevails over how to interpret the compound *yi de* 懿德, which is usually rendered “fine virtue” or “excellent virtue” for lack of a more precise alternative. An important observation in the respect comes from Vassili Kryukov who remarks:

The innovation of the Shi Qiang *pan* lies in the substitution of “Heaven’s mandate” by “perfect virtue” [懿德]. Thus, there is a functional correspondence between *de* and *ming* 命.¹³⁴

¹³² Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 50.387-393; *Mingwen xuan* #269; “Inscriptional Records,” #92; *Source Book*, 122-123.

¹³³ Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu*, 580.

¹³⁴ See Vassili Kryukov, “Symbols of Power and Communication in Pre-Confucian China (On the Anthropology of *de*): Preliminary Assumptions,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 58.2 (1995): 321.

However we choose to translate the term *de* in this compound word, due to its functional correspondence with *ming*, we should expect it to carry the notion of a charge or of an obligation that, if assumed by King Wen, would have resulted in a bond between Di and King Wen. This also applies to the interpretation of *de* in the He *zun* inscription.¹³⁵

Problematic is not just the term *de*, which will concern us in greater detail later on in this study,¹³⁶ but also the morpheme *yi* 懿, commonly translated as “excellent” or “perfect.” This rendering is in fact based on a gloss in the *Erya* 爾雅, which ascribes it the meaning *mei* 美, “fine,” “excellent.”¹³⁷ On closer look we find that the same gloss lists *yi* and *xiu* 休, “grace,” “beneficence,” as synonyms. This provides an important clue as to how *yi* might be understood in this context, as *xiu* regularly modifies the king’s commands in vessel donors’ responses to royal appointments.¹³⁸ Hence it would make sense to interpret *yi* here in terms of Di’s beneficence. Although so far there are no other known instances of such a usage in the bronzes, we do find several examples where Di’s or Heaven’s Mandate is referred to as gracious in the *Documents of Zhou*.¹³⁹

However, the term *yi* seems to comprise another semantic aspect. In the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 we find the semantic referent of the graph 懿 paraphrased as “exclusive, enduring and (then) perfect” (*zhuan jiu er mei ye* 專久而美也).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Compare the discussion on pages 113-114, and pages 209-210.

¹³⁶ Cf. chapter three in this study.

¹³⁷ Xing Bing 邢昺 (932-1010), *Erya zhushu* 爾雅注疏, ed. Shisan Jing zhushu zhengli weiyuanhui 十三經注疏整理委員會 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 2001 [1818]), 2.30.

¹³⁸ Compare the discussion in chapter two below.

¹³⁹ See Jiang Kunwu, *Shi Shu chengci kaoshi*, 68-70.

¹⁴⁰ Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981 [1815]), 10.496.

Thus Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58 – 148 AD) modifies the meaning “fine / perfect” in a crucial way as the Qing philologist Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735 - 1815) explains in his *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注:

Xu expands the meaning [of *yi* as fine / perfect], adding the notion of ‘exclusivity’ and ‘endurance’ to it, for the graph 懿 follows the signific *yi* 壹, ‘one.’ Something has to be exclusive / undivided in order to become long lasting. When it can be made to last long then it will be fine / perfect.¹⁴¹

Whereas the emphasis on exclusivity and endurance would fit the context of the Shi Qiang *pan* and Xing *zhong* inscriptions, Xu Shen’s analysis of the graph 懿, which is written 𠄎 or 𠄏 in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, proves to be problematic from an epigraphic point of view. It rests on the assumption that the element 亼 in the graph 𠄎 (𠄏) can be interpreted as *yi* 壹, “one,” “single-minded.” Yet the latter graph is only attested for in the late Warring States period in the context of the state of Qin 秦.¹⁴² In other words, there exists ultimately no proof for Xu’s theory. Nevertheless, the notion of exclusivity, endurance and pervasiveness is suggested by the usage of the compound *yi-de* in early transmitted texts as well. For example in the major Mao ode *Shi mai* 時邁 (Mao #273) we read:

明昭有周	Greatly manifest is the House of Zhou,
式序在位	It has succeeded the central position.
載戢干戈	Now put away your shields and axes,
載囊弓矢	Now case your arrows and bows;
我求懿德	We seek <i>yi-de</i>

¹⁴¹ 「許益之以專久者，惟其字从壹也。專壹而後可久，可久而後美」(Ibid.)

¹⁴² See Yang Min 楊敏 and Meng Pengsheng 孟蓬生, “‘Yi’ ji ‘yi’ de lai yuan shi xi 「懿」及「壹」的來源試析, *Hebei Shifan Daxue xuebao* 河北師範大學學報 (Zhexue shehui kexue ban 哲學社會科學版) 39.6 (2016):116-119; and Hao Shihong 郝士宏, Shi hu, yi 釋壺、壹, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 25 (2004): 296-299.

肆于時夏 To be established throughout these Xia regions.
允王保之 May the king protect it.¹⁴³

Yi-de suggests here an integrative, stabilizing element, aimed at achieving an ecumenical unity in contrast to the preceding military conflict, associated with political fragmentation and potentially multiple power centres. The same notion of *yi-de* clearly prevails in our examples above. Thus given the lack of a convincing alternative interpretation,¹⁴⁴ I still choose to translate the compound *yi-de* tentatively as “gracious exclusive obligation” in the Xing *zhong* and Shi Qiang *pan* inscriptions. This makes sense in so far as King Wen is considered the exclusive bearer of Heaven’s or Di’s universal charge, obliging him to convene the myriad polities of the North China Plain under his command. Moreover, the enduring nature of this task is laid out in the Shi Qiang *pan* inscription in terms of a historical narrative which traces the retrieval and the perpetuation of this task throughout successive reigns of Zhou kings, presumably up to the reign of King Yih 懿 (r. 899/97-873).¹⁴⁵

1.4.2.2 The Great Charge: From analogy to literalism

To sum up our point, the shift of authority and agency that resulted from this differentiation between the transcendent sphere of the gods and the human socio-political realm, paralleled by the transfer of the pattern of human order into the

¹⁴³ *Maoshi zhushu*, 19.1921. Compare also the use of the compound in the major ode *Zheng min* 烝民 (Mao # 260).

¹⁴⁴ While many modern palaeographers still follow Xu Shen’s interpretation, some argue that the element 壺 should be transcribed as *hu* 壺, “flagon,” “jug.” See Guwenzi gulin bianzuan weiyuanhui, ed., *Guwenzi gulin*, 8.848-849. However, this explanation does not lead to any convincing interpretation of the graph either.

¹⁴⁵ Compare the full text in Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 183-192.

divine sphere, coincided with a reversal of the role of the king from a patriarch, diviner and tribal leader to the role of the sole representative of the universal divine order within the human community. In order to become this representative he needed to gain autonomy over his own agency which was accomplished through the self-proclaimed receipt of the Great Charge from Heaven or Di.

The Zhou king's autonomy of agency, however, was bound to an obligation, to the fulfilment of a political task to be precise. This point deserves special attention. As we have stated in the introduction to this study, the mutual commitment to this politico-religious task served as grounds for the affiliation with the institution of Zhou kingship in Western Zhou lineage rhetoric. But the point also deserves our attention because the notion of reflexive political meaning, of a theo-political task that aimed at the change of the state of affairs in the world was something completely new in comparison with the agenda of Anyang kingship. The latter, as we have already noted, saw its *raison d'être* in the ritual attunement of the human order to that of the cosmos. The logic behind Shang ritual praxis, seen as the fulfilment of Shang kingship in terms of the ritual integration of the human polity into the cosmic order, is quite similar to what Eric Voegelin writes with respect to the Ancient Near East:

In Mesopotamian and Egyptian Societies of the Ancient Near East, the order of the empire is symbolized as an analogue to the order of the cosmos; its creation and perpetuation as well are symbolized in terms of cosmic creation. The rituals refer to the empire as an already existent and established part of the cosmos.¹⁴⁶

This reverberates with Frankfort's observation cited above, that "whatever was significant" in the perception of early man "was imbedded in the life of the cosmos,

¹⁴⁶ Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis: Zur Theorie der Geschichte und Politik* (Munich: Piper, 1966), 201. The translation into English is my own.

and it was precisely the king's function to maintain the harmony of that integration.” The conception of the Heavenly Mandate by contrast suggests that at the turn of the first millennium BCE it was no longer sufficient or even possible to simply maintain that integration under the given circumstances. Indeed it presupposes a disjunction between human and cosmic order which necessitates pragmatic action on the side of the human sovereign to overcome this discrepancy. Again, it was Benjamin Schwartz who first recognized this point:

At its deepest level, the idea of Heaven's Mandate presents us with a clear apprehension of the gap between the human order as it ought to be and as it actually is.¹⁴⁷

This gap becomes manifest in the juxtaposition between Heaven's universality and the myriad polities (*wan bang*) populating the north China plain. The idea of the Heavenly Mandate (or Di's *yi-de* in the Xing *zhong* inscription) was now for the King to convene all these polities within one ecumenical conception of humanity in order to match (*pei* 配) the human world with its Heavenly counterpart. This matching image, depicting the very idea of Zhou kingship, occurs literally in Western Zhou sources in connection with the king gaining control over the four cardinal regions, its territories and its peoples. We find this image articulated in its most basic form among other texts in the inscription from the late Western Zhou Nangong Hu *zhong* 南宮乎鐘 (JC 181).¹⁴⁸ The middle part from the inscription reads:

¹⁴⁷ Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 53.

¹⁴⁸ The bell was discovered by construction workers on May 5th 1979 near Baozigou 豹子沟 in Fufeng county, Shaanxi. See Luo Xizhang 羅西章, “Fufeng chutu de Shang Zhou qingtongqi” 扶風出土的商周青銅器, *Kaogu yu Wenwu* 考古與文物 (1980) 4: 6-30.

[...]天子其萬年壽(眉)壽，畀(允)永保四方，配皇天。[...]
[....] May the Son of Heaven for ten thousand years until old age, forever
sovereignly protect the four cardinal regions, [and in doing so] matching August
Heaven. [...] ¹⁴⁹

Statements such as this presuppose not an analogy but a basic discrepancy to be in place between human and cosmic order. Hence congruence between both spheres needs to be created and maintained through the agency of the Zhou king who acts on behalf of and is invested with Heaven's exclusive authority. This shift from Shang ritualism and divination to the Zhou kings' proclaimed implementation of the Heavenly order in the human realm has been conceptualized by Eric Voegelin in another context in terms of the development from cosmological empires to ecumenical empires as a "literalisation" of the analogy between cosmic and human order. Taking the Mongol edicts sent to the pope and other European leaders between the years 1245-1255 as an example he states:

Different from the ritual of the cosmological empire that re-news the cosmic order in accordance to the rhythm of the seasonal celebrations analogically for the order of the empire, the ritual of ecumenic expansion transposes this analogy into pragmatic action. It is no longer sufficient to perceive the establishment and the order of the existing society as an analogue to the cosmic creation and the cosmic order. The analogy to divine sovereignty over the cosmos becomes literalized as human sovereignty over the entire ecumene. ¹⁵⁰

Heaven's Great Charge can be seen as the very symbol of this literalisation in early China. In its conception, the Mandate is not a metaphor but a concrete call for action.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *Mingwen xuan* #446; Cai Meifen 蔡玫芬 ed., *Hehe Zongzhou – Xizhou wenhua tezhan* 赫赫宗周 – 西周文化特展 (Taipei: Gu Gong, 2012), 84-87.

¹⁵⁰ Voegelin, *Anamnesis: Zur Theorie der Geschichte und Politik*, 179. The translation into English is my own.

This goes hand in hand with a significant change in human self-perception as

Voegelin further remarks:

The transformation from the analogical ritual to the literal ritual presupposes a shift in human perception from being a part of the cosmic order to the autonomy of human agency.¹⁵¹

Both factors, the autonomy of human agency and sovereignty as pragmatic action are combined in the notion of the Heavenly Mandate as we find it in the inscriptions and in the earliest transmitted literature. Ultimately these two factors constitute the conditions that gave rise to the sort of argumentation associated with the *Documents of Zhou*. No matter whether we look at the announcement (gao 誥) or the harangue (shi 誓) chapters, all these passages presume the autonomy of human agency in terms of the possibility to decide for or against a certain path of action. Without this possibility, the rhetoric of crisis and of motives these texts are built on would neither be necessary nor possible to think of.¹⁵²

1.4.2.3 *The second differentiation: sifang and the Zhou polity*

Let us return to *sifang* as our common thread to lead us through this chapter. In Western Zhou sources, *sifang* not only signifies the human geography in distinction to the Heavenly realm, it also forms part of another distinction that took place within the human geography. Other than the Shang kings, the Zhou never understood

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 179

¹⁵² Cf. Chapter two pp. 175-193.

themselves to constitute the “natural” centre of the *sifang*-geography. This is partly due of course to the fact that the Zhou were conquerors from the margins of the former Shang realm, which for them marked the centre of civilization. Hence their relation with this centre could have never been an autochthonous one, but one of conquest, migration and foundation.

Yet even after the initial Western Zhou reigns had passed, the Zhou still primarily identified with their ancestral homeland, not at the centre but west of the four cardinal regions and their populations. Due to this prevailing perspective, the lands and the population of *sifang* remained in a way objectified throughout the dynasty. Such is the case in the early Western Zhou Da Yu *ding* 大盂鼎 (JC 2837) inscription¹⁵³ where the Zhou king, presumably King Kang,¹⁵⁴ is depicted to charge

¹⁵³ The inscription from the Da Yu *ding* has been first recorded and transcribed in Wu Dacheng 吳大澂, *Hengxuan suo jian suo cang jijin lu* 恆軒所見所藏吉金錄 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1971 [1885]), 9.12, and ten years later again in Wu Shifen, *Mei gu lu jinwen*, 2.550-560. According to Wu Dacheng, *Kezhai ji gu lu* 憲齋集古錄, 26 juan. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004 [1896]), 4.15, the vessel was discovered in a mud bank in Licun 禮村 near Qi 岐 Mountain in Mei 眉 county, Shaanxi, around the year 1820. The same site reportedly also produced the now lost early Western Zhou Xiao Yu *ding* 小盂鼎 (JC 2839) (cf. Wang Guowei, *Guantang bieji bu yi* 觀堂別集補遺, in idem, *Wang Guangtang xiansheng quanji* 王觀堂先生全集, 16 vols. [Taipei: Wenhua chubangongsi, 1958], 4.2.1294). For the intricate history of the vessel’s early transmission and appropriation process during the turbulent late Qing and Republican eras see Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 101; *Source Book*, 30; and Li Zhaoyuan 李朝遠, “Da Yu *ding* zhengbu er san li” 大盂鼎証補二三例, *Shanghai Wenbo* 上海文博 (2004) 1: 24-30. The vessel is now stored in the National Museum of China in Beijing.

¹⁵⁴ Due to the salient similarities between the text from the Da Yu *ding* inscription and that of the “Jiu gao” 酒誥 in the transmitted *Documents*, late Qing scholars took the traditional ascription of the “gao” chapters in the *Documents* to the reign of King Cheng as grounds to date the Da Yu *ding* vessel to the time of King Cheng as well. The mentioning of the posthumous title of King Cheng in the inscription on the Xiao Yu *ding*, commissioned by the same individual than the Da Yu *ding*, lead subsequent scholars to agree on a date during the reign of King Kang for the production of the vessel. Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 101-102. However the reign of King Kang must be understood as a *terminus post quem* date. Recent art-historical considerations as well as textual features associated with inscriptions typical for the early mid- Western Zhou period lead more and more scholars to assume a later date for the production both of the Xiao and Da Yu *ding*, presumably within the reign of King Mu. Cf. Li Shan 李山 and Li Hui 李輝, “Dai xiao Yu *ding* zhizuo niandai Kang wang shuo zhiyi” 大小盂鼎制作年代康王說質疑, *Beijing Shifan Daxue xuebao* 北京師範大學學報 2 (2012): 31-36; and Maria Khayutina, “The Conquest of Shang,” forthcoming, appendix. Khayutina compares the “antiquarian” style of the vessel to that of the Qi *ding* 旃鼎 (JC 2704) and the Zhong Jiang *ding* 仲姜鼎 (JC 2191), which both date to the mid-Western Zhou period. Furthermore she argues that the calendric information in the Xiao Yu *ding* inscription fits the calendar of King Mu. In addition to the

the vessel donor Yu with an important military task:

隹(唯)九月，王才(在)宗周，令孟。[...]

It was in the ninth month when the King was at Ancestral Zhou issuing a command to Yu. [...]

王曰：孟，迺豐(紹)夾死(尸)司戎，敏諫罰訟。夙(夙)夕豐(召)我一人登(烝)四方，季我其疆省先王受民受疆(疆)土。

The King spoke: “Yu, assist me in taking over the supervision of warfare and be assiduous in remonstrating with me.¹⁵⁵ From dawn to dusk assist me, the One Man, in heading the four cardinal regions,¹⁵⁶ so I may continue to inspect the populations / peoples and the territories the former kings have been entrusted with.¹⁵⁷

It is revealing that the king utters this command from the Zhou ancestral lands in the Wei river valley and not from the Eastern capital Chengzhou 成周, the political centre of *sifang* in Western Zhou rhetoric.¹⁵⁸ Although Chengzhou occasionally functions as the setting for royal commands and receptions in bronze inscriptions as

dispute over the dating of the vessel, the contiguities between its text and passages from the *Documents* as well as its neat calligraphy lead the late Qing scholar Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909) to declare the inscription an outright forgery (Zhang Zhidong, *Guangya lun junshi zha* 廣雅堂論金石札 [1922], reprinted in *Jinwen wenxian jicheng* 金文文獻集成, 46 vols., ed. Zhongguo Kexueyuan kaoguyanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所 [Hong Kong: Xianggang Mingshi wenhua guoji chubanyouxiangongsi, 2004], 16.440-441). However, Zhang’s rather subjective assumptions concerning the authenticity of the Da Yu ding and a number of further inscriptions generally considered as authentic have been refuted as unfounded guesswork in Rong Geng, *Shang Zhou yiqi tonglun*, 171-172; and in Rong Geng and Zhang Weiqi, *Yin Zhou qingtongqi tonglun*, 136.

¹⁵⁵ For the interpretations of the graphs 死(尸)司 as indicating the meaning of “to take on responsibilities,” see the explanations by Constance A. Cook in *Source Book*, 33, note 6.

¹⁵⁶ For this rendering of the graph 登 as *zheng* 烝 and its interpretation as *jun* 君, “to rule,” see Yang Huaiyuan 楊懷源, *Xi Zhou jinwen cihui yanjiu* 西周金文詞彙研究 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 2007), 146.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.34-35; *Duandai* #74; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 12.647-681; *Mingwen xuan* #62; Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #36; and *Source Book* #29. The scholarly literature on the Da Yu ding inscription is particularly vast. For a comprehensive discussion of the text’s interpretations published in Chinese see Zhou Baohong 周寶宏, *Xizhou qingtong zhongqi mingwen jishi* 西周青銅種器銘文集釋 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2007), 203-350.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*, 45-46, for the location of Zongzhou. For the identification of eastern capital Chengzhou or Luoyi 洛邑 see *ibid*, 62-66.

well, throughout the Western Zhou period most appointments and receptions took place in other locations, including to a significant extent the royal residences at Zhou 周 or Qizhou 岐周, Zhongzhou / Hao 宗周 / 鎬 and Feng 封,¹⁵⁹ all located in or close to the Plain of Zhou. Especially in mid- and late Western Zhou inscriptions, slightly more than half of the kingly whereabouts mentioned in the texts belong to the latter group.¹⁶⁰

The picture we get from this differs from the Shang precedent in a twofold way. Although the Shang kings always constituted the centre of *sifang*, the regions and peoples classified within this structure were by definition heterogeneous and alien to the Shang.¹⁶¹ Unless they became permanent Shang members through ancestral adoption, they were bound to remain outside of the central Shang civilization. In Zhou sources we observe the exact opposite situation. While the Zhou saw themselves rather outside or on the Western fringes of the *sifang* geography, the latter and their populations became homogeneous and subject to Zhou sovereignty.¹⁶² This coincides with the appearance of the term *min* 民 (peoples, populations) in Western Zhou sources. As I have shown elsewhere, *min* functions as an ordering symbol in that it designates potentially diverse populations uniformly and homogeneously in the aspect of their conceived affiliation to the Zhou realm. The concept of *min* integrates these populations into the Zhou order in their function as passive subjects

¹⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, 27- 49, for the geography of the Zhou heartland, including the location of its major settlements.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Maria Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity,” *T’oung Pao* 96 (2010): 5-11. Khayutina proposes in this article among other issues the continued prominence of the pre-dynastic centres on the Plain of Zhou in the hierarchy of royal residences throughout the Western Zhou period.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 26-46.

¹⁶² See *ibid.*, 63-71 The earliest extant example for this perception is the text from the 保卣 Bao you (JC 5415) and 保尊 Bao zun (JC 6003) inscriptions dating from the reign of King Cheng, where a royal bestowal is said to have “coincided with the leaders from the populations of the four cardinal regions gathering at Zhou (probably Qizhou 岐周) for the King’s great you-sacrifice” (禘(禘)于四方迨(會)王大祀祓(祐)于周).

who merely respond to sovereignty based on and implemented in accordance with the Heavenly Mandate.¹⁶³ This fits well with the fact that the term *min* is not only unattested for in the uncorrupted Shang sources, the idea of a subject population is also foreign to the late Shang conception of sovereignty.¹⁶⁴

This leads us to the second major distinction which *sifang* forms a part of in a Western Zhou context, namely the distinction between the Zhou and their allies as Heaven's representatives on the one hand, and the myriad lands with their populations they are charged with to rule on the other. This distinction becomes particularly visible in the inscription on the late Western Zhou Da Ke *ding* 大克鼎 (JC 2836):¹⁶⁵

不(丕)顯天子，天子其萬年無疆(疆)，保辭(乂)周邦，畋(允)尹四方。

Greatly illustrious is the Son of Heaven! May the Son of Heaven for myriad years without end protect and secure the Zhou polity and aptly rule over the four cardinal regions.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ See my “The Term *min* 民 as a Political Concept in Western Zhou Thought,”

¹⁶⁴ In the view of the preceding discussion on the nature of the Shang polity as defining itself against its surrounding cultural outsiders, I would speak about the role of its affiliated non-Shang populations in terms of affines in the sense Mary W. Helms has defined the concept: “Because the house views itself as embedded within an encircling and qualitatively definitive cosmic setting, the house can never be complete unto itself. Like it or not, its continued existence as a political, social, and ideological entity is held hostage by the moral and political necessity of recognizing and forming attachments with cosmological Others [...]. Among the several categories of universally recognized cosmological Others are affines, non-members of the house [the latter defined in our case as the Shang core lineage and its princely lateral branches (A/N)] who constitute a category of other people that stands in close structural proximity with the house and who are linked to the house by distinctive metaphorical and sociological relationships” (Mary W. Helms, *Access to Origins: Affines, Ancestors and Aristocrats* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998], 55). The *min* on the other hand were by definition an integral part of the *Tianxia* cosmos. In Western and Eastern Zhou sources, cultural outsiders were associated with the *yi* 夷 and *rong* 戎 barbarians. See Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 194-241.

¹⁶⁵ The vessel was found in 1890 within a cache of approximately 120 bronzes unearthed in Rencun 任村, Fufeng county, Shaanxi. Apart from the Da Ke *ding*, about a dozen more vessels from the same cache also belonged to Ke 克, a prominent landowner and important official in late Western Zhou times. Cf. *Duandai*, 259-260; and *Source Book*, 172. Its inscription was first recorded and transcribed in Wu Dacheng, *Kezhai ji gu lu*, 5.1-5.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *Daxi*, 2. 121-123; *Duandai* #185; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 28.490-511; *Mingwen xuan* #297; Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #96; *Source Book* #46. My interpretation of the compound *baoyi* 保辭(乂) follows Lei Xieren 雷燮仁, “*Shi, Shu*, jinwen ‘baoyi’ ciyi bianzheng” 《詩》、《書》、金文 “保乂(艾、

Here and in a number of similar passages from both excavated and transmitted sources we find the Zhou polity and *sifang* explicitly separated into two spheres within one political context.¹⁶⁷ This novelty is important as it opens up the space for political sovereignty. As we are dealing with a polycentric political area of tension within the perceived “inner” cultural space of the Zhou confederation, we can now speak of a ruler and the ruled, bound together within the framework of one ecumenical order.

With this, the role of the king changes from a tribal leader and high priest, leading the path for his kinship-community through divination and ritual, to a universal king representing divine authority within the human ecumene. This point becomes obvious for the first time in the He *zun* 何尊 inscription (JC 6014), dating from the reign of King Cheng or King Kang:¹⁶⁸

隹(唯)王初鄴(遷)宅于成周，復禹珷(武)王豐(禮)，裸自天。[...]

When the king for the first time took residence in Chengzhou, he resumed the rites of King Wu and poured out the libation from [the chamber of] Heaven.

辭)” 詞義辨證, *Guwenzi luntan* 古文字論壇 1 (2015): 338-347.

¹⁶⁷ See the odes *Jie Nan Shan* 節南山 (Mao 191) and *Song Gao* 崧高 (Mao 259) in the *Mao Odes*, the “Kang gao” 康誥 and “Luo gao” 洛誥 chapters in the *Documents*, and the inscriptions from the Lu Bo Dong *guigai* 魯伯戲簋蓋 (JC 4302), Shi Xun *gui* 師匚簋 (JC 4342), Bao *you* 保卣 (JC 5415), Bao *zun* 保尊 (JC 6003) and Qiu *pan* 逯盤 (NA 757) vessels.

¹⁶⁸ Standing under the influence of the traditional Zhou narrative, most scholars identify the king in this inscription with King Cheng and consequently relate the episode to the “Shao gao” passage in the *Documents*. First among them Tang Lan 唐蘭, “He *zun* mingwen jieshi” 何尊銘文解釋, *Wenwu* (1976) 1: 60-63; and Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, “He *zun* mingwen jieshi” 何尊銘文解釋, *Wenwu* (1976) 1: 64-65. Cf. the references listed in *Source Book*, 18. However based on inconsistencies between the calendrical data in the He *zun* inscription and King Cheng’s calendar as it appears in the transmitted *Documents*, Li Xueqin ascribes the vessel to the fifth year in the reign of King Kang. See Li Xueqin, “He *zun* xin shi” 何尊新釋, *Wenwu* (1981) 1: 35-45. This proposal is also shared by Dong Shan 董珊. See his notes on the He *zun* inscription in Cai Meifen ed., *Hehe Zongzhou*, 44. Comparing both style and inscription of the He *zun* with similar, yet more accurately datable *zun* vessels found in the Baoji 寶雞 area where the He *zun* has been excavated in 1963, Khayutina goes so far as to suggest a date in the early reign of King Zhao for the production of the vessel. See Khayutina, “The Conquest of Shang,” appendix.

[...]

曰：「[...]隹(唯)珷(武)王既克大邑商，則廷告于天，曰：『余其宅茲中或(域)，自之辭(乂)民。』[...]」

He spoke: “[...] When King Wu had newly subdued the Great Settlement Shang, he solemnly announced to Heaven the words: ‘I shall reside in this central region and from here protect the *min*-populations.’ [...].”¹⁶⁹

The centre here is no longer primarily a cosmic centre or an *axis mundi*, but a political centre marked as such by the sovereign who is surrounded by his subjects. Also noteworthy is the autonomy of agency with which King Wu chooses the place for establishing his politico-religious task.

Although one has to keep in mind the largely symbolic nature of this constellation, as is the case with the rise of Zhou kingship and the idea of the Heavenly Mandate, the on-going differentiation between the royal domain and *sifang* in Western Zhou rhetoric also mirrors underlying pragmatic conditions. These have been identified and conflated by Li Feng 李峰 in “the structural bifurcation of the Western Zhou State” along the dividing line between the royal domain in Shaanxi and the numerous regional states surrounding the eastern capital Chengzhou.¹⁷⁰ The Zhou simply lacked the means to create a single unified administrative structure, capable of turning the entire north Chinese cultural region into a centrally governed dominion.¹⁷¹ Maria Khayutina even distinguishes “between the royal metropolitan territories as the ‘smaller Zhou kingdom,’ on the one hand, and the ‘larger Zhou

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku* 48.171-184; *Mingwen xuan* #32; Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, 1997), 77-79; Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #13; and *Source Book* #6.

¹⁷⁰ Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*, 110-116; and idem, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China*, 43-49.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft*, 417-443; Xu Zhuoyun, *Xi Zhou shi*, 107-173.

polity' including principalities, on the other hand.¹⁷² This differentiation makes the most sense to me as it reflects the conceptual distinction between the Zhou polity and *sifang* geography, including the so-called regional states, in Western Zhou political rhetoric.

1.4.2.4 The third differentiation: Cosmic synchronicity vs. diachronic political time, linear time of the bond

In reviewing the differentiations pointed out so far, we find that all the distinct spheres of the Zhou world, both cosmic and political, were thought to be interconnected in the person of the king. But other than in Shang ritual logic, the Zhou king was not the “natural” pivot of the cosmos. Neither was he necessarily related to his allies through lines of descent. If he was, as we will come to see in the second and third chapter of this study, these kinship ties did not play a significant role in the ideological conception of Zhou kingship. The king had to affiliate with Heaven, his allies and the *sifang* ecumene by means of politico-religious commitments and alliances. The connection between the king and the different spheres of the world was therefore always conditional and subject to an obligation that started at a definite point in time from which onward the king had to assume accountability for his actions. Thus comes into play a third differentiation involving the Western Zhou notion of *sifang*, namely the differentiation between the eternal cycles of cosmic time and the potentially finite linear time of the theo-political

¹⁷² See Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity,” 37-38; and idem, “Marital Alliances and Affinal Relatives (Sheng and Hungou) in the Society and Politics of Zhou China in the Light of Bronze Inscriptions,” *Early China* 37 (2014): 56.

mandate. It was the bond with Heaven that initiated the course of irreversible time in early China, unfolding into successive periods of accountability,¹⁷³ always with the possibility of coming to an end should the Zhou kings fail to live up to their obligations.

If in Shang ritual praxis *sifang* functioned to structure cosmic time, it became subject to the time of the theo-political bond in Western Zhou thought. Already in the passages from the Nangong Hu *zhong* and Da ke *ding* inscriptions cited above, we encountered the protagonist's anxiety about human finitude, more exactly about the reigning king's mortality and consequently about the prospect of dissolution of the Zhou's bond with Heaven. We read: "May the Son of Heaven for ten thousand years until old age, forever sovereignly protect the four cardinal regions [...]," in the inscription from the Nangong Hu *zhong*, and: "May the Son of Heaven for ten thousand years without end protect the Zhou polity and sovereignly administer the four cardinal regions," in the inscription from the Da ke *ding* respectively.¹⁷⁴

In the end, of course, the Zhou kings proved to be mortal. Hence in the literary tradition, especially in the *Zhoushu* section from the transmitted *Documents*, we repeatedly encounter the topic of royal succession that required the re-determination of the royal heir to continue the bond with Heaven. That this appears to be less of a topic in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions should be due to the fact that most bronzes

¹⁷³ Compare Assmann and Müller eds., *Der Ursprung der Geschichte*, 13-16, for the conception of irreversible linear time as the time of accountability (Rechenschaftszeit). Assmann states: "Linear cultural memory, the memory of the time of accountability, is inextricably linked with the concept of history and historical consciousness. [...] As do rites and celebrations belong to the cyclical construction of time, so do justice and morals, liability and accountability belong to the linear construction of time" (ibid, 13). The translation from German is my own.

¹⁷⁴ Similar prayers for personal and political immortality, becoming increasingly common in mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, are entirely absent from epigraphic Shang sources where future prospects were limited to the extents of the ritual cycles that could be divined about. Cf. Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, "Cong meishou dao changsheng – Zhongguo gudai shengming guannian de zhuanbian" 從眉壽到長生 – 中國古代生命觀念的轉變, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 66.2 (1995): 383-487.

were commissioned by non-royal elites. The text on the late Western Zhou Wusi Hu *zhong* 五祀𦉑鐘 (JC 358) poses an exception in this respect. It is one of the few Western Zhou inscriptions written from the perspective of the king, in this case from the perspective of the young King Li 厲 (r. 857/53-842/28) standing at the beginning of his reign.¹⁷⁵ The inscription starts with King Li articulating his intent to continue the bond with Heaven initiated by King Wen:¹⁷⁶

明韞文乃受大命，匍右(有)四方。余小子肇嗣先王，配上下[...]。𦉑其萬年永畹(允)尹四方，保大令[...]。

Bright [...] [King] Wen received the Great Mandate and spread it throughout the four cardinal regions. I, the young heir, proceed to carry on with the former Kings' [task of] matching above and below [...]. May I, Hu (King Li [N/A]), for ten thousand years without end, sovereignly govern the four cardinal regions and protect the Great Mandate.¹⁷⁷

What we find clearly articulated here, and to some extent already in the passages from the Da Yu *ding* and He *zun* inscriptions cited above, is the retrieval of a legacy. The text presents us with the interrelated notions of obligation and time as they are commonly defined in anthropology: Legacy, or better, the retrieval of legacy, presupposes a sense of conscience, memory, and future determination on the side of the retriever. These three factors in combination create, to speak with Jan Assmann, a “sphere of inter-locution” within which the present reaches out into the past and the future.¹⁷⁸ The retriever of legacy feels the obligation to remember and re-assume

¹⁷⁵ The bell was discovered by peasants during construction works in February 1981 near Zhuangbai 莊白, Fufeng county, Shaanxi. It was subsequently acquired by the Shaanxi museum in October 1982. See Mu Haiting 穆海亭 and Zhu Jieyuan 朱捷元, “Xin faxian de Xizhou wangshi zhongqi ‘Wusi Hu zhong’” 新發現的西周王室重器五祀𦉑鐘, *Renwen zazhi* 人文雜誌 23.2 (1983): 118-121.

¹⁷⁶ The preceding portion from this text is likely inscribed on another bell belonging to the same chime, which however is not yet found, or might have been lost or destroyed.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *Mingwen xuan* #405.

¹⁷⁸ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 133-134.

commitments made by his forebears. He makes these commitments his own and turns them further into an obligation for his descendants. Assmann therefore also calls this the “sphere of obligation and conscience.”¹⁷⁹ It is in this sphere, that the Zhou kings and their allied elites were able to relate to each other and to define their political alliances across generations.¹⁸⁰

In Shang times, it seems, this sphere has not yet fully opened up. Late Shang divination records and bronze inscriptions concern the present and the immediate future as far as it can be rendered definite and predictable through divination. As the divination records in the OBI show, the authority for the king’s actions rested completely with the provident divinity, in theory at least it granted the king no autonomy of agency. Hence as far as concerns the king’s actions determined through means of divination, there was no need for him to retain a memory of accountability. This does not mean that memory did not play a role in Shang kingship, quite the contrary is the case, but memory or cultural memory in Shang times was exclusively concerned with the continuity of correct ritual performance and not with historical memory. In this respect Assmann remarks:

Cultural memory circulates in forms of commemoration that were originally bound up with rituals and festivals. As long as these rites were predominant, the knowledge that was all-important for identity was handed down through repetition. It is the very essence of all rites that they follow a given, unchanging order. Thus each performance is consistent with its predecessors, so that in illiterate societies time typically follows a circular pattern; it is therefore fair to

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Assmann further remarks in this respect: “In the sphere of inter-locution one cultivates one’s conscience and memory in order to become a point of contact for others. This conscientious memory is called accountability.” (In der Sphäre der Inter-Lokution bildet man ein Gewissen und ein Gedächtnis aus, um ein Ansprechpartner zu sein für die anderen. Dieses gewissenhafte Gedächtnis heißt Verantwortung). (Ibid).

talk of this cultural circularity in terms of “repetition compulsion.”¹⁸¹

Although the Shang elites were an incipient literate society, their epigraphic remains, however, pretty much define Shang identity in terms of ritual continuity. In other words the main mechanisms of Shang sovereignty, divination and ritual, prevented the perception of Anyang kingship from breaking up and falling into the distinct spheres of past, present and future and thus from the necessity to develop a historical memory.

The formation of Western Zhou kingship by contrast began with the proclaimed transferral of authority from Heaven to the king and continued with the delegation of permanent authority from the King to his allied elites. From King Wen’s assumption of the Mandate, or more likely from the initial delegation of ruling authority from the king to the ducal lineages, the Zhou entered into what Assmann calls “the time of accountability.”¹⁸² The conditions and the time of the Mandate, its binding past and its future promise, became the ideological context for the Zhou alliance’s existence and perpetuation, which brings us to our last point in this chapter.

1.4.2.5 sifang, the Heavenly Mandate and the Zhou lineage alliance

In the above discussion on the various differentiations defining the Zhou world, we have been mainly considering the Zhou king’s relation with Heaven and *sifang*, but what about the individual elites that constituted the Zhou ruling alliance? Where was their place in this politico-religious constellation?

¹⁸¹ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 72.

¹⁸² See p. 113, n. 173 above.

In fact, with the exception of the Wusi Hu *zhong* text, all passages from Western Zhou epigraphic sources cited so far are taken from inscriptions commissioned and used by non-royal elites. If we were to limit our scope of investigation to include epigraphic sources only, our knowledge of the Zhou founding narrative would indeed derive almost entirely from non-royal lineage accounts. In other words, the image of the Zhou kings and their deeds as we find them retained in bronze inscriptions are told from the perspective of various north Chinese elites and should thus be expected to relate closely to the latter's own causes. This resembles to a certain degree the situation in late Shang bronze inscriptions, which also have been inscribed exclusively from the perspective of elites in their endeavours to affiliate with royal ancestral ritual. In the Zhou case however, the vessel donors did not perceive themselves as royal kin, instead they identified with the Zhou kings' political task. For instance the passage from the Xing *zhong* inscription cited earlier in this chapter continues to describe the origins of the donor's lineage's relation with the Zhou royal house in the following words:

[...]季武王既弋(翦)殷，敝(微)史刺(烈)且(祖)來見武王，武王則令周公舍寓(宇)呂(以)五十頌(通?)處。 [...]

[...] When King Wu eliminated / cut off the Yin,¹⁸³ my glorious ancestor, Scribe Wei, came to audience before King Wu, and King Wu ordered the Patriarch of Zhou to bestow him with a fief of fifty *song* (fields?).¹⁸⁴ [...]

The Zhou King and the Wei-lineage ancestor are presented here as starting off as two

¹⁸³ The interpretation of the graph 弋 follows Chen Jian 陳劍, "Jiagu jinwen 'zai' zi bushi" 甲骨金文“弋”字補釋, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 25 (2004): 40-44, rpt. in idem, *Jiagu jinwen kaoshi lunji* 甲骨金文考釋論集 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2007), 103-104.

¹⁸⁴ For the interpretation of this passage as a record of the enfeoffment of the Wei-lineage's founding ancestor in Zhou see Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui, Yin Shengping eds., *Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazhu qingtongqi qun yanjiu*, 53-54; 93. For the interpretation of the graph 頌 see *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 50.391.

independent socio-political entities, with the latter joining King Wu in a (proto-) political alliance after the Zhou's reception of the Heavenly Mandate and the subsequent conquest over the Shang. In return King Wu grants the Wei-lineage ancestor a fief, which not only symbolizes the latter's enrolment into the Zhou realm, but also entailed an obligation for Scribe Wei and his descendants to loyally serve the Zhou's cause. With the alliance thus sealed begins the time of the bond between the Zhou royal house and the Wei-lineage, leading up to the vessel donor Xing, who announces his determination to retrieve and perpetuate his ancestors' legacy, i.e. to continue to serve the Zhou kings:

[...]今癸夙夕虔苟(敬)卹毕(厥)死(尸)事[...]。
 [...] Now I, Xing, respectfully day and night, devote myself to fulfil my obligation to serve [the King].¹⁸⁵

In the He *zun* inscription we find a similar situation. Upon assuming his position in the Jing temple hall, the King is depicted as addressing the principal heirs from the princely or ducal lineages,¹⁸⁶ among whom we expect the vessel donor, He, himself:

王(誥)宗小子于京室，曰：「昔才！爾考公氏克逮(仇)玟(文)王。隸(肆)玟(文)王受茲□□[大令]。 [...]

[T]he King addressed the heirs from the princely lineages who were

¹⁸⁵ For the interpretation of the compound 死(尸)事 see *Source Book*, 33, n. 6; and Chen Yingjie, *Xihou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci*, 274-75.

¹⁸⁶ The term *xiao zi* 小子 was used as a self-reference for the principal heir of a lineage head in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. *Zong xiao zi* 宗小子, according to Lothar von Falkenhausen, refers to the lesser ranking descendants of a trunk-lineage (von Falkenhausen, "The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun: New Evidence on Social Structure and Historical Consciousness in Late Western Zhou China (c.800 BC)," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 139 [2005]: 249). This means that the King is depicted here to address the principal heirs of the lineage heads from the Zhou royal house's princely lineages. Although this suggests that the King and the *zong xiao zi* were connected through lines of common descent, the constellation depicted in the He *zun* inscription is clearly of a political nature. Cf. the discussion in chapter three for this point.

congregated in the Great Hall of the Jing palace saying: “Formerly, your deceased fathers, the patriarchs, were able to ally with King Wen,¹⁸⁷ whereupon King Wen received this [Great Charge]. [...]”¹⁸⁸

[...]烏虜(乎),爾有唯小子亡戡(識)◦覲(視)于公氏有爵(功)于天,馭(徹)令(命)苟(敬)享(享)戡(哉)◦夷(助)王龔(恭)德,谷(欲)天順(訓)我不每(敏)◦」[...] [...] Alas! You are but un-experienced lineage heirs. Attend to the example of your forebears who have meritorious achievements with Heaven.¹⁸⁹ [Strive to] accomplish the charge and serve reverently! Assist me,¹⁹⁰ your king, in honouring our *de* (i.e. their mutual intent and obligation towards fulfilling the Great Charge), so that Heaven may instruct us on our insensibilities.” [...]”¹⁹¹

Here as well, the donor’s ancestor is depicted as having joined the Zhou kings in political alliance. Only this time, the alliance does not follow from but directly leads

¹⁸⁷ The graph 𠄎 in this and a number of further inscriptions has been variously transcribed as 速, 速 or 述. Not only the graphic correspondence is questionable in each case, the proposed renderings could not be meaningfully interpreted either. After the discovery of the inscription on the bottom of the He zun in the 1975, Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 suggested to transcribe the graph as 逵 writing the word *bi* 弼, to assist, to aide (Zhang Zhenglang, “He zun mingwen jieshi buyi” 何尊銘文解釋補遺, *Wenwu* [1976] 1: 66). This rendering has long been accepted until Chen Jian, with the help of supporting evidence from Warring States manuscripts, has convincingly shown that the graph in question should be transcribed as 逵, Old-Chinese *g(r)u, meaning *chou* 仇, Old-Chinese *[g](r)u, “to match with,” “to ally with.” See Chen Jian “Ju Guodian jian shidu jinwen yi li” 據郭店簡釋讀金文一例, in idem, *Jiagu jinwen kaoshi lunji*, 20-26. Much earlier Wang Guowei already pointed out that in certain contexts in the *Odes* and *Documents* the graph 求, Old-Chinese *[g](r)u, likely functions as a loan graph to write the word *chou* 仇, which he shows is synonymous with *pi* 匹. See Wang Guowei, “Yu youren lun *Shi Shu* zhong chengyu shu” 與友人論詩書中成語書, in idem, *Guantang ji lin*, 78-79.

¹⁸⁸ For the use of *si* 肆(肆) as a copula used to connect clauses that describe a cause-effect relation see Pan Yukun, *Xizhou jinwen yuxu yanjiu*, 155.

¹⁸⁹ I follow Dong Shan 董珊 in rendering the graphs 龔、龔 and 爵 in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as *gong* 功 or *gong* 恭, “meritorious achievements.” See Dong Shan, “Lüe lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen” 略論西周單氏家族窖藏青銅器銘文, *Zhongguo Lishi Wenwu* 中國歷史文物 (2003) 4: 44.

¹⁹⁰ My interpretation of the graph 夷 as *zhu* 助, “to assist,” in this and other contexts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions follows Shirakawa, *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 48.179-180; and David S. Nivison, “The Authenticity of the Mao Kung Ting Inscription,” in *Ancient Chinese and Southeast Asian Bronze Age Cultures*, 2 vols., eds. F. David Bulbeck and Noel Barnard (Taipei: SMC 1996-97), 1.318- 321. See also He Shuhuan 何樹環, “Jinwen ‘hui’ zi bie jie – jian lun ‘hui’” 金文「夷」字別解 – 兼論「惠」, in idem, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji* 青銅器與西周史論集 (Taipei: Wenjin chubun, 2013), 251-298.

¹⁹¹ The sentence breaks and the interpretation of the graph 谷 in this line follow Shirakawa (*Kinbun tsūshaku* 48.175) and Dong Shan (*Hehe Zongzhou*, 44). For the construction “hui 夷 (help) ... yu 欲 (desiring = so that)” see Nivison, “The Authenticity of the Mao Kung Ting Inscription,” 319.

to King Wen's receipt of the Heavenly Mandate or the Great Charge.¹⁹² It was *because* of the ducal houses' assistance that King Wen was able to receive the Charge in the first place. The Charge is also the decisive factor that continues to bind the lineage heirs and the present King to their common cause in the context of the inscription.

Considering these examples that stand exemplary for elite inscriptions referring to the Zhou founding myth, it seems that where it does appear in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions the Great Charge matters in so far as it constitutes the ideological frame of (proto-) political interaction for the elites and the King. Its receipt proves to be a joint venture involving the Zhou kings and their allied elites equally. A particular revealing source in this respect is the text inscribed on the late Western Zhou Qiu *pan* 逯盤 (NA 757) basin from the Yangjiacun cache.¹⁹³ The entire text from this

¹⁹² My interpretation of this passage presumes of course that the two destroyed graphs in the inscription should be reconstructed as *Da ling* (*ming*) 大令(命), "the Great Charge." Scholars such as Tang Lan, who first analysed the inscription after it was detected in 1975, claim that both the top of the graph 大 and the bottom of the graph 令 are still somewhat visible on the fringes of the lacuna in the middle of the inscription (Tang Lan, "He zun mingwen jieshi"). However, the more or less unanimously accepted reconstruction as *da ming* eventually rests on contextual considerations. Indeed, there are several reasons that strongly support such a reconstruction. First of all, in the entire known Western Zhou bronze corpus there is no single example of King Wen being depicted as receiving anything except Heaven's Mandate. Second, the compounds *Tianming* 天(令)命 and *Da ming* 大令(命) (including the phrase *Tian you Daling* 天有[佑]大令 [Heaven's support and the Great Charge] from the Da Yu ding inscription) always occur within a fixed context. With the exception of the Ban *gui* 班簋 (JC 4341) inscription it is exclusively referred to in the context of King Wen's and King Wu's initial receipt of the Mandate. In many cases the statement of its receipt is followed by an idealized formulaic account declaring the fulfilment of Heaven's task, namely the defeat of the Shang and the pacification of the *sifang* ecumene. Moreover, in the majority of cases the receipt of the mandate is directly related to the vessel donor's forebear's assistance rendered to the former kings, which is claimed to have made this receipt possible. As all these contextual aspects are present in the He *zun* inscription, nothing would seem more appropriate than to reconstruct its two missing graphs as 大令(命). Third, not only is King Wu depicted as announcing to Heaven the fulfilment of its task, the reigning King in the inscription too refers to Heaven as the ultimate moral instance to judge over the ruling alliance's performance. Last but not least, the term *ming* 令(命) in the passage "Attend to the example of your forebears who have meritorious achievements with Heaven. [Strive to] accomplish the charge and serve reverently," unmistakably refers to the idea of the Great Charge as well. Thus even if one, for reasons of scientific integrity, refuses to accept the established reconstruction of the two missing graphs, one nevertheless has to admit that the inscription addresses the ideology of Heaven's Mandate throughout.

¹⁹³ Compare p. 95, n. 120 above for information on the Yangjiacun find.

inscription will concern us later on. For our present purpose it suffices to quote only a few lines of speech attributed to the vessel donor, Qiu 逯, from the prestigious Shan 單 lineage,¹⁹⁴ and the Zhou king (King Xuan) respectively:

逯曰：「不(丕)顯朕皇高且(祖)單公[...] 夾豐文王、武王達殷，膺受天魯令，匍有四方，竝(並)宅阜(厥)堇(圻=畿)疆土，用配上帝。[...]」

Qiu spoke: “Greatly illustrious was my august high ancestor, Patriarch Shan, [...] he assisted King Wen and King Wu in replacing the Yin and in assuming Heaven’s excellent Mandate,¹⁹⁵ spreading it throughout the four cardinal regions. [Patriarch Shan] sided with [the Zhou kings] in taking residence within the [received / conquered] territories in order to match Di on High.¹⁹⁶ [...]”

[...]逯肇(纘)朕皇且(祖)考服，虔夙夕敬朕死(尸)事。肆(肆)天子多易(賜)逯休，天子其萬年無疆，耆黃耇，保奠周邦，諫辭(乂)四方」。

[...] I, Qiu, have been continuing my august ancestors’ and deceased father’s service [to the Zhou Kings]. Respectfully day and night, I devoted myself to fulfil my obligations. Hence the Son of Heaven has on many occasions bestowed his grace on me, Qiu. May the Son of Heaven for ten thousand years without end, until high age, protect the Zhou polity, may he order and secure the four cardinal regions.

王若曰：「逯，不(丕)顯文武，膺受大令(命)，匍有四方，則繇(繇)佳(唯)乃先聖且(祖)考夾豐先王，夔(恭)堇(勤)大令(命)[...]」

The King approvingly spoke: “Qiu, that the greatly illustrious [Kings] Wen and

¹⁹⁴ For Qiu and the Shan lineage see David M. Sena, “Reproducing Society: Lineage and Kinship in Western Zhou China,” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2005); 74-117; and von Falkenhausen, “The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun,” 247-267.

¹⁹⁵ For the interpretation of da 達 as to replace in this context see Lian Shaoming 連劭名, “Shi Qiang pan mingwen yanjiu” 史牆盤銘文研究, in Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui, Yin Shengping eds., *Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazhu qingtongqi qun yanjiu*, 363.

¹⁹⁶ The compound *jin-jiang-tu* 堇疆土 also appears within the late Western Zhou Zong Zhou *zhong* 宗周鐘 or 馱鐘 *Hu zhong* (JC 260) inscription in the phrase *Wang yu xing Wen Wu jin-jiang-tu* 王遯省文武堇疆土 (the King inspects the territories [received / conquered] by King’s Wen and Wu). I follow Dong Shan, “Lue lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaozang qingtongqi mingwen,” 43, n. 5, in reading *jin* (*[g]rə[r]) 堇 as *qi* (*[ŋ]ər) 圻 or *ji* (*[g]ə[r]) 畿, “royal domain.” Taken together *ji* and *jiang* 疆, “border region,” form a compound referring to the Zhou realm as a whole. Other interpreters read 堇 as *qin* (*[g]ər) 勤, “to toil,” which results in the heavily paraphrasing translation of *jue qin jiangtu* 厥勤疆土 as “the territories [Kings Wen and Wu] had labored [to conquer].”

Wu [were able to] receive and shoulder the Great Mandate, that [they were able to] spread it throughout the four cardinal regions, was precisely because your sage forebears allied with and assisted the former Kings in their exertions and labours [towards implementing] the Great Charge.¹⁹⁷

The use of the Zhou narrative in this passage is quite similar to that in the Xing *zhong* and He *zun* examples. Yet it goes one step further in that it fuses the Zhou founding narrative with the Shan lineage narrative as the protagonist in this inscription presents his lineage ancestor as co-founder of the Zhou realm. Further down the inscription records King Xuan's affirmation of this claim, made explicitly through the phrase *ze yao wei* 則繇唯. "It was precisely because" Qiu's ancestors assisted the former kings that the latter were able to receive the Great charge in the first place.¹⁹⁸ In this case the Great Charge is more than just a shared element relating the Shan lineage narrative to that of the Zhou kings. The Shan lineage narrative transcends its own scope as it merges into the grand Zhou narrative, which towards the end of the Western Zhou became more and more the shared collective memory of an aristocratic elite society.

What is more, in all of the three examples cited above, and indeed whenever the

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Wenwu* (2003) 6: 43-93; Wang Hui 王輝, "Qiu *pan* mingwen jiashi" 逖盤銘文箋釋, *Kaogu yu Wenwu* (2003) 3: 81-91; Li Ling 李零, "Du Yangjiacun chutu de Yu Qiu zhu qi" 讀楊家村出土的虞逖諸器, *Zhongguo Lishi Wewu* (2003) 3: 16-27; Dong Shan, "Lue lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaozang qingtongqi mingwen," 40-50; Cai Meifen ed., *Hehe Zongzhou*, 28-31; von Falkenhausen, "The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun," 239-295; Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The writing of a late Western Zhou bronze inscription," *Asiatische Studien* 61.3 (2007): 845-877; Sena, "Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China: Narratives of Lineage History in the 'Scribe Qiang' and 'Qiu' Bronzes," *Asia Major* 25.1 (2012): 63-81; and *Source Book* #63.

¹⁹⁸ Guo Moruo 郭沫若 interprets the graph 繇 as *youyu* 由於, "because of" (Guo Moruo, "Shi Ke xu ming kaoshi" 師克盨銘考釋, *Wenwu* [1962] 6: 10). Dong Shan further stresses the cause and effect relationship between the two parts connected by 繇 ("Lue lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaozang qingtongqi mingwen," 44), as does Li Ling, "Du Yangjiacun chutu de Yu Qiu zhu qi," 24. See further Shen Pei 沈培, "Xizhou jinwen zhong de 'yao' he Shangshu zhong de 'di' 西周金文中的'繇'和《尚書》中的'迪'," *Guwenzi yanjiu* 25 (2004): 218-224. For the interpretation of the syntagma *ze yao wei* 則繇唯 as "because of" in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions see Zhang Zhenlin, "'Ze yao wei' jie." See also p. 38, n. 102 above.

protagonists in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions refer to the Zhou founding narrative, they are never referring to a completed event belonging to a detached past. The Zhou receipt of the Mandate as well as its implementation remains an unfinished event, the outcome of which had yet to be determined. Hence the Mandate in its past promise and future obligation constituted the sphere or inter-locution for the Zhou alliance as a whole. Now we can speak about the idea of a proto-political alliance within which the organization in terms of vertical authority relations is ideologically based on the shared trans-generational commitment to a super-imposed theo-political task.

1.5 Conclusion

A short excursus about the historical context of the developments just outlined seems to be in order at this point. Their significance for the cultural formation of early Chinese kingship is without doubt inestimable. Schwartz goes so far as to suggest that in the Heavenly Mandate “we find clear evidence of that critical spirit toward the anterior development of high civilization which seems to be the earmark of the axial age in all high civilizations.”¹⁹⁹

However, apart from the polemic condemnation of Shang violence and alcoholic excesses we find in literary accounts from the mid- to late Western Zhou period onwards, there exists an apparent gap in the written evidence when it comes to the reasons behind the radical changes in cultural formation accompanying the Shang-Zhou transition. It is important to note in this respect that passages in

¹⁹⁹ Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 53.

transmitted texts referring to the Shang Kings' negligence of the Heavenly Mandate reflect nothing but speculative *historiogenesis*, aimed at appropriating the past in terms of the ideas prevalent during the time of their composition.²⁰⁰ Hence narratives about the Shang having failed the Heavenly Mandate, such as we find them in the “Duo fang” 多方 and “Duo shi” 多士 chapters in the *Documents* for instance,²⁰¹ do not actually qualify to throw light on the Shang-Zhou transition. On the contrary they did and still do their part in concealing the changes in the perception of human organisation and sovereignty that mark this change.

Still, according to our adopted Vichian axiom, reminding us that the order of ideas always follows the order of institutions, the appearance of Zhou ecumenical kingship as well as the ensuing conceptual change of *sifang* from a ritual orientation structure to the objectified human geography could not have happened without underlying pragmatic reasons giving rise to these new modes of ethno-political formation. However sparse the textual sources for this particular topic are, they allow us nevertheless to formulate an informed guess as to how these developments came about.

²⁰⁰ The concept of *historiogenesis*, or *historiogenetic* speculation, has been coined by Eric Voegelin to describe the construction of history in linear terms backwards to a given society's foundational origins. Cf. Voegelin, *Anamnesis: Zur Theorie der Geschichte und Politik*, 79-116.

²⁰¹ Cf. Joachim Gentz, “One Heaven, One History, One People: Repositioning the Zhou in Royal Addresses to Subdued Enemies in the “Duo shi” 多士 and “Duo fang” 多方 Chapters of the *Shangshu* and in the “Shang shi” 商誓 Chapter of the *Yi Zhoushu*,” in *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy*, 146-192.

1.5.1 *The possible historical context of the Shang-Zhou transition*

Parallel or prior to the proclaimed breakup of cosmic unity, the Shang polity, which throughout the Anyang period was largely synonymous with the extended Shang clan surrounded by allied or hostile cultural outsiders referred to as the many *fang* (*duo fang* 多方) in the OBI,²⁰² presumably lost its internal cohesion as the congruence between ethnic / kinship and political formation in the late Shang cultural sphere began to dissolve. This process might have started with the loosening of ties between the royal line and the numerous Zi-lineages as Zhu Fenghan has pointed out.²⁰³ Yet another aspect in that process has so far been overlooked. At the same time the internal coherency among the Zi-lineage polities began to dissolve, foreign polities located on the margins of the Shang sphere of influence such as the Zhou, began to identify with the Shang politico-religious order from an *outside position* as Shang cultural forms were adopted by ever wider circles across the North China Plain.²⁰⁴

According to the evidence from late Shang oracle bone inscriptions, mostly dating from the time of King Wu Ding, we know that the Zhou existed as an autonomous polity on the margins of the Shang sphere of influence, at times hostile at times allied to the latter.²⁰⁵ While Zhou culture presumably evolved out of or in exchange with other local cultures, the so-called pre-Zhou culture (*Xian Zhou*

²⁰² Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu*, 249-332; and Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape*, 55-72.

²⁰³ Cf. Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 259.

²⁰⁴ A possible sign for such a development can perhaps be found in the sudden self-enhancement of the royal line in its claim for divinity during the last two Anyang reigns as proposed by Akatsuka Kiyoshi 赤塚忠 and Benjamin Schwartz. If we accept Akatsuka's and Schwartz's interpretation of the use of the epithet in the temple names of the last two Shang king's, we might further understand this unprecedented step as a reaction against this loss of cohesion. See Akatsuka Kiyoshi, *Chūgoku kodai no shūkyō to bunka*, 515; and Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 38.

²⁰⁵ Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 33-70.

wenhua 先周文化) at some point came into contact with Shang culture.²⁰⁶ No later than during the Anyang or Xiaotun 小屯 period, the Zhou partly adopted the material culture and the religious cosmological beliefs from the Shang as archaeological data shows.²⁰⁷ Especially interesting in this respect are fragments from the Zhouyuan 周原 oracle bones, recovered in the nineteen seventies, which most likely were produced by the Zhou before their conquest of the Shang.²⁰⁸ Not only do they bear testimony to the Zhou's adoption of the ceremonial language, the writing system, its technique and media from the Shang, references to the Shang royal cult also suggest that the Zhou adopted the Shang pantheon including the royal ancestors as well.

As we have already mentioned above, Edward L. Shaughnessy raised in this context the possibility of an extra-lineage cult that might have been practised between the Shang royal lineage in Anyang and its allied kinship polities populating its periphery.²⁰⁹ As marginal as this evidence may seem to be, together with archaeological reports testifying to the adoption of Shang material culture in other non-Shang settlements that have flourished contemporary to the Anyang period, it points to an important development in the cultural formation of the north Chinese realm towards the end of the Anyang reigns. Namely it shows that Shang cultural formation at the turn of the first millennium BCE had outgrown the limited confines of basic human socialization based on common descent. Such institutional developments as these just mentioned might have triggered the breakup of the

²⁰⁶ Cf. the discussions in Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 35-41; and in Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," in *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 302-307.

²⁰⁷ See Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 61-67.

²⁰⁸ See Cao Wei 曹璋 ed., *Zhouyuan Jiaguwen*.

²⁰⁹ See the discussion on the Zhouyuan Oracle-Bone Inscriptions by Shaughnessy et al. in "The Early China Forum," *Early China* 11-12 (1985-1987): 146-194

compact Shang worldview by creating a structural diversity the Shang conceptual unity of kinship organization and politico-religious order could not accommodate. This phenomenon and the problems arising from it have been identified and described by Jan Assmann in analytical terms:

As society becomes more complex, the primary alliance between ethnic, cultural, and political formations begins to disintegrate and to create problems that may be divided into two categories: those of integration and those of distinction.²¹⁰

These are indeed the two super-categories which can be used to account for the rise of Zhou kingship. One major integrative aspect of the Great Charge has already been dealt with above. Where the analogy between cosmic High God and human leader is no longer given because the human community appears scattered and fragmented, it would appear as a logical consequence in the context of beginning theo-political reflexion for a powerful military leader to see in this human constellation a call for pragmatic action, proclaiming himself the representative of the universal divine order in the human world. Another integrative aspect connected to the Great Charge will be addressed towards the end of the second chapter.

1.5.2 When did the ideology of Zhou kingship emerge?

The big picture we have drawn in this chapter derives from the juxtaposition of core aspects from late Shang and Western Zhou worldviews respectively. While we

²¹⁰ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 125.

have distinguished several layers within the Western Zhou apprehension of human ecumenical organisation, we basically did so without discriminating between early-, mid-, and late Western Zhou material. The reason for that is quite simple. From its earliest appearance in the inscription from the He *zun* to its latest retrieval in the Qiu bronzes, the ideology of kingship centred on the Zhou founding myth, albeit some minor variations, shows no significant chronological development.

Nevertheless we cannot escape the fact that except for some very few instances, most references to Zhou ideology and its foundational origins occur in inscriptions dating from the late Western Zhou period. Thus Kern, Vogelsang and others assume these instances to constitute expressions of an incipient historical consciousness and a building cultural memory that formed in reaction to a break in continuity associated with the military defeats and internal struggles starting with the reign of King Mu.²¹¹ But then again, as we have already pointed out in the introduction, especially the accounts from the He *zun* and Da Yu *ding* inscriptions do not fit into this picture. They suggest instead that neither the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate, nor the need to commemorate the mytho-historical Zhou origins developed only during the latter third of the dynasty. In fact the basic idea of an autonomously acting human ruler who derives his authority from a transcendent divinity towards which he has to prove accountable seems to have existed at least from the time of King Wu, as the text on the earliest attestable inscribed Western Zhou vessel, the Tian Wang *gui* 天亡簋 (JC 4261),²¹² shows. Indeed the text suggests that the Shang-Zhou transition in the

²¹¹ Compare the discussion on chronology in the introduction.

²¹² The vessel was reportedly discovered at Qi Mountain, Shaanxi, during the Daoguang 道光 reign period (1821-1855). It is commonly dated to the aftermath the Zhou alliance's conquest over the Shang towards the end of King Wu's reign. Cf. Zhongguo Lishi Bowuguan 中國歷史博物館編, ed., *Zhongguo Lishi Bowuguan* 中國歷史博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1984), 48. Its inscription was first recorded in Xu Tongbo 徐同柏, *Cong gu tang kuan shi xue* 從古堂款識學, 16 vols. (Shanghai: Tongwen shuju, 1886), 15.8.

narrower sense of the Zhou's ascend to power, went hand in hand with a major break in tradition:

[乙]亥，王又(有)大豐(禮)。王凡(泛)三(三?)方。王祀殳(于)天室。

On *yi-hai* day (day twelve) the King conducted a great rite. The King traversed (the Biyong Lake?)²¹³ in the three (four?) cardinal directions (three, perhaps perceived from the perspective of the Zhou occupying the eastern part of the cosmological geography [N/A]) and performed a sacrifice at the Chamber of Heaven.

降，天亡又(佑)王衣(殷)祀殳(于)王不(丕)顯考文王，事喜(糴)上帝。文王(監?/嚴?)在上，不(丕)顯王乍(則)省(省)。不(丕)肆(肆)王乍(則)麇(賡)，不(丕)克乞(訖)衣(殷)王祀。[...]

[After the King] descended [from the Chamber of Heaven], I, Tian Wang, assisted the King in performing a grand sacrifice to the King's great and brilliant father, King Wen, and in a millet offering to Di on High. With King Wen surveying above, the brilliant King emulated his example and carried on below, bringing to an end the sacrifices of the Shang Kings. [...] ²¹⁴

The texts starts with the King, presumably King Wu, conducting a cosmic ritual, followed by sacrificial offerings made to his royal ancestor, King Wen, and to the High God Di. The important part, however, is what follows. By emulating King Wen's example and by carrying on his task within the human realm, King Wu not only appropriates his ancestor's authority, he also initiates the time of historical memory and thus the sphere of inter-location which starts from the time of King Wen, making him into the first actual ancestor of Zhou kingship. This image is contrasted

²¹³ See Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 4 for the identification of the locality of the rite with the *biyong* lake. Compare therefor the parallel passage in the *Mai zun* 麥尊 (JC 6015): "At the *biyong* lake, the King embarked on a boat in order to perform the Great Rite" (才(在)璧(辟)灘(雍)，王乘于舟為大豐(禮)).

²¹⁴ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.1-3; *Duandai* #1; Sun Zuoyun, "Shuo 'Tian Wang gui' wei Wu Wang mie Shang yiqian tongqi" 說天王簋為武王滅商以前銅器, *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 文物參考資料 (1958) 1: 29-31; idem, "Zai lun 'Tian Wang gui' er san shi" 再論天王簋二三事, *Wenwu* (1960) 5: 50-52; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 1.1-38; *Mingwen xuan* #23; and *Source Book* #5.

to King Wu ending the Shang kings' sacrifices as marking the turn of a new era. The abandonment of Shang ritual and King Wu's emulation of King Wen's example must be seen as decisive factors in the Shang-Zhou transition that placed all ensuing events on the line of irreversible historical time. The historical reflections in the He *zun* inscription as well as in the Da Yu *ding* seem to confirm this view.

Apart from the references to the idea of Zhou kingship we find in these unique early Western Zhou sources, it has to be noted that from quite early on in the dynasty the Zhou king is successively addressed as Son of Heaven (Tianzi 天子) in elite bronze inscriptions.²¹⁵ This image of divine-human son-ship, of which we already count eight instances in the early Western Zhou period,²¹⁶ indicates nothing else than a perceived bond between the king and Heaven.²¹⁷ While there are still only two mentions of the Heavenly Mandate in the corpus of mid- Western Zhou inscriptions,²¹⁸ the AS database counts as much as 66 instances of the appellation Tianzi for the same period of time.²¹⁹ This suggests that although Zhou ideology is scarcely referred to in early and mid-Western epigraphic sources, the idea of Zhou kingship as constellative, with the king representing Heaven's authority within the

²¹⁵ Cf. Takeuchi Yasuhiro 内竹康浩, "Sei Shū Kinbun chū no 'tenshi' ni tsuite" 西周金文中の《天子》について, in *Ronshū Chūgoku kodai no moji to bunka* 論集中國古代の文字と文化 (Tokyo: Kyūko, 1999), 105-30.

²¹⁶ According to the AS database, the appellation Tianzi can be found in the following early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions: In the Rong *gui* 榮簋 (JC 4121), the Xiao Chen Shou *gui* 小臣守簋 (JC 4179-181), the Xian *gui* 獻簋 (JC 4205), the Jing Hou *gui* 井侯簋 (JC 4241), the Jing *gui* 靜簋 (JC 4273), the Mai *zun* 麥尊 (JC 6015), the Jing *ding* 靜鼎 (NA 1795), and in the Shang *yu* 尚盂 (NB 893).

²¹⁷ Compare also Assmann, "Theokratie im Alten Ägypten," in *Theokratie und theokratischer Diskurs. Die Rede von der Gottesherrschaft und ihre politisch-sozialen Auswirkungen im interkulturellen Vergleich*, eds. Kai Trampedach and Andreas Pečar (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013), 22-27, for the idea of divine-human son-ship underlying the model of representative theocracy in an ancient Egypt after the fourth Dynasty.

²¹⁸ Those are found in the inscription cast on the Lu Bo Dong *gui* lid 魯伯東簋蓋 (JC 04302) and in the Guai Bo *gui* 乖伯簋 (JC 4331) inscription respectively.

²¹⁹ Not counting multiple mentions within one inscription or multiple instances of the same inscription. For comparison, for the late Western Zhou period, the AS database counts eight mentions of the Great Charge and 59 instances of the appellation Tianzi.

human ecumene, was already widespread and established before the time of the late Western Zhou ritual reform.

The question why the articulate reflection on the Zhou grand narrative and its intellectual values appear with greater frequency only in inscriptions dating from late Western Zhou period has to be left unanswered at this point. Surely a growing historical consciousness as well as a solidifying cultural memory in the face of actual decline must have played a significant part in this process. Yet I suspect that those are not the only factors involved. We will retrieve this question at the end of the next chapter, after we have concerned ourselves with the operative aspects of the inscriptions, the record of the conferral and the receipt of royal commands.

2. FROM POLITICAL PRAXIS TO CULTURAL META-REFLECTION

2.1 Introduction

In the first chapter we have approached and described the concept of Zhou kingship with respect to its fundamental ontological premises. We furthermore identified the idea of a theo-political bond in which the king represents the authority of a transcendent moral divinity, an authority linked to the agenda and implementation of ecumenical rule, as the ideological or symbolic context within which the king and his allied elites affiliated with each other in terms of a proto-political ruling alliance. However, we have also mentioned that this ideology did not yet play a significant role in early to mid-Western Zhou elite bronze inscriptions.

What did play a role in these inscriptions, as I will demonstrate below, was to define the interpersonal authority relations between king and elites as well as to state the concrete terms on which these were based. This is something that has not been paid much attention to in the study of early Chinese bronze inscriptions, especially when it comes to the question of evidence for the Shang-Zhou transition in epigraphic sources. While claims of participation in the royal ancestral cult disappeared almost immediately in early Western Zhou inscriptions, records of royal rewards, which form the core of all late Shang inscriptions, gradually gave way to records of the receipt of royal commands. In the course of this shift, we can observe how the vessel donors' simple casting statements became contract-like receipt-formulae, often including an oath of loyalty, the further we move into the Western Zhou period. Although at first sight they seem to be unrelated to the

ontological matters addressed above, these issues prove to be just as crucial for the development and the understanding of Zhou ideology.

In the first part of this chapter we will focus on those developments in the epigraphic sources that bear witness to a change in the perception of the affiliation between king and elites. Complementary to what we have done in the preceding chapter by identifying the superimposed ideological aspects of Zhou rule, we now start by looking at the institution of Zhou kingship from the perspective of the interpersonal level as it presents itself in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that relate to the commitment of its protagonists to the king and to the royal cause. My goal here is to show that in bronze inscriptions, the relations between king and elites reveal the character of patron-client relations based on proto-political bonds drawn between unequal individuals.¹ Royal commands and their receipt, as we will see, always came hand in hand with the establishment of vertical solidarity between the involved parties. These relations and their perpetuation, I argue, constitute the central concern in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

The second part of this chapter brings us back to our initial problem, the interdependency between the ideology of Zhou kingship and its institutional context. If our assumption that the concept of the Great Mandate might have actually developed at some stage from the institution of royal commands proves right, the conditions that the former entails for the Zhou rulers should be expected to resemble

¹ One has of course to make an important concession here. Other than actual patron-client relationships, the sort of which we find depicted in the Springs and Autumns covenant texts (*mengshu* 盟書) excavated in Houma 侯馬 and Wenxian 溫縣 for instance (compare chapter three, pp. 197-208), the concept of Zhou kingship does not allow for the idea of defection or of rival patrons. The status of the Zhou king is absolute and his commands are binding. Nevertheless the creation of vertical authority relations in Western Zhou sources is ultimately based on the mechanism of patron-client relations. The receipt and acceptance of the king's charge requires the appointee to assume a political commitment he himself has to prove accountable for. Cf. Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 117-122, for a similar phenomenon in ancient Egypt.

the conditions of the king's political charges. In order to answer this question, we need to switch to a different source-context and consider passages from the transmitted *Documents of Zhou* in which the protagonists present themselves as bearers of the Heavenly Mandate and heirs to the founding Kings Wen and Wu. Here we will investigate in how far the issues addressed in the latter resemble those that matter in accounts of the conferral and the receipt of royal commands in the bronzes.

In a third step we then need to address the crucial question of how the spheres of royal charges and the Heavenly Mandate relate to each other in the only context where they actually appear together, that of mostly mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, and whether or not there exists any kind of direct translation of constellations from the socio-political sphere into the theo-political sphere in these sources. Only if we can get a clear grasp on these issues will we be able to determine if the Western Zhou institution of royal appointments indeed directly relates to the theo-political discourse found in transmitted foundational or cultural texts such as the *Odes* and *Documents*.

2.2 New patterns in early Western Zhou inscriptions

Our task first brings us back to the beginning of the last chapter where we considered the mode of elite affiliation with the royal house as it is depicted in late Shang bronze inscriptions. We ended up with identifying texts from late Shang bronze inscriptions as a new form of writing, born out of elite endeavours to articulate their privileged ties with the Shang king as the ultimate source of power and prestige (addressing the factors of distinction and integration). We will now

continue our study with the analysis of early and mid- Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, focussing on how this formula departs and develops from its late Shang precedent as the underlying conditions change and further factors enter the constellation.

Despite fundamental differences between the modes of affiliation articulated in texts from late Shang and from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, we are looking at significant continuities as well that should be mentioned first before concentrating on the disparities. The elite tradition of having bronze vessels cast for the use in ancestral ritual that were inscribed with statements about the donor's relation to the king continued into the Western Zhou, and, over time, developed to a far greater extent than during the relatively short-lived late Anyang period, both geographically and in the sheer number of inscribed vessels cast.² Similar to what we have stated above for the Shang, in the Western Zhou as well, inscribed bronzes were commissioned exclusively by non-royal elites. Apart from three noteworthy exceptions constituted by the bronzes cast by King Li, we don't find inscribed bronze vessels commissioned by the Zhou king himself.³ Only in the Eastern Zhou multi-state world did local ruling lineages, most prominently those of Jin 晉, Qin 秦 and Chu 楚, begin to cast vessels inscribed with texts articulating politico-religious claims from the perspective of their respective ruling houses without references to the Zhou king or to the Zhou founding narrative.⁴

² For figures up until 1990 see Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 156-166. It is important to note however that while inscribed bronzes from the early Western Zhou period up to the reign of King Zhao have been found all over the north China plain, finds that date from the mid- to late Western Zhou period are almost exclusively confined to the Zhou capital region in the Wei river valley in Shaanxi.

³ Based on their inscriptions, the late Western Zhou Wu si Hu *zhong* 五祀𦣻鐘 (JC 358), Hu *gui* 𦣻簋 (JC 4317) and Hu *zhong* 𦣻鐘 (JC 260) bronzes are believed to have been commissioned by King Li 厲 (857/53-842/28 B.C.). Cf. *Sources* 169-172; and the discussion and bibliographical references in *Source Book*, 147-153.

⁴ For a general introduction to Eastern Zhou bronze inscriptions see Gilbert Mattos, "Eastern Zhou

Although vessels with inscriptions consisting of no more than a name, an emblem, or a simple casting statement in the form of “X made this precious vessel,”⁵ continue to account for the vast majority of inscribed bronzes cast during the Western Zhou, from very early on in the period new patterns started to appear that broke with their Shang precedents. While texts such as that from the Tianwang *gui*, cited at the end of the last chapter, mark very rare exceptions in the corpus of early Western Zhou inscriptions, a new type of inscription celebrating the joining of individual elites into the Zhou kings’ service became increasingly common. This type of early to mid-Western Zhou inscriptions will concern us in the following subchapters.

2.2.1 From reward inscriptions to enrolment inscriptions: The conceiving of future socio-political relations in early and mid-Western Zhou bronze inscriptions

In our analysis of late Shang bronze inscriptions in chapter one we have been mainly focussing on dating conventions and references to royal ritual. For our present purposes it will be necessary first to take a closer look at the nature of the contact between king and vessel donor depicted in these inscriptions. This nature would change radically during the first half of the Western Zhou period, resulting in significant changes in the function of bronze inscriptions as well.

Bronze Inscriptions,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History*, 85-123. For inscriptions from Qin see Wang Hui 王輝, *Qin tongqi mingwen biannian jishi* 秦銅器銘文編年集釋 (Xi’an: San Qin, 1990); and Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2000), 59-105. For inscriptions from Chu see Constance A. Cook, “Auspicious Metals and Southern Spirits: An Analysis of the Chu Bronze Inscriptions” (PhD diss., University of California, 1990).

⁵ Cf. von Falkenhausen, “Issues in Western Zhou Studies,” 153-154.

2.2.1.1 Reward inscriptions

As we have already noted in passing, texts from the late Shang bronze inscriptions (with the exception of those consisting merely of collective emblems or simple casting statements) are generally verbal displays of royal rewards given in form of cowries (*bei* 貝) as reimbursements for services rendered to the king. In their most complete form, reward inscriptions record the event of a bestowal, preceded by the reason for which the reward was granted, followed by a casting statement in combination with a dedication. One especially detailed example we have not yet cited in the preceding chapter is the inscription from the Xiao zi X you 小子龠卣 (*JC* 5417) flagon,⁶ recording the donor's receipt of an award of cowries, this time not from the king but from a Zi-lineage patriarch:

乙巳，子令小子龠先以人于堇，子光商(賞)龠貝二朋，子曰：「貝，售(唯)蔑女(汝)曆。」龠用乍(作)母辛彝，才(在)十月二。佳(唯)子曰：「令望(望)人方罍。」〔龠〕

On *yi-si* day the Patriarch commanded lineage younger X to proceed with men to Jin. The Patriarch bestowed on me, X, two strings of cowries, saying: “These cowries shall remunerate you for your deeds.” Wherefore X had cast this sacrificial vessel for Mother Xin. It was in the twelfth month when the Patriarch addressed me [again], saying: “I command you to proceed to Renfang Mei.”
〔emblem〕⁷

⁶ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel which is currently housed in the Hakutsuru Fine Art Museum in Kobe, Japan. It was first recorded in Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940), *Zhensong tang jigū yiwén* 貞松堂集古遺文, 16 vols. (Luo Zhenyu, 1930), 8.31.

⁷ Cf. Akatsuka, *Chūgoku kodai no shūkyō to bunka*, 675-679; and *Mingwen xuan* #5.

What matters in this and similar texts are the merits earned from the fulfillment of a charge, resulting perhaps not only in the payment of cowries but also in the conferral of ritual privileges, as one might infer from the examples we have been analyzing in the preceding chapter.

Except for the missing references to Shang royal ritual, this type of record continued for some time to constitute the majority of longer early Western Zhou inscriptions, especially during the reign of King Cheng.⁸ Compare for instance the text from the two Xiaochen Lai *gui* 小臣譚簋 *tureens* (JC 4238+4239):⁹

戲東尸(夷)大反，白(伯)懋父呂(以)殷八自(師)征東尸(夷)。唯十又一月，遣自鬻自(師)，述東陔，伐海眉。

Alas! The Eastern Yi rose in great rebellion. Elder Maofu campaigned against the Eastern Yi with the eight divisions of Yin. In the eleventh month they were dispatched from the encampment at X and, following the eastern slopes, they attacked at the seacoast.

季卒(厥)復歸才(在)牧自(師)，白(伯)懋父承王令易(賜)自(師)逵征自五鬪貝，小臣譚(逵)蔑曆，眾易(賜)貝，用乍(作)寶尊(尊)彝。

When they returned to the encampment at Mu, Elder Maofu, on the orders of the King, presented those who had led the campaign with cowries from Wuyu. Petty Minister Lai was singled out for praise and presented with cowries, wherefore was cast this precious vessel.¹⁰

Most reward inscriptions from the early Western Zhou period, however, are rather sparing and much less detailed in their formulation such as the Xiaochen Shan *zhi*

⁸ The majority of inscriptions the *Mingwen xuan* assigns to the reign of Cheng belong to this category. See *ibid.* nos. 24-56.

⁹ The vessel was reportedly discovered in Jun 浚 county, Henan, in 1931. Cf. *Duandai*, 20. Its inscription was first recorded in Luo Zhenyu, *Zhensong tang jigū yiwén*, 6.6.

¹⁰ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.23-24; *Duandai* #8; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 13.719; *Mingwen xuan* #25. My translation of this inscription follows closely that of Eno, “Inscriptional records” #11.

小臣單觶 (JC 6512) inscription,¹¹ presumably dating from the reign of King

Cheng:

王後戠克商，才(在)成自(師)，周公易(賜)小臣單貝十朋，用乍(作)寶尊(尊)彝。

During his later subjugation of Shang, the King dwelled at the encampment at Cheng. The Patriarch of Zhou presented Petty Minister Shan with ten strings of cowries. Wherefore was cast this precious ritual vessel.¹²

Albeit not explicitly mentioned in this example, the context suggests that Petty Minister Shan was rewarded for military merits he had already earned by the time of the bestowal. An even shorter statement that fits into the same pattern can be found cast on the early Western Zhou Gang jie zun 岡切尊 (JC 5977) tureen:¹³

王征禁，易(賜)剛(岡)切貝朋，用乍(作)朕蒿(高)且(祖)缶(寶)尊(尊)彝。

The King led a punitive campaign against X. He presented Gangjie with strings of cowries. Wherefore was cast this precious ritual vessel for my High Ancestor.¹⁴

Here as well, we have to assume that Gangjie received these cowries for the merits he earned during the said campaign. Although these three examples differ from most of their Shang precedents in that they no longer employ Shang dating conventions or references to the royal ritual schedule, their core information is still quite similar to

¹¹ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel which is currently housed in the Shanghai Museum. Its inscription was first recorded in Luo Zhenyu, *Zhensong tang jigū yiwén*, 9.29.

¹² Cf. *Daxi*, 2.2-3; *Duandai* #3; *Mingwen xuan* #25; and Eno, “Inscriptional Records” #4.

¹³ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel which is currently housed in the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. Its inscription was first recorded under the name *Gang you* 岡缶 in Yu Xingwu, *Shuangjian Chi ji jin wenxuan* 雙劍詒吉金文選 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998 [1933]), 352 (xia 3.9).

¹⁴ Cf. *Duandai* #14; *Mingwen xuan* #29.

late Shang reward inscriptions. Both types refer to commands, their execution and their remuneration in retrospect as closed events. The inscriptions retain the memory of these events as a form of merit display in the context of ancestral ritual and banquets.

2.2.1.2 *Enrolment inscriptions*

This prevalent perspective in recording the interactions between king and elites underwent a complete reversal after the initial Western Zhou reigns had passed. Beginning with the reign of King Kang, we observe the incremental appearance of inscriptions recording the issuing of a command, with its fulfilment still lying ahead in the future. Other than commands recorded in reward inscriptions, these charges normally entailed a life-long obligation for the recipient. Similarly, bestowals of material goods referred to in these inscriptions are not given as reimbursements for services already rendered, but as gifts in the Maussian sense, marking the beginning of a perpetual dependence between king and vessel donor.¹⁵ It follows that the reason for recording these events on bronze paraphernalia must have been the honour of receiving the king's unconditional recognition as well as the donor's need to create a memory of obligation for himself and for his descendants.¹⁶ Closely related to this inference ranges the fact that we further discover a completely new element in these

¹⁵ Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) has shown how gift-giving was used in archaic societies in order to initiate corporate solidarity based on the obligation to receive and to reciprocate gifts. Cf. Marcel Mauss, *Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2012 [1925]).

¹⁶ Cf. Virginia C. Kane, "Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions: The Charge, the Gifts, and the Response," *Early China* 8 (1982-83): 14-28, esp. 16, for the credit of trust coming with the king's commands in appointment inscriptions.

inscriptions: the explicit thematization of proto-political relations.¹⁷ The trust the king places in the recipient *ex ante* must have compelled the vessel donor's willing submission into the authority structures created through the power of the command and / or the gift. Hence it is in these inscriptions that we first encounter statements explicitly articulating the protagonists' socio-political identity within the Zhou alliance, expressed both as a promise and a claim. One of the earliest examples to illustrate this point is the inscription from the early Western Zhou Xian *gui* 獻簋 (JC 4205) tureen:¹⁸

隹(唯)九月既望(望)庚寅，櫛(楷)白(伯)于邁王休，亡尤。朕(朕)辟天子、櫛(楷)白(伯)令畢(厥)臣獻金車。

It was the ninth month after the full moon on *geng-yin* day (day 27), when Elder Kai received a gracious bestowal from the King, there was no harm. My ruler and my superior, the Son of Heaven and Elder Kai, bestowed on me, their servant Xian, metal and a chariot.

對朕(朕)辟休，乍(作)朕(朕)文考光父乙。十世(世)不諳(忘)獻身才(在)畢公家，受天子休。

(I) extol my ruler's and my superior's grace in having (this vessel) cast for my glorious ancestor Father Yi. Ten generations shall not forget, I, Xian, a member of Patriarch of Bi's household, received the Son of Heaven's grace.

What makes this inscription particularly interesting is the fact that it situates the

¹⁷ I use the term "proto-political" here to differentiate the bonds between Zhou king and lineage elites in a Western context from political alliances between ducal houses and regional states as they became common in the Eastern Zhou multistate world. Cf. Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition*, 78-106, for the latter context.

¹⁸ Nothing is known about the date and circumstances of the vessel's discovery. According to Luo Zhenyu, in whose collection it was first housed, the vessel was found near Bao An 保安 in Zhuo lu 涿鹿 county, Hebei. Cf. *idem*, *Mengyi caotang ji jin lu* 夢鄴草堂吉金圖, 3 vols. (Luo Zhenyu, 1875-1908), 1.25. Apparently the vessel was broken when it has been found, since it shows traces of restoration. Both Guo Moruo, who remarked that the inscription's calligraphy resembles that of the Da Yu *ding* inscription, and Ma Chengyuan date the vessel to the reign of King Kang, Chen Mengjia dates it to the reign of King Cheng. Cf. *Daxi*, 2.46; *Duandai* #26; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 9.505-513; and *Mingwen xuan* #80.

vessel donor, Xian, in two intersecting socio-political contexts. Xian's membership in the household of Patriarch Bi,¹⁹ where he apparently ranked below Elder Kai in lineage hierarchy, marks his basic social identity. It is in this capacity, as a member of the Bi patriarch's household that Xian, mediated by his superior, comes to participate in the superimposed institution of Zhou kingship. The text claims nothing less than Xian's actual enrollment into the enhanced structures of Zhou kingship, caused through the king's recognition.²⁰ Although it does not mention any explicit charge or appointment to an official position, the fact that Xian is addressing the Zhou king as "my ruler" (*zhen bi* 朕辟)²¹ as well as the obvious association of the bestowed chariot with military and / or administrative tasks, do point to an unspoken political obligation placed on Xian to henceforth be at the king's service.²²

Unlike the late Shang inscriptions we have been analyzing in the previous chapter, the text from the Xian *gui* inscription makes it furthermore very clear that Zhou kinship was in fact a superimposed structure into which individuals joined by virtue of being chosen by the king, while at the same time retaining their basic socio-political identity. While the latter constituted the individual's irreducible context of social identification, membership in the former came in terms of a commitment that needed to be actively pronounced and perpetuated. Hence we read

¹⁹ For the identification of Patriarch Bi see Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 54.

²⁰ It might be helpful at this point to recall Assmann's definition of symbolic or enhanced structures as they apply to our context: "The establishment of early civilizations always coincided with the creation of new forms of political organization that far exceeded the natural dimensions of human socialization. The symbolic meanings of such enhanced groupings were then no longer confined to the primary anthropological functions of communication, interaction, and detachment from the everyday world, but they had the additional task of stabilizing a highly volatile political formation and integrating a range of more or less heterogeneous sociocultural formations" (Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 125).

²¹ For all possible meanings of *bi* 辟, its diachronic development, as well as for the phrases and constellations it appears in in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, see Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 764; 772-783.

²² Furthermore the unusual choice of the term *ling* 令, used here to describe the bestowal of the gifts, might include a somewhat unspecific charge issued at Xian to enter royal service.

in the dedication line of the *Xian gui* inscription: “Ten generations shall not forget, I, Xian, a member of Patriarch of Bi’s household, received the Son of Heaven’s grace.” The significance of the connection between the King’s grace (*xiu* 休), indicating his unconditional decision to include individuals into his structure of command, and need for the recipient to cultivate a memory of commitment is rather complex and will concern us in greater detail in a separate subchapter below.

Although unparalleled in its explicitness, the text from the *Xian gui* inscription is by no means the only instance where we observe the relation between king and vessel donor to intersect with the institutional structure of a ducal house. In fact especially during the early Western Zhou reigns, most enrollment inscriptions depict the Zhou King commanding individuals to serve him by assuming official duties within their respective ducal lineages, such as in the inscription from the early Western Zhou *Xiaozi Sheng zun* 小子生尊 (*JC* 6001) tureen for instance:²³

隹(唯)王南征，才(在)□。王令生辨事□公宗。小子生易(賜)金、鬱鬯，用(乍)作殷(簋)寶尊(尊)彝，用對揚王休，其萬年永寶，用鄉出內(入)事(使)人。 When the King was on his southern campaign, he dwelled at [...]. The King commanded me, Sheng, to assume duties in Patriarch [...]’s lineage. [The King] presented me, lineage younger Sheng, with metal and black millet sacrificial wine. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial *gui* tureen in order to extol the King’s grace. May I treasure it for ten thousand years and use it to serve / host [the King], receiving and transmitting [his charges] to those under my command.²⁴

²³ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the vessel’s discovery. It was reportedly once held in the Qing imperial collection (Qing Gong jiucang 清宮舊藏) but is now lost. A rubbing of its inscription has been transmitted in Liang Shizheng 梁詩正 et al., *Xianding xiqing gujian* 欽定西清古鑑, 40 vols. (Shanghai: Hongwen shuju, 1888 [1755]), 8.43.

²⁴ Cf. *Duandai* #59; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 14.781-786; *Mingwen xuan* #104; and Eno, “Inscriptional Records” #48. Chen Mengjia identifies the phrase “*yong xiang chu ru shi ren*” 用鄉出入使人 as a shortened version of the formulaic expression “to serve the King and transmit his commands to one’s subordinates” 用鄉王出入使人. See Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 85-86. That the phrase *chu ru* 出入 stands short for “*chu ru wang ming*” 出內(入)王命, “to receive and transmit the King’s commands,”

The political nature of the relation between king and vessel donor stands out much clearer here than in the Xian *gui* inscription due to the explicitly stated royal command, answered by the vessel donor's statement to serve the King perpetually. However, the integration of political and genealogical contexts is no less obvious in this example. The designation *zong* 宗, "trunk-lineage," clearly refers to the institution of the ducal house in terms of a lineage organization.²⁵ Correspondingly, the vessel donor's epithet *xiaozi*, "lineage younger," indicates his rank within the ducal house's line of descent. While this constellation remains in place, effected through the king's command, Sheng's position in the ducal kinship hierarchy now becomes part of the wider political authority structure that constitutes the network of Zhou kingship.

Moreover, the subordination of lineages and ducal houses under the super-imposed structure of Zhou kingship inevitably led to a politicization of vertical relations within ducal houses as well. We already saw that the first two appearances of the appellation *zhen bi*, "my ruler," in the Xian *gui* inscription must have pertained to both the Zhou King and Elder Kai. It follows that even within lineage hierarchies, individuals of different rank would relate to each other through the Zhou network of

is suggested by the instances of the full form found in the Shi Wang *ding* 師望鼎 (JC 2812) and Da Ke *ding* 大克鼎 (JC 2836) inscriptions. My definition of the compound *churu* 出入 as "receiving and transmitting" follows Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu yanjiu*, 331. That *shiren* 使人 refers to a group of people who were obviously subordinated to the vessel donor might be inferred from a passage in the mid- Western Zhou Wei *ding* 衛鼎 (JC 2733) inscription, where *shiren* is mentioned together with a closely related group of people: "May I use it (the vessel) to serve / host the King, receiving and transmitting [his charges] to those under my command and to my many peers" (用鄉王出入使人眾多朋友). *You* 友 or *pengyou* 朋友 refers to one's peers or male kinfolk, including affinal relatives, who were ranking below oneself in kinship hierarchy. For this last point compare the discussion in chapter three.

²⁵ For the definition of *zong* 宗 as lineage or trunk lineage see Zhu Fenghan, *Shang-Zhou jiazu xingtai yanjiu*, 10-12; Robert H. Gassmann, *Verwandtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten China: Begriffe, Strukturen und Prozesse* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 63-66; and von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 66.

command and obligation.²⁶ Such is the case, for example, with the inscription on the Xiaochen Zhai *gui* 小臣宅簋 (JC 4201) tureen:²⁷

佳(唯)五月壬辰，同公才(在)豐，令宅事白(伯)懋父。白(伯)易(賜)小臣宅畫
卣、戈九、易(錫)金車、馬兩。揚公白(伯)休，用乍(作)乙公尊(尊)彝。子子
孫永寶，其萬年用鄉王出入。

In the fifth month on *ren-chen* day, Patriarch Tong was at Feng and charged Zhai to serve Elder Maofu. Elder Maofu presented Petty Minister Zhai with a shield, a halberds, a spear, a chariot embellished with red bronze, and a chariot drawn by a pair of horses. [Zhai] raised up the grace of the Patriarch and Elder Maofu in thanks, wherefore was cast a sacrificial vessel for Patriarch Yi. May [Zhai's] descendants treasure it eternally and use it to serve / host the King, receiving and transmitting [his commands] for ten thousand years.²⁸

Not the Zhou King but a patriarch is described here to charge the vessel donor with a task to serve Elder Maofu, who must have ranged between Zhai and the patriarch in lineage hierarchy. The patriarch utters the charge and Elder Maofu bestows the official insignia on Zhai. While Zhai extols both patriarch Tong and Elder Maofu for their munificence in the casting statement, he reserves the dedication and prayer line at the end of the inscription to contextualize his appointment within the institution of Zhou kingship. Obviously Patriarch Tong's and Elder Maofu's authority to command and to bestow gifts originated with the king. Hence although Zhai received the charge and the insignia for office from the former two, he ultimately owes his loyalty to the Zhou king.

²⁶ See also Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 166-168; and Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 309-314, for this point.

²⁷ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel which is currently housed in the National Museum of China. Reportedly it was first held in the former collection of Luo Zhenyu. In 1955 the vessel has been recovered from a pile of broken bronze ware by the staff from the Lüshun Museum where it was stored before it had been moved to its present location. Its inscription was first recorded in Zou An 鄒安, ed., *Zhou jinwen cun* 周金文存, 6 juan + 6 supplements (Shanghai: Cangsheng Mingzhi Daxue, 1924), supplement 3.

²⁸ Cf. *Duandai* #17; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 13.737-745; *Mingwen xuan* #75; "Inscriptional Records" #18.

In sum, from these three examples we can clearly perceive of early Western Zhou kingship as a vertical structure of command and obligation interconnecting lineage hierarchies with the royal house. Not just the patriarchs (*gong* 公), but also individuals from various ranks within the ducal houses defined or re-defined themselves as loyal servants to the Zhou King, either following direct royal commands as we have seen it described in the Xian *gui* and Xiaozi Sheng *zun* inscriptions, or indirectly through their superiors' recognition by the King. Of great significance to understand this second mechanism is further the inscription on the early Western Zhou Mai *fangzun* 麥方尊 (JC 6015) tureen.²⁹ This is one among the few extant examples relating to the establishment of the regional states, the backbone of Zhou authority outside the royal domain in the Wei-river valley:³⁰

王令辟井(邢)侯出坏侯于井(邢)。季若二月，侯見于宗周，亡述(尤)。迨(會)王饗(養)京(京)酏(酏)祀。

The King commanded my ruler, the (henceforth) Marquis of Xing, to depart from Pi and to serve as Marquis in Xing. By the time of the second month, the Marquis appeared in audience at Zongzhou, there was no harm. [The audience] concurred with the King performing a *rong*-libation in Pangjing.³¹

季若謁(翌)日，才(在)璧(辟)灘(雍)，王乘于舟為大豐(禮)。王射大龔(鴻)，禽(擒)。侯乘于赤旂舟，從。死(尸)咸。之日，王呂(以)侯內(入)于寤(寢)，

²⁹ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this bronze which is now lost. It was reportedly once held in the Qing imperial collection. A drawing of the vessel and a rubbing of its inscription have been transmitted in Liang Shizheng et al., *Xianding xiqing gujian*, 8.33. The vessel donor, scribe Mai, is also associated with the casting and inscribing of the contemporary Mai *yi* 麥彝 (JC 9893) and Mai *he* 麥盃 (JC 9451) vessels. While the former too is only preserved in form of a drawing and rubbing in the *Xianding xiqing gujian*, the latter is still extant and currently housed in the Sen-oku Hakuko Kan 泉屋博古館, Kyoto, Japan.

³⁰ In this case, the inscribed text refers to the initial investiture of the Marquis of Xing 邢. Cf. Yang Wenshan 楊文山, "Qingtongqi 'Mai zun' yu Xingguo shi feng – liang Zhou Xingguo lishi zonghe yanjiu zhi yi" 青銅器“麥尊”與邢國始封 – 兩周邢國歷史綜合研究之一, *Wenwu Chunqiu* 文物春秋 59 (2001): 1-9; and Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 260-263.

³¹ For the location and the possible function of Pangjing as a ritual centre, see Ulrich Lau, *Quellenstudien zur Landvergabe und Bodenübertragung in der westlichen Zhou-Dynastie (1045?-771 v. Chr.)* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica, 1999), 114-117; and Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 152.

侯易(賜)玄周(瑯)戈。

On the following day, at the *biyong* lake, the King embarked on a boat in order to perform the Great Rite. The King shot a great bird. The Marquis sailed in attendance on a boat with a vermillion banner and killed the wounded fowl. On this same day, the King conducted the Marquis into the inner palace chamber and presented him with a carved black halberd.

季王才(在)敝(岸)，己夕，侯易(賜)者(赭)雉(裸)臣二百家。劑(齎)用王乘車馬、金勒、冂(冕)、衣、市、舄。

That evening, when the King was at An, the Marquis was presented with a red battle axe and two hundred households of ministers. The King granted him the use of a royal chariot drawn by horses with bronze-embellished tackle, clothed in ceremonial hat, jacket, kneepads, and sandals.

唯歸，暹(揚)天子休，告亡尤。用葬(鴻)義寧侯，覲(顯)孝于井(邢)侯。

Upon returning, the Marquis extolled the Son of Heaven's grace, reporting that the visit concluded without harm. He presented the plumage of the fowl to bring contentment to his illustrious late father and to offer to the [former] Marquis of Xing.³²

乍(作)冊麥易(賜)金于辟侯。麥揚，用乍(作)寶罍彝。用鬯侯逆舟(復)，暹(揚)明令。

I, Recorder Mai, received metal from my ruler, the Marquis, whom I extol by having cast this precious sacrificial vessel. May I use it to serve the Marquis's comings and goings and to exalt (his and / or the King's) brilliant command.³³

唯天子休于麥辟侯之年鑄。孫孫子子其永亡冬(終)，冬(終)用罍(造?)德(德?)，妥多友，膏(享)旌(奔)走令。

It was in the year when the Son of Heaven bestowed his grace upon Mai's ruler, the Marquis, that this vessel was cast. May his (Mai's) descendants forever without end, eternally use it to respond (?) to [the Marquis's and the King's] munificence,³⁴ to appease their kinfolk,³⁵ and to serve assiduously in carrying

³² Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku* 2.641 for the interpretation of the graphs 葬義.

³³ The rendering of the two graphs 逆舟 is very tentative here. My choice is based on the discussion in Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yontu mingci*, 326-332. In *JC* the two graphs are transcribed as *ni zao* 逆造. David W. Pankenier (*Source Book*, 43-44) reads *ni shou* 逆受, "receiving and bestowing."

³⁴ *De* 德 seems to appear here in the sense of *xiu* 休, "grace," "munificence." This rare usage is

out [the Marquis's and the King's] commands.³⁶

While the text goes to great lengths describing the Marquis's encounter with the king, its emphasis clearly lies on the secondary transferal of royal authority from the Marquis of Xing to scribe Mai. The detailed narration of the investiture of the Marquis of Xing preceding Mai's bestowal merely serves as a context, informing the latter event with the authority and the symbolism of Zhou kingship. Similar to late Shang vessel donors' attempts to synchronize their rewards with the schedule of Shang royal ritual, here we perceive an attempt by scribe Mai to synchronize his bestowal from the marquis with the latter's primary receipt of a royal command.

Although the above cited examples are by no means exhaustive in number, our selection nevertheless proves to be representative when it comes to the question of how Zhou kingship was envisioned in terms of a corporate identity connecting the various north Chinese lineages and their elite members to the king. They show that membership in the Zhou alliance was granted in the form of political inclusion through the delegation of limited authority that demanded the bearer's loyalty towards his superiors, culminating in the person of the king. Therefore reflections into the articulate form of a collective Zhou identity, as far as we can reconstruct such events from the epigraphic sources, necessarily took the form of statements to

otherwise only attested for in the mid-Western Zhou Shi Yu *ding* 師俞鼎 (JC 2723) and Shi Yu *zun* 師俞尊 (JC 5995) inscriptions. The text from the latter reads: "The King upholds [Yu's] merits and bestows metal on Commander Yu. Yu therefore responds to and extols the King's munificence." ([...] 王夜(掖)功, 易(賜)師餘(俞)金。俞則對揚(厥)德[...]). Cf. Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yontu mingci*, 522, n. 1. See also the discussion in chapter three in the present study.

³⁵ Cf. Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yontu mingci*, 479-482 for the interpretation of *tuo* 妥 as "to entertain."

³⁶ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.40-42; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 11.628-646; *Mingwen xuan* #67; Yang Wenshan, "Xizhou qingtong Xing qi 'Mai zun' tongshi" 西周青銅邢器 "麥尊" 通釋, *Xingtai Shifan gaozhuan xuebao* 邢台師範高專學報 4 (1997): 19-29; and Lau, *Quellenstudien*, 105-119. The English translation has been adapted from Eno, "Inscriptional Records" #25, and Pankenier (*Source Book*, 43-44). See also Li Feng's translation of the Mai *zun* inscription in *Bureaucracy and the State*, 261-262.

loyally serve the Zhou king, either directly or by serving one's intermediary superior. Normally we find these statements in vessel dedications following the record of a royal charge. However, the order could also be reversed, highlighting in turn the vessel donor's initiative and decision to join the Zhou king's network, as is the case in the inscription from the early Western Zhou Zhao *you* 召卣 (JC 10360), also known as Zhao huan *qi* 召鬲器.³⁷ Interestingly, according to Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, the protagonist in the Zhao *you* inscription could be the same person who is referred to as Patriarch Bi in the Xian *gui* inscription, which would make him a cousin of the Zhou king.³⁸ The text goes as follows:³⁹

隹(唯)十又二月初吉丁卯，鬻(召)啟(肇)進事，旌(奔)徯(走)事皇辟君。休，王自穀事(使)賚(賞)畢土方五十里。鬻(召)弗敢謹(忘)王休，異用乍(作)坎宮旅彝。

It was the twelfth month, first auspiciousness,⁴⁰ on *ding-mao* day (day four) that I, Zhao, began to enter the service (of the King), arduously serving my august sovereign ruler.⁴¹ [Responding with] grace, the King, from Gou, ordered

³⁷ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel which is currently housed in the National Museum of China. Its inscription was first recorded in Zou An, ed., *Zhou jinwen cun*, supplement 5.

³⁸ See *Duandai*, 52-53

³⁹ Cf. Yang Shuda 楊樹達, *Ji Weiju jinwen shuo* 積微居金文說 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013 [1959]), 212; *Duandai* #25; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 9.467-484; *Mingwen xuan* #101.

⁴⁰ The term *chuji*, “first auspiciousness,” refers to the first of the four moon phases employed in the dating formula in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Cf. Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 78; and Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 57-59.

⁴¹ My understanding of this sentence follows Yang Shuda, *Jiweiju jinwen shuo*, 212. The interpretive transcription for the graphs 旌徯 follows *Duandai* #25 and *Mingwen xuan* #101. *Benzou* 奔走, lit. “to hurry and move quickly,” is used in bronze inscriptions in the sense of to fulfil orders or tasks. Cf. Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci*, 273-274. There are diverging interpretations regarding the somewhat unusual designation *huang bi jun* 皇辟君. Yang Shuda, *Jiweiju jinwen shuo*, 212, and Shirakawa, *Kinbun tsūshaku* 9.475, understand this form of address to be directed at the King. Chen Mengjia (*Duandai*, 52) and Chen Yingjie (*Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 724-726) on the other hand believe *huang bi jun* to designate the Zhou king's consort. Their evidence however relies solely on the assumed compatibility of the terms Wangjiang 王姜 and jun 君 in the two almost identical inscriptions from the Zuoce Huan *you* 作冊鬲卣 (JC 5407) and the Zuoce Huan *zun* 作冊鬲尊 (JC 5407) respectively. This led Guo Moruo and Chen Mengjia to assert that *jun* generally refers to the royal consort in early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. See for this point Liang Zhou *jinwenci daxi*, 3.14 and *Duandai*, 61. This point has been refuted by Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄, “Sei Shū seidōki seisaku no haikai” 西周青銅器製作の背景, in *Sei Shū seidōki*, 36.

fifty *li* square of lands from Bi to be bestowed (on me, Zhao).⁴² I, Zhao, do not dare to forget the King's grace, wherefore I have this sacrificial vessel cast for the *sheng* ancestral temple.⁴³

The text starts with Zhao's pronounced decision to subordinate himself politically to the Zhou king whereupon the latter grants him a fief, recognizing his intention to serve Zhou's theo-political cause.⁴⁴ This would be all the more revealing if Zhao indeed had been a branch-member of the royal lineage as Chen Mengjia suggests he was. Even if Zhao and the King were of common descent, this was clearly not a factor considered relevant in the context of the inscription. Zhao literally *enters* the institution of Zhou kingship by entering into the king's service. In this context the Zhou king would have ceased to be Zhao's genealogical superior in the first place as he became his *august sovereign ruler*.⁴⁵ This in turn describes exactly one of the main features Wang Guowei identifies with the institutional changes that mark the Shang-Zhou transition as a transformation from an extended conical clan-polity to a proto-political confederation integrated within a superimposed ruling organization,

Given that in the context of the Zhao *you* inscription it is the unmistakably the king who bestows the vessel donor with a fief, I follow Yang, Shirakawa and Zhao, in assuming *jun* to refer to the Zhou king in this case.

⁴² My translation of this sentence follows closely the interpretation by Chen Mengjia in *Duandai*, 52.

⁴³ As a prefixed attribute in a vessel designation, *lü* 旅 is generally believed to designate the bronze as a vessel intended for the use in sacrificial offerings. For a discussion of other possible meanings of the word *lü* in various epigraphic contexts, see *Yongtu mingci*, 250-257; and He Shuhuan, "Shuo tongqi chengming zhong de 'lü'" 說銅器稱名中的「旅」, in idem, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji*, 225-250. Following an earlier finding by Yu Xingwu 于省吾, he shows that in bronze inscriptions *lü* 旅 is interchangeable with *lu* 魯 and *jia* 嘉, both used in contexts of ritual offerings.

⁴⁴ The fief in turn must not be mistaken for a reward, as it placed an obligation on Zhao to henceforth serve as a loyal part in the Zhou structure of command. Compare also the highly similar formulation in the Zhong *ding* 中鼎 (JC 2785) inscription: "The King bestows on Commander Kuang the lands of Huai. The King spoke: 'Zhong, when the people of Huai entered into the service [of the King], this land has been given to them by King Wu in order for them to become his ministers. Now I give you, Kuang, this land to be your appanage.'" (王令大史兄(貺)襄土。王曰：「中，茲(茲)襄人入史(事)，易(賜)于珺王乍(作)臣，今兄(貺)鼻(釐)女(汝)襄土乍(作)乃采」。) Cf. *Liang Zhou jinwenci daxi*, 3.16-17.

⁴⁵ For further arguments suggesting the incongruity of kinship- and ruling structures on the level of the Western Zhou ruling organization, see also Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 378-283; and Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 166-167.

namely “the custom of regarding the Son of Heaven as ruler and the many regional lords as ministers” (君天子、臣諸侯之制).

This is an important point which is often overlooked in studies stressing the importance of kinship ties in relations between the Zhou king and the regional rulers.⁴⁶ Even though genealogy might have played a considerable part in the delegation of authority and the distribution of wealth, especially in the early Western Zhou period, it does not appear as a significant factor in the few extant inscriptions relating to the instalment of regional lords. Let us look at another example to substantiate this point. While Chen Mengjia’s identification of vessel donor Zhao with patriarch Bi, based mainly on passages from the *Shiji* 史記, rests on a rather speculative grounds, the protagonist in the early Western Zhou Jing Hou *gui* 井侯簋 or Xing Hou *gui* 邢侯簋 (JC 4241)⁴⁷ inscription can be identified with some degree of confidence as a descendant of the Patriarch of Zhou, referred to in transmitted texts as Zhou Gong Dan 周公旦, brother of King Wu.⁴⁸ The inscription bears some difficulties as it does not mention the donor by name and sometimes even omits the identity of speaker or addressee. However, there is sufficient evidence to assume that the text refers to the devolution of the duty of Marquis of Jing, the initial

⁴⁶ See the discussion at the beginning of chapter three in this study.

⁴⁷ No verifiable information exists about the date, location and circumstances of the vessel’s discovery. Rong Geng assumes it was found in 1921 near the city of Luoyang 洛陽, Henan (*Shang Zhou yiqi tongkao*, 282). However, according to a private letter that Wang Xiantang 王獻唐 (1896-1960) wrote to Chen Mengjia, the vessel, which is now housed in the British Museum, was unearthed together with several un-inscribed bronzes north of the city of Yangzhou 揚州, Jiangsu, during irrigation works in 1929. After a broken handle had been restored at a workshop in Jinan 濟南, Shandong, Wang states, the vessel was sold within Shanghai from where it must have been shipped to the United Kingdom where it was first exhibited in 1935. Cf. *Duandai*, 82. Its inscription was first recorded in Luo Zhenyu, *Zhensong tang jigū yiwēn*, 4.48.

⁴⁸ In his introduction and translation of the Jing Hou *gui* inscription in *Source Book*, 28-29, Eno states: “The Jing Hou *gui* is most commonly dated to the reign of King Kang or late in the reign of King Cheng. The vessel was cast for the newly installed Marquis of Jing, a region in contemporary Hebei Province that is regularly rendered as Xing 邢 in transmitted texts, and associated with the modern region of Xingtai 邢台, about 100 km north of the last Shang capital. The rulers of Jing belonged to a branch of the lineage of Zhou Gong, as indicated by the vessel dedication.”

creation of the position of which is recorded in the Mai *zun* inscription, to the unnamed vessel donor who reveals himself as a descendant of the patriarch of Zhou in the dedication line.⁴⁹

隹(唯)三月，王令燹(榮)冢內史曰：「蕘(更=賡)井(邢)侯(侯)服，易(賜)臣三品：州人、重人、葷(庸)人。」

It was the third month when the King ordered Rong and the Inner Scribe to pronounce [his charge to X]: “[X,] assume and continue the duties of Marquis of Xing.⁵⁰ I bestow on you ministers of three categories: men of Zhou, men of Zhong, and men of Yong.”

拜頷首，魯天子宥(酬)畢(厥)瀕福。克奔走上下，帝無冬(終)令(命)于有周。追考(孝)，對(述)不敢象(愆)。邵(劭)朕(朕)福(血=恤)，朕(峻=允)臣天子。用冊(冊)王令，乍(作)周公彝。

Bowing prostrate [I, X,] praise the great blessings received from the Son of Heaven. [My forebear, the Patriarch of Zhou?] was able to arduously serve above and below,⁵¹ so Di had no [occasion] to end Zhou’s mandate.⁵² In

⁴⁹ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.39-40; Yu Xingwu, “Jing Hou gui kaoshi” 井侯簋考釋, *Kaogu shekan* 考古社刊 (1936) 4: 22-26; *Duandai* #58; *Kinbun tsūshaku* 11.591-607; *Mingwen xuan*, #66; Yang Wenshan, “Xizhou qingtongqi ‘Xing Hou gui’ tongshi” 西周青銅器 “邢侯簋” 通釋, *Xingtai Shifan gaozhuan xuebao* 17.1 (2002): 23-28; and *Source Book* #10. See Shang Zhiru 尚志儒, “Xizhou jinwen zhong de Jingguo” 西周金文中的井國, *Wenbo* 文博 3 (1993): 60-68, for the historical context of the Mai *zun* and Jing Hou *gui* inscriptions in the light of the genesis of the State of Xing.

⁵⁰ Based on a similar formulation in the Ban *gui* 班簋 (*JC* 4341), “The King orders Elder Mao to assume and continue the official duties of the Guo Cheng Patriarch” (王令毛伯賡虢城公服), Guo Moruo suggests to render the graph 蕘 as *geng* 更(賡), “to continue,” “to succeed.” Shirakawa, *Kinbun tsūshaku* 11.594-596, considers this option as well. Further passages from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions to support this view are found in the incipits from the Chi *zhi* 饌觶 goblet (*JC* 6516), “The King calls on the Inner Scribe to pronounce the charge to Chi: ‘Assume and continue your forebear’s official duties’” (王呼內史冊命饌：賡厥祖考服) and from the Qiu *pan* 逌盤 (NA 757), “I, Qiu, have been continuing my august ancestors’ and deceased father’s service [to the Zhou Kings]. Respectfully day and night, I devoted myself to fulfil my obligations” (逌肇纂朕皇祖考服，虔夙夕，敬朕死事). However, the above passage from the Jing Hou *gui* could also read: “The King orders Rong and the Inner Scribe saying: ‘Amend the Marquis of Xing’s duties / sphere of control.’” See for instance the interpretation in Yang Wenshan, “Xizhou qingtongqi ‘Xing Hou gui’ tongshi (xia)” 西周青銅器 “邢侯簋” 通釋 (下), *Xingtai Shifan gaozhuan xuebao* 20.1 (2005): 5-9.

⁵¹ Phrases beginning with *ke* 克, “to be able to” always refer to deeds already achieved by the vessel donor and / or his forebears in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

⁵² Most commentators interpret *shang-xia Di* 上下帝 (the deities above and below) as one compound, thus reading 克奔走上下帝，無終命于有周, which Eno for instance translates as: “May I serve well the deities above and below, eternally under the mandate of the Zhou” (*Source Book*, 29). I follow Yu Xingwu (“Jing Hou gui kaoshi;” and *Shuangjian Chi Shangshu xin zheng*, 198), Rong Geng

pursuance of my filial duty, I will continue [my forebear's task] and dare not be neglecting.⁵³ I [pledge to] exert myself in our blessings and in our burdens,⁵⁴ and to trustingly serve the Son of Heaven.⁵⁵ To record the orders of the King, I cast this vessel for the Patriarch of Zhou.

Although the vessel donor in all likelihood shared a common ancestry with the commanding king, in a way we can say that among all the inscriptions we have seen so far in this chapter, the text from the Jing Hou *gui* inscription builds strongest on the idiom of command and obligation as well as on the symbolic world of meaning underlying the idea of Zhou kingship. In addition to the semantics of command and obligation, we encounter here for the first time (with the exception of the Tianwang *gui*, which dates even earlier than the Jing Hou *gui*.) a reference to a superimposed theo-political purpose, implicitly resonating in the phrase “*Di* had no [occasion] to end Zhou's mandate.”⁵⁶ Even if one opts for reading *Shang-xia Di* as one compound, the phrase *wu zhong ming yu you Zhou* still suggests that it is the theo-political

(*Shang Zhou yiqi tongkao*, 264), Chen Mengjia (*Duandai*, 82-83), and Dobson (*Early Archaic Chinese*, 194-195) in dividing the sentence after *shang-xia* and assigning *Di* as the subject of the following sentence. For the interpretation of *shang-xia* 上下 as a compound designating above and below, Heaven and the human realm, as well as for other instances of its usage, see Yu Xingwu, “Jing Hou *gui* kaoshi;” and idem, *Shuangjian Chi Shangshu xin zheng*, 198-199. Compare also Jiang Kunwu, *Shi Shu chengci kaoshi*, 298-302. My rendering of the second phrase as “*Di* had no [occasion] to end Zhou's mandate” too, follows Yu Xingwu and Chen Mengjia. Both scholars have identified similar statements to support this reading in the OBI and in the *Documents*. Most importantly, in the OBI we find the following divination topic: “*Di* might perhaps put an end to this settlement – *Di* will not put an end to this settlement” (帝隹其冬[終]茲邑 – 帝弗冬[終]茲邑) (*HJ* 14209 正). In the *Documents*, the following two passages are of concern: “Heaven rejected and put an end to the Mandate of the grand Yin polity” (天既遐終大邦殷之命 [“*Shao gao*” 召誥, *Shangshu jin-gu wen zhushu*, 18.396]); and “Yin's Mandate has been ended by *Di*” (殷命終于帝[“*Duo shi*” 多士, *Shangshu jin-gu wen zhushu*, 20.424]). However the discussion on whether or not *shang-xia di* should be read as a single compound has still not come to a close yet. See Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 491-494, on the current opinions on this topic.

⁵³ For the interpretation of the graph *tuan* (*[ʃo[r]-s) 𠄎 as *duo* (*[ʃoj?) 惰, “careless,” “neglecting,” see Chen Jian, “Jinwen ‘tuan’ zi kaoshi” 金文 “𠄎” 字考釋, in idem, *Jiagu Jinwen kaoshi lunji*, 243-272, esp. 252-255.

⁵⁴ For 𠄎 see Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 300. For the interpretation of the graph 𠄎, see the annotations in *ibid*, 409-413, esp. 412.

⁵⁵ For the rendering of the second 𠄎 as *yun* 允 see *ibid*, 499-500.

⁵⁶ Cf. Yu Xingwu, *Jiagu wenzi shilin*, 189, who understands this passage as an important trace in the early development of the Zhou concept of the Heavenly Mandate.

Mandate of Heaven or of Di which is meant here by *ming*. Thus above the level of personal commitment between King and vessel donor, the next higher binding instance was not a shared genealogy but a shared politico-religious orientation and obligation.

That such a text should have been commissioned by a cousin of the Zhou king bears an important insight for our analysis. No matter whether the authority transfer recorded in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions involves a non-Zhou individual from an allied kinship polity, a lesser member from a ducal house, or a marquis or patriarch whose recent ancestral line connects him directly to the royal house, the nature of the interaction between king and appointee always follows the same pattern: The king, himself subject to Heaven's judgment in the symbolic world of Zhou kingship, chooses whom he wants to incorporate into his proto-political network by delegating limited authority and resources to the respective appointee. To the King's credit of trust he placed on his appointee corresponds the latter's promise to live up to the obligations thus invested in him. This necessarily entailed the future-directed contriving of the relationship between king and appointee in terms of a proto-political bond. What started with a commitment determining the allies' future course of action, inevitably turned into binding memory, which also extended to and determined the relationship between the allies' descendants. Consequently it was the memory of obligation that in the long turn substituted for genealogical ties in the creation and perpetuation of Zhou corporate solidarity.

2.2.2 *Interim conclusions*

Returning to our initial discovery, we can say that the radical change of perspective we witness in early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions from the time of King Kang onwards directly reflects the changing self-perception of the king and the elites from an extended kinship community, defined through lines of common descent, to an alliance of purpose, bound together through the shared future-directed commitment to a theo-political agenda.

Yet what these inscriptions address in the first place are the terms on which corporate solidarity was founded on a non-coercive basis between Zhou king and lineage elites. The relevant factors here are the munificence and the un-coerced entrustment of authority on the side of the king, and willing subordination and loyalty on the side of appointee. In its conception this constellation resembles a patron-client relationship in that the alliance between the king and elites rested on a contingent basis defined through a structure of vertical solidarity.⁵⁷ This constellation presupposes a certain scope of action allowing both parties, at least in theory, to choose whether or not they wish to enter into a mutual dependency with each other. Indeed, it was not just the king who had decisional power over whom he wanted to incorporate into his ruling organization, the appointees too were willingly allied individuals the king perpetually needed to bind and to obligate, rather than minions in a given hierarchy whom he could command at will. Precisely because subordination under the Zhou king's authority was non-enforceable, a command, in order to become effective, also required a decision and an avowal to be loyal to the king on the side of the appointee. By the same token, there were no compelling

⁵⁷ Cf. Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 117-122, for the concept of vertical solidarity.

factors other than the obligation to recognize such perpetual loyalties, which could oblige the King to include individuals into his structure of command.

Where a politico-religious motivation does appear in early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, such as in the Jing Hou *gui* inscription, it marks an extension or a transformation of the dynamics of command and obligation into the purely symbolic sphere of politico-religious ideas. This continues to the case even in mid- to late Western Zhou inscriptions where images such as the Heavenly Mandate and its conditions become more frequent.⁵⁸

Hence in order to make sense of Zhou politico-religious ideas in the creation of an ethno-political identity, we first need to fully understand the complex dynamics of royal commands, its visions of success but also of failure.

2.3 The royal command as a constitutive element in the creation of corporate solidarity

The King's and the elites' perspectives as we find them retained in the bronzes are important, for they constitute the main evidence telling us that contacts between king and vessel donors were not taking place within given pre-built authority structures. Individuals were bound within their basic social units, the lineage, which, according to the epigraphic sources, coincides at its largest extent with the structure of a ducal house (*gong-zong* 公宗).⁵⁹ Institutional structures above lineage level in turn rested on contingent, symbolically defined grounds, and hence required an

⁵⁸ Compare the discussion at the end of this chapter.

⁵⁹ See Zhu Fenghan, *Shang-Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 291-301; and Gassmann, *Verwandtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten China*, 63-66.

active commitment from the involved parties. Virginia C. Kane was the first to note this point with respect to late Western Zhou appointment inscriptions:

The “appointment” inscription, as opposed to the “reward” inscription, [...] presupposes a society in which the king *trusts* his appointee to fulfill the obligations of the assigned office “blamelessly,” without abusing its privileges and without expecting any other reward except the honor of serving the king and perhaps being reappointed to the same office or to a higher office by the next king.⁶⁰

However, our analysis so far has shown that such a society could not simply be presupposed. On the contrary, as the future-directed rhetoric of commitment and loyalty in the inscriptions suggest, the conditions for this trust needed to be (re-) created together with, and by means of, each individual appointment. Here lies the reason why I associate the latter with the context of patron-client relations.

This point has to concern us further as it shows that royal commands were certainly more than a mere operational factor within the Zhou king’s civil and military bureaucracy, the extent of the existence of which is less than certain.⁶¹ Rather they appear to have been a significant constitutive factor in the creation of a lineage-transcending Zhou corporate solidarity.⁶² Whereas the ensuing socio-economic interactions between king and appointee presuppose an existing authority structure, royal commands themselves anticipated and created (or retrieved) these structures. Their issuing as well as their acceptance played equally important

⁶⁰ Virginia C. Kane, “Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions,” 16, emphasis in original.

⁶¹ See von Falkenhausen, “Review of Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China*,” 259-265.

⁶² The distinction between the operative and constitutive functions in political organizations goes back to Jeremy Bentham’s political theory developed in the late 18th century: “In a political state,” Bentham states, “all power is either operative, or constitutive: operative is that, by the immediate exercise of which, obsequiousness and obedience are called for at the hands of individuals: constitutive [...] is that, by the exercise of which, operative power is created and conferred” (John Bowring, ed., *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1843), 9: 127.

parts in a verbal exchange of locutions, creating a basis of mutual trust through illocutionary force. So far, however, royal commands have been mainly considered from the perspective of the king's agency as authoritative statements, designed to achieve royal aims. Yet the vessel donors' responses to the receipt of royal commands reveal another side of the picture. Not only did commands require a response to become effective, they were also treated rather as gifts than as demands in the vessel donors' statement of praise. Munificence rather than coercion obliged the donors to devote themselves to the Zhou course. This complementary side to royal commands needs to be taken seriously in order to understand the nature of Zhou corporate solidarity, its rhetoric and the symbolic order it refers to.

2.3.1 *The Hendiadys of ming 命 and xiu 休*

The most instructive passages to look for this complementary aspect are of course the answers the commands caused on the side of the appointees. What correlates to the king's issue of a command on the side of the appointee? In each of the inscriptions cited above, both commands and bestowals indirectly indicating the transfer of authority were answered by the vessel donors' praise of the king's (or a patriarch's) grace or munificence. In each example, except in the text from the Xing Hou *gui*, the king's conferral of a charge and / or of symbolic gifts is referred to by the vessel donor as *xiu* 休. This is by no means mere coincidence. Quantitative analysis of mid- to late Western Zhou appointment inscriptions shows that the conferral of a command customarily entailed the response: "X responds to and extols

the King's grace" (*X dui yang wang-xiu* X 對揚王休), or a variant thereof.⁶³ But what exactly does *xiu* imply here? And even more importantly, what does the seemingly mandatory appearance of this phrase in commitment or enrolment inscriptions tell us about the nature of royal commands?

The lexical meaning of *xiu* does not pose any major difficulties. Based on the term's usage in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, where it overtly appears in the object-position within statements extolling the king's mandate and bestowal of gifts, it is commonly translated as "gift," "benevolence" or "gracious favour" within this corpus. In some instances, where *xiu* functions as a verb, it is rendered "to bestow."⁶⁴ However, one needs to differentiate between the implications of *xiu* and that of other terms used to describe the bestowal of material goods and rewards, such as *ci* 賜 or *shang* 賞. Takayama Setsuya 高山節也 was the first to point out that in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions *xiu* cannot be reduced to the same semantic range as *ci* or *shang* which many scholars regard as synonyms of *xiu*.⁶⁵ Comparing epigraphic texts in which *xiu* and *ci* appear together within consecutive statements, Takayama has shown that while *ci* exclusively marks the bestowal of physical items, *xiu* by contrast always refers to the overall act of royal liberality, including the king's goodwill, recognition and the delegation of authority.⁶⁶ Two years later, Virginia C. Kane, in her important article "Aspects of Western Zhou Appointment Inscriptions,"

⁶³ See Takayama Setsuya 高山節也, "Sei Shū kokka ni okeru 'Ten-mei' no kino" 西周国家における「天命」の機能, in *Sei Shū jidai no seidōki to sono kokka*, ed. Matsumaru Michio, 348-349; and Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 125; 405, esp. 611, n. 1.

⁶⁴ Cf. Tang Lan 唐蘭, "Lun yi ming zhong de 'xiu' zi" 論彝銘中的“休”字, in idem, *Tang Lan xiansheng jinwen lunji* 唐蘭先生金文論集 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 1995), 65; Yang Huaiyuan 楊懷源, "Jinwen changyongci 'xiu' ji qi ciyu yi tongyici" 金文常用詞“休”及其賜予義同義詞, *Chongqing Sanxia xueyuan xuebao* 重慶三峽學院學報 4 (2010): 112-114; and *Yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 415-429.

⁶⁵ Takayama Setsuya, "Sei Shū kokka ni okeru 'Ten-mei' no kino," 348-353.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 350-353.

convincingly relates the formula, “to extol the King’s grace,” to the receipt of a charge.⁶⁷ In terms of philological evidence for the association of *ming* with *xiu* in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, Kane and Chen Hanping 陳漢平 propose that *xiu* stands short for *xiu-ming* 休命, “gracious mandate.”⁶⁸ Whereas in most instances of the formula the vessel donor simply praises the king’s grace, *xiu*, there exists also a significant number of examples in which the donor explicitly extols the king’s gracious mandate (*xiu-ling* 休令 or *xiu-ming* 休命).⁶⁹ The context in either case is the same. Hence Kane and Chen argue that in those instances where *xiu* stands on its own, the term nevertheless implicates the mandate as well.⁷⁰

Let us compare some examples from the category of appointment inscriptions in order to furnish this point. The first example exists in three identical inscriptions cast on the two mid-Western Zhou Xiao Chen Shou *gui* 小臣守簋 (*Jicheng* 4179+4180) and on one extant Xiao Chen Shou *gui lid* 小臣守簋蓋 (*Jicheng* 4181) respectively.⁷¹

隹(唯)五月既死霸，辛未，王吏(使)小臣守吏(事)于夷(?)，賓馬兩、金十鈞。守敢對揚天子休令，用乍(作)鑄引中(仲)寶戩(簋)，子子孫孫永寶用。

In the fifth month, after the dying brightness on *xin-wei* day, the King ordered petty minister Shou to serve in Yi (?), wherefore he bestowed [on him] two horses and three hundred catties of metal. Shou dared to respond to and to extol the King’s gracious command, wherefore he had cast a precious *gui*-tureen for

⁶⁷ Kane, “Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions,” 14-28.

⁶⁸ Chen Hanping 陳漢平, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu* 西周冊命制度研究 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1986), 309-311.

⁶⁹ There are 35 instances according to the AS database.

⁷⁰ See also Takayama, “Sei Shū kokka ni okeru ‘Ten-me’ no kino,” 353.

⁷¹ Only one of the vessels is still extant and housed in the Shanghai Museum. Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of their discovery. The inscription from the lid was first recorded in Wu Rongguang 吳榮光 (1773-1843), *Junqing guan jinwen* 筠清館金文, 5 vols. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1971 [1842]), 3.20; that from the vessels in Liu Xinyuan 劉心源 (1848-1917), *Jigu shi ji jin wenshu* 奇觚室吉金文述, 12 vols. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1971 [1902]), 4.2. The cited version is *JC* 4180. Judging from the dating conventions, the inscription dates probably from the time of King Zhao or King Mu.

Yinzhong (?). May sons and grandsons forever treasure and use it.⁷²

The king is depicted here as commanding at the vessel donor Shou (a rare example where the term *shi* 使, “to cause someone to do something,” or “to assign someone to fulfil a duty” is used instead of *ming*), followed by the bestowal of gifts, which, at least in part, seem to have been especially designed to be of use in the appointee’s future position.⁷³ Consistent with this observation appears the fact that the vessel donor explicitly extols the king’s gracious command (*xiu ling* 休令).

The second example, the text inscribed on the late early Western Zhou Jing *fangding* 靜方鼎 (NA 1795) dating from the reign of King Zhao,⁷⁴ by contrast has only *xiu* in the passage extolling the king’s grace. Its latter half reads:

[...]月既望，丁丑，王才（在）成周大室，令靜曰：卑（俾）女（汝）□嗣（司）才（在）曾噩（鄂）自（師）。王曰：靜，易（賜）女（汝）鬯、旂、市、采鬯。曰：用事。靜揚天子休，用乍（作）父丁寶尊（尊）彝。

[A]fter the full moon, on *ding-chou* day, the King was in the Great Hall in Chengzhou where he issued a command to Jing, speaking: “I empower (?) you to supervise the E-armies at Zeng.” The King spoke: “Jing, I bestow on you sacrificial wine, a banner flag, an apron, and an appanage in X.” He spoke: “Use [these] to serve!” Jing responded to and extolled the Son of Heaven’s grace, wherefore he had cast this precious *zun* vessel for Father Ding.⁷⁵

The passage starts with the king’s charge pronounced to the vessel donor. The subsequent gift list is followed by the king’s imperative to use these items to serve,

⁷² Cf. *Mingwen xuan* #324.

⁷³ Compare the bestowal of horses in the *Xian gui*.

⁷⁴ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of the vessel, which is currently housed in the Idemitsu Museum of Arts in Tokyo, Japan. It has been first studied by Xu Tianjing 徐天進, Zhang Maorong 張懋鎔 and Wang Zhankui 王占奎 in 1998. See *Wenwu* (1998) 5: 85-90.

⁷⁵ Cf. the interpretations in *Wenwu* (1998) 5: 85-90.

which implies that they were intended as adjuncts to the mandate, most of them symbolizing the recipient's newly gained royal authority.⁷⁶ It should also be clear, therefore, that the term *xiu* in the donor's statement of praise, although not modifying the word *ling* or *ming* here, refers primarily to the mandate and not to the physical gifts accompanying it.

We might even cite a third example in which the king's charge is not mentioned at all, yet where it is nevertheless obvious that *xiu* on its own refers to the authority invested in the vessel donor through an unmentioned royal charge. The following text is found inscribed identically on each of the three extant tureens from the mid-Western Zhou Wei *gui* 衛簋 (NB 1212, NB 1213, NB 1779) set:⁷⁷

唯八月既生霸庚寅，王各(格)于康大(太)室。衛曰：朕光(皇)尹中(仲)侃父右(右)告衛于王。王易(錫)衛佩、戣(緇)市(黻)、殺(朱)亢、金車、金旛，曰：用事。衛頹(拜)顛(稽)首，對揚王休。[...]

It was in the eight month, after the growing brightness, on *geng-yin* day that the king took his position in the Great hall of Kang. Wei announced: "My glorious superior, head of officials, Zhong Kanfu conducted Wei to his audience and made Wei's announcement to the king on his behalf."⁷⁸ The king bestowed on Wei a belt pendant, black knee pads, a vermilion girdle-pendant, a golden chariot and a golden pennant (?) saying: 'Use them to serve.' Wei bowed prostrate, responded to and extolled the king's grace. [...]

⁷⁶ For a list of generic gifts mentioned in appointment inscriptions see Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 82-83. Monographic studies of these gifts as well as of their use and symbolic meaning are Chen Hanping, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu*, 220-263; and He Shuhuan, *Xizhou xi ming mingwen xin jiu*, 85-249.

⁷⁷ Cf. Wu Zhenfeng 吳鎮烽, "X qi mingwen kaoshi 獄器銘文考釋," *Kaogu yu Wenwu* (2006) 6: 58-65; Zhu Fenghan, "Wei gui yu Bo X zhu qi" 衛簋與獄諸器, *Nankai xuebao* (zhexue shehui kexue ban) (2008) 6: 1-8; Zhang Guangyu 張光裕 "Le Congtang cang X gui ji xian jian Wei gui san qi mingwen xiaoji" 樂從堂藏獄簋及新見衛簋三器銘文小記, *Zhongshan Daxue xuebao* 中山大學學報 (Shehui kexue ban 社會科學版) (2009) 5:12-13; and Lü Zhangshen 呂章申 ed., *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan bai nian shoucang jicui* 中國國家博物館百年收藏集粹 (Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 2014), 86-87. While two of the vessels are currently held in a private collection in Hong Kong (NB 1212 + NB 1213), the third one (NB 1779) is housed in the National Museum of China. Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the vessels' discovery.

⁷⁸ The interpretation of this passage follows Wu Zhenfeng and Zhu Fenghan.

All of the items listed in this inscription are clearly official insignia, the bestowal of which presupposes the recipient's appointment to an office, implied here by the imperative "Use these to serve!" Here as well, *xiu* stands implicitly for *xiu-ming*.

This observation pertains to the great majority of appointment and commitment inscriptions in general that extol the king's grace in an undifferentiated manner by only referring to the king's *xiu*. It suggests once again that we should regard royal commands not only in an operative and demanding sense that required the recipient to sacrifice his power and resources in order to serve the king,⁷⁹ but also in a constitutive sense, as an "official notice of empowerment by the king or his representative to the recipient of increased socio-economic rights within Zhou society."⁸⁰ David Schaberg points in this respect to the similarities between *ming* and the ancient Greek term *moira* in the sense of "a 'portion' or 'share' that one receives on any occasion of distribution."⁸¹ "*Ming*, like *moira*," he states, "is an allotment granted by a superior arbiter on an occasion of distribution."⁸²

What then was the purpose of the phrase "X responds to and extols the King's grace" in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions? Was it indeed just intended as a note of thankfulness as some assume it was?⁸³ To be sure, the king's command did in every

⁷⁹ However, one must not forget that this side of royal commands was connected to the necessity of royal bestowals of gifts as well as David Schaberg remarks: "[O]n the occasion when it is issued, and as it is transmitted thereafter, the command is financed by gifts both material and intangible. These gifts, understood as the justification for whatever sacrifices the *ming* might require, supply the energy for the various conversions *ming* must undergo and ensure, at least in pious theory, that commission will not be turned into private profit." (David Schaberg, "Command and the Content of Tradition," in *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment and Fate in Chinese Culture*, ed. Christopher Lupke, [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005], 24).

⁸⁰ Constance A. Cook, "Wealth and the Western Zhou," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60, No.2 (1997): 260.

⁸¹ David Schaberg, "Command and the Content of Tradition," 26

⁸² *Ibid.*, 30. Compare also Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 85-86. Munro assumes the twofold meaning of "command" and "that which is given" for the word *ming* in Western Zhou times.

⁸³ So for instance Kane, "Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions," 20-21; and Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 83-85.

case impose a significant obligation on the bearer. Sometimes it may have even required the latter to sacrifice his life in military service. But even in cases where royal commands were perceived as great burdens, they were still treated as an act of royal grace. The reason why we hardly see this side of royal commands is because it was highly unusual to refer to the hardships and dangers that come with the king's charge in the medium of bronze inscriptions. To my knowledge, only the text from the mid- Western Zhou Dong *fangding* 戎方鼎 (II) (JC 2824) inscription addresses such issues in an outright manner:⁸⁴

戎曰：烏虜(乎)！王唯念戎辟刺(烈)考甲公。王用肇(肇)事(使)乃子戎率虎臣御(禦)難(淮)戎。

Dong spoke: “Alas! The King remembers Dong’s sovereign, my illustrious deceased father, Patriarch Jia. The King initially employed your son, Dong, to lead the Tiger guards against the Huai and the Rong tribes.”

戎曰：烏虜(乎)！朕文考甲公、文母日庚，弋(式)休劓(則)尚！安永宕乃子戎心，安永襲(襲)戎身，畢(厥)復高(享)于天子。唯畢(厥)事(使)乃子戎萬年辟事天子，母(毋)又(有)耽(尤)于畢(厥)身。[…]

Dong spoke: “Alas! My accomplished deceased father, Patriarch Jia and my accomplished mother Ri Geng, make that [I be able] to pattern myself on [the king’s] grace as the ultimate norm.⁸⁵ May you eternally make firm (?) your

⁸⁴ This and 17 further vessels commissioned by the same donor, most importantly the Dong *gui* 戎簋 (JC 4322), have been archaeologically excavated in 1975 from tomb 75M1 in Zhuangbai, Fufeng county, Shaanxi, close to the site where the famous Zhuangbai hoard 1 was found one year later. Cf. Luo Xizang 羅西章, Wu Zhenfeng and Luo Zhongru 雒忠如, “Shaanxi Fufeng chutu Xizhou Bo Dong zhu qi” 陝西扶風出土西周伯戎諸器, *Wenwu* (1976) 6: 51-60. Moreover, several unprovenanced vessels such as the Bo Dong *gui* 伯戎簋 (JC 4115) and the Lu Bo Dong *gui* 魯伯戎簋 (JC 4302) are now also associated with the same man, who may have well been the original tomb occupant. Cf. Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋, “Lu Bo Dong tongqi ji qi xiangguan wenti” 魯伯戎銅器及其相關問題, *Kaogu yu Wenwu* (1983) 5: 43-49; and Wang Zhongwen 汪中文, “‘Bo Dong’ yu ‘Lu,’ ‘Lu Bo Dong’ zhuqi jian xilian wenti zhi jiantao” “伯戎”與“魯”、“魯伯戎”諸器間系聯問題之檢討, *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 79.3 (1989): 43-48.

⁸⁵ The reading of the graph 弋 as 式 follows a suggestion by Qiu Xigui. Qiu further follows Ding Shengshu 丁聲樹, “*Shijing* ‘shi’ zi shuo” 詩經“式”字說, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 6.4 (1936): 487-495, in reading the graph in the sense of to urge someone to do something. See Qiu Xigui, “Buci ‘yi’ zi he Shi, Shu li de ‘shi’ zi” 卜辭“異”字和詩、書的“式”字, *Zhongguo*

son's, Dong's heart; may you eternally shield Dong's person that I may continue to serve the Son of Heaven. May you grant that your son, Dong, can serve the Son of Heaven for ten thousand years.⁸⁶ Let no harm inflict on my person.” [...]⁸⁷

I follow Chen Yingjie and Robert Eno in reading this text as a prayer for protection against the dangers that Dong will be facing in the military campaign he has been ordered to lead.⁸⁸ The king's charge is clearly perceived here as a burden, exposing the bearer to great personal dangers. It is thus all the more telling that Dong refers not to the king's mandatory charge in this context but to his compulsory grace. This might be an important clue as to the almost mandatory appearance of the phrase *dui yang wang-xiu* in Western Zhou appointment inscriptions. A gift, in our case the un-coerced extension of Zhou corporate solidarity, becomes socially effective with its acceptance. Hence I understand the verbs *dui* 對, “to respond to,” “to match,” and *yang* 揚, “to exalt,” to mark the vessel donor's receipt of royal favours, his willing submission to the King's authority, rather than to merely express the donor's gratefulness. One could even say the phrase *dui yang wang-xiu*, at least to a certain extent, bears a contractual character in this context.

Our conclusions concerning the exact implications of *xiu* have to remain tentative to some degree. However, with further examples from both transmitted and

yuyanxuebao 中國語言學報 1 (1983): 178-179, rpt. in *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji*, 1.220-221; See also Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 371, for a similar conclusion. A formulation similar to that in the Dong *fangding* text can also be found in the closing passage from the mid-Western Zhou Shi Qiang pan 史牆盤 (JC 10175) inscription: “My shining grandfather and father have made [the King's] grace their standard and conveyed to me the precious blessings of succession. May I embrace their blessings living a long life to great old age that I may devotedly serve my ruler [the King] and forever treasure this [this vessel]” (刺(烈)且(祖)、文考弋(式)龕(休?)受(授)牆爾龕(社?)福。裏(懷)媯(祿), 黃耇彌生, 龕事畢(厥)辟, 其萬年永寶用).

⁸⁶ Cf. Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 274, for the interpretation of *xiang* 享 as *fengshi* 奉事, “to serve.”

⁸⁷ Cf. *Mingwen xuan*, #179; Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #60; *Source Book*, 64-65.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 821; Robert Eno, “Reflections on Literary and Devotional Aspects of Western Zhou Memorial Inscriptions,” in Shaughnessy, ed., *Imprints of Kinship*, 277.

excavated texts to follow, it will become more and more obvious, I think, that *ming* and *xiu* indeed constituted a sort of cultural hendiadys on which a proto-political Zhou corporate identity was founded. A binding mandate could not be issued without the accompanying conferral of socio-economic rights. By the same token, favours granted by the king necessarily entailed binding obligations. Behind this logic, again, appears the idea of a vertical solidarity typical of patron-client relations.

Indeed, if we broaden our scope of investigation, we find that the king emerges as a patron-figure in several passages from the *Mao Odes*. For instance in the *Major Ode* (*Daya* 大雅) *Jia le* 假樂 (Mao 249) we read:

假樂君子	Gracious and benevolent is our ruler (the King),
顯顯令德	Manifest shines his liberality and sense for solidarity. ⁸⁹
宜民宜人	He brings good to the <i>min</i> and to the <i>ren</i> ,
受祿于天	And receives the blessings from Heaven. ⁹⁰
[...]	
千祿百福	Seeking blessings and centuple favours
子孫千億	for his multitudinous descendants,
穆穆皇皇	*m(r)iwk-*m(r)iwk, *[ɕ] ^{wɿ} aŋ-*[ɕ] ^{wɿ} aŋ,
宜君宜王	He brings good to patriarchs and kings. ⁹¹
[...]	

The king is depicted in this passage as extending his solidarity vertically, reaching all strata of society,⁹² and horizontally, affiliating not just with the patriarchs from the

⁸⁹ *Ling* 令 should read *shan* 善 “benevolent,” “generous” in this context. Cf. the explanations of the phrase *ling yi* 令儀 in Xiang Xi 向熹, *Shijing Cidian* 詩經詞典, rev. ed. (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 2014 [1997]), 308.

⁹⁰ *Maoshi zhushu*, 17.1602.

⁹¹ *Maoshi zhushu*, 17.1603. My translation of these two passages owes much to the brilliant interpretation and poetic rendering of this piece in Victor von Strauss, trans., *Schī-Kīng: Das Kanonische Liederbuch der Chinesen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969 [1880]), 419.

⁹² I take *ren* 人 and *min* 民 here as a complimentary pair referring to the entirety of the human ecumene.

lineages estates that constitute the Zhou ruling organization (*jun* 君) but even with the rulers from non-Zhou polities (*wang* 王). The king's munificence here implies a reaching out of the sovereign's care beyond the limitations of his immediate socio-economic context. It suggests the un-coerced extension of corporate solidarity from the confines of the Zhou core body politic to an ecumenical context.

Another version of this image can be found in the *Shang Hymn* (*Shang Song* 商頌) *Changfa* 長發 (Mao 304), probably a post- Western Zhou text appropriating the legendary figure of the Shang founding King Cheng Tang 成湯 to the Zhou conception of kingship and universal history:

何天之休	He bore the Heaven's blessings;
不競不綽	Neither violent nor pleading,
不剛不柔	Neither forcing nor yielding,
敷政優優	He broadly spread his munificent governance,
百祿是適	gathering and securing centuple blessings. ⁹³

What becomes even more evident here than in the Ode *Jia le* is that the extension of the king's munificence marks a constitutive measure devised to bring the realm under his control.

It is in this context, in the correlation of outreaching munificence and the consolidation of sovereignty, where we find a link to the notion of *xiu* in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions where it meets with the notion of royal commands. Both aspects form complementary features in the conception of Zhou kingship as the combination of the elements of sovereignty and outreaching providence.

This idea was by no means unique to early Chinese culture. The mechanism of

⁹³ *Maoshi zhushu*, 20.2144-2145.

granting unconditioned favours in order to impose obligations and to establish conditional bonds is a common phenomenon to be found throughout the ancient world. Moshe Weinfeld for instance has shown that the hendiadys of covenant and grace as well as the complementary nomenclature of bond, oath and faith on the one hand and kindness, friendship, love, brotherhood and peace on the other, are common features in covenant formulations and idiomatic expressions found in the ancient Near East, stretching all the way in time and space from ancient Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine and Anatolia to Greece and Rome.⁹⁴

Having identified *xiu* and *ming* as complementary factors in the creation of Zhou proto-political corporate solidarity, the most important question for us to consider at this point is the alternative to the successful implementation of vertical dependencies depicted in the sources analysed so far. For it is in avoidance of, and against the background of the possible failure to meet the aimed at conditions, that an idiom of obligation and commitment is required in the first place. This question has so far seldom been asked in early China studies.

2.3.2 The King has not forgotten: Recognition vs. oblivion

Perhaps the most trenchant observation concerning the opposite of *xiu* and *ming* can be found in Kane's apt definition of the term *xiu* as it appears in Western Zhou appointment inscriptions:

⁹⁴ Moshe Weinfeld, "Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and Its Influence on the West," *JAOS* 93.2 (1973): 190-199.

In response to recognition by a superior, whether in the form of a reward or a charge, the recipient customarily replied by praising the superior's "gracious favour" (對揚王 / 公 / 君休). The term *xiu* 休 is particularly felicitous in this context, since it implies, on the one hand, that rewards and charges conferred by a superior were freely given, unconstrained, uncoerced, and unsolicited; and, on the other hand, that service was rendered by an inferior without desire for or expectation of reward from the superior. The opposite of "wang-xiu" 王休 ("the king's gracious favor") was not stinginess or disfavor on the part of the king, but forgetfulness or obliviousness: the king overlooks, does not recognize, does not remember.⁹⁵

The opposite of *xiu*, according to Kane, is forgetting (*wang* 忘), letting fall into oblivion. Nowhere does the constitutive nature of royal commands and gifts appear more obvious than in this observation. However, Kane does not allow for her discovery to reach the structural level of Western Zhou elite society when she says that being overlooked by the kings would merely result in formerly office holding families to lose their honour.⁹⁶ If we understand the Zhou ruling alliance as a sum of quasi patron-client relations, and this is what the bronzes suggest, then this point truly marks a tremendously important insight into the condition of Western Zhou corporate solidarity, taking into account its contingent basis. It shows again very clearly that the king's commanding and / or gifting was not predetermined, nor did it take place within an established grid of binding relations which could serve to define the relationship between the king and the North-Chinese elites *ex ante*. While on an operative level royal commands did of course entail concrete obligations and functions within an existing Zhou military organization or within its incipient bureaucracy, on the constitutive level, commands and gifts served first and foremost as a means to initiate, retrieve and perpetuate bond-like patron-client relations

⁹⁵ Kane, "Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions," 20-21.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 23.

between king and lineage elites. Maria Khayutina therefore subsumes these measures to the context of “royal hospitality.” She has shown in several studies that the king received those whom he wanted to appoint to an official function, or with whom he wanted to renew loyalty ties, as guests.⁹⁷ Hospitality, and thus the outreaching royal munificence, was the platform for the creation and perpetuation of Zhou corporate solidarity. Without the institution of royal hospitality and the constitutive functions associated with it, there could have been no collective Western Zhou identity beyond the confines of the Zhou king’s own descent group.

Apart from internal political rivalry that could question Zhou legitimacy,⁹⁸ forgetting and negligence consequently posed the biggest dangers for the continued existence of Zhou corporate solidarity from inside. A look at some concrete examples should suffice to substantiate this point. First let us consider a very important text inscribed on the mid- Western Zhou *Li juzun* 盞駒尊 (JC 6011),⁹⁹ a *zun*-beaker cast in form of a horse with an inscribed front:

隹(唯)王十又二月，辰才(在)甲申，王初執駒于斂。王乎(呼)師虞召(詔)盞。王親旨(詣)盞，駒易(賜)兩。

It was in the twelfth month, the *chen*-star / -constellation was at *jia-shen*, when the King for the first time selected colts at An. The King called out for

⁹⁷ Cf. Maria Khayutina, “Host-Guest Opposition as a Model of Geo-Political Relations in Pre-Imperial China,” *Oriens Extremus* 43 (2002): 77-100; idem, “Welcoming Guests – Constructing Corporate Privacy? An Attempt at a Socio-Anthropological Interpretation of Ancestral Rituals Evolution in Ancient China (ca. XI - V cc. BC),” *Berliner China-Heft* 24 (2003): 35-50; and especially idem, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity (1046/5-771 BC),” *T’oung Pao* 96 (2010): 1-73.

⁹⁸ Cf. Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 295-313; and Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 328-331, for the power struggles that took place within the Western Zhou ruling organisation.

⁹⁹ This and four other bronzes commissioned by the vessel donor *Li* 盞 were excavated under scientific conditions from a hoard near Lijia cun 李家村, Mei county, Shaanxi, in 1955. The find was first published in *Wenwu cankao ziliao* (1957) 4: 6; and in Guo Moruo, “Li qi mingwen kaoshi” 盞器銘文考釋, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 (1957) 2: 2, respectively. See also Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan, Baoji shi kaogu yanjiusuo, and Mei xian wenhuaguan, eds., *Ji jin zhu hua zhang: Baoji Meixian Yangjiacun Shanshi qingtongqi jiaocang*, 239-261.

Commander Qu to summon Li. The King personally selected colts for Li and bestowed a pair on him.

拜頤(稽)首曰：王弗望(忘)昏(厥)舊宗小子，堋皇盞身。盞曰：王棚下不其(期)，則邁(萬)年保我邁(萬)宗。

[Li] bowed prostrate, speaking: “The King has not forgotten the young son of the old lineage and [?] Li’s person”¹⁰⁰ Li spoke: “The King befriends those below without limit, and hence for ten-thousand years protects our ten thousand lineages.”¹⁰¹

盞曰：余其敢對揚天子之休，余用乍(作)朕文考大中(仲)寶樽(尊)彝。盞曰：其邁(萬)年世子孫孫永寶之。

Li spoke: “I shall dare to extol the Son of Heaven’s grace, wherefore I have commissioned the precious sacrificial *zun*-vessel for my cultured deceased father Da Zhong.” Li spoke: “May sons and grandsons for ten thousand years and for ten thousand generations forever treasure it.”¹⁰²

The king’s relation with the ten thousand lineages in the vessel donor’s statement clearly depicts the king in the image of a patron. In the background we can still perceive of a highly diverse, polycentric society that was organized in descent groups and tribal alliances. Even at the time of the inscription, which dates to the early mid-Western Zhou period, it seems these old structures had not yet disappeared or merged with the enhanced structure of Zhou kingship. From the tone of the text it rather seems that Zhou kingship mainly existed in points of contact such as audiences and bestowals, as well as charges and the ensuing service relations. It is important to bear this point in mind when we consider the nature of the contact recorded in the Li *juzun* inscription. Although we know from two different inscriptions that Li, a member of the prominent Shan 單 lineage, did receive royal commands in other

¹⁰⁰ So far no interpretation has been suggested for the graph 堋.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 452.

¹⁰² Cf. *Duandai*, #122; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 19.312-338; *Mingwen xuan* #262; Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #79; and *Source Book* #26.

contexts,¹⁰³ this inscription actually only records a bestowal of gifts which seems unrelated to any sort of command. Yet neither does it qualify as a record of a reward granted to Li for some concrete services he might have rendered to the king in the past. Given the fact that Li is said to have served under both, King Zhao and King Mu in the text from the Qiu pan inscription,¹⁰⁴ one could reasonably assume the horses to be a gift from King Mu, given towards the beginning of his reign in order to re-establish or retrieve the ties between the royal house and its allied lineages. Hence Li's interpretation of the gesture: "The King has not forgotten the young son of the old lineage." Interesting and quite unique in this context appears further the perspective adopted by Li as spokesman for the many lineages affiliated with, but not forming an integral part of the royal house. This is in so far important as it points to a polycentric political area of tension which, even though it is never addressed as such in contemporary sources, nevertheless must have prompted the need for the specific Western Zhou idiom of obligation and commitment.

The inscription on the mid-Western Zhou Cheng *gui* 甬簋 (NA 1606) tureen reveals a very similar context:¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Compare the inscription on the Li Fangzun 盨方尊 (JC 6013) which records a royal command issued at Li, and the Lai Pan inscription, where Li is listed as an ancestor of the vessel donor Qiu, who is described there to have served King's Zhao and Mu. Cf. David M. Sena's introduction to and translation of the Li Fangzun and the Li Juzun inscriptions in *Source book*, 80-83.

¹⁰⁴ The said passage reads: "Ah! My august high ancestor Hui Zhong Lifu! Stabilizing and harmonizing in his governing, accomplished in his plans, he joined together with King Zhao and King Mu in extending [the Zhou's] governing to the four cardinal regions and in cutting down and punishing the Chu and Jing" (季朕皇高祖惠仲盨父，盪蘇于政，又成于猷，用會昭王、穆王，盜政四方，翦伐楚荆).

¹⁰⁵ Nothing concrete is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel which is now housed in the Poly Art Museum in Beijing. However the vessel donor, Cheng 甬 has been identified as the ruler of the polity of Ying 應, who also commissioned the mid-Western Zhou Ying Hou Cheng xu 應侯甬盨 (NA 65) that was excavated from tomb M48 in the cemetery of the rulers of Ying near Pingdingshan 平頂山, Henan, between 1986 and 1998. Cf. Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所, and Pingdingshan shi wenwu guanliju 平頂山市文物管理局, eds., *Pingdingshan Yingguo mudi 1* 平頂山應國墓地 I (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2012), 710-715. The vessel and its inscription have first been published in *Baoli cang jin bianji weiyuanhui* 《保利藏金》編輯委員會, ed., *Baoli cang jin* 保利藏金 (Guangzhou: Lingnan

佳(唯)王十又一月初吉丁亥，王才(在)姑，王弗望(忘)應公室，滅宐(寵?)禹身，易(賜)貝卅朋，馬四匹，禹對揚王不(丕)顯休宐(寵?) [...]

It was during the King's eleventh month, beginning auspiciousness, on *ding-hai* day that the King was at Gu. The King has not forgotten the ducal house of Ying and bestowed (?) favours on Cheng.¹⁰⁶ He bestowed on me thirty strings of cowries and four horses. Cheng extolls the King's brilliant munificent favours.¹⁰⁷

In this case as well, the gifting neither relates to a command nor to a concrete reward. The context described here, and to a certain extent also in the *Li juzun* inscription above, rather fits into one particular aspect of the model of royal hospitality developed by Maria Khayutina. In her study, Khayutina argues that, apart from the binding force of royal appointments, the geo-political constitution of the Western Zhou alliance relied on occasional gift-giving and feasting the king had conducted during his visits in the domains of the ducal lineages in order to revise loyalty bonds with them.¹⁰⁸ This seems to be precisely the case in the scene depicted in the *Cheng gui* inscription. Although the exact position of Gu is unclear, the vicinity was most likely located at some distance from the royal centre.¹⁰⁹ Thus we must assume the text to imply that the king, being on a tour, makes station at Gu where he retrieves his ties with the ducal house of Ying.¹¹⁰

The reason why the king remembered these lineages was of course to be found

meishu chubanshe, 1999), 73-78.

¹⁰⁶ For reading of 宐 as *chong* 寵 "favour," see *Zuoqi yongtu mingci*, 405, n.1.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Wu Zhenwu 吳振武, "Xin jian Xizhou 'Cheng gui' mingwen shi du" 新見西周禹簋銘文試讀, *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊 2 (2006): 84-88.

¹⁰⁸ Maria Khayutina, "Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity (1046/5-771 BC)," *T'oung Pao* 96 (2010): 1-73.

¹⁰⁹ For an informed guess as to the possible geographical location of Gu, see Khayutina, "Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity (1046/5-771 BC)," 26, n. 60.

¹¹⁰ For further examples see *Zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 448-449.

in the latters' military and administrative service rendered to the royal house in the past. Hence many vessel donors relate their receipt of royal recognition to their forebears' history of service, which by the same token, functions as point of departure for their own pledge to be loyal to the king. Such is the case for instance in the inscription on the mid- Western Zhou Hu *guigai* 虎簋蓋 (NA 633), a classic appointment inscription retaining parts of the appointment ritual's choreography:¹¹¹

[...]王乎(呼)入(内)史曰：冊令(命)虎。曰：飶(哉)乃且(祖)考事先王，嗣(司)虎臣。今命女(汝)曰：更(賡)毕(厥)且(祖)考，疋師戲嗣(司)走馬馭(馭)人眾五邑走馬馭(馭)人，女(汝)女(毋)敢不善于乃政。易(賜)女(汝)載市、幽黃、玄衣、澆(紉)屯(純)、縑(纓)旂五日，用事。

[...]The King called for the Inner Scribe, saying: “Pronounce the written command to Hu!” He spoke: “Initially your forebears served the former king(s) in supervising the tiger guards.¹¹² Now I command you with the words: ‘Succeed your forebears and assist commander Xi in supervising the Masters of Horses and Charioteers and the Masters of Horses and Charioteers of the five settlements. Do not dare not to excel in your duties!’ I award you dark leather kneepads with a deep-coloured belt, a dark cloak with an embroidered hem, a pennant fringed with small bells and marked with five suns. Use these to serve!”

虎敢拜頤(稽)首，對揚天子不(丕)忝(丕)魯休。虎曰：不(丕)顯朕刺(烈)且(祖)考舜明克事先王。隸天子弗望(忘)毕孫子，付毕尚官。天子其萬年疆(紳)茲命。虎用乍(作)文考日庚尊(尊)殷(簋)，子孫其永寶用，夙夕享于宗。

Hu dared to bow prostrate, extolling the Son of Heaven's greatly felicitous grace. Hu spoke: “Greatly manifest were my meritorious forebears. Luminous and bright, they have been able to serve the former Kings.¹¹³ Subsequently the Son of Heaven has not forgotten their descendant and entrusts him with their superior office. May the Son of Heaven extend this mandate for ten thousand years. Wherefore Hu has commissioned this *zun*-tureen for my cultured

¹¹¹ The lid was excavated in August 1996 from a site in Shanggou cun 山溝村, Danfeng 丹鳳 county, Shaanxi. The find was first published in *Kaogu yu Wenwu* (1997) 3: 78-80. See also Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 194-197

¹¹² For 飶 as *zai* 哉, “originally,” “initially,” see Chen Hanping, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu*, 135-136.

¹¹³ Ming cf. *Zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 259-260

deceased father Ri Geng. May sons and grandsons use it forever to offer day at night to our lineage [ancestors].¹¹⁴

Due to the contingent basis of the Zhou alliance, but perhaps also due to the lineages' material restraints and limited manpower, their capability to render military and administrative service to the Zhou royal house must have been anything but a matter of course. Apart from the political decision to enter into a commitment with the king, it also presupposed the lineage's ability to spare its own resources necessary to conduct these services.¹¹⁵ The text from the Hu *guigai* inscription goes through great efforts to stress this point. It not only mentions the fact that Hu's forebears were able to serve (*ke shi* 克事) former kings, their ability to do so is further depicted in a rather poetic image to have been "luminous and bright" (*lin-ming* 粦明), clearly visible for everyone near and far. Hence the king's decision to remember and recognize Hu, whom he expects to succeed his forebears in serving the royal house without fail, is envisioned here in terms of the continuation of an established relation of trust.

Not surprisingly thus, statements stressing the evidence of one's ancestors' ability to serve the royal house developed an almost formulaic character in mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. A formulation quite similar to that in the Hu *guigai* text can be found for instance in the text from the mid- Western Zhou Yin Ji *ge* 尹媯鬲 (*JC* 754) inscription:¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Source Book* #24.

¹¹⁵ There is so far no evidence of an official emolument for Zhou officials during the Western Zhou period. Royal gifts, although meant in part to reimburse the bearer for his service, were mostly insignia prestige goods not meant to secure his economical subsistence. In the end, the lineages who were participating in the Zhou structure of vertical solidarity likely needed to invest part of their own capital as well in order to profit from their participation in Zhou corporate identity.

¹¹⁶ Nothing is known about the discovery of this vessel which is currently housed in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. A rubbing of its inscriptions was first published in Yu Xingwu, *Shang Zhou jinwen lu yi* 商周金文錄遺 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1957), 97.

[...]休天君弗望(忘)穆公聖舜明飶(弼)事先王[...]

[...]The gracious Heavenly Lord has not forgotten the sagacious Patriarch Mu, who, luminous and bright, assisted and served the former Kings. [...] ¹¹⁷

Although such statements reveal that royal recognition was in a way expected, the logic of *xiu* and *ming* nevertheless makes it clear that, at least in theory, nothing could compel the king to remember the services and loyalties rendered to him.

The king's gracious recognition by contrast always imposed a binding obligation on the recipients of gifts and charges, requiring the latter to cultivate a memory of commitment. In the above cited Xian *gui* inscription we read: "Ten generations shall not forget (*wang* 忘), I, Xian, a member of Patriarch of Bi's household, received the Son of Heaven's grace;" similar in the Zhao *you* text we read: "Zhao does not dare to forget (*wang* 忘) the King's grace." An even more emphatic admonition from the vessel donor directed at his future descendants concludes the passage from the three Wei *gui* inscriptions:

[...] 孫孫子子其邁(萬)年壘(永)寶茲王休，其日引勿替，謹(世)母(毋)墮(忘)。

[...] "May sons of grandsons for ten thousand years treasure this, the king's grace, may they recall it every day without abandoning it, generation after generation shall not forget."

This formulation in particular refers to the undesirable possibility that the king's grace could be abandoned by the vessel donor's descendants lest they perpetually remember their obligation towards the royal house.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Duandai* #97; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 14.794-810; *Source Book* #34.

2.3.3 *Lasting and enduring as the ultimate purpose*

These previous points reveal something fundamental in regard to how “membership” in the Western Zhou ruling organization was perceived, namely that being a part of the institution of Zhou kingship stood always under the impression of finitude and possible failure. Moreover, as royal mandates were attached to the giver and bearer in terms of personal commitments, they could not be simply passed on from one generation to the next. Membership in the institution of Zhou kingship needed to be actively retrieved from generation to generation. This found its reflection in a new perception of life and genealogy that shines through in the prayer sections from mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, in his seminal study on concepts of longevity in Early China, observes that prayers for long life (first on behalf of the lineage members as a collective, later on more and more also for individual persons) addressed to the ancestors, start to appear first in mid- Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Already by the end of the mid- Western Zhou period, they had become a commonplace in appointment and commitment inscriptions.¹¹⁸ The interesting fact is that from the very beginning, the concept of a prolonged personal lifespan and the wish for a perpetually granted mandate appear as mutually dependent factors in the inscriptions.¹¹⁹ See for instance the text inscribed identically on the five

¹¹⁸ Du Zhengsheng, “Cong meishou dao changsheng.”

¹¹⁹ The idea that there must have existed conceptual links between *ming* as mandate and *ming* as individual lifespan has been voiced first in Kane, “Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions,” 23.

mid-Western Zhou Zhui *gui* 追簋 (JC 4219-4224) tureens.¹²⁰

追虔夙夕卹畢(厥)死事。天子多易(賜)追休。追敢對天子覲(顯)揚，用乍(作)朕(朕)皇且(祖)考躋(尊)殷(簋)。用享(享)孝于前文人，用斂(祈)凶眉壽永令(命)，畹(允)臣天子靈(令)冬(終)。追其萬年子子孫孫永寶用。

I, Zhui, have devoted myself reverently day and night to fulfil my obligations. Hence the Son of Heaven has on many occasions bestowed his grace on me, Zhui. I, Zhui, dare to extol the Son of Heaven's brilliant [grace],¹²¹ wherefore was cast this sacrificial tureen for my august deceased Father. I use it to present offerings to my cultured forebears, to pray for old age and for an eternal mandate, so I may trustily serve the Son of Heaven until the end of my days.¹²² May I, Zhui, be granted ten thousand years; may sons and grandsons forever treasure it (the vessel and / or the King's grace).¹²³

The phrase *meishou yongling* 眉壽永令 combines the wish for personal longevity (*meishou*) with the request for an eternal mandate (*yongling*).¹²⁴ The following statement paraphrases this request, placing the main emphasis on the political mandate. Hence the desire for a long personal lifespan is tied to the purpose of serving the King as long as possible. In the compound *lingzhong* 令終 both sides

¹²⁰ From this set of six vessels, two are currently held in the Palace Museum in Beijing, one is housed in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, one in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and one in the Taitō City Calligraphy Museum, Tokyo. The last one, which was once among the Qing imperial collection, is now lost. Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of their discovery. A rubbing of the inscription (JC 4224) has been first recorded in Liang Shizheng et al., *Xianding xiqing gujian*, 27.18.

¹²¹ The syntax in this phrase is rather unusual. With regard to similar a similar formulation found in the Liang Qi *zhong* 梁其鐘 inscriptions (JC 187, 189 and 191), which reads: “Liang Qi dares to respond to and to extol the Son of Heaven's grandly brilliant grace” (*Liang Qi gan dui Tianzi pi xian xiu yang* 梁其敢對天子丕顯休揚).” I assume that the word *xiu* has been omitted but is nevertheless implied in the Zhui *gui* inscription. Both formulations are variants of the much more common formula “to respond to an to extol the Son of Heaven's grandly brilliant grace (對揚天子丕顯休), where the graph 揚 forms a compound with 對. Ma Chengyuan as well assumes that the word order has simply been reversed in the Zhui *gui* example (*Mingwen xuan*, 240). For the interpretation of the graph 覲 as *xian* 顯, “manifest,” “brilliant,” see Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 505-510.

¹²² For my interpretation of the compound 靈冬 as *ling-zhong* 令終, “end of life” or “lifespan,” compare the analysis in *Zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 396-398.

¹²³ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 20.442-448; *Mingwen xuan* #333.

¹²⁴ Du Zhengsheng, “Cong meishou dao changsheng,” 395, esp. n. 8.

finally fall together in one: *Ling* signifies here the personal lifespan which the vessel donor entirely devotes to serve the king. With this intricate operation, the text manages to equate lifetime with bond-time. It describes an attempt to match biological existence with the successful perpetuation of the bond.

The final prayer line voices the expectation that the vessel donor's descendants may retrieve and perpetuate the political mandate throughout their own lifetime and thus historicize the lineage's participation in the institution of Zhou kingship, just as the law of legacy defines the lineage as a corporate identity which transcends the individual lifespans of its members.¹²⁵

The same interlocking request can be observed in the late Western Zhou Song *ding* 頌鼎 (JC 2827) inscription:¹²⁶

[...]用追孝癩(祈)凶康彘屯(純)右(祐)通彘(祿)永令(命)。頌其萬年眉壽，畀(允)臣天子靈(令)冬(終)，子子孫孫寶用。

[...] May I, in pursuance of my filial duties, pray for great assistance, blessings throughout and for an eternal Mandate. May I, Song, be granted a long life of ten thousand years, may I trustily serve the Son of Heaven to the end of my days; may sons and grandsons treasure it (the vessel and / or the King's grace).¹²⁷

Here as well, political mandate and personal lifespan are juxtaposed and interwoven with each other twice. The vessel donor, Song, first prays for an eternal political mandate. It follows a request for longevity in order to be able to serve the king as long as possible. After Song's days will come to an end, his descendants are expected

¹²⁵ Cf. Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, 82-85 and 107, for the concept of "law of legacy" as I use it here.

¹²⁶ Nothing is known about the discovery of this vessel, which is currently held in the Palace Museum in Beijing. Its inscription was first recorded in Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849), *Jigu zhai zhong ding yiqi kuanshi* 積古齋鐘鼎彝器款識, 10 vols. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1967 [1804]), 4.32.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 24.165-168; *Mingwen xuan* #434.

to retrieve and perpetuate the mandate as part of their legacy.

Further similar formulations that juxtapose prayers for an eternal mandate and prayers for a long life can be found in numerous instances throughout mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.¹²⁸ In all these instances we find the same operation at work: By associating biological lifespans with the linear time of the bond, and by merging genealogical succession with the task of retrieving and perpetuating the latter, the prayer sections in the bronzes render mere genealogy into historicity in terms of a linear memory of accountability connecting the generations with each other. The historicity of the lineages in turn became inextricably linked with, and indeed was subject to their members' participation in the institution of Zhou kingship. This is in my view the most striking evidence for the perceived contingency when it comes to elite ties with the royal house. It shows that the existence of lineages and their involvement in the Zhou ruling organization belonged to two different realms. By equating one with the other, the political life with the biological life and by turning political legacy into genealogical legacy, the vessel donors attempted to bridge that systemic gap.

2.4 Between the socio-political and the theo-political sphere

Having outlined the different aspects that define corporate solidarity and identity within the institutional context of royal commands, the next logical step for us would be to look again at the ideology of Zhou kingship, only this time with the

¹²⁸ See Xu Zhongshu 徐中舒, "Jinwen guci shili" 金文韻辭釋例, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 6.1 (1936): 1-44; and especially Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 381-404, 497-503.

focus set on the question how its symbolic logic relates to the mechanism and the conditions of royal charges. Yet when it comes to the explicit thematization of Zhou ideology, our epigraphic corpus of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions proves to be a rather limited source. Not only are reflexive statements in the bronzes limited to a few passages of direct marked speech, as we have already noted, they furthermore tend to be extremely short and formulaic. Indeed one gets the impression that they merely point to an underlying discourse instead of expounding it. In order to find instances of Zhou ideology in the form of a reflexive, theo-political discourse, we have to rely on the pre-classical passages from the *Documents of Zhou*. Although, for the reasons discussed in the introduction, we are unable to confirm any direct relations between the latter and any text from the corpus of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, yet if our initial assumptions are not completely mistaken, we nevertheless should expect these passages to reflect the institutional context of Western Zhou royal commands to a significant extent. In the following pages we will see whether or not we are able to substantiate this assumption.

2.4.1 From personal mandate to cultural mandate

We concluded our preceding analysis with the observation that *xiu* and *ming* provided the mechanism within which Zhou corporate solidarity defined itself as a collective of quasi patron-client relations in the bronzes. Hence if our assumption that the whole idea of Zhou kingship, even in the transmitted sources, ultimately builds on the logic of the proto-political bond between Zhou king and the various lineage elites proves right, the same hendiadys of *xiu* and *ming* should show in the

idea of the Heavenly Mandate. And indeed it does. For instance in the “Da gao” 大誥 chapter from the *Documents of Zhou* we find the following passage:

已！予惟小子，不敢替上帝命。天休于寧(文)¹²⁹王，興我小邦周。
Alas! I am but the young heir, and I do not dare to abandon Di on High’s
Mandate.¹³⁰ Heaven bestowed his grace on King Wen and thus promoted our
small polity Zhou.¹³¹

A similar formulation, with the roles of Di and Heaven reversed, can be found in the “Kang gao” 康誥 chapter:

帝休，天乃大命文王。
Di granted its grace, and thus Heaven greatly charged King Wen.¹³²

It is telling that our basic observation concerning the twofold nature and conditions of royal commands resurfaces in the concept of the Heavenly Mandate from the *Documents of Zhou*. It turns out the latter as well has two sides to it, *ming* and *xiu*. What is *wang-xiu* 王休, “the king’s grace,” to the elite protagonists in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, is *Tian-xiu* 天休, “Heaven’s grace,” to the community of Zhou kings, heirs apparent, regents and virtuous ministers depicted in the *Documents*. In

¹²⁹ Most scholars agree that in all instances of *Ning wang* 寧王, *ning-ren* 寧人 and *ning-kao* 寧考 throughout the “Da gao” chapter, 寧 should read *wen* 文. The error is most likely due to a scribal error based on the misinterpretation of the epigraphic form 𠄎 as 寧 instead of 文. Cf. See Chen Mengia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 212; Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shangshu jishi* 尚書集釋 (Taipei: Lianjing, 1983), 136; and Gu Jiegang 顧詒剛 and Liu Qiyu 劉起鈞, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun* 尚書校釋譯論, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), 3.1266-1267.

¹³⁰ The interpretation of *ti* 替 as *fei* 廢, “to discard,” “to abandon,” follows Zeng Yunqian 曾運乾, *Shangshu zheng du* 尚書正讀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), 3.152.

¹³¹ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.348. See also the translations in James Legge, *The Chinese Classics Vol.3: The Shoo King* (Taipei: SMC, 1991 [1865]), 369; and Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, reprint (Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), 37.

¹³² *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 15.360. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 385; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 39.

fact the compound *Tian-xiu* has been identified by Jiang Kunwu 姜昆武 as a set expression in *Documents* standing short for “*Tian jiang xiu ming*” 天降休命 (Heaven bestows its gracious mandate).¹³³ As is the case with the king’s grace and the king’s mandate in texts from bronze inscriptions, in the *Documents* too, Heavenly Mandate and Heavenly Grace form a complementary conceptual pair, irreducible in its constituents. Here too comes into play Kane’s important contrastive pair of recognition and elevation on the one hand and of falling into oblivion on the other. Only in this case it is the entire Zhou ruling organization, its existence at such that is at stake. In order to illustrate this point, we need to take a look at passages from the *Documents* that adopt the perspective of the Zhou king and his agents facing situations of substantial crisis.

2.4.2 *The theo-political bond and the rhetoric of crisis in the Documents*

While texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions concern the “particularized” relations between individual elites and the Zhou king, transmitted texts from the *Documents* transpose the pattern of these relations into a cultural formula by elevating it from a socio-political to a theological or theo-political context. Where Heaven constitutes the agent who bestows its gracious mandate onto the Zhou king, the latter, and by extension the entire Zhou ruling elite, become the bearers of a theo-political or cultural command.¹³⁴ But not just the scope and nature of the

¹³³ Jiang Kunwu, *Shi Shu chengci kaoshi*, 68-70.

¹³⁴ Schaberg, “Command and the Content of Tradition,” 26, has coined the term “cultural *ming*” in this context.

command are different in the *Documents*; the motives for referring to it are not entirely the same as in the bronzes either. While most bronze inscriptions address the successful, future directed initiation or perpetuation of proto-political bonds, texts from the *Documents* in turn always invoke the Zhou alliance's theo-political bond with Heaven in what one could refer to as moments of cultural crisis.¹³⁵ Those are situations where the alliance faces the threat of its dissolution in the form of internal and / or external factors,¹³⁶ where it faces the succession to the throne of a young, inexperienced heir, often paired with the necessity to consolidate a highly volatile political stability,¹³⁷ as well as when subdued confederations and populations are urged to submit not just to Zhou supremacy, but also to the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate.¹³⁸ All these situations call for a decision from the protagonists and / or the addressees to perpetuate existing authority relations, to implement political agendas, or to submit to political authority. Whenever such decisions are called for in the *Documents*, motivations for or against a certain course of action are inevitably sought after in the past of the theo-political bond, invoking the images of Kings Wen and Wu and the terms of their receipt of the Heavenly Mandate. Hence defining the uses of the past in the *Documents* we may speak with Assmann of a “rhetoric of crisis and of motives.”¹³⁹

¹³⁵ My use of the term crisis implies its Greek connotations pointed out by Reinhart Koselleck in his entry “Krise,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Konze, and Reinhart Koselleck (8 volumes; Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972-97), 3: 617-50. “*Krisis*,” Koselleck states, “has its roots in the Greek verb *krinō*: to ‘separate’ (part, divorce), to ‘choose,’ to ‘judge,’ to ‘decide;’ as a means of ‘measuring oneself,’ to ‘quarrel,’ or to ‘fight.’ This created a relatively broad spectrum of meanings. In classical Greek, the term was central to politics. It meant not only ‘divorce’ and ‘quarrel,’ but also ‘decision’ in the sense of reaching a crucial point that would tip the scales.” (Reinhart Koselleck and Michaela W. Richter trans., “Crisis,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67.2 [2006]: 358).

¹³⁶ For instance in the “Da gao” 大誥 chapter.

¹³⁷ Such as in the “Kang gao,” 康誥 “Jiu gao” 酒誥, “Shao gao” 召誥 and “Luo gao,” 洛誥 series, as well as in the “Zi cai” 梓材 and “Gu ming” 顧命 chapters.

¹³⁸ Such as in the “Duo fang” 多方 and “Duo shi” 多士 chapters.

¹³⁹ See Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 112-117.

I choose to open my argument with a longer citation from the “Da gao” 大誥 chapter from the *Documents of Zhou*, as the royal protagonist in this passage confronts his allies with the very conditions of Zhou kingship in the face of a rebellion involving both a reinvigorated Shang prince and members of the Zhou royal house.¹⁴⁰ I furthermore choose this particular passage to begin with as it is the only chapter from the new text *Documents* that, at least in its earliest form, is unequivocally regarded as a genuine Western Zhou text. Indeed, most commentators even date it to the early Western Zhou period.¹⁴¹ In abbreviated form, the text reads as follows:¹⁴²

王若曰：「猷大誥爾多邦越爾御事，弗弔天降割于我家，不少延。洪惟我幼沖人，嗣無疆大歷服。[...]敷賁敷前人受命，茲不忘大功。予不敢閉于天降威。[...]」

The King spoke thus: “I will greatly tell and discourse to you,¹⁴³ (princes of) the numerous polities, and to you, managers of affairs. Merciless Heaven sends down injury on our House, without the slightest delay. I am greatly occupied by the thought that I, the young heir, have succeeded to such boundless and numerous tasks. [...] It is upon me to arduously serve the charge received by the former men (i.e. the former kings).¹⁴⁴ Now, I do not forget their great

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 358-365; and Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 310-312, for this mytho-historical episode in the Zhou grand narrative. The “deep-structure” of this episode and its discursive significance has been dealt with in Sarah Allan, *The Heir and the Sage: Dynastic Legend in Early China* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1981), 103-121.

¹⁴¹ Cf. He Dingsheng, “Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai,” 180-187; Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 221-222; Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 449-450; Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jishi*, 154; Xia Hanyi, “Lüe lun jinwen Shangshu ‘Zhoushu’ ge pian de zhuzuo niandai,” 916-917; and Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1261-1262.

¹⁴² My interpretation of this passage from the “Da gao” chapter has been greatly aided by Chen Mengjia’s analysis of the text using evidence from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and Wang Mang’s appropriation of the “Da Gao” in the *Hanshu* 漢書. See Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 208-222. In many parts, the translation has been adapted from Legge and Karlgren.

¹⁴³ For the meaning of *you* 猷 as an emphasiser see Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1263.

¹⁴⁴ Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850-1908), *Jinwen Shangshu kaozheng* 金文尚書考證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989 [1897]), 13.279, and Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 211, argue that the phrase “敷賁敷前人受命” reflects the old text tradition of the *Documents* and should read “奔傳前人受命” (to arduously serve the charge received by the former men) in the new text version. My translation

achievements, not do I dare to deny the signs of terror that Heaven's sends down upon us [...]."¹⁴⁵

The king appears as addressing the members of his ruling organisation in the face of calamities inflicted upon them by Heaven. The king interprets these portents as a divine warning, urging him to stick to his responsibility to fulfil Heaven's Great Charge which he inherited from his predecessors. However, in order to succeed with his task, he needs to convince his allies to join and support him in his chosen course of action. Thus begins the king's rhetoric of motives and of crisis:

[...]殷小腆誕敢紀其敘。天降威，知我國有疵，民不康，曰：『予復！』反鄙(耻)我周邦。今蠢今翼日，民獻有十夫予翼(=翼予)以于(往)敕(彌=完成)寧(文)、武圖功。我有大事休，朕卜並吉。

“Small and reduced as Yin now is, (its prince) grandly presumes to reconnect his line of succession.¹⁴⁶ When Heaven (now) sends down its awesome terror, he (the Shang prince) knows that our domain has flaws and the *min* are not settled, and he speaks: ‘I will recover (my patrimony)!’ Hence he is about to go against and to humiliate our Zhou polity,¹⁴⁷ (and to once more assign to it a marginal existence on the fringes of the world).¹⁴⁸ In the midst of the present turmoil and upheaval,¹⁴⁹ a group of worthy men [stepped forward] to help me go on to complete and to perpetuate the great deeds of [King's] Wen and Wu.¹⁵⁰ The great business I am engaging in will (thus) have a successful issue. I have divined (also) by the tortoise-shell, and always got a favourable response.¹⁵¹

follows their interpretation.

¹⁴⁵ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.342-343. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 362; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 36.

¹⁴⁶ The interpretation of this passage follows Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jishi*, 136; and Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1267-1268.

¹⁴⁷ The interpretation of *bi* 鄙 as *chi* 耻, “to humiliate,” follows Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 213.

¹⁴⁸ See Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1268, for this interpretation..

¹⁴⁹ My translation of this subset is based on the analysis in Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1268-1269.

¹⁵⁰ All interpretations this passage, except of my rendering of the compound *minxian* 民獻 which is based on Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 214, follow Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1269-1270.

¹⁵¹ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.345-346. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 366-367; and Karlgren, *The*

肆予告我友邦君越尹氏、庶士、御事、曰：『予得吉卜，予惟以爾庶邦于伐殷逋播臣。』爾庶邦君越庶士、御事罔不反曰：『艱大，民不靜。亦惟在王宮邦君室。越予小子考翼，不可征，王害不違卜？』

Therefore I tell you, the princes of my allied polities, and you, the directors of departments, my officers, and the managers of my affairs; I have obtained a favourable reply to my divinations. Together with all of you from the many polities I will go forward and punish those vagabond and transported ministers of Yin. (But) you the princes of the many polities; and you the various officers and managers of my affairs, all retort on me, saying, “The hardships will be great, and the *min*-populace is troubled (already). Let alone (those you plan to go against) are members from the royal house and from princely ruling houses.¹⁵² They are our fathers and brothers,¹⁵³ hence they cannot not be attacked; why does your Majesty not go contrary to the divinations?”¹⁵⁴

肆予冲人永思艱，曰：『嗚呼！允蠢，鰥寡哀哉！予造(遭)天役，遺大投艱于朕身！』越予冲人不印自恤。義爾邦君越爾多士、尹氏、御事綏予曰：『無毖于恤，不可不成乃寧(文)考圖功！』

I too, in my inexperience, have spent long time thinking about of these hardships. But alas, I have come to say: ‘Truly if this turmoil (i.e. the Wu Geng rebellion)¹⁵⁵ persists, it will deplorably afflict the wifeless men and widows!¹⁵⁶ Heaven assigned me this great task [of ruling the ecumene and cutting off the Shang]; it laid the hard duty [to fulfil these obligations] on my person.¹⁵⁷ I therefore do not pity myself; and it would be right in you, the many officers, the directors of departments, and the managers of my affairs, to comfort me, saying, “Do not be distressed with sorrow. We shall surely complete the great deeds of your deceased father.¹⁵⁸

Book of Documents, 37.

¹⁵² The interpretation of this sentence follows Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jishi*, 137.

¹⁵³ For the interpretation of kao yi 考翼 as fathers and brothers see Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 215.

¹⁵⁴ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.346-347. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 367-368; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 37.

¹⁵⁵ See Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jishi*, 138, for this interpretation.

¹⁵⁶ See Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 215, for the interpretation of this passage.

¹⁵⁷ The translation of this key passage closely follows Legge, *The Shoo King*, 368-369. See also Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jishi*, 138, for a similar interpretation.

¹⁵⁸ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.347. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 368-369; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 37.

已！予惟小子，不敢替上帝命。天休于寧(文)王，興我小邦周。寧(文)王惟卜用，克綏受茲命。今天其相民，矧亦惟卜用。嗚呼！天明畏，弼我丕丕基！」 [...]

Alas! I am but the young heir, and I do not dare to abandon Di on High's Mandate. Heaven bestowed its grace on King Wen and thereby promoted our small polity Zhou. King Wen divined and acted accordingly, and so he was able to receive and assume this (great) appointment. Now when Heaven is (evidently) aiding the *min*, how much more should we follow the indications of the shell! Oh! the clearly intimated will of Heaven is to be feared: it is to help my great inheritance.”[...]”¹⁵⁹

Facing unrest from the inside and the threat of an invasion from the outside (including defectors from the royal house), the Zhou alliance is depicted here as standing on the margins of its dissolution. Important is the self-positioning of the protagonist at a crucial point midway between the assumption of a commitment and its future fulfilment, which is now at stake. In this context, the responsibility the Heavenly Mandate entails becomes a shared, trans-generational responsibility that was perceived to overrule particularistic, especially egoistic concerns the Zhou kings allies might harbour.¹⁶⁰ Heaven, by bestowing its grace on the Zhou, is said to have elevated (*xing* 興) the latter from a small polity among many to the arbiter of the Heavenly order in the human realm. This in itself constituted the ultimate theo-political purpose the Zhou alliance had to live up to. Abandoning the obligations that came with Heaven's / Di's mandate would have necessarily caused the alliance's falling back into a state of cultural oblivion. This logic shines through in a couple of bronze inscriptions as well, such as in the text from the Xing Hou *gui* cited earlier in

¹⁵⁹ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.348. The translation of the last three sentences closely follows Legge, *The Shoo King*, 369-370. Compare also Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 37.

¹⁶⁰ This even includes concerns of the Zhou king's allies to go against their own kin. The priority of the Heavenly as well as of the king's mandate over kinship relations will concern us in greater detail in the next chapter.

this chapter, where we read: “[My forebear, the Patriarch of Zhou,] was able to arduously serve above and below, so Di had no [occasion] to end Zhou’s mandate.” The tragic possibility inherent in these lines becomes actual reality in a passage from the “Shao gao” 召誥 chapter, referring to the Shang-Zhou transition in terms of Zhou ideology:¹⁶¹

皇天上帝，改厥元子茲大國殷之命。惟王受命，無疆惟休，亦無疆惟恤。嗚呼！曷其奈何弗敬？

August Heaven and Di on High altered their principal heir and with it the Mandate of this great settlement Yin. It was King [Wen] who then received [and assumed] the Mandate, infinite its blessings (grace), yet infinite also its burdens. Alas! How could he possibly not be reverently?¹⁶²

What we observe here and in the “Da gao” chapter above, is nothing else than the transformation of the conditions governing the socio-political ties between Zhou king and lineage elites into a theo-political idea. By envisioning the possible finitude of the mandate and by projecting this possibility back onto the demise of the Shang, this idea had been further transformed into a universal law of history.¹⁶³ Where the end had already manifested itself historically it provided a concrete possibility confronting the Zhou with their own temporal limitations.

Against this background, the historically predefined possibility of failing the

¹⁶¹ Except for He Dingsheng, who dates this text to an undefined timeframe within the early Eastern Zhou period (“Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai,” 180-187), all other major commentators assume the initial formation of the text to have taken place in the early- to mid-Western Zhou period.

¹⁶² *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 18.395. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 425; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 48-49. See also the interpretations of this passage in Shaughnessy, “The Duke of Zhou’s Retirement in the East and the Beginnings of the Minister-Monarch Debate in Chinese Political Philosophy,” *Early China* 18 (1993): 61, and Nivison, “An Interpretation of the ‘Shao gao,’” *Early China* 20 (1995): 180.

¹⁶³ In fact, as we will see shortly below, it is due to the very nature of a bond as defined by the time that elapses between its coming into being and its dissolution, that irrevocable linear time and hence historical time could become the prevalent condition for cultural orientation. It is no coincidence that *Historiogenesis* in early China began with the interpretation of historical change in terms of receiving or losing Heaven’s gracious mandate, of anticipating, meeting or failing its conditions.

Mandate, the range between *xiu* (or *fu* 福, “blessings,” in other passages) and *xu* 恤, “burdens” or “anxieties,” constitutes the bandwidth of conditions the mandate might entail at different times and which its bearers have to cope with.¹⁶⁴ Whereas it is easy to keep with one’s commitments towards contributing to a super-imposed common good at times of blessing and reward, it seems tempting to forfeit these commitments out of egoistic concerns in times of trouble and hardships.¹⁶⁵ The question of how to prevent this latter possibility from happening stands in the focus of the texts assembled in the *Documents*. In the “Da Gao” chapter the king addresses his allies who were unwilling to oppose a rebellion out of petty concerns and the fear of encountering hardships. The “Shao Gao” chapter depicts the Patriarch of Zhou as admonishing the young King Cheng to continue his forebears’ commitment towards fulfilling the terms of the Heavenly Mandate in the aftermath of the Wu Geng rebellion when order had just been restored in the former Shang territories. Indeed, all “gao” chapters in the *Documents of Zhou* address either a young and un-experienced king or the Zhou king’s reluctant allies in moments of crisis, or else when confronted with highly volatile stability. In each scenario, the perpetuation of the Heavenly Mandate is referred to as the ultimate purpose that all parties within the alliance, but in particular the king, have to commit themselves to, lest they want to provoke the Zhou alliance’s politico-religious demise.

It is from this perspective that we have to understand the overemphasized

¹⁶⁴ Compare also the following statement from the Jing Hou *gui* inscription in this context: “In pursuance of my filial duty, I will continue [my forebear’s task] and dare not be neglecting. I [pledge to] exert myself in our blessings and in our burdens, and to trustingly serve the Son of Heaven.” (追孝，述不敢惰。劬朕福恤，允臣天子).

¹⁶⁵ Compare the famous line in the Ode *Dang* 蕩 (Mao 255): “To begin well is common; To end well is rare indeed” (Arthur Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry*, ed. Joseph R. Allen [New York: Grove Press, 2011 [1937]], 261). (靡不有初，鮮克有終) (*Maoshi zhushu*, 18.1685).

exclamation “*he qi nai he fu jing*” 曷其奈何弗敬 in the cited “Shao gao” passage. The first four morphemes in this phrase redundantly express the moral impossibility of not honouring Heaven’s gracious mandate, no matter what the situation is. The opposite of losing the mandate, its perpetuation in time, requires the bearer’s consistent devotion (*jing* 敬), notwithstanding greatly varying fortunes and the manifold oppositions he meets along the way.

2.4.3 *The memory of obligation and Western Zhou identity as a sphere of inter-locution*

This observation points us into the direction of endurance and perpetuation as the ultimate motivation behind the political rhetoric found in the *Documents of Zhou*. This is the same motivation we have identified to rule over the particularized relations between Zhou king and elites in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. In the inscriptions analysed so far, we came across pledges not to forget (*bu wang* 不忘), and admonitions not to abandon (*wu ti* 勿替) the king’s gracious command. The verb *jing* 敬, “to revere,” “to hold in honour,” as it is used in the “Shao gao,” in turn describes the positive act of remembering, of keeping in mind the assumption of an obligation by constantly maintaining an inner state of alertness.¹⁶⁶ In bronze inscriptions too, we find the term *jing* employed in the king’s statements

¹⁶⁶ According to Axel Schuessler’s *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, 317, the verb *jing* 敬 (*kren(?)*-s*) is cognate to *jing* 驚 (*kren), “to be afraid,” “to be alert,” but also “to frighten,” “to scare.” This relatedness between devotion and fear remotely reverberates with Friedrich Nietzsche’s assumption that the most ancient means to induce memory and conscience in man was to devise corporal punishments in order to lever out the natural state of human forgetfulness with pain, fear and terror. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, in *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, vol. 6.2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968 [1887]), 310-313.

admonishing his appointees not to neglect their obligations. Compare for instance the king's imperative uttered at his subordinate Yu 盂 in the Da Yu *ding* inscription:

王曰：「盂，若苟(敬)乃正(政)，勿灑(廢)朕令。」

The King spoke: “Yu, be mindful of your official affairs, do not abandon my command.”

A similar formulation can be found in the late Western Zhou Mao Gong *ding* 毛公鼎 (JC 2841) inscription:

女(汝)母(毋)敢彖(惰)在乃服，鬲(劬)夙夕，敬念王畏(威)不賜(易)。

Do not dare to be neglecting in your service, exert yourself day and night.¹⁶⁷

Always remember and bear in mind the King's imperturbable awesomeness.

Numerous further instances could be cited here that are all more or less approximate variations of the formula “Be reverent day and night (in performing your services), do not abandon my command!” (敬夙夕/夜[用事]，勿廢朕令).¹⁶⁸ *Jing*, in this formula, clearly forms a complementary pair with *wu fei* 勿廢, “do not abandon.” Yet by implication, *jing* is also synonymous to *bu wang*, “not to forget.” The temporal modification *su-xi* 夙夕, “day and night,” renders this point quite obvious. By constantly, day and night, maintaining an inner state of alertness, the bearer of a mandate should force himself to cultivate a memory of obligation.¹⁶⁹ The incentive for doing so, in the last instance, was nothing else than the wish to ensure that the

¹⁶⁷ For 鬲, see Chen Bingxin 陳秉新, “Shi ‘X’ ji xiang guan zi ci” 釋 “鬲”及相關字詞, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 22 (2007): 96-100.

¹⁶⁸ See the examples in Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 272-276.

¹⁶⁹ This was absolutely crucial in the context of Zhou kingship for it allowed individuals to appropriate the king's, and, in the last instance, Heaven's authority, to act autonomously towards the fulfillment of their tasks throughout time and throughout changing fortunes.

volatile bonds between king and elites would last and remain, in the ideal case throughout subsequent generations. Hence we can say that in terms of the conditions and motivations for human action, the individual mandates between king and elites merge with the idea of Heaven's super-imposed theo-political mandate in the rhetoric of the *Documents*.

This brings us back to a fundamental observation already mentioned in conjunction with the Shang-Zhou transition, which, borrowing the famous image from Eric Voegelin, we have labelled a "leap in being." We have said that the Shang elites perceived themselves in consubstantiality and conduration with the cosmos and its phenomena. Shang kingship was thus concerned with attuning human activities to its cosmic surroundings. Within this constellation the Shang king and his affines were in the main acting within ritually prescribed roles. Conformity to a certain role, as we have said, does not take place within the field of tension described by a past promise on the one hand and its future fulfilment other, but on the scale between conformity and deviation. Consequently the Shang kings were concerned with the immediate future as it confronted them with binary alternatives (to do or not to do; sooner or later, etc.) of which one had to be right, the other wrong. Neither the past, nor the distant future played any major role in this sort of orientation.

The logic of the mandate, whether it is the Zhou king's socio-political command or Heaven's theo-political mandate, worked on completely different premises. A mandate obliged the bearer to the fulfilment of a task, which, as a superimposed binding orientation, transcended all intermediate choices that lay between the assumption of the mandate and its final fulfilment. On the one hand it required the bearer to plan out and devote his entire life span and even that of his future descendants to the pursuance of the assumed duties. On the other hand, each new

decision the bearer faced, in the last instance always referred him back to the terms of the obligation he or his forebears initially assumed.

Traces of this change still seem to surface in the twofold function of the king in the “Da gao” chapter, who appears there both in the role of the diviner and in the role of the bearer of the theo-political command. Perhaps in an attempt to resort to traditional models of authority, the king bases his decision to launch an attack against the revolting former Shang elites on the outcome of a divination. However the binary logic does no longer account for the necessity of following the king’s directives. As it seems to conflict with elite interests, its outcome could be ignored or even openly opposed by members of the king’s ruling organization. It is the former kings’ assumption of a cultural commitment, the Heavenly mandate, which in the end proves to be binding for the entire alliance. The king changes here from the keeper of a cosmic balance to the keeper of a theo-political promise:

“I am the servant of Heaven, which has assigned me this great task, and laid the hard duty on my person.”

This image is further stressed in the penultimate passage from the “Da gao” chapter which reads:

王曰：「爾惟舊人，爾丕克遠省，爾知寧(文)王若勤哉！天闕毖我成功所，予不敢不極卒寧(文)王圖事。[...]予曷其不于前寧(文)人圖功攸終？天亦惟用勤毖我民，若有疾，予曷敢不于前寧(文)人攸受休畢！」

The king spoke: “You, who are allies of the first day, are fully able to remember the past; you know how great the toils of King Wen were. Now that Heaven puts the toil on us to (continue and) achieve (their) work, I dare not but go to the end with and accomplish the great task assumed by King Wen. [...] How dare I but aim at the completion of the work formerly begun by my cultured forebears?”

Heaven, moreover, was toiling and distressing our forebears as if they were suffering from disease.¹⁷⁰ How dare I allow (the appointment) which my cultured forebears received, to be without its happy fulfilment.¹⁷¹

The *raison d'être* of kingship here lies no longer in attuning the human order to that of the cosmos, or in maintaining a balance between auspiciousness and disaster. The king and his allies find themselves in the middle of a task that has begun in the past with its goal still ahead in the future awaiting its fulfilment. As fortunes change and paths become obstructed by opposition or rebellion, but also because the present could not but move further and further away in time from this foundational event (the allies could remember because they have been in service from the beginning), a retentive was needed in order to keep subsequent generations connected to this source of purpose and obligation. *Jing* (or *nian* 念, “to hold in mind,” “to recollect,”) served as such a retentive as it interrelated the past with the remembering individual or group in form of personal- or group accountability.¹⁷² Circulating cultural texts such as the passages from the *Documents of Zhou*, as well as inscribing commands into bronze vessels that were placed at the heart of the perpetuation and reproduction of lineage authority, the ancestral temple, might be taken as the utmost form of *jing* or *nian*.¹⁷³

In sum, all of the above made observations imply that linear memory and the expanding range of irreversible historical time became the primary condition for the Zhou alliance's (the protagonists in the bronzes as well as those in the *Odes* and

¹⁷⁰ I follow Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 218, in interpreting *min* here as the forebears of the princely lineages.

¹⁷¹ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 14.348-350. The translation has been adapted from Legge, *The Shoo King*, 370-371; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 37.

¹⁷² Compare Assmann's concept of accountability and the time of accountability in Assmann and Müller, eds., *Der Ursprung der Geschichte*, 13-14.

¹⁷³ This also relates to the fact that the oral act of issuing and receiving commands was retained in writing. Cf. Schaberg, “Command and the Content of tradition,” 25-26; 30-31.

Documents) politico-religious orientation. Indeed, the time of the bond with Heaven (and with the king) constituted the very condition of their existence, an existence defined in historical terms.¹⁷⁴ This historical mode of existence in turn found its ultimate purpose in its own perpetuation in the course of progressing historical time against the inevitable possibility of its dissolution. This goal is expressed most clearly in the following passage from the “Luo gao” 洛誥, where the young King Cheng is depicted to address the Patriarch of Zhou after the latter’s move to Luoyi in the aftermath of the Wu Geng rebellion:¹⁷⁵

王拜手稽首曰：「公不敢不敬天之休，來相宅，其作周匹休。[...]公其以予萬億年敬天之休。」

The King placed his hands together and bows prostrate saying: “You, Patriarch (Zhou Gong), did not dare not to be reverently towards Heaven’s grace. You came to reside [in Luoyi, the centre of *sifang*] in order to establish Zhou, so as to respond to the [Heavenly] grace.¹⁷⁶ [...] May you, Patriarch, together with me, for myriads upon myriads of years devote yourself to [respond to] Heaven’s grace. [...]”¹⁷⁷

The indefinite perpetuation of the theo-political bond with Heaven appears here as the Zhou alliance’s utmost goal, determining all its intermediate decisions and actions.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ See also Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 83-85 for the basic culture-historical assumption underlying this point.

¹⁷⁵ Whereas most commentators date the “Luo gao” chapter to the early Western Zhou period, within the regency of the Patriarch of Zhou to be specific, Shaughnessy detects a relatively high number of linguistic features typical for the Eastern Zhou period in this text. Hence he assumes at least part of the genesis of the “Luo gao” to have taken place somewhere between the Western Zhou and the Springs and Autumns period (“Lüe lun jinwen Shangshu ‘Zhoushu’ ge pian de zhuzuo niandai,” 916-917). He Dingsheng as well dates the chapter to the early Eastern Zhou period (“Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai,” 180-187).

¹⁷⁶ The translation of the last part of this sentence follows Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 51.

¹⁷⁷ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 19.405. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 437-438; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 51-52.

¹⁷⁸ Interestingly, Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 244-319, and Jan Assmann after him, have discovered the same phenomenon

This insight reverberates again with the ultimate motivation we have attested in the relation between king and elites in the bronze inscriptions. What is more, just as in the bronzes where we saw the equation of bond time with the biological lifespan of its bearer, the person of the ruler too falls together with the bearer of Heaven's mandate where bond time equates lifetime. Here too comes to the fore the ideal of a prolonged biological lifespan which would enable the sovereign to guarantee the bond's perpetuation for as long as possible. While this aspect remains rather latent in the *Documents*, we encounter it frequently in the *Odes* within the formulaic phrase, "may the sovereign live for ten thousand years" (*junzi wan nian* 君子萬年).¹⁷⁹ Wherever this phrase appears in the *Mao Odes*, it always associates the continued wellbeing of the community with the longevity of the sovereign. Thus in the Minor Ode *Zhan bi Luo yi* 瞻彼洛矣 (Mao 213) we read:

君子至止	Our sovereign has come,
福祿既同	In whom all blessings join.
君子萬年	May our sovereign for ten thousand years
保其家邦	Safeguard his house and polity. ¹⁸⁰

A continuation or variation of this image occurs further in the Major Ode *Ji zui* 既醉 (Mao 247):

in the context of the bond between Yahweh and the Israelites in the OT. Assmann brings it to the point when he states that in the Torah, "the idea of life, endurance and remaining – in contrast to Death, oblivion and failure – marks the highest value from which all criteria for action ultimately derive." (Diese Idee des Lebens, Dauerns, Bleibens – mit ihrem Gegensatz des Todes, Verschwindens, Scheiterns – ist der höchste Wert, von dem her sich alle Handlungsmaximen bestimmen. [Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 65]). The resemblance here is no coincidence. It is due to the logic of the political bond which in both contexts serves as the ultimate condition for corporate solidarity.

¹⁷⁹ This phrase appears in the following passages: *Zhan bi Luo yi* 瞻彼洛矣 (Mao 213); *Yuan yang* 鴛鴦 (Mao 216); *Ji zui* 既醉 (Mao 247);

¹⁸⁰ *Maoshi zhushu*, 14.1229. The translation has been adapted from Waley, *The Book of Songs*, 202.

[...]
 君子萬年 You, the sovereign, shall be given ten thousand years;
 永錫祚胤 And there will be granted to you for ever dignity and posterity.

其胤維何 How as to your posterity?
 天被爾祿 Heaven invests you with your dignity,
 君子萬年 You, the sovereign, shall be given ten thousand years;
 景命有僕 The bright appointment is attached to your person.¹⁸¹

The appointment is attached to the person of the king not in his capacity as a link in the genealogical line of Zhou kings, but as a political individual, capable of assuming an obligation. Under these circumstances, the line of kings, as those of lineage leaders, is also no longer a purely genealogical line, but a succession of historical figures held together through the retentive which we have identified as accountability or the memory of obligation. Zhou kingship, at least in theory, is not a family affair but a matter of theo-political commitment. In order for Zhou kingship to become a matter of subsequent generations, this commitment needed to be linked with genealogical authority and thus be turned into legacy. A very rare, presumably royal statement in this respect can be found in the late Western Zhou Hu gui 鬲簋 (JC 4317) inscription ascribed to King Li 厲 (r. 857/53-842/28 BCE) during the twelfth year of his reign:¹⁸²

王曰：「有余佳(唯)小子余亡康。晝夜至(經)離(攤=擁)先王用配皇天，簣(廣)爵(致)朕(朕)心，墜(施)于三(四)方。隸(肆)余呂(以)饒(俊)士獻民，禹(承)整(守)先王宗室。[...]」¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ *Maoshi zhushu*, 17.1579-1580. The translation has been adapted from Legge, *The Chinese Classics, Vol. 4: The She King* (Taipei: SMC, 1991 [1871]), 478.

¹⁸² The bell has been excavated under scientific conditions from a bronze hoard near Qicun 齊村, Fufeng county, Shaanxi, in May 1978. The find was first published in *Wenwu* (1979) 4: 89-91.

¹⁸³ The transcription of the text follows, with few exceptions, that proposed by Wang Yutang 汪玉堂 in *Hehe Zongzhou*, 66.

The King spoke: “Although I was but a youngster I had no leisure. From dawn to dusk I [strove to] constantly remember and uphold [the standards] the former kings employed in order to match August Heaven.¹⁸⁴ I broadened my heart and made it extend to the four cardinal quarters. Hence I have been able to employ the eminent warriors and distinguished *min*-lineages [to help me] succeed in maintaining the former king’s ancestral house. [...]”¹⁸⁵

The literary tradition as well comes up with similar examples, so for instance the Zhou Temple Hymn “Min yu xiaozi” 閔予小子 (Mao #286) in the *Mao Odes*. The protagonist in this text is believed to be the young King Cheng upon assuming the throne:

[...]	
於乎皇考	O my august Father,
永世克孝	All your life long you have fulfilled your pious obligation.
念茲皇祖	You remembered the high ancestor
陟降庭止	As he ascended and descended in the court.
維予小子	Now I, the young heir,
夙夜敬止	Will be reverent from morning to night.
於乎皇王	O you august Kings,
繼序思不忘	I will continue the succession, not will I forget my legacy. ¹⁸⁶

The sequence of *nian* 念, *jing* 敬, *si* 思 and *bu wang* 不忘 describes the

¹⁸⁴ The interpretation of the graph 隤 as 擁, “to uphold,” follows Zhang Zhenglang 張政娘, “Zhou Li wang Hu *gui shiwen*” 周厲王胡簋釋文, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 3 (1980): 104-119, reprinted in idem, *Jiagu jinwen yu Shang Zhou shi yanjiu* 甲骨金文與商周史研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 247. See also Chōn Kwang-Jin 全廣鎮, *Liang Zhou jinwen tongjiazhi yanjiu* 兩周金文通假字研究 (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng shuju, 1989), 240; and He Shuhuan, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji*, 257-258, for further passages where the graph 隤 should be rendered 擁 in bronze inscriptions.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *Mingwen xuan* #404. Compare also the translations by Shaughnessy in *Sources*, 171-172, Eno, “Inscriptional records” #101, and by Cook in *Source Book*, 150-151, which all differ considerably from my own. Shaughnessy proposes that the date given at the end of the inscription, the “twelfth ritual cycle of the King” (*wang shi you er si* 王十又二祀) might coincide with the year 842 BCE, the year in which king Li was exiled, the earliest accepted dated event in Chinese history (Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 343).

¹⁸⁶ *Maoshi zhushu*, 19.1978-1979. Cf. the translation in Strauss, *Schī-Kīng*, 487; Waley, *The Book of Songs*, 301.

continuous retrieval of legacy across generations, an on-going memory of obligation and commitment, integrating the dynasty's past present and future into a single enhanced context within which the political actors that constituted the Zhou alliance could define and perpetuate their relations. This again is the context we have identified, using Jan Assmann's terminology, as the "sphere of inter-locution," in the first chapter of this study.

2.4.4 Interim conclusions

In the preceding pages we have demonstrated that the idea of the Heavenly Mandate in transmitted early Chinese literature indeed reflects the basic conditions of Western Zhou proto-political bonds as they are depicted in the bronze inscriptions. However, when we look at passages in the *Documents* discussing the implications of the Great Mandate for the way in which the king and his allies should act, we leave the immediate context of the future-directed charge and its receipt, marked by the exchange of illocutionary acts in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, and enter into a context of (theo-) political reflection. The protagonists here already find themselves within defined political constellations. It is the perpetuation of extant relations and / or the fulfilment of unfinished political commitments that is at stake. Hence what these passages reveal is the need for a binding sense which surfaces in the rhetoric of motives the protagonists employ in order to account for their decisions and actions. By addressing the question of meaning, these passages take the concept of the charge or bond to a discursive level on which the idea of Zhou kingship and the Heavenly Mandate could have developed a literary afterlife detached from their original

context. Here, I argue, lies the main difference between records of royal charges in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and passages concerning the Heavenly Mandate in the *Documents*. The question is how do actual appointments and ideological reflection de facto relate to each other in those instances where records of royal charges do refer the ideology of Heavenly Mandate in the bronzes? This question is of utmost importance, for only in these constellations here do both spheres appear together within the same source material, bound to the same historical and institutional context. The answer to this question will determine whether or not and in which way we can reasonably associate the pre-classical chapters from the *Documents of Zhou* with the institution of Western Zhou royal commands.

Moreover, only with a firm grasp on this issue will we be able to answer the question of how the collective quasi patron-client relationships we have attested in the bronze inscriptions translate into the idea of a single ruling organization defined through the commitment to a super-imposed cultural task, a *dao-de tuanti* 道德團體 in the words of Wang Guowei. For these purposes we have to bring together the outcomes from the first and the second part of this chapter and apply these insights to the analysis of the few Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that refer to the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate within the contexts of royal appointments.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ See the examples in Kominami Ichirō 小南一朗, *Kodai Chūgoku Tenmei to Seidōki* 古代中国天命と青銅器 (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2006).

2.5 From bond formula to a rhetoric of crisis and of motives in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions

2.5.1 *The political and the theo-political bond in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions*

Following our adopted Vichian axiom according to which the order of ideas must proceed from the order of institutions, we assume that the concept of the Heavenly Mandate actually developed from that of the political bond. The idea is not completely new,¹⁸⁸ neither is it without parallels in the ancient world. A similar example can be observed in the case of Israel in the Old Testament. It is now generally accepted that the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, depicted in several forms and on several occasions in the OT, has been modelled upon the pattern of Mesopotamian and Hittite land grants and political covenants.¹⁸⁹ Important, however, is not just the fact that the idea of the covenant with God or Heaven was modelled on established political praxis, but how these two spheres relate to each other. With respect to the OT Jan Assmann proposes to call this phenomenon a “transfer of relations.”¹⁹⁰ “The form of the contract,” he writes, “puts an end to the analogy

¹⁸⁸ See for instance Chen Hanping, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu*, 339. Chen argues: “The Heavenly Mandate can change, in the same sense that royal appointments can be altered and changed. Hence it can be inferred that the early Chinese idea of the Heavenly Mandate originated in the political system of royal appointments. What the ancients call ‘Heavenly Mandate,’ is really a distorted reflection of the system of royal appointments into the relation between humans and spirits, as well as into the relation between humans and their idea of Heaven.” (天命可以改革，與王命可以變改相同。由此可知，中國古代之天命思想起源于人間之冊命制度。古人所謂“天命，”實為人間冊命制度在人與神、人與天觀念之中之曲折反映)。

¹⁸⁹ See among others George E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 17.3 (1954): 49-76; Moshe Weinfeld, “The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90.2 (1970): 184-203; and René Lopez, “Israelite Covenants in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Covenants,” *CTS Journal* 9 (2003): 92-111; and *CTS Journal* 10 (2004): 72-106, for an overview and discussion of the current scholarship on this topic.

¹⁹⁰ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 49-50.

between Heaven and earth,”¹⁹¹ which marks a defining feature of the so called cosmological empires in the ancient Middle East.¹⁹² We have mentioned the same point with regard to the role of the Heavenly Mandate in the Shang-Zhou transition above.¹⁹³ With King Wen’s receipt of the Great Charge, we said, ends the analogy between the king and Di / Heaven as the former becomes the latter’s contractually bound representative within the human ecumene. Yet when relating this idea to Western Zhou political praxis, most scholars merely see an analogical resemblance between the Heavenly Mandate and the King’s charges as they are recorded in the bronze inscriptions.¹⁹⁴ For Assmann however, the concept of the bond, in this case the bond between Yahweh and the people of Israel, “does not refer to an analogy, neither does it describe a metaphor but a transfer.”¹⁹⁵ What does that mean in particular? Assmann explains:

The relation between a vassal and his overlord is not being compared to the relation between the people and God; instead the former gets deducted from the account of political relations and is being transferred onto the account of religious relations. [...] In a word: a new religion is founded on the pattern of political bonds. With the transfer of the forms of contract and law code from the socio-political sphere into the sphere of man’s relationship with god, both spheres fall into one.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Cf. Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, 51-156.

¹⁹³ Compare chapter one pp. 97-101.

¹⁹⁴ So for instance Kane, “Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions,” 17; Chen Hanping, *Xizhou ceming zhidu yanjiu*, 339; and Allan, “On the Identity of Shang Di 上帝 and the Origin of the Concept of the Celestial Mandate (Tian Ming 天命), *Early China* 31 (2007): 37-38.

¹⁹⁵ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 51.

¹⁹⁶ “Die Beziehung des Vasallen zu seinem Oberherrn wird nicht verglichen mit der des Volkes zu Gott, sondern sie wird dem Konto politischer Beziehungen abgezogen und dem Konto religiöser Beziehungen gutgeschrieben. [...] Mit einem Wort: eine neue Religion wird gestiftet nach dem Modell politischer Bindungen. Indem die Formen des Vertrages und des Rechtsbuches aus der soziopolitischen Sphäre in die Sphäre der Gottesbeziehung übertragen werden, fallen diese beiden Sphären in eins zusammen.” (Ibid, 51).

A somewhat similar operation, I argue, can be observed in the case of the Western Zhou, albeit here we are not talking about the relation between the “people” and Di / Heaven, but between the elites, including the Zhou King himself, and Di / Heaven. In Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, I will demonstrate, the Heavenly Mandate concerns the elites as much as the king if not more. The basic difference is that the bond between god and the Israelites in the OT describes the founding of a religion against the state,¹⁹⁷ whereas in the Zhou case a political alliance transcends its own principles of political organization into the theological sphere. Hence in the Zhou case we are not talking about the founding of a new religion but about the founding of a political theology of representation on the pattern of political bonds. Moreover, if we look at the phenomenon that Assmann describes from the perspective of the (proto-) political bonds recorded in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, the transfer of relations turns out to be more of a transformation or extension of the political into the theological sphere. The political bonds remain at the centre of Zhou corporate identity, yet in certain constellations we find them merging into one superimposed theo-political bond. This mechanism and its purpose in Western Zhou rhetoric is what concern us here.

2.5.1.1 Follow-up charges

Investigating into our inscriptional evidence, we find that the Great Charge appears exclusively in the context of royal follow-up charges (i.e. charges in which the king orders the appointee to continue his forebears’ official task). While

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 49.

follow-up charges take the familiar form of exchanges of illocutionary acts, bearing all the features of Western Zhou commitment inscriptions we have pointed out above, previous bonds between the appointees' forebears and the former kings do occasionally re-appear in these records in the form of historical reflection. This is the context where the Heavenly Mandate initially emerges in the epigraphic record.

In order to address this phenomenon, it makes sense to look first at follow-up charges that do not mention the Heavenly Mandate, for it is in contrast to those regular inscriptions that the former reveal their significance.

The following three examples will serve to establish the generic pattern of mid-to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions recording follow-up charges. Our first example is the text from the mid- Western Zhou (King Mu) Lu *gui* 親簋 (NB 821) inscription:¹⁹⁸

[...]王乎乍(作)冊尹冊鬻(申)令(命)親曰：更(賡)乃且(祖)服，乍(作)冢鬲(司)馬。[...]女(汝)迺(乃)苟(敬)夙夕，勿瀆(廢)朕令，女(汝)肇享。

[...] The King called on the Chief Document Maker to announce the [King's] extended (?) command to Lu, its wording was such: "Continue the service of your forebears and act as Grand Supervisor of Horses. [...] Be reverent from dawn to dusk and do not abandon my command. You shall succeed to serve!"¹⁹⁹

親拜稽首，敢對揚天子休，用乍(作)朕文且(祖)幽白(伯)寶戩(簋)。親其萬年孫孫子子其永寶用。

Lu bowed prostrate, daring to extol the Son of Heaven's gracious command, wherefore he made this precious *gui*-tureen for his accomplished ancestor You

¹⁹⁸ The vessel, which has been acquired by the National Museum of China in 2005, was reportedly discovered at a site near Baoji city, Shaanxi, in the early Republican period. It was first published in *Zhongguo Lishi Wenwu* (2006) 3: 4-7. For the dating of the vessel and for the interpretation of its inscription see Wang Guanying 王冠英, "Lu gui kaoshi" 親簋考釋, *Zhongguo Lishi Wenwu* (2006) 2: 4-6; Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Lun Lu gui de niandai" 論親簋的年代, *ibid.*, 7-8; and Shaughnessy, "Newest Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels, 2000-2010," in *idem ed., Imprints of Kinship*, 152-154.

¹⁹⁹ For the interpretation of *xiang* 享 as *fengshi* 奉事, "to serve," see Chen Yingjie, *Zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 282-283.

Bo. May I, Lu, be given myriads of years; may grandsons and sons forever treasure and use [this vessel].

The phrase “continue the service of your forebears” explicitly contextualizes the relation between king and appointee within a trans-generational sphere of inter-locution. *Geng* 賡, “to continue,” *jing* 令 and “do not abandon my command” (勿廢朕令) form a sequence of locutions uttered at the appointee by the king, addressing the former’s accountability in view of the past, present and future. The vessel donor’s prayer for old age and the obligation he places upon his descendants have to be understood within the context of the assumption of the charge. Here we find again all the aspects of Western Zhou commitment inscriptions we have pointed out before.

An almost verbatim formulation can be found in the text from the identical inscriptions cast on each vessel in the mid- Western Zhou *Shi You gui* 師酉簋 set (*JC* 4288-4291):²⁰⁰

[...]王乎(呼)史鬻(稟)冊命師酉：嗣乃且(祖)啻(敵)官[...]敬夙夜，勿灋(廢)朕(朕)令。

[...] The King called on Scribe Lin to announce the [King’s] command to Commander You: “Succeed your forebears in their chief official position [...] Be reverently from dawn to night, do not abandon my command.”²⁰¹

師酉拜詣首，對揚天子丕(丕)顯休令，用乍(作)朕(朕)文考乙白(伯)、寃姬尊(尊)殷(簋)，酉其萬年子子孫孫永寶用。

Commander You bowed prostrate and extolled the Son of Heaven’s manifest

²⁰⁰ Nothing is known about the location, date and the circumstances of the discovery of these four vessels of which three are currently housed in the in the Palace Museum, Beijing, and one in the National Museum of China. Their inscription was first recorded in Ruan Yuan, *Jigu zhai zhong ding yiqi kuanshi*, 6.23.

²⁰¹ For my rendering of the graph *chi* (*s-k^he-s) 啻 as *di* (*[d]^hek) 敵, “chief,” “principal,” see p. 38. n. 102 above.

gracious command, wherefore he made this precious *gui*-tureen for his deceased father Yi Bo and his mother Jiu Ji. May I, You, be given myriads of years; may sons and grandsons forever treasure and use [this vessel].²⁰²

The similarities between this text and that from the Lu *gui* inscription are striking enough to speak about a shared pattern here. Another more or less similar example is the text from the Shi Hu *gui* 師虎簋 (JC 4316) inscription, also dating to the mid-Western Zhou period.²⁰³

[...]王若曰：虎[...]令女(汝)更(賡)乃曼(祖)考(敵)官，嗣(司)才(左)右戲(繁)荆，苟(敬)夙夜，勿瀆(廢)朕(朕)令。易(賜)女(汝)赤舄，用事。

[...] The King approvingly spoke: “Hu [...] [I] order you to succeed your forebears in their chief official position and to take charge of the horses in the Left and Right Camps. Be reverent from dawn till night and do not abandon my charge. I bestow on you a pair of red shoes, use these to serve.”

虎敢拜詣首，對揚天子不(丕)杯(丕)魯休，用乍(作)朕(朕)刺(烈)考日庚(尊)殷(簋)，子子孫孫其永寶用。

Hu dared to bow prostrate, extolling the Son of Heaven’s greatly felicitous grace, wherefore he made this sacrificial *gui*-tureen for his valorous father Ri Geng. May sons and grandsons forever treasure and use [this vessel].²⁰⁴

These three examples should suffice to illustrate the generic pattern of mid- Western Zhou inscriptions recording the receipt of follow-up charges. In terms of their internal logic, there exists no notable difference between these and records of initial appointments.

²⁰² Cf. *Daxi*, 2.89-90; *Duandai* #173; Mingwen xuan #192; Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #61 and *Source Book* #31.

²⁰³ No verifiable information exists about the date, location and circumstances of the vessel’s discovery. Its inscription was first recorded in Wu Shifen, *Mei gu lu jinwen*, 3.2.58.2.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *Duandai* #108; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 19.353-360; Eno, “Inscriptional Records” #76. Compare also the translation and analysis in Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 192-196.

2.5.1.2 Follow-up charges with reference to the Heavenly Mandate

Our next example is the text from the late Western Zhou Shi Ke *xu* 師克盥 inscription, existing in multiple instances on two similar vessels (*JC* 4467 and NA 1907), presumably belonging to a larger set which has been lost, and in one instance on a Shi Ke *xu lid* 師克盥蓋 (*JC* 4468).²⁰⁵ This text is almost identical to the three examples just cited with the difference that it further embeds the king’s charge within a passage of political reflection. The version produced below follows *JC* 4467:

王若曰：師克，不(丕)顯文武，雁(膺)受大令，匍有四方，則繇(繇)佳(唯)乃先且(祖)考又(有)夨(功)于周邦，干(扞)害(憲=閑)王身，乍(作)爪牙。

The King approvingly spoke: “Commander Ke, that the greatly manifest [Kings] Wen and Wu [were able to] receive and shoulder the Great Mandate, that [they were able to] spread it throughout the four cardinal regions, was because your forebears had meritorious achievements in the Zhou polity,²⁰⁶ guarding the King’s body, acting as its claws and teeth.”

王曰：克，余佳(唯)丕(經=念)乃先且(祖)考克齡臣先王。昔余既令女(汝)，今余佳夨(申)夨乃令，令女(汝)更(廢)乃且(祖)考夨(兼)夨(司)左右虎臣。易(賜)女(汝)[...]。敬夙夕，勿灋(廢)夨(朕)令。

The King spoke: “Ke, I do recall you ancestors’ ability to serve the former Kings with all their heart and strength.²⁰⁷ Hence in the past I already charged

²⁰⁵ See p. 95, n. 119 above for information on the Shi Ke *xu* vessels.

²⁰⁶ For the interpretation of the graph 繇 see p. 38, n. 102 as well as p. 122, n. 198 above. For my rendering of the graph 夨 compare the discussion on p. 119, n. 189.

²⁰⁷ 丕, according to Guo Moruo, is the early form of the graph 經 (Guo Moruo, “Shi Ke *xu* ming kaoshi,” 10). Dong Shan interprets *jing* 經 in a similar formulation found in the Qiu *pan* inscription as nian 念, “to recall,” “to remember.” He cites the phrase *jing nian* 丕(經)念 from the Da Ke ding 大克鼎 inscription to corroborate his point. See Dong Shan, “Lue lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaozang qingtongqi mingwen,” 44. Guo Moruo interprets the phrase 齡臣 as *jin chen* 夨臣, meaning “to serve someone with all one’s capacity and strength” (Guo Moruo, “Shi Ke *xu* ming kaoshi,” 10). Yu Xingwu further sees a connection between the formulae 齡臣先王 and *yun chen Tianzi* 夨(允)臣天子 “to trustily serve the Son of Heaven” in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. See Yu Xingwu, “Shi Ke *xu* ming kaoshi’ shu hou” 《師克盥銘考釋》書後, *Wenwu* (1962) 11: 57.

you [with a governmental task], now I extend your charge, commanding you to follow your forebears in jointly supervising the Tiger Servants of the left and the right.²⁰⁸ I bestow on you [list of gifts]. Be devoted day and night, do not abandon my command!”

克敢對揚天子不(丕)顯魯休，用乍(作)旅盥，克其萬年子子孫孫永寶用。
Ke dares to extoll the Son of Heaven’s greatly felicitous grace, wherefore this sacrificial *xu* tureen was made. May I, Ke, be given myriads of years; may grandsons and sons forever treasure and use [this vessel].²⁰⁹

The text starts with an image of the receipt of the Heavenly Mandate we are all too familiar with from the *Odes* and *Documents*. However, unlike the examples we saw in the *Documents* above, in this case the king’s rhetoric of motives forms part of and, in a way, introduces the illocutionary act of the charge. In accordance with the text’s purpose, the king refers to the receipt of the Heavenly Mandate from the joint perspective of his own and Ke’s legacy. It was because of Ke’s ancestors’ meritorious achievements that the Zhou could receive the Heavenly Mandate and fulfil its task. Commemoration and reflection here entail less a directive for combined future action than a claim of a joint legacy of corporate solidarity, culminating in a metaphoric image of the king and his allies as one “royal body.” This claim now forms the basis for the king’s command: The king recalls Ke’s forebear’s abilities to serve the former kings wherefore he now charges Ke to retrieve and continue his forebear’s tasks.

In contrast with the preceding examples, the simple imperative to continue one’s forebear’s official position must have been perceived insufficient in this case. The king’s decision, it seems, needed to be further explained through a rhetoric of

²⁰⁸ For the rendering of the graph 兼 as *jian* 兼, “jointly,” simultaneous(ly),” see Chen Jian, “Jiaguwen jiu shi ‘yuan’ he ‘ji’ de liang ge zi ji jinwen ‘X’ zi xin shi” 甲骨文舊釋 “智” 和 “盥” 的兩個字及金文 “兼” 字新釋, in idem, *Jiagu jinwen kaoshi lunji*, 177-233.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Guo Moruo, “Shi Ke *xu* ming kaoshi,” *Duandai* #210; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 28.541-552; *Mingwen xuan* #207; and *Source Book* #46.

motives in order to create an appearance of legitimacy on which the king's charge could firmly rest.²¹⁰ Hence the example from the Shi Ke *xu* inscriptions tells us that, at least in some cases, retrieved membership in the Zhou alliance had to be justified. It also suggests that in these cases the receipt of the Heavenly Mandate functioned as the frame of reference for this justification.

Indeed, we find that the Great Mandate does appear especially in constellations where the King charges individuals from markedly different ethnic and socio-political contexts, such as in the inscription from the mid-Western Zhou Lu Bo Dong *gui* lid 𠄎伯戣簋蓋 (JC 04302).²¹¹ This inscription records a royal charge granted to an individual from an allied non-Zhou polity as can be inferred from the dedication line which addresses Lu Bo Dong's father as *wang* 王, a title which apart from the Zhou king only applies to rulers from non-Zhou polities in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions:²¹²

隹(唯)王正月，辰才(在)庚寅，王若曰：𠄎白(伯)戣，繇(繇)自乃且(祖)考又(有)爵(功)于周邦，右(佑)鬬三(四)方，叀(助)夙天令。女(汝)肇(紹)不豢(惰)。余易(賜)女鬻鬻一卣、[...]。

²¹⁰ In a way it seems the king's rhetoric of motives served the vessel donor's purposes more than the king's.

²¹¹ The history and the whereabouts of the bronze are uncertain, only a rubbing of its inscription is still extant today. Although nothing is known about the date, place, and the circumstances of its discovery, the vessel donor Dong, Elder of Lu, is could be the same person who commissioned the Dong *fangding* 𠄎方鼎 (JC 2824) and the Dong *gui* 𠄎簋 (JC 4322), which have been archaeologically excavated in 1975 from tomb 75M1 in Zhuangbai, Fufeng county, Shaanxi. Cf. the discussion on p. 165, n. 84 above. See especially Huang Shengzhang, "Lu Bo Dong tongqi ji qi xiangguan wenti," and Wang Zhongwen, "'Bo Dong' yu 'Lu,' 'Lu Bo Dong' zhuqi jian xilian wenti zhi jiantao." The vessel's inscription was first recorded in Wu Shifen, *Mei gu lu jinwen*, 3.2.51.

²¹² See Wang Shimin 王世民, "Xizhou Chunqiu jinwen zhong de zhuhou juecheng" 西周春秋金文中的諸侯爵稱, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 (1983) 3:5; and Zhang Zhenglang, "Zewang *gui* ba: Ping Wang Guowei 'Gu zhuhou cheng wang shuo'" 矢王簋拔——評王國維《古諸侯稱王說》, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 13 (1986): 179-180, reprinted in idem, *Jiagu jinwen yu Shang Zhou shi yanjiu*, 224-233. The meaning of *wang* in this context may well retain some of the familial implications we have associated with the term in late Shang sources. This would indeed fit Dong's epithet *bo* 伯, elder, whom Guo Moruo identifies with the leader of the polity of Lu, a polity known under the name of Liu 六 in the *Zuo zhuan*. See *Daxi*, 2.63.

In the first month of the King's reign, when the date-planet was in *geng-yin* (day 27) that the King, approving [of Dong's award], said: "Dong, Elder of Lu! From the beginning your forebears had accomplished deeds in the service to the Zhou polity, helping to open up the four cardinal regions and to make broad the Mandate of Heaven.²¹³ May you continue their work without blemish.²¹⁴ I present you with a flask of sacrificial black millet wine [...]."

彖白(伯)敢拜手頡首，對揚天子不(丕)顯休，用乍(作)餼(朕)皇考釐王寶璽(尊)簋。余其永邁(萬)年寶用，子子孫孫其帥并(型)受茲(茲)休。

Dong, the Elder of Lu dared to bow prostrate and to extol the Son of Heaven's brilliant beneficence, wherefore having cast a precious sacrificial tureen for my august father King Li. May I live to treasure it forever. May my sons and grandsons descendants pattern themselves on my example and [continuously] receive this beneficence.²¹⁵

As a special case in this respect, the inscription on the mid- Western Zhou Guai Bo *gui* 𠄎(乖)伯簋 (JC 4331) tureen deserves mentioning.²¹⁶ Not only was the vessel donor, Guai Bo 乖伯, also referred to as Guifeng 歸峯 or Mei'ao 眉敖,²¹⁷ the

²¹³ For my interpretation of the graph 𠄎 as *zhu* 助, "to assist," see chapter one p. 119, n. 190 above.

²¹⁴ Guo Muoruo reads 肇 in this context as a loan graph to used to write the word *shao* 紹, "to continue." See Cf. Guo Moruo, *Daxi*, 2.62-64. Zhu Fenghan, "Lun Zhou jinwen zhong 'zhao' zi de zhiyi" 論周金文中 "肇" 字的字義, *Beijing Shifan Daxue xuebao (Renwen shehui kexue ban)* 北京師範大學學報 (人文社會科學版) 158 (2000): 18-25, confirms Guo's reading.

²¹⁵ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.62-65; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 17.209-232; *Mingwen xuan* #180; and *Source Book* #22. The translation has been adapted from Eno, "Inscriptional Records" #58.

²¹⁶ Nothing specific is known about the date, place and the circumstances of the discovery of the vessel which is currently housed in the National Museum of China. Its inscription was first recorded in Wu Dacheng, *Kezhai ji gu lu*, 11.22-23.

²¹⁷ Whereas Guifeng was probably the vessel donor's personal name, Mei'ao appears to have been an alternative title for the ruler of Guai, according to Li Feng the Chinese transliteration of a foreign name (Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*, 185). Eno remarks: "There is a strong textual tradition that associates the term *ao* with the titles of rulers of Chu, a polity known from Western Zhou times, but famous as the dominant southern culture of the Eastern Zhou era, principally associated with the middle Yangzi River valley. The language or languages of the larger Chu region were indeed distinct from that of the Zhou people, and some terms associated with Chu, such as *mei'ao*, appear to be phonetic representations of non-Chinese words, reflecting possible ritual leadership positions" (*Source Book*, 160). See also Barry B. Blakeley, "Chu Society and State: Image versus Reality," in *Defining Chu: Image and Reality in Ancient China*, eds. Constance A. Cook and John S. Major (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 53-54, on this point. However, as will be discussed below, the ancient polity of Guai was most likely located within the modern-day province of Gansu 甘肅, north-west of the Zhou homeland.

ruler of the ethnically different non-Zhou polity of Guai 𠄎(乖),²¹⁸ he is even depicted as the target of a Zhou-led military campaign prior to his receipt of the Zhou king's recognition:

隹(唯)王九年九月甲寅，王命益公征眉敖。益公至，告。

It was in the ninth year of the King's reign, in the ninth month, on *jia-yin* day (day 51). The King ordered Patriarch Yi to campaign against Mei'ao.²¹⁹ Patriarch Yi returned and reported.

二月，眉敖至見(覲)，獻費(帛)。

In the second month, Mei'ao arrived [at the Zhou court]. He was received in audience and presented tribute.

Apparently this was not the first time Mei'ao, or a predecessor with the same title was received in audience by the Zhou king. In a presumably earlier inscription, that from the mid-Western Zhou Ninth Year Qiu Wei *ding* 九年裘衛鼎 (JC 2831) it says:²²⁰

隹(唯)九年正月既死霸庚辰，王才(在)周駒宮，各廟。眉敖者(諸)膚卓事見于王，王大禱。[...]

It was in the ninth year, in the first month, after the dying brightness, on the day

²¹⁸ In the past, based on an arbitrary rendering of the graph 𠄎, Guai has been mistaken for the polity of Gui 歸, located in Zigui 秭歸 in the Three Gorges region in western Hubei (So for instance in *Daxi*, 2.147-148). With the discovery of Guai Shu *ding* 乖叔鼎 (JC 1733) in 1972 in tomb no. 1 of a Western Zhou cemetery excavated near Yaojiahe 姚家河, Lingtai 靈臺 county, Gansu (Cf. *Kaogu* [1976] 1: 39-48), the polity of Guai is now believed to have been located in the Jing 涇 River valley between eastern Gansu and southern Ningxia. The inscription from another vessel presumably commissioned by the same donor, the, also unprovenienced, Mei'ao *gui* 鼻(眉)敖簋 (JC 4213) tureen, confirms this assumption as it records the contact between the north-western Rong 戎 people and Mei'ao. For an in depth discussion on the polity of Guai, its possible location as well as on the relation between Guai and the Zhou, see Li Feng, "Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders: Evidence from the Bronze Inscriptions of the Western Zhou Period (1045-771 B.C.)," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002): 210-221; and idem, *Landscape and Power*, 183-186.

²¹⁹ For information on Patriarch Yi see Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, 117-120.

²²⁰ The vessel was archaeologically excavated in 1975 from hoard 1 near Dongjiacun 董家村, Qishan county, Shaanxi. The find was first published in *Wenwu* (1976) 5: 39.

geng-chen. The King was in Zhou at the Palace of Colts and descended to the temple. Zhu Fu appeared in audience as the envoy of Mei'ao. The King received him with full ceremonial honours.²²¹

Li Feng argues that the Qiu Wei *ding* was cast in the ninth year of the reign of King Gong (909/06 BCE), whereas he dates the Guai Bo *gui* to the ninth year of the reign of King Yih (890/88 BCE).²²² Thus the campaign against Mei'ao would have taken place in between these two audiences. If Li's dating is right, then this would indeed suggest a changing relation between the Zhou and the polity of Guai. It is therefore all the more significant that we find explicit references to the Zhou founding myth and to the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate in the remainder of the text from the Guai Bo *gui* inscription:

己未，王命中(仲)侄(致)歸(乖)白(伯)貔裘。王若曰：「(乖)白(伯)，朕(朕)不(丕)顯且(祖)玟(文)、珣(武)雁(膺)受大命，乃且(祖)克逮(仇)先王，異(翼)自也(他)邦，又(有)芾(功)于大命。我亦弗窳(荒?)享邦，易(賜)女(汝)貔裘。」
On *yi-wei* day (day 56), the King ordered Zhong Zhi to return Elder Guai with a badger coat. The King approvingly spoke: “Guai Bo! When my grand and brilliant forebears, [Kings] Wen and Wu, received and shouldered the Great Mandate, your forebears capably allied with the former kings, assisting them from another polity and earned meritorious achievements in [the implementation of] the Great Mandate.²²³ Hence I too do not abandon your rulership [over your polity] and award you this badger coat.”²²⁴

²²¹ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 49.256-294; *Mingwen xuan* #203; and Source Book, #27. The translation has been slightly adapted from Eno, “Inscriptional Records,” #71. Compare also the translation of this passage in Li Feng, “Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders,” 218.

²²² Li Feng, “Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders,” 218-219, esp. n. 25-26.

²²³ Cf. Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci*, 370. For the interpretation of the graph 芾 see Dong Shan, “Lüe lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen,” 44, and Chen Jian 陳劍, “Shi ‘X’” 釋 “芾”, unpublished manuscript referred to in Dong Shan, “Lüe lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen,” 44.

²²⁴ Ma Chengyuan assumes that the graph 窳 follows the phonetic *m̥raŋ 兕 and might therefore be meaningfully read as *m̥aŋ 荒, “to abandon,” “to waste,” in this context (*Mingwen xuan*, 140, n. 8). All proposed translations of this line known to me understand this as an expression of the king's redetermination to continue Zhou rule. However, in view of the fact that the inscriptions begins with

禘(乖)白(伯)拜手顛首天子休，弗望(忘)小禩(裔)邦。歸皐敢對揚天子不(丕)杯(丕)魯休，用乍(作)朕(朕)皇考武乖幾王尊簋。用好宗朝(廟)，烹(享)夙夕，好棚(朋)友季百者(諸)婚邁(媾)。用禱(祈)屯(純)彘(祿)永命，魯壽子孫。歸皐其邁(萬)年日用烹(享)于宗室。

Elder Guai bowed prostrate at the grace of the Son of Heaven, that this small and distant polity has not been forgotten. Gui Feng dares to extoll the Son of Heaven's illustrious felicitous grace, wherefore this precious *gui*-tureen is cast for my august deceased father, Martial King Ji of Guai. May I use it to present offerings at my ancestral temple day and night, to feast my peers and my many affinal relatives. I pray for grace and an eternal mandate, for felicitous longevity and descendants. May I, Guifeng, for myriads of years, daily use [this vessel] to present offerings at the lineage ancestral chamber.²²⁵

The king's choice to leave Mei'ao in power as ruler of the non-Zhou polity of Guai is depicted here as a purely political decision, based on an assumed joint legacy in the commitment towards fulfilling the conditions of the Heavenly Mandate. The latter literally functions as a pivot which interconnects these two otherwise unrelated parties within a political constellation. The same holds true for the inscriptions from the examples Shi Ke *xu lid* and from the Lu Bo Dong *gui lid*.

What we see in each of these three examples is in the end nothing less than the transformation of the political bonds between the Zhou king and elite individuals into an extension or perpetuation of a mytho-historical ur-alliance in which the vessel donors' forebears are claimed to have joined king's Wen and Wu on their own account in order to assist the latter in their receipt and implementation of Heaven's theo-political Mandate. At this point one can indeed perceive a transfer of relations

mentioning a military campaign against Mei'ao, it makes more sense to take this as a statement of grace, allowing Elder Guai to retain ruling authority in his polity on grounds of his ancestors having been allied with the Zhou founding kings.

²²⁵ Cf. *Duandai* #196; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 25.282-295; *Mingwen xuan* #206; and *Source Book* #42. See also the translations in Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 172-173; and Li, *Landscape and Power*, 184-185.

from the socio-political to the theological realm. The ultimate source of political sovereignty gets transferred from the person of the King onto Heaven, with the effect that the king and his allies equally turn into the bearers of Heaven's theo-political charge, and hence into a single community of purpose. However, this transfer did not entail a deduction of relations from the account of political affairs as Assmann states it to be the case in the OT. The proto-political bonds between the Zhou king and his allied elites remained at the centre of the Zhou alliance.²²⁶ The receipt of Heaven's Great Charge did not render the political alliances between king and elites obsolete, on the contrary, it serves here as a discursive framework for the political perpetuation of the Zhou alliance. This discursive frame of reference further intersects with what we have called, following Assmann, the sphere of interlocution. In all of the three examples cited above it is the memory of accountability informed by a shared cultural commitment that made political interaction on the level between king and elites possible and meaningful.

It is of utmost importance to understand this basic idea behind the concept of the Heavenly Mandate as most interpretations of the Mandate in Western Zhou sources do not pay attention to the discursive dimension the latter introduces into the collective Zhou identity.²²⁷ To merely say that the Heavenly Mandate has been envisioned in order to serve as a legitimation for the Zhou's victory over the Shang

²²⁶ Once again, one needs to take into consideration the important difference that the bond between god and the Israelites in the OT describes the founding of a religion against the state.

²²⁷ See for instance Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 81-100; Takayama Setsuya, "Sei Shū kokka ni okeru 'Ten-meī' no kino;" Toyota Hisashi 豊田久, *Shūdai shi no kenkyū: Higashi Ajia sekai ni okeru tayōsei no tōgō* 周代史の研究：東アジア世界における多様性の統合 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2015), 12-94; Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou shi*, 95-106; Kominami Ichirō, *Kodai Chūgoku tenmei to seidōki*, 179-200; Allan, "On the Identity of Shang Di 上帝 and the Origin of the Concept of the Celestial Mandate (Tian Ming 天命);" and David W. Pankenier, *Astrology and Cosmology in Early China: Conforming Earth to Heaven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 193-241. None of these seminal studies on the concept of the Heavenly Mandate point to its function as a discursive framework for the perpetuation of the relations between the Zhou and his allied elites in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

and its subsequent military expansion, or in order for the king to demand loyalty from his allies, is not sufficient to explain its significance in the logic of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. In the bronzes, we may now say, the Great Charge first and foremost addresses the fundamental question of integration on the level of elite society, mirroring the conditions of the proto-political bond as the prevalent form in which the elites affiliated with the Zhou king. In this respect, the three examples analysed above bear witness to what we might call the discursive transformation of many proto-political bonds into one theo-political bond, where the parties involved in the former become one community of purpose on the meta-level of cultural reflection. This reverberates with our finding from the beginning of this chapter, concerning the politicization of relations between king and elites.

2.5.2 The rhetoric of crisis and of motives in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions

What we are left with at this point is the question of meaning when we talk about the Zhou alliance as a community of purpose. If the idea of the Zhou alliance is expressed in the concept of the Heavenly Mandate, we should assume the latter to address the alliance's purpose as well. Indeed, in the first chapter of this study we have identified the purpose of the Heavenly Mandate with the task of ecumenical rulership. The question is how this meaning enters the constellation between king and elites laid out in the pattern of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. The earliest extant epigraphic source where we find the ideology of Heavenly Mandate explicitly associated with its purpose is the He *zun* 鬲尊 inscription, which presumably dates

from the reign of King Cheng or King Kang, or, according to Khayutina, perhaps even from the reign of King Zhao. Let us review the core passages from this inscription:²²⁸

隹(唯)王初鄴(遷)宅于成周，[...] 聿(誥)宗小子于京室，曰：「昔才！爾考公氏克速(仇)玟(文)王。隹(肆)玟(文)王受茲□□[大令]。」

When the king for the first time took residence in Chengzhou, [...] [he] addressed the heirs from the princely lineages who were congregated in the Great Hall of the Jing palace saying: “Formerly, your deceased fathers were able to ally with King Wen, whereupon King Wen received this [Great Charge].

隹(唯)玟(武)王既克大邑商，則廷告于天，曰：『余其宅茲中或(域)，自之辭(乂)民。』

When King Wu had newly subdued the Great Settlement Shang, he solemnly announced to Heaven the words: ‘I shall reside in this central region and from here protect the *min*-populations.’

烏虘(乎)，爾有唯小子亡戩(識)。覩(視)于公氏有爵(功)于天，馭(徹)令苟(敬)高(享)戎(哉)。夷(助)王龔(恭)德，谷(欲)天順(訓)我不每(敏)。」 [...]

Alas! You are but un-experienced youngsters. Attend to the example of your forebears who have meritorious achievements with Heaven. [Strive to] accomplish the charge and serve reverently! Assist me, your king, in honouring our *de* (i.e. our mutual intent and obligation towards fulfilling the Great Charge), may Heaven instruct us on our insensibilities.” [...]

The purpose behind the Great Charge, or whatever it is that King Wen is said to have received in this passage, is here for the first time clearly named as the agenda of ecumenical rule (*yi min* 乂民).²²⁹ It appears in the form of a prosopopeial image depicting King Wu to announce his assumption of the Great Charge to Heaven. With

²²⁸ Compare chapter one pp. 105-106, and pp. 113-114 for information on the He *zun* and its inscription as well as for philological notes on the text.

²²⁹ For *min* as an ordering symbol referring to the population of *sifang* or the *Tianxia* ecumene see my “The Term *min* 民 as a Political Concept in Western Zhou Thought.”

the help of this image, the kingly protagonist introduces this purpose directly into the Zhou alliances' sphere of interlocation.

This closely resembles the constellation we saw in the “Da gao” chapter from the *Documents*, where the king and his allies found themselves midway between their forebears' assumption of a commitment and its future fulfilment lying in their own hands in turn. In view of the possibility that the shared trans-generational obligation to fulfill the conditions of the Great Charge might be abandoned, in the *He zun* text too, a decision and commitment to continue the ancestors' course are required. Although in the latter we do not perceive any disagreement about the future course of action to be taken, the moment a new generation retrieves and continues its forebears' commitments in itself constitutes a moment of crisis calling for a decision.²³⁰ This is also the case in the inscription from the *Jing Hou gui*, where, again, we read:

[My forebear, the Patriarch of Zhou] was able to arduously serve above and below, so Di had no [occasion] to end Zhou's mandate. In pursuance of my filial duty, I will continue [my forebear's task] and dare not be neglecting.

It is in such moments of crisis where the reflection on political meaning or purpose becomes important, for the decision whether or not to carry on with one's forebears' commitments does not only take place within the sphere of interlocation, but also between the poles of right and wrong, the idea of corporate solidarity and its opposite, success or failure. As these aspects touch upon the meta-level of cultural reflection, it should not be surprising that we find them inextricably linked with the conditions of the Heavenly Mandate as well. With the ascription of moral values to the Great

²³⁰ For my use of the term crisis see p. 185, n. 135 above.

Charge the decision whether or not to continue one's forebear's commitments becomes even more a political and ethical decision. This shows most prominently in the text from the Da Yu *ding* inscription, which we already have been concerned with above. The text opens with an unusually long and detailed rhetoric of motives delivered by the king:

隹(唯)九月，王才(在)宗周，令孟。王若曰：孟！不(丕)顯玟(文)王受天有(佑)大令。在珷(武)王嗣玟(文)乍(作)邦，鬪(鬪)畢(厥)匿(慝)，匍(敷)有四方，畹(允)正畢(厥)民。

It was in the ninth month when the King was at Ancestral Zhou issuing a command to Yu. The King approvingly spoke: “Yu! Greatly manifest King Wen received Heaven's support and the Great Charge. At the time King Wu succeeded King Wen, he created the [Zhou] polity, expelled all evils and spread [the Charge] throughout the four cardinal regions. Trust-winningly he set the *min*-populace in order.

在季(于)卣(御)事釁，酉(酒)無敢醜(醜)。有鬻(柴)蒸(蒸)祀，無敢饜(酬)。古(故)天異(=惟)臨子，灋(廢=大)²³¹保先王，□有四方。

In the handling of (ceremonial) affairs, he did not dare to overindulge in drink. When performing the *Chai* and the *Zheng* sacrificial offerings²³² he did not dare to encourage drunkenness. It was thus that Heaven approached [King Wu] and adopted him as his son, and greatly protected our former kings [in their possession of] the four quarters.²³³

我聞殷述(墜)令，隹(唯)殷邊侯、田(甸)季(與)殷正百辟率肆(肆)于酉(酒)，古(故)喪自(師)。

I have heard Yin's loss of the charge was due to its greater and lesser lords' as well as to its many court officials' indulging in wine and it was thus that Yin lost its armies.

²³¹ *Mingwen xuan*, 39.

²³² For the nature of the *zheng* 蒸 offering see Vogt, “Between Kin and King: Social Aspects of Western Zhou Ritual,” 148-160. For *chai* 鬻(柴) see *ibid*, 346-350.

²³³ The interpretation of the graph 異 as *wei* 惟, “because of,” “owing to,” as well as that of the phrase *lin zi* 臨子 as “to approach and to adopt as one's son” (*lin er zi zhi* 臨而子之) follows Qiu Xigui, “Buci ‘yi’ zi he *Shi*, *Shu* li de ‘shi’ zi,” in *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji*, 1. 217.

King Wu's receipt of the Mandate is described here as the result of his restraint and moderation in the use of alcohol in official and ritual affairs. This stands diametrically opposed to the late Shang ruling elite's alcoholic excesses. These two poles now define what Assmann calls a "binary structured sphere of action."²³⁴ Here we have a clear differentiation of human behaviour into right and wrong, the decision for either of which is directly related to the receipt or withdrawal of Heaven's Great Charge. Hence the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate emerges here in the form of a discourse that has a legacy in the transmitted *Documents* as well. In the "Jiu gao" 酒誥 chapter we come across a strikingly similar argumentation in a context where the king is depicted to admonish his ministers not to indulge or permit indulgence into alcohol abuse.²³⁵

「天降威，我民用大亂喪德，亦罔非酒惟行。越小大邦用喪，亦罔非酒惟辜。」[...]

Whenever Heaven has send down his majestic terror because our *min* had become greatly disordered and lost their *sensus communis*, it was always wine that drove their conduct. The ruin of polities small and great as well, has been caused invariably by their guilt due to the abuse of wine. [...]²³⁶

This kind of wrong behaviour is then further associated with the mytho-historical demise of Shang in the king's speech:

²³⁴ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 114-117

²³⁵ Notwithsatnding the high level of intertextuality between the "Jiu gao" and the Da Yu *ding* inscription (Cf. Yu Xingwu, *Shuangjian Chi Shangshu xin zheng*, 2.19-25), we still cannot for sure treat them as contemporaneous sources. While most scholars accept the "Jiu gao" as an early Western Zhou text, Shaughnessy detects a significant amount of linguistic features typical for the Eastern Zhou period in this text ("Lüe lun jinwen Shangshu 'Zhoushu' ge pian de zhuzuo niandai," 916-917). He Dingsheng, however, dates this chapter to the Western Zhou period ("Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai," 180-187).

²³⁶ *Shangshu jin- guwen zhushu*, 16.375. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 401; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 43.

弗惟德馨香祀，登聞于天；誕惟民怨，庶群自酒，腥聞在上。故天降喪于殷，罔愛于殷，惟逸。天非虐，惟民自速辜。

And so it was that no fragrance of *de* ascended from the sacrifices to be perceived by Heaven. Greatly resentful were the *min* and in crowds they intoxicated themselves with wine so that a rank smell was perceived on high. When Heaven therefore sent down destruction on Yin and showed no mercy for it, this was due to such excesses. This was no case of Heaven being cruel; it was that the *min* drew guilt upon themselves. [...]²³⁷

Alcohol abuse stands here for the anti-social, for excess and self-indulgence,²³⁸ in contrast to *de* 德, which, as we will see in greater detail in the following chapter, indicates a sort of *sensus communis*.²³⁹ With regard to the term's use in the *Documents* and in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, Donald J. Munro's definition of *de* as denoting a "consistent attitude toward the Heaven-decreed norms" still proves to be the most plausible one in my view.²⁴⁰ However, the word "attitude" seems insufficient in this context since we are clearly talking about a *commitment* to fulfil the Heaven-decreed norms. These norms in turn are nothing else than the conditions and rules of Zhou corporate solidarity above the level of kinship organization.²⁴¹ As their implementation calls for the organization of society in terms of kingship, the

²³⁷ *Shangshu jin- guwen zhushu*, 16.381. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 409; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 45.

²³⁸ Cf. Roel Sterckx, "Alcohol and Historiography in Early China," *Global Food History* 1.1 (2015): 13-32.

²³⁹ Compare also the following lines in the minor ode *Bin zhi chu yan* 賓之初筵 (Mao 220) "If [the guest] got drunk they went out, they would still receive their blessings. But if they get drunk and stay, this would be called harming *de*." (既醉而出，並受其福。醉而不出，是謂伐德。[*Maoshi zhushu*, 14. 1273]). The English translation has been adapted from Waley, *The Book of Songs*, 208.

²⁴⁰ Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, 100, 185-193.

²⁴¹ This reverberates with Fu Sinian's 傅斯年 (1896-1950) famous statement: "All measures taken to secure the Heavenly Mandate clearly refer to human affairs. Among all the issues committed to Heaven not one sets aside human matters and talks about Heaven" (一切固保天命之方案，皆明言在人事之中。[...]事事託命于天，而無一事舍人事而言天) (Fu Sinian, *Xingming gu xun bian zheng* 性命古訓辨證, 3 juan (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, (1992) [1940], 2.13).

decision for the right path equals the decision to subordinate oneself to the Zhou king's ruling authority. Yu, in the Da Yu *ding* inscription, is said to have made this decision, as the king's speech continues:

已！女(汝)妹(昧)辰(晨)又(有)大服。余隹(唯)即朕小學，女(汝)勿勉(逸)余乃辟一人。今我隹(唯)即井(型)窻(稟)于玟(文)王正德，若玟(文)王令二三正。今余隹(唯)令女(汝)孟鬻(紹)燹(榮)斁(敬)雝(攤=擁)德烝(經)。敏朝夕入譫(諫)，言(享)奔走，畏天畏(威)。」

Alas, you have helped me from the hazy dawn of my youth: When I was engaged in my youthful studies, you did not abandon me, your ruler, the solitary man.²⁴² Now I assume to emulate and grasp the upright [sense of] *de* (*sensus communis*) of King Wen, and charge the various officials as he did. Now I charge you to assist Rong in devotedly holding up the standards of *de*: be assiduous in remonstrating with me from dawn to dusk serving in awe of Heaven's awesomeness.

王曰：「而，令女(汝)孟井(型)乃嗣且(祖)南公。」王曰：孟，迺鬻夾死(尸)司戎，敏諫罰訟，夙(夙)夕鬻(召)我一人豷(烝)四方，孳我其適省先王受民受疆(疆)土。易(賜)女(汝)鬯一卣[...]。」

The King spoke: “Oh! I charge you, Yu, to emulate and succeed your late grandfather Nan Gong.”²⁴³ The King spoke: “Yu, assist me in taking over the supervision of warfare and assiduously remonstrate and upbraid me. From dawn to dusk assist me, the One Man, in heading the four cardinal regions, so we may continue to inspect the populations / peoples and the territories the former kings have been entrusted with. I bestow on you a jug of sacrificial wine [...].”

王曰：「孟，若斁(敬)乃正，勿灋(廢)朕令。」

The King spoke: “Yu! Be attentive to your governmental affairs! Do not neglect my charge!”

²⁴² For the interpretation of the graph 勉 as yi 逸, “evade,” see the discussion in Zhou Baohong, *Xizhou qingtong zhongqi mingwen jishi*, 283-284.

²⁴³ For as to the possible identity of 南公 Nan Gong see Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*, 127-128; and Huang Fengchun 黃風春 and Hu Gang 胡剛, “Shuo Xizhou jinwen zhong de ‘Nan Gong’ – jian lun Suizhou Yejiashan Xizhou Zengguo mudi de zushu” 說西周金文中的‘南公’——兼論隨州葉家山西周曾國墓地的族屬, *Jiangnan kaogu* 江漢考古 (2014) 2: 50-55.

孟用對王休，用乍(作)且(祖)南公寶鼎。佳(唯)王廿又三祀。

Yu responds to [and extols] the King's grace, wherefore he has cast this precious *ding*-cauldron for his ancestor Patriarch Nan. It was the King's twenty third year.

The text suggests that Yu, at least in theory, had the chance to decide against the king, especially when the latter was still a minor and not yet able to ensure cohesion among his ruling organization. That he did not do so has its reason in a surrounding complex of shared meanings and inherited cultural norms. We perceive here a conjunction of binding legacies and cultural reflection which caused both the king and vessel donor Yu to base their decisions on *de*, which we might reasonably refer to here as a sort of communal political will. This will coincides with the commitment to continue a cultural legacy that, in retrospective, started with the King's and Yu's forebears' assumption of the Heavenly Mandate.

The perceived force of this sort of political motivation becomes especially apparent in our next example, the inscription from the late Western Zhou Shi Xun *gui* 師匄(詢)簋 (JC 4342) tureen, commissioned by the same man who also had cast the contemporaneous Xun *gui* 匄(詢)簋 (JC 4321), the inscription from which has been cited earlier in the introduction to this study.²⁴⁴ As is the case in the latter, in Shi Xun *gui* inscription as well, the king is depicted as recounting the vessel donor's

²⁴⁴ Only a brush-written Song dynasty copy of the inscription from this long since lost vessel still exists today, transmitted in Xue Shangong's 薛尚功 *Lidai zhong ding yiqi kuanzhi fatie* 歷代鐘鼎彝器款識法帖, 18 vols. (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004 [1144]), 14.14. However, the authenticity of the Shi Xun *gui* inscription had been confirmed with the excavation of the Xun *gui* from a site near Sipocun 寺坡村, Lantian 藍田 county, Shaanxi, in 1959. The find, which includes several more inscribed bronzes, was first published in *Wenwu* (1960) 2: 11-19. The Xun *gui* presumably predates the Shi Xun *gui*, as Xun did not yet bear the title Shi, "Commander," in the former. Since the audience recorded in the Xun *gui* inscription is dated to the 17th year of reigning king's government, Nivison conjectures that the date *yuan nian* 元年, "first year," given at the end of the Shi Xun *gui* inscription must refer to the beginning of following reign, when the newly ascended king re-confirmed Commander Xun's charge (Nivison, "the Authenticity of the Mao Kung Ting Inscription," 312).

forbears' deeds in the former kings' receipt of the Heavenly Mandate. In this text however, the king, probably the successor of the king cited in the slightly earlier *Xun gui* inscription,²⁴⁵ moreover refers to a break in historical continuity which separates the protagonists from the time and the achievements of Kings Wen and Wu.²⁴⁶ Hence the king and his appointee define their mutual relations based on the commitment to a remembered foundational past despite a radically different reality:

王若曰：師訇，不(丕)顯文武，雁(膺)受天令，亦則繇(繇)佳(唯)乃聖且(祖)考克受(股)左(肱)先王，乍(作)畢(厥)丩(爪)与(牙)用夾鬻(召)畢(厥)辟，奠大令，鑿(鑿=戾)鬲(龠=和)季(于)政。肆皇帝亡吳(斲)，臨保我畢(有)周季四方，民亡不康靜。

The King approvingly spoke: “Commander Xun, that the greatly manifest [Kings] Wen and Wu [were able to] receive and shoulder the Great Mandate, was because your sage forebears capably guarded the former Kings, acting as their claws and teeth, aiding their rulers to establish the Great Mandate, bringing stability and harmony to governance.²⁴⁷ Thus was August Di in no way dissatisfied and watched over and protected our Zhou and the four cardinal regions. Nowhere were the *min* not happy and tranquil.”

王曰：師訇，哀才(哉)！今日天疾畏(威)降喪，□德不克斐(乂)。古(故)亡丞于先王。

The King said: “Commander Hong, Alas! In these days Heaven rises awesome and sends down calamities, [...] *de (sensus communis)* cannot be upheld (?), thus there is no way to succeed [in the way of] the former kings.

²⁴⁵ The exact dating of both vessels proves to be rather difficult. Nivison assumes that the vessels date from the reigns of King Xuan and King You respectively. Cf. the discussion in Nivison, “the Authenticity of the Mao Kung Ting Inscription,” 312-316.

²⁴⁶ Not incidentally, together with the inscriptions from the late Western Zhou *Shi Huan gui* 師寰簋 (JC 4313), the *Mu gui* 牧簋 (JC 4343) and the *Mao Gong ding*, the *Shi Xun gui* presents the main source for Vogelsang's thesis of the experience of a break in continuity in the worldview of the late Western Zhou elite. Cf. Vogelsang, *Geschichte als Problem*, 118-121.

²⁴⁷ The *JC* standard transcription of this passage reads 「[...]亦則於女(汝)乃聖且(祖)考克左(佐)右(佑)先王，乍(作)畢(厥)肱股[...]」。 My choices follow Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 308; and the findings in Chen Jian, “Shi Xizhou jinwen zhong de ‘gong’ zi” 釋西周金文中的“左”字, in idem, *Jiagu jinwen kaoshi lunji*, 234-242; esp. 242, n.1.

鄉(嚮)女(汝)徝屯(純)卹周邦，妥(綏=輔)立余小子，夙(惇)乃事，隹(唯)王身厚𠄎。

[Yet] formerly, out of your integer concern for the Zhou polity, you placed me, the young heir, upon the throne and carried out your duties,²⁴⁸ firmly protecting the person of the King.

今余隹(唯)夙(申)稟乃令，令女(汝)夷離(攤=擁)我邦小大猷，邦佑潢辭。
Now I extend your charge and order you to help preserving our polity's objectives great and small,²⁴⁹ and to broadly bring order to our polity. [...],²⁵⁰

In the face of such a break in continuity, of a reality radically different from the formative and normative past, Shi Xun is praised by the king for having been able to do his part in keeping the institution of Zhou kingship alive due to his commitment to a theo-political idea. Although there has been a binding genealogical legacy compelling Shi Xun to continue serving the royal house, what the king in the inscription stresses most is Shi Xun's personal choice to do so, based on a set of values that come with the ideology of Zhou kingship.

2.6 The literary legacy of Western Zhou kingship

What we perceive in both the Da Yu *ding* and in the Shi Xun *gui* inscriptions is a situation in which the relation of vertical authority between King and appointee was no longer being taken for granted. Yu, having assisted the king from the hazy

²⁴⁸ My interpretation of the graph *tuo* (*ŋ^soj?) 妥 as *sui* (*s.nuj) 綏, paraphrased as *fu* 輔, “to assist,” follows *Mingwen xuan*, 175, n. 12.

²⁴⁹ For the interpretation of 夷離 as *zhu yong* 助擁, “to help preserve / uphold,” see He Shuhuan, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji*, 254-260.

²⁵⁰ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.139-141; *Duandai* #207; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 31.710-722; *Mingwen xuan* #245; and *Source Book* #32.

dawn of his youth, Commander Xun, having helped to establish the young heir as successor to the throne; those acts are described to have been based on a conscious decision of the protagonists to subordinate themselves to a theo-political task. The royal charges commemorated in these two texts are merely a result of this previous willing subordination of a strong elite individual under an apparently weak king for the sake of a higher good. In other words, the discursive transformation of proto-political bonds into theo-political bonds works here the other way round in that actual political constellations were made to fit the ideals envisioned on the meta-level of cultural reflection. This, in my view, is exactly the context wherein the narratives from the few very long mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions relate to texts from the transmitted *Odes* and *Documents*. The difference is merely that in the bronzes, these reflections are tied to actual historical personalities and constellations, whereas in the *Odes* and *Documents* they transcend any concrete historical setting as they enter into the subjunctive realm of literature. Once the Zhou grand narrative became entirely staffed with, to use a Vichian term, the *poetic characters* or *dramatis personae* from the cultural memory of the mid- to late Western Zhou elites,²⁵¹ retrieved and, presumably, altered by subsequent generations of the Eastern Zhou multistate aristocracy, this narrative could have advanced into the guarantor for the perpetuation of Zhou kingship as a symbolic order and cultural model even beyond the actual spatio-temporal extent of Western Zhou rule. What this narrative rendered articulate can be best described with another Vican term, *poetic truth*:

²⁵¹ Note that *caratteri poetici* bears several implications in Vico's use of the term, *dramatis personae* being the one I refer to here. Cf. Jürgen Trabant, *Neue Wissenschaft von alten Zeichen: Vicos Semantologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), 51-52.

[P]oetic truth is metaphysical truth, and physical truth which is not in conformity with it should be considered false. Thence springs this important consideration in poetic theory: the true war chief, for example, is Godfrey that Torquato Tasso imagines; and all the chiefs who do not conform throughout to Godfrey are not true chiefs of war.²⁵²

This might ultimately be the most plausible way to describe how the Zhou grand narrative in the bronzes, *Odes* and *Documents* relates to the texts' various contexts of retrieval throughout the Western Zhou and the Springs and Autumns period.

However, in the same way the Zhou grand narrative became gradually separated from the immediate context of the conferral of royal commands in the transmitted literature, its symbolic order was also adapted to inform mytho-historical constellations other than that of the Western Zhou kings and their allies. Such is the case in a number of Eastern Zhou bronze inscriptions. The most prominent example of this kind is the text from the early Springs and Autumns Qin Gong *zhong* 秦公鐘 (JC 262 -263) inscription, which can be found, with slight variations, on a set of *bo* 罍 bells as well as on one *gui*-tureen from Qin :²⁵³

秦公曰：我先且(祖)受天命，商(賞)宅受或(國)。刺刺(烈烈)邵(昭)文公、靜

²⁵² [I]l vero poetico è un vero metafisico, a petto del quale il vero fisico, che non vi si conforma, dee tenersi a luogo di falso. Dallo che esce questa importante considerazione in ragion poetica: che 'l vero capitano di guerra, per esempio, è 'l Goffredo che finge Torquato Tasso; e tutti i capitani che non si conformano in tutto e per tutto a Goffredo, essi non sono veri capitani di guerra. (Vico, *Principi di scienza nuova*, 147). The English translation is taken from Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch, trans., *The New Science of Giambattista Vico: Unabridged Translation of the Third Edition (1744)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 74. Note the unusual use of the term *metaphysical* explained in the annotations by Andrea Battistini: “metaphysical: ideal, in the sense that the poetic character embodies [the respective] qualities in a superb, paradigmatic and perfect fashion” (*metafisico*: ideale, perché il personaggio poetico astrae le qualità presentandole in forme superlative, esemplari et perfette” (Vico, *Principi di scienza nuova*, 666).

²⁵³ The bells were excavated from a site in Taigongmiaocun 太公廟村, Baoji county, Shaanxi, in 1978. The find was first published in *Wenwu* (1978) 11: 1-5. For the related inscriptions on the Qin Gong *bo* 秦公罍 (JC 267-270) set and on the Qin Gong *gui* 秦公簋 (JC 4315) see Wang Hui, *Qin tongqi mingwen biannian jishi*, 13-32; and Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, 59-105.

公、憲公，不彖(惰)于上。邵(劭)合皇天，巳(以)虢事繼(蠻)方。[...]

The Patriarch of Qin spoke: “My forebears assumed the Heavenly Mandate and were rewarded with a residence and the receipt of a domain. Resolute and determined, the brilliant Patriarchs Wen, Jing, and Gong were not neglecting towards above (i.e. towards Heaven’s Charge). Striving to match August Heaven,²⁵⁴ they awe-inspiringly administered the Man-regions.²⁵⁵ [...]

[...]秦公嬰(其)峻(允)齡才(在)立(位)，靡(膺)受大命豐(眉)壽無疆(疆)，匍有四方。嬰(其)康寶。

[...] May the Patriarch of Qin trustily fulfil his position,²⁵⁶ receiving and shouldering the Great Charge, until old age without limit spreading it throughout the four quarters. May he grandly keep and treasure [these bells].²⁵⁷

In this example we see how the rulers of Qin borrowed the symbolic order of the Heavenly Mandate to stylize themselves into role of the Zhou kings. Furthermore, as we have already mentioned in passing, in the *Documents* the conditions of the Heavenly Mandate were also reflected back into the past beyond the founding of the Zhou in order to explain the Shang-Zhou transition in terms of a universal theological pattern.²⁵⁸

Yet not only did the symbolic order of Zhou kingship outlast the Western Zhou period, its institutional context lived on to a certain extent as well. Apart from polities such as Qin, whose rulers claimed the ideological position of the Zhou kings for themselves, the varying hegemons (*ba* 霸) who lead the alliance of polities that

²⁵⁴ My interpretation of the phrase *shao he* 邵(劭)合 as “striving to match,” follows Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 300.

²⁵⁵ For the interpretation of the graph *xi* 虢 as awe-inspiring see Guo Jingyun 郭靜云 (Olga Gorodetskaya), *Qin ren yu Tianming: Cong “Ziyi” kan xian Qin Ruxue zhuanhua cheng ‘jing’ 親仁與天命：從《緇衣》看先秦儒學轉化成「經」* (Taipei: Wanjuan lou, 2010), 197-198.

²⁵⁶ Compare p. 209, n. 207 above for the interpretation of the phrase *yun ling* 峻(允)齡.

²⁵⁷ Cf. *Mingwen xuan* #917; Wang Hui, *Qin tongqi mingwen biannian jishi*, 13-14; and *Source Book* #66.

²⁵⁸ Cf. our discussion on the “Shao gao” chapter on pp. 190-192 above, as well as the “Duo fang” 多方 and “Duo Shi” 多士 chapters in the *Documents*.

constituted the Springs and Autumns “multistate world” between 722 and 453 BCE understood themselves to act on behalf of the disempowered Zhou king.²⁵⁹ Although the actual ruling power clearly rested with the respective hegemon and their allies, the latter’s relation to the Zhou king was still very much defined through the obligations and targets depicted in late Western Zhou Bronze inscriptions. See for instance the text from the mid- Springs and Autumns Jin Gong *pen* 晉公盞(盆) (*JC* 10342) inscription,²⁶⁰ purportedly recording the speech of a newly ascended Patriarch of Jin:²⁶¹

隹(唯)王正月初吉丁亥，晉(晉)公曰：我皇且(祖)饒(唐)公，[雁(鷹)]受大令，左右武王，敬□百繇(蠻)，廣嗣(司)四方。至于[大/不?]廷，莫不史(事)[王]。[…]

It was the first month in the King’s reign, beginning auspiciousness, on ding-hai day.²⁶² The Patriarch of Jin spoke: “My august ancestor, Patriarch Tang,²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Cf. Cho-yun Hsu, “The Spring and Autumn Period,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 551-566; and Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period, 722-453 B.C.E.* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 55-104.

²⁶⁰ Nothing is known about the location, date and circumstances of the discovery of this long since lost vessel. Only two hardly legible rubbings of its inscription, which was first recorded in Wu Rongguang, *Junqing guan jinwen*, 3.15.2-16.2, are still extant today. However, there exists a Jin Gong *pan* 晉公盤 in a private collection which bears an almost verbatim inscription, albeit with some significant graphical variants. Both versions have been compared and philologically analysed in Wu Zhengfeng, “Jin Gong pan yu Jin Gong pen mingwen duidu” 晉公盤與晉公盞銘文對讀, *Fudan Daxue chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin wangzhan lunwen* 復旦大學出土文獻與古文字研究中心網站論文, June 22, 2014, http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=2297. Although the authenticity of the Jin Gong *pan* has so far not been confirmed, its inscription might be tentatively used to supplement our interpretation of the Jin Gong *pen* text. My transcription follows the version in Xie Mingwen 謝明文, “Jin Gong *pen* mingwen bushi” 晉公盞銘文補釋, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 5 (2013): 236-257, which, to my mind, is more accurate than that found in the *JC*.

²⁶¹ Judging from its inscription’s content, the vessel likely dates to the period of Jin’s leadership of the Springs and Autumns multistate alliance, which began with the reign of Jin Wen Gong 晉文公 (r. 636-628 BCE). In 635 BCE, Hsu states, “King Xiang 襄 of Zhou (r. 651-619 BCE) was challenged by his brother Zhao 朝 and fled from the capital. The exiled king requested help from Jin and Qin. Jin Wen Gong promptly responded to the royal call. Having declined assistance offered by Qin, he sent troops to escort the king back to the capital. To mark his gratitude, King Xiang bestowed upon Jin several territories in the vicinity of the royal capital. Thus, Jin gained not only prestige but also a foothold in the core of the Central Plain” (“The Spring and Autumn Period,” 560).

²⁶² Judging from the inscription’s internal date, it seems that not only the Patriarch of Jin just followed into the position of his forebear, but the Zhou King as well must have just ascended to the throne.

received and shouldered the Great Charge, aiding and assisting King Wu in reverently [...] the myriad Man-peoples and to broadly govern the four quarters. Including [even] those who did not come to the court (?),²⁶⁴ there was none who did not serve [the King]. [...]"²⁶⁵

[...]公曰：余雖(唯)今小子，叟(敢)帥井(型)先王，秉德勳=(秩秩)，琫(柔)變萬邦，讓=(哀哀)莫不日賴(卑)鬻(恭)。余咸畜胤(俊)士，乍(作)馮(憑)左右，保辭(乂)王國， [...]

[...] The Patriarch spoke: "Although today I am but a young heir, I dare to emulate the former Kings, respectfully holding fast to their *de*, appeasing the myriad polities. Among the many polities there shall be none that should not daily obey and submit [to the King's rule].²⁶⁶ All the capable men under my command shall act as reliable aids and assistants, protecting and securing the King's domain. [...]"²⁶⁷

The constellation between the Zhou king and the Patriarch of Jin are still quite similar to those we saw in the Shi Ke *xu*, the Da Yu *ding*, or the Shi Xun *gui* inscriptions above, albeit with a significant shift of perspective and emphasis. The king has been reduced here to a passive symbolic figure to the extent that even the receipt of the Heavenly Mandate was associated with the first Patriarch of Jin acting

²⁶³ Tangshu Yu 唐叔虞, a son of King Wu of Zhou, was the mytho-historical founder of the polity of Jin. According to Hsu, "Jin was originally located in the southern part of Shanxi, on the north side of the Yellow River from the Zhou eastern capital of Chengzhou. It was included among the Zhou vassal states in order to shield the Zhou eastern capital from northern threats" ("The Spring and Autumn Period," 558).

²⁶⁴ The transcription of this phrase as *zhi yu Dating* 至于大廷 in the JC rests on a rather tentative rendering of the hardly legible graphs in the rubbings. Scholars assume Dating to refer to the name of a polity known from transmitted texts. However, the same phrase in the Jin Gong *pan* inscription reads *zhi yu bu ting* 至于大廷, "even those who do not come to court." Not only does this reading fit the context much better, the compound *bu ting* is also very common in late Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns bronze inscriptions, where it appears in the same context as in the Jin Gong inscriptions. Compare for instance the following phrase from the mid- Springs and Autumns Qin Gong *bo* 秦公罇 (JC 270) inscription: "to hold down and calm those who do not come to court and to appease the many polities" (鎮靜不廷，柔變百邦). Hence in this case I tentatively adapt the transcription of the Jin Gong *pan* inscription to read *bu ting* instead of Dating.

²⁶⁵ Here I follow the JC in contextually reconstructing the illegible graph as *wang* 王 instead of *gong* 公, as Xie Mingwen does.

²⁶⁶ My interpretation of the phrase 賴鬻 as *bei gong* 卑恭, see Xie Mingwen, "Jin Gong *pan* mingwen bushi," 242-247.

²⁶⁷ Cf. *Daxi*, 2:231-232; *Mingwen xuan* #887.

on the former kings' behalf. Similarly, the protagonist in this inscription claims to represent the reigning king's political power by acting as the head of the Springs and Autumns multi-policy alliance. As will be shown in the next chapter of this study, the form of the covenant (*meng* 盟) that came to replace the Western Zhou institution of royal commands and appointments in this context worked in many respects on the same premises as Western Zhou proto-political bonds between king and elites.²⁶⁸ Covenants, committing the leaders of the Eastern Zhou polities to the hegemon, too were patterned on the model of patron-client relations, defined through vertical loyalties and shared political goals. Hence during the Springs and Autumns period the initial link between the symbolic order retained in the Zhou grand narrative and the institutional context of its retrieval might still not have completely vanished.

A definite break in the conception of political organization occurred only with the implementation of the famous reforms of Shang Yang 商鞅 around the year 350 BCE, after which political power became focused on the person of the ruler, acting as the head of a centralised government.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Cf. pp. 257-266 below.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Mark Edward Lewis, "Warring States Political History," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 597-616. Lewis argues: "The completion of these reforms marked the end not only of the Zhou nobility but also of the armed lineages which had been the fundamental unit of aristocratic society. [...] All disposition of military power and claims to service and tribute were now concentrated in the hands of the rulers of the territorial states, while the only significant unit for the definition of kin ties or the offering of service and taxation was the household. (Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990], 64).

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have demonstrated that the ideology of Zhou kingship, especially the concept of the Heavenly Mandate, developed in interrelation with and must be seen as intrinsically linked to the institution of royal commands. This not only provides us with an institutional context for the culture-historical interpretation of the Zhou grand narrative in our earliest epigraphic and transmitted sources; it also allows us to clearly delineate this context from other aspects of early Chinese socio-political organisation as far as concerns their possible impact on Zhou ideology. For instance, we can now say with some confidence that the idea of Zhou kingship cannot be directly related to the measures identified with the late Western Zhou ritual reform,²⁷⁰ instead its increased prominence during the late Western Zhou period must be associated with the growing significance of the royal appointment ceremony from the time of King Mu onwards.

This point also concerns the issue of cultural memory and the reason for certain forms of reflection on the past to appear. While the necessity to recollect was from the beginning inherent in the institution of the bond in that the latter required the involved parties to build a memory of obligation, references to the Zhou foundational narrative, as we have seen, occurred exclusively within a rhetoric of crisis. This of course fits with the prevalent opinion among early China scholars that the Zhou grand narrative took shape during a time marked by military decline and the general experience of a break in continuity. However, and this is what this chapter has shown, the concerns expressed in this rhetoric of crisis and motives, both in bronze inscriptions and in the *Documents*, ultimately relate to the conditions of the bond, to

²⁷⁰ This statement is justified in so far as these measures were all of a sumptuary nature.

the dynamics of command and commitment. Hence apart from external factors, such as military defeats and the Zhou's vanishing geo-political importance, an unsettling of the institution of the bond itself might have prompted this kind of reflection to no small extent. This unsettling in turn may have very well been connected to the ritual reform in the course of which vertical bonds between individuals became obscured by a stratified descent-based hierarchy.

Moreover if we look at those few examples where the Zhou grand narrative is rendered explicit in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, we find that a significant number of them involve actors who stood outside of the Zhou elite's kinship and ritual network and sometimes even came from another ethnic background. Especially the examples from the Lu Bo Dong *gui*, the Guai Bo *gui* and the Shi Xun *gui* inscriptions are important in this respect. They suggest that relations based on the ideology of Heaven were part of an enhanced collective identity which was able to supersede even ethnic and cultural differences.

This leads us to the final point in this study: how were the individual and the collective defined in Zhou ideology if not through genealogical rank, lineage, clan and ethnic affiliation? Conversely, how did this enhanced identity relate to the latter factors?

3. THE HEART OF ZHOU KINGSHIP: THE RHETORIC OF *XIN* 心 AND *DE* 德

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter we have identified the conditions and mechanisms of Zhou kingship with those of the (proto-) political bond. Our analysis of various Western Zhou bronze inscriptions has shown that on the basic level of its institutional manifestation, the Zhou ruling organization rested on numerous quasi patron-client relations binding individual elites to the king. It was by transforming the concept of these (proto-) political bonds into a theo-political idea, that the king and the heterogeneous parties allied to him were able to define themselves as a single community of purpose bound to the fulfilment of a super-imposed theo-political task. As the third factor, in the shared commitment to which both king and elites resembled each other, the Heavenly Mandate moreover allowed for the members of the Zhou ruling alliance to negotiate the perpetuation and the nature of their relation in the context of a shared system of values and meanings inscribed into the Zhou grand narrative. This we have associated with the beginnings of a rhetoric of crisis and of motives, laying the foundation for the patterns of discourse to be developed in the *Documents* and other transmitted early Chinese texts.

Moreover, we found that on each level within this system the viability of the Zhou ruling organization was ultimately contingent upon a political choice and the involved individuals' commitment to fulfil their assumed obligations. This now points to the, at least to a certain extent, politically self-determined individual as a

decisive constituent in the creation and perpetuation of Zhou corporate solidarity. Kinship and marriage alliance, as most scholars suggest, may have constituted the main factor in the overall cohesion of Western and Eastern Zhou elite society, but at least on the discursive level retained in texts from elite bronze inscriptions, the accountable individual, defined through the freedom to reach political decisions and through the ability to assume personal commitments, forms the basic unit in the structure of Western Zhou kingship understood as the sum of proto-political bonds. Yet this model not only stands in contrast to the Zhou kings' assumed reliance on kinship ties in the creation of the so-called "regional states" in early Western Zhou times,¹ it also conflicts with the idea that the institutionalisation of the royal appointment ceremony (*ceming yishi* 冊命儀式) around the mid- ninth century BCE, and with it the consolidation of a new political order,² were directly associated with the program of the late Western Zhou ritual reform, for the latter merely aimed at stratifying the lineage elites along rigidly defined lines of descent. Inter-personal bonds in the fashion of patron-client relations, as well as a political ideology based on the logic of the latter seem to be somewhat at odds with the principles of a stratified kinship-based aristocracy, suggested by the frequent occurrence of graded seniority-markers in conjunction with personal names in texts from late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Hence in talking about Western Zhou socio-political organization, the question arises whether one needs to differentiate between a kinship or lineage context on the one hand and a political or kingship context on the other.

In a way we have already done so by showing that royal commands and their

¹ The term "vassal polities" might perhaps be a better choice to describe the Zhou's institution of parcelling out ruling authority over groups of populations covering a certain territory to royal princes and allied lineages.

² Cf. Shaughnessy, *Western Zhou History*, 323-342; and Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 103-148.

receipt defined the relation between king and appointee in purely political terms, regardless of genealogical factors. But did participation in the king's network of command and obligation, like participating in matters of the polis in ancient Greece, entail a *bios politicos*, a sort of second order of existence that was different from one's genealogical role? If so, can we find something like the notion of a *zōon politikon* in a Western Zhou context as well?³ In other words, we have to ask what qualities our textual sources ascribe to individual political actors and how the conception of the latter showed in and defined the nature of corporate solidarity which informed the network of command and obligation both on the level of the king's commands and on the level of Heaven's theo-political charge. This complex of themes has so far not found much attention in Early China studies. Yet it is of the utmost importance to deal with these considerations if one wants to understand the concept and the concerns of Zhou kingship we encounter in its textual heritage.

We begin this chapter by questioning again the prevalent scholarly opinion that the Zhou ruling organization was socially *and* politically contingent upon structures of kinship and genealogy. We aim to show that apart from genealogical rank, lineage-, clan- and ethnic affiliation, which constituted the layered identity of each individual,⁴ there also existed the notion of a political person that was to some extent unaffected by these biological factors. In this step I endeavour to substantiate my assumption that the idea of such a political person, or better, of its capacities, was symbolised by the terms *xin* 心, standing for the seat of a person's intention and conscience, and *de* 德, political commitment, respectively. This part, which consists mainly of a

³ For the conception of the political person and the public realm in differentiation to the household and the genealogically defined individual in ancient Greece, see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998 [1958]), 22-37.

⁴ Cf. von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 28.

conceptual analysis, will then be followed by an investigation into the question how a person's political identity intersects with its irreducible genealogical context in order to account for the interrelatedness of both spheres in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

In the last part of this chapter we will take the idea of the political person one step further and look if and how it translates into a vision of an enhanced corporate identity, Wang Guowei's *dao-de tuanti* 道德團體. Just as the Heavenly command constituted a shared cultural obligation for the entire Zhou ruling organization, there had to equally exist a common or solidary mind-set, a sort of *sensus communis* that would commit its members, including the king, to this shared cultural task.⁵

⁵ *Sensus communis* is understood here not in the meaning of "common sense," but in the German connotation of the term as *Gemeinsinn*, i.e. a shared mind-set that orientates the individual members of a community towards common community interests and socio-political goals. A detailed definition of *de* and the idea of *Gemeinsinn* will follow below on page 307. Throughout this chapter we will attempt an incremental definition of the concept of *de* in different but related context and from different perspectives.

3.2 Searching for the political in Western Zhou corporate solidarity

3.2.1 *Kinship vs. kingship*

Not only has the factor of the individual so far been neglected in Western Zhou studies,⁶ our emphasis on the (proto-) political aspects of Zhou kingship also seems to collide somewhat with the leading scholarly opinion that the organization of Zhou corporate solidarity had been based to a large extent on kinship structures and hence on prescribed roles and structures of uncontested genealogical authority.⁷ While this claim may be valid in many respects, one needs to be careful to decide in which contexts kinship was regarded as constitutive for the creation and perpetuation of corporate identity and where it was perhaps not.

Speaking of Western Zhou elite society as it is reflected in texts and mortuary data, genealogy indeed seems to have been the defining factor in the social organization of corporate solidarity on the level of the lineage.⁸ Especially from the time of the ritual reform onwards, graded seniority markers have been used in bronze inscriptions to indicate the genealogical rank of named individuals. Branch-lineages too have been classified with the help of seniority markers according to their relative

⁶ As an important exception, Robert Eno's "Reflections on Literary and Devotional Aspects of Western Zhou Memorial Inscriptions," should be mentioned. On the basis of a number of highly individual examples Eno traces the individual voice in contrast to the ritual voice or the voice of the impersonal recorder in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

⁷ Among the most recent comprehensive studies on the Zhou kinship organization, Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 229-427; Robert Gassmann, *Verwandschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten China*; von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*; and Chen Jie 陳潔, *Shang Zhou xingshi zhidu yanjiu* 商周姓氏制度研究 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 2007), 220-409, should be mentioned.

⁸ Cf. Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 309-337; Sena, "Reproducing Society: Lineage and Kinship in Western Zhou China;" and von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 64-70 and 74-126.

proximity to the trunk lineage.⁹ Sumptuary analysis of lineage cemeteries as well, suggests the existence of kinship hierarchies based on lines of descent.¹⁰ These phenomena may suffice to attest to the order of genealogy as the dominant organizing principle within the lineages as well as perhaps on the level of inter-lineage relations. However, lineage hierarchies do not necessarily reflect the political standing of their members in the context of Zhou kingship and its ideology. For instance, some of the most prominent vessel donors who received royal appointments to prestigious posts bear the epithet *shu* 叔 “third-born” or *ji* 季 “last-born” in their names, which might either refer to their own seniority rank or to their belonging to a sub-lineage founded by a third-born or last-born among several brothers.¹¹ Hence von Falkenhausen, in his review of Li Feng’s *Bureaucracy and the State*, concludes on that matter:

[N]othing in the inscriptions suggests that all officeholders mentioned were heads of their respective lineages. On the contrary, while control over the lineage estate usually passed to the most senior descendant, the data amply show that the bureaucracy provided opportunities for some of the younger sons of aristocratic families, giving them an alternative path to status and privilege.¹²

Moreover, as David M. Sena has argued in an important recent article, the lists of office holding ancestors given in the *Shi Qiang pan* and *Qiu pan* inscriptions respectively, the only extant examples where we find such lists, do not show a

⁹ See von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 70.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 98-111.

¹¹ For instance the late Western Zhou *Guo Shu Lü zhong* 虢叔旅鐘 (*JC* 238-243), the late Western Zhou *Shi Cai gui* 師察簋 (*JC* 4253-4254), the early Western Zhou *Shu Yi ding* 叔矢鼎 (NA 915), the mid-Western Zhou *Geng Ji ding* 庚季鼎 (*JC* 2781), the late Western Zhou *Guo Ji Zi Bai pan* 虢季子白盤 (*JC* 10173) and further late Western Zhou bronzes ascribed to Guo Ji (NA 1-40).

¹² Von Falkenhausen, “Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.” (review article) *Zhejiang University Journal of Art and Archaeology* 1 (2014): 252-277.

succession of lineage heads but a pedigree of office holders.¹³

Apart from genealogical hierarchies within lineages, there also exists evidence that powerful lineages customarily joined forces with each other through marital alliances, involving intermarriages between elite lineages and the royal line.¹⁴ Thus kinship, in the form of affinal bonds, also played a role on the level of inter-lineage relations.¹⁵ Yet according to Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容, records of intermarriage with members of the royal house appeared only very rarely and by chance in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. There was no template for the creation of such relations in bronze writing. This suggests that marriage alliances did not belong to the idea of corporate solidarity which bronze inscriptions habitually addressed either.¹⁶

When it comes to the proto-political bonds between the king and those individuals he invested with royal ruling authority, kinship factors are entirely absent in the textual records. We have already mentioned in the preceding chapter that genealogical relations between Zhou king and appointee did not play a role in appointment or commitment inscriptions in general. Moreover, the same idiom of command and obligation was used, regardless of whether the appointee shared common descent with the king or not. This coincides with Shaughnessy's and Sena's

¹³ Sena, "Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China." We will discuss this point below on pp. 298-300 in greater detail.

¹⁴ Cf. Liu Qiyi 劉啓益, "Xizhou jinwen zhong suo jian de Zhouwang houfei" 西周金文中所見的周王后妃, *Kaogu yu Wenwu* (1980) 4: 85-90; Shaughnessy, "Toward a Social Geography of the Zhouyuan during the Western Zhou Dynasty: the Jing and Zhong Lineages of Fufeng County," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo and Don J. Wyatt (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 16-34; idem, "Western Zhou Hoards and Family Histories in the Zhouyuan," in *New Perspectives on China's Past: Chinese Archaeology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Xiaoneng Yang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 255-267; Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容, "Cong qingtongqi mingwen kan liang Zhou wangshi hunyin guanxi" 從青銅器銘文看兩周王室婚姻關係, in *Guwenzi yu gudai shi 1*, 253-292; and Khayutina, "Marital Alliances and Affinal Relatives (*Sheng* and *Hungou*) in the Society and Politics of Zhou China in the Light of Bronze Inscriptions."

¹⁵ Cf. Léon Vandermeersch, *Wangdao ou La voie royale : Recherches sur l'esprit des Institutions de la Chine archaïque*. Tome I : Structures culturelles et structures familiales (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1977), 295-325.

¹⁶ Chen Zhaorong, "Cong qingtongqi mingwen kan liang Zhou wangshi hunyin guanxi," 283-284.

findings concerning different lineages from different clans having held high posts in the Western Zhou ruling organization.¹⁷ It also suggests that even in cases where kinship and kingship structures did correlate, there nevertheless existed a very clear dividing line between their respective working mechanisms.

This observation now stands against claims raised most persistently by Li Feng, to understand the Western Zhou political organization, especially with respect to the structure of the regional states, as a “delegatory kin-ordered settlement state.”¹⁸ This claim ultimately goes back to accounts in the *Zuozhuan*, stating that after the conquest over the Shang, the Zhou rulers established regional states as kin-branches in the newly conquered eastern territories in order to consolidate Zhou supremacy.¹⁹ While archaeological finds made during the last decades have partially confirmed the picture presented in traditional sources,²⁰ it remains to determine in how far genealogy played a role in the conception and perpetuation of the proto-political relations between Zhou king and regional rulers. Herrlee G. Creel, who works with an analytic concept of feudalism to describe the structure of the greater Zhou ruling organization,²¹ raises an important objection at this point:

What role did kinship actually play in Western Zhou feudalism? It was certainly considerable, but it seems probable that it has been exaggerated; here as elsewhere the tendency has been too transfer the patterns of the well-known Spring and Autumn period back to the relatively unknown Western Zhou

¹⁷ Shaughnessy, “Toward a Social Geography of the Zhouyuan during the Western Zhou Dynasty: the Jing and Zhong Lineages of Fufeng County;” idem, “Western Zhou Hoards and Family Histories in the Zhouyuan;” and Sena, “Reproducing Society: Lineage and Kinship in Western Zhou China.”

¹⁸ Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 294-299.

¹⁹ Cf. Xu Zhuoyun, *Xizhou Shi*, 139-159

²⁰ Cf. Li, *Landscape and Power*, 66-76.

²¹ In terms of a working definition, Creel refers to feudalism as “a system of government in which a ruler personally delegates limited sovereignty over portions of his territory to vassals” (Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 320).

situation.²²

Earlier in the same paragraph Creel remarks that

[t]he surname of the royal house, Ji, flaunted so proudly as an emblem of relationship to the Zhou rulers in the Spring and Autumn period, occurs with surprising rarity in the Western Zhou sources. In the *Book of Changes* and the *Documents* it is wholly absent. And in the bronze inscriptions of my corpus, and in the *Poetry*, it is not only rare, but is used exclusively in connection with women, like any other surname. There is never any mention of “Ji” states as constituting a special, privileged group.²³

This observation again points to the likely conceptual division between kinship and kingship in a Western Zhou context, perhaps already anticipating the Springs and Autumns institution of inter-polity covenants.²⁴ Although Li, in his model of the Western Zhou ruling organization, emphasizes the delegation of royal authority along kinship lines,²⁵ he too describes this delegation ultimately in political terms when he claims that the “relationship formed in the court ritual establishing the regional rulers defined them as subjects and demanded their unconditional submission to the Zhou king.”²⁶ This reverberates with what we have stated in the preceding chapter, namely that relatives change into the role of political inferiors once they have assumed an

²² Ibid., 381.

²³ Ibid., 380. The corpus of bronze inscriptions consulted by Creel is Guo Moruos *Liang Zhou Jinwen Ci Daxi Kaoshi*. Even though a digital search in the AS database shows 221 instances of the graph 姬 for the entire Western Zhou period (including many instances from identical inscriptions cast on sets of vessels), Creel’s observation that the graph is more or less exclusively employed in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as a surname for women remains nevertheless valid. The overt majority of inscriptions featuring the graph 姬 consist of short statements dedicating a vessel to a Ji-surnamed female.

²⁴ We should not forget that the images of the Springs and Autumns period Creel has in mind here, come from the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Guoyu*, two works of a Warring States origin. For the institution of the covenant in the Springs and Autumns period see pp. 257-266 below.

²⁵ Li, *Landscape and Power*, 115-116; and idem, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 296.

²⁶ Li, “‘Feudalism’ and Western Zhou China: A Criticism,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63/1 (2003): 142.

official position in the institution of Zhou kingship. In fact, Li, who fiercely criticises the use of the term “feudalism” in a Western Zhou context, does not differ much from Creel when it comes to defining the basic mechanism behind the establishment of the regional states. Both assume a system in which the king personally delegates limited sovereignty to his agents, empowering them to exercise royal ruling authority within certain groups of people and / or territories. Those who have been empowered by the king owe him unconditional personal loyalty in turn. Yet exactly this mechanism proves to be entirely unrelated, and at times even contradictory to the logic of kinship as Creel, with reference to Marc Bloch, rightly remarks:

If we regard feudalism strictly as a method of attaining certain political objectives, regard for family ties was in a sense incompatible with it. Bloch observes that ‘the ties based on blood relationship [...] were by their very nature foreign to the human relations characteristic of feudalism.’ A ruler seeking the best man to whom to delegate authority over a portion of his realm ought, in order to secure the best results, to appoint the most qualified individual regardless of relationship. And if the appointee fails, he should be replaced, again without regard to kinship.²⁷

This brings us back one more time to the inscription from the early Western Zhou Jing Hou *gui* tureen, one of the few extant contemporary epigraphic sources that relate to the authority transfer between the king and a ruler of one of the so called regional states, in this case the north-eastern polity of Jing 井 or Xing 邢 in transmitted sources. Let us recall: The inscription depicts the Zhou king to invest the un-named vessel donor, presumably a son of Zhou Gong Dan, with the duties of

²⁷ Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 377. Interestingly, an almost verbatim definition can be found already in the *Zuozhuan*, where it says: “When it comes to appointing [officials], the only thing that matters is whether or not [the appointees] will excel in performing their duties. [This system] makes no difference between kin and non-kin” (夫舉無他，唯善所在，親疏一也。[*Zuo*, Zhao 28:1495]).

Marquis of Jing.²⁸ The way the vessel donor pledges his loyalty to the king deserves our attention once more:

[...][My forebear, the Patriarch of Zhou (?)] was able to arduously serve above and below, so Di had no [occasion] to end Zhou's mandate. In pursuance of my filial duty, I will continue [my forebear's task] and dare not be neglecting. I [pledge to] exert myself in our blessings and in our burdens, and to trustingly serve the Son of Heaven. [...]

Although king and vessel donor might well have been relatives of sorts, the text introduces the king on the one hand and the vessel donor together with his forebear on the other, as two separate social entities who relate to each other through their common commitment to a third factor, the theo-political command of Heaven / Di. This is the same tripartite structure we have observed in the *Shi Ke xu*, *Lu Bo Dong gui lid*, *Guai Bo gui*, *He zun*, *Da Yu ding* and *Shi xun gui* inscriptions above. Here as well, the Great Charge defines both the king and the appointee as members of the same community of purpose. It is the shared obligation the Command places on its bearers that makes it necessary for them to enter into a vertical, proto-political dependency. In other words, this kind of relation was by definition not contingent upon genealogy but upon the appointee's personal commitment and willing political subordination. If genealogical ties were sufficient to guarantee the perpetuation of the Zhou ruling organisation, this ideology wouldn't have been needed, especially not since it is modelled on the mechanism of the (proto-) political bond.

²⁸ Other interpreters say that the inscription pertains to the relocation of the polity of Xing from its proximity to the royal domain to its later location a hundred kilometres north of the last Shang capital. Cf. *Source Book*, 28-29.

3.2.2 *The individual and its political capacities*

What becomes important in this context is the individual, defined through the ability to make political decisions as well as to assume commitments. Again, the question is whether or not we can find the idea of such personal qualities symbolised in our sources. In fact we do. The political individual, or better, its defining capacities, decision making ability and accountability, I argue in the following, are associated with the heart (*xin* 心) in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as well as in the *Documents of Zhou*. It is with reference to the heart that a person is addressed, or presents himself in a political capacity in our sources. A generic example of such a usage can be found in the text from the four identical late Western Zhou Qiu *zhong* 逯鐘 (NA 772-774 + NB 779) inscriptions, dated to the reign of King Xuan 宣 (r. 827/25-782 BCE). This text belongs to a dozen exceptional Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that start with a statement or an announcement by the vessel donor.²⁹ In this case the entire texts consist of a single long statement attributed to a man named Qiu, a member of the prestigious Shan 單 lineage whom we also know from the inscriptions on the recently excavated Qiu *pan* and Qiu *ding* (NA 745-756) assemblies :

逯曰：「丕顯朕皇考克彜明厥心，帥用厥先祖考政德享辟先王。逯禦厥辟，不敢惰，虔夙夕敬厥死事。[...]」

Qiu spoke: “Greatly illustrious, my august deceased father was able to make his heart manifest and bright, to emulate his forebears’ upright *de* and to serve the

²⁹ Chen Yingjie has identified and grouped these inscriptions under the category “the vessel donor spoke:” (*qizhu yue* 器主曰) inscriptions. See Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen Zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 818-835.

former kings as his sovereigns. [Now] I, Qiu, [succeed] to protect my ruler, not daring to be neglecting. Reverently from dawn till dusk I devote myself to my lifelong responsibilities. [...]"

In his announcement to resume his forebears political commitment,³⁰ Qiu combines his ancestry with a legacy of service to the Zhou kings he himself is determined to retrieve and to continue. The way he depicts his forebear's legacy of service shows clearly that genealogy and politics were thought to belong to two different contexts. Qiu's father did not simply follow his forebears in serving the Zhou kings by means of genealogic succession. He needed to make manifest his heart or intent, i.e. he had to actively assume the commitment of serving the Zhou king's by emulating his forebear's upright *de*. The phrases "to make manifest one's heart," "to be attentive to one's *de*" (*shen de* 慎德), and "to emulate" (*shuaixing* 帥刑) or "to hold fast to (*bing* 秉) one's forebear's *de*," appear in several mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions where they are always directly related to or even part of the vessel donor's pledge of serving the Zhou king and protecting the Heavenly Mandate.³¹ This suggests that the notions of *xin* and *de* do not belong to the realm of kinship and genealogy but to the vessel donors' political life and legacy. However, with *de* we touch upon one of the least understood and therefore most debated key terms in early Chinese texts.³² As the term plays a crucial role for our following argumentation a

³⁰ Von Falkenhausen refers to this and similar passages that purport to record the vessel donor's direct speech as announcements of merit in the subjective mode (von Falkenhausen, "The Royal Audience and its Reflections in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions," 240). I venture to suggest that such announcements were not primarily intended to boast of one's forebears' merits but to establish one's accountability. I believe they formed part of a rhetoric of crisis preceding the vessel donor's pledge to continue his forebears' legacy and to trustingly serve the king.

³¹ See the discussion below on pp. 293-314.

³² A complete overview of the conceptual history of *de* from late Shang times to the late Han period as well as a discussion of various conflicting scholarly opinions on this topic has been attempted in Scott A. Barnwell, "The Evolution of the Concept of De 德 in Early China," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 235 (2013).

few preliminary explanations seem to be appropriate at this point.

We have already come across the term *de* in the Da Yu *ding* inscription where we defined it, with reference to Munro, as a “consistent attitude towards the Heaven-decreed norms,” but also as a sort of *sensus communis*, binding the king and his allies to a common course of action. Here now we find *de* in a context that further defines it as an inner, heart-related quality which political actors had to acquire through self-commitment and model emulation.³³ This should not actually surprise as the heart element forms part of the graph itself, not just in its modern transcription but also in Western Zhou bronze script where *de* is written 德 (JC 2837), 德 (JC 4341) or 德 (JC 2812). But what role exactly does the heart play in the meaning of *de*? This question is not easy to answer as the semantic range as well as the etymology of the term *de* is still a highly debated topic. Although most scholars agree that both the graph and the word *de* are Western Zhou creations, many still believe the OBI graphs 德 (Heji 7254), 德 (Heji 20547) and 德 (Heji 20543), directly transcribed as 德, to constitute antecedents or variants of Western Zhou 德. Moreover the form 德 still appears in two early and on mid- Western Zhou bronze inscription where it is commonly read as *de* {德},³⁴ Old-Chinese *tʰək. But are the words behind Shang 德 and Western Zhou 德 / 德 really cognate or indeed identical? Let us take a short detour into the epigraphy of 德.

The Shang and early Zhou graph 德 consists of the elements 辵, indicating movement or action,³⁵ and 直, interpreted as *zhi* {直}, Old-Chinese *N-t<r>ək,

³³ The aspect of model emulation in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions has been analysed in William E. Savage, “Archetypes, Model Emulation, and the Confucian Gentleman,” *Early China* 17 (1992): 1-25.

³⁴ Following the conventions of modern Chinese epigraphy, graphs put in curly brackets { } indicate the word or the morpheme we associate with the usage of the respective graph.

³⁵ Cf. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, 185.

meaning “straight,” “right,” “upright,” but also “correctly viewing” (*zheng jian* 正見) according to the *Shuowen*.³⁶ Jao Tsung-yi 饒宗頤, who thus transcribes 徯 as 徯 in a modern rendering, identifies *zhi* {直} as the defining semantic component in both Shang 徯 and Western Zhou 德. Hence he proposes to read both graphs as *de* {德}, which he translates as “virtue.”³⁷ Further proponents of this reading are Luo Zenyu 羅振玉 and David S. Nivison.³⁸ Rightful criticism, especially of Nivison’s conclusions, has been voiced by Vassili Kryukov who accuses the proponents of Shang *de* {德} to rely on isolated examples and of further disregarding major differences in syntax, word class and context when claiming parallels between the usage of 徯 in the OBI and those of 德 in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the *Documents*.³⁹ Incommensurateness in these aspects is also one of the main reasons why most scholars see no direct connection between Shang 徯 and Western Zhou 德, especially not in regard to the words they stand for. Based on the verbal usage of the words written by 徯 and their context in serial OBI passages, Guo Moruo, Li Xiaoding 李孝定, Qu Wanli 屈萬里 and Yu Xingwu 于省吾 interpretatively transcribe the graph as 徯 to be read *xun* {巡}, Old-Chinese *[sə.l]u[n], “to patrol,” “to inspect.”⁴⁰ Wang Xiang 王襄 has proposed a related transcription, 省, to be read *xing* {省}, Old-Chinese *[s]eŋʔ, meaning “to examine,”

³⁶ Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 12.634.

³⁷ Jao Tsung-yi, “The Character *te* in Bronze Inscriptions,” in *The Proceedings of a Symposium on Scientific Methods of Research in the Study of Ancient Chinese Bronzes and Southeast Asian Metal and other Archaeological Artifacts*, ed. Noel Barnard (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1976), 145-154.

³⁸ Yu Xingwu, ed., *Jiaguwenzi gulin*, 3. 2250-2251; David S. Nivison, “Royal ‘virtue’ in Shang oracle inscriptions,” *Early China* 4 (1978-79): 54; Nivison, “‘Virtue’ in Bone and Bronze,” in idem, *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bryan W. Van Norden (Peru, IL.: Open Court, 1996), 17-30.

³⁹ Kryukov, “Symbols of Power and Communication,” 322-323.

⁴⁰ Yu Xingwu ed., *Jiaguwenzi gulin*, 3. 2251-2256.

“to observe.”⁴¹ In the OBI the term appears mostly in conjunction with the words *fa* 伐, “to attack,” or *zheng* 征, “to campaign,” within divination questions such as “should the King inspect and attack / campaign against a certain *fang* region / tribe” (*wang x fa / zheng mou fang* 王徯伐/征某方).⁴² Apart from this military usage, Munro and Kryukov further identify a sacrificial context in which 徯 appears in the sense of “to consult a divine being and making offerings to one” (*x zi yu mou zu* 徯出于某祖).⁴³ It is in the notion of “to consult” (lit. “to look up at”) a high-ranking ancestor, where Munro detects a possible link between the word written by Shang 徯 and Western Zhou *de* {德}. The latter, according to Munro, retains the notion of “viewpoint” from the former. However this link has to be relativized by the fact that Shang 徯 and Western Zhou 德 are used syntactically and contextually different. While Shang 徯 is always used verbally in OBI in contexts of warfare and sacrifice, Western Zhou 德 functions exclusively as a noun, denoting a social or political quality in humans that had to be held fast to (*bing* 秉), emulated (*shuaixing* 帥刑), made manifest (*ming* 明 / *xian* 顯), or held up (*yong* 翬 [擁]), and that one needed to revere (*jing* 敬 / *gong* 恭) or to be attentive to (*shen* 慎). Thus in the end, both Munro and Kryukov assume the word *de* {德} to be clearly a Western Zhou concept without a direct antecedent in extant Shang sources.

In terms of graphical analysis, Munro identifies the heart (*xin* 心) component as the decisive semantic element in 德 which, in his view, relates to the basic lexical meaning of “attitude” in the word *de*.⁴⁴ Similarly Guo Moruo, Li Xiaoding and Qiu

⁴¹ Ibid., 2251.

⁴² See H00558.4, H00559.6, H06399.1, H06400.2, H06535, H06545.1, H06733, H20540.1.

⁴³ Munro, *The Concept of Man*, 188-189; Kryukov, “Symbols of Power and Communication,” 323-324.

⁴⁴ “This element in graphs often denotes mental activity, and in this case it most likely refers to ‘attitude’ towards the antecedent Heavenly standard.” (Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, 185-186).

Xigui argue that the graph 德 derives its meaning neither from the element 彳, as the *Shuowen* suggests, nor from 直, but from the heart element while it takes its sound from the component 直 值, Old-Chinese *m-t<r>ək-s.⁴⁵ Hence a shortened form (*shengti* 省體) of the graph 德 would read 德 (德),⁴⁶ exchanging the phonetic *m-t<r>ək-s 值 for the near homophone *N-t<r>ək 直, and not 徝.⁴⁷ This would be consistent with the observation that none of the Shang usages of 徝 resemble any of the uses of 德 in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as well as in the *Odes* and *Documents*. It would not explain, however, why the three known instances of 徝 in early to mid- Western Zhou bronze inscriptions do resemble the usage of *de* in mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, unless one understands 徝 in these cases as a loan graph for writing the word *de* {德} which perhaps had no matching graph until the early mid- Western Zhou period.⁴⁸ That we are definitely dealing with instances of Western Zhou *de* {德} in these three examples becomes clear from the nominal usage of 徝 as well as from its context:

曆(曆)肇(肇)對元徝(德)[...] (JC 2614)

Li succeeds to match [his forefathers'] primordial *de*. [...]

孫孫子子其永亡冬(終), 冬(終)用窳(造?)徝(德)[...]。 (JC 6015)

May his (Mai's) descendants forever without end, eternally use it [the vessel] to respond (?) to [the Marquis's and the King's] *de* [...].

辛乍(作)寶, 其亡(無)彊(疆), 卒(厥)家豨(攤=攤)徝(德) [...]。 (JC 2660)

Xin makes the treasure, may it be [valued] forever, may Xin's family hold up their *de* [...].

⁴⁵ Yu Xingwu ed., *Jiaguwenzi gulin*, 3. 2251-2252; Qiu Xigui, *Wenzixue gaiyao* 文字學概要 (Taipei: Wan juan lou, 1995), 158.

⁴⁶ See for instance JC 10076.

⁴⁷ Qiu Xigui, *Wenzixue gaiyao*, 158.

⁴⁸ This is what Guo Moruo suggests for the case of 徝 in the early Western Zhou Li *ding* 曆鼎 inscription (JC 2614). See Yu Xingwu ed., *Jiaguwenzi gulin*, 3. 2251.

In the final analysis it is the context wherein *de* appears, and the concepts related to it in this context, that allows us to draw any definite conclusions about the terms meaning and usage. As Kryukov has pointed out with regard to the numerous attempts to prove the existence of the notion of *de* or proto-*de* in Shang OBI:

The insufficiency of all these interpretations is inevitable since they are confined to graphical and lexical analysis of a word taken out of context. However, *de* exists not in a void but in an entire linguo-cultural space. *De* is not an isolated term but a cultural symbol inseparable from other similar symbols. It emerged in the beginning of Zhou not as an estranged concept but in close connexion with a whole system of categories [...]. Hence the junction of proto-*de* with the signfic ‘heart’ from which the Zhou character *de* was born is not just a graphic variation, but an important change which signals a major new ritual context of *de*, which is why the Zhou word is essentially different from its Shang prototype.⁴⁹

In fact, as we will come to see below, *de* does not only appear in connection with other categories, it also forms part of a larger category itself, namely that of the heart. Not only do the expressions “to grasp / hold fast to *de*” (*bing de* 秉德) and “to be attentive to one’s *de*” (*shen de* 慎德) constitute a sort of hendiadys with the phrase “to make one’s heart manifest” (*ming xin* 明心), the heart-related action of *shen* as well as the heart component in the graph 德 itself suggest that *de* should be associated with the heart as a sort of meta-category.

This brings us back to the heart as a concept that, like *de*, appeared first in Western Zhou times in the context of the politicisation of relations between king and

⁴⁹ Kryukov, “Symbols of Power and Communication,” 325.

elites in the rhetoric of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.⁵⁰ However, the relative scarcity of its occurrence the farther we go back in our sources, especially with regard to early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, makes it difficult if not impossible to analyse the earliest instances of *xin* in any meaningful way without first establishing a working definition of the term as well as a generic or serial context for its use. Unfortunately, due to the source situation, this can only be done by looking into later stages of the terms history. Hence I propose to take a somewhat unusual step by approaching the topic in terms of a reverse conceptual history or rather in terms of a deconstruction. Starting from explicit discussions of the heart and its capacities in Warring States political philosophy as a sort of early impact historical perspective,⁵¹ I endeavour to trace the concept back to the context of Springs and Autumns covenants (*meng* 盟) and from there further to the delegation of royal authority in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in texts from the *Documents of Zhou*. In doing so, I am fully aware of the dangers inherent in this method, namely

⁵⁰ Some scholars claim that the graph *xin* 心 can already be found in Shang OBI. Others argue that the few instances identified with 心, such as 𠄎 (Heji 6) or 𠄏 (Heji 16407) resemble rather the OBI graph for 貝, 𠄐. Cf. Yu Xingwu ed., *Jiaguwenzi gulin*, 3. 1891-1892. Yu Xingwu's "Shi 'xin'" 釋「心」, in idem, *Jiagu wenzi shilin*, 361-367, is now by many regarded as the authoritative argumentation attesting to the existence of the graph in late Shang sources. Yet, similar to the alleged cases of Shang-*de*, there exists no serial context for the term *xin* in Shang OBI that resembles its generic use in later sources. Four instances of a graph written 𠄑 (JC 8554) are known from late Shang bronze inscriptions that the *Jicheng* editors transcribe as 心. However all four instances appear exclusively in personal names and / or collective emblems. Cf. Wang Lan 王蘭, *Shang Zhou jinwen xingtí jiégòu yánjiú* 商周金文形體結構研究 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2013), 224. It is furthermore telling that unlike other graphs known from Shang bronze inscriptions the graph 𠄑 appears in none of the extant Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. In the latter we find the graph for *xin* {心} from the beginning written as 𠄒 (JC 10175), 𠄓 (JC 2812) or 𠄔 (JC 10176). See *ibid.*, 64. A notable exception are the graphs 𠄕 and 𠄖, used to write the word *xin* in the early Western Zhou *Ke lei* 克罍 (NA 1368) and *Ke he* 克盃 (NA 1367) inscriptions. See below, pp. 269-273, for a discussion of those two inscriptions.

⁵¹ This part is mainly intended to dissociate the idea of the heart from later Neo-Confucian notions in the minds of the readers and to approach the term through the earliest extant reflections to be found on it in literary sources. The results from this part cannot and will not be directly related to the notion of the heart Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns epigraphic sources. However many insightful aspects of the heart as it is defined in Warring States philosophy that can be meaningfully juxtaposed to its usage in Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns texts.

the peril of arriving at a syncretic description. However, my approach does not aim at anachronistically projecting later properties of *xin* back into the Western Zhou period but, quite to the contrary, to dismantle the Warring States concept of *xin* by tracing it through its antecedent uses and contexts. Thus once we arrive at the term's earliest instances we will still only be dealing with what we have, yet we will be able to better assess and interpret our findings by discussing them in the context of the term's conceptual history.

3.3 Exposing ones heart: the symbolization of personal intent and its context in Early Chinese texts

3.3.1 The heart as the ruler within the individual

When speaking about the heart in early China we tend to think first of Confucian or Ruist theories of human nature. Indeed, as a topic in early Chinese political philosophy the heart appears first in the context of Warring States Masters literature.⁵² In the *Mengzi* 孟子 and in the *Xunzi* 荀子 in particular, it is associated with the agency that controls human behaviour.⁵³ In this context we find *xin* 心 often translated as “heart-mind,” or “mind,” indicating the fact that not only emotions, but mental activities as well were thought to be located in the heart. Munro,

⁵² The term “Masters literature” has been coined by Wiebke Denecke in her book *The Dynamics of Masters Literature: Early Chinese Thought from Confucius to Han Feize* (Cambridge MA., and London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁵³ Cf. I. A. Richards, *Mencius on the Mind* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co., 1932), 65-85; A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), 130-132, 251-255; Kwong-loi Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 84-135; and Denecke, *The Dynamics of Masters Literature*, 153-206.

in his seminal study on the concept of man in Early China, outlines the functions ascribed to the heart, or mind in his terminology, as follows:

The term “mind” (*xin* 心) was used in early China to denote many things, including “intentions,” “feelings,” the location of the desires, cognitive activity, and evaluative activity. [...] Once the mind decides that something is right or proper, it commands action in accordance with its judgement. So the mind both evaluates the requirements of a situation and commands proper action; these are its two primary functions.⁵⁴

The heart became important as outer factors such as ritual hierarchies and lineage law, binding the individual into rigidly prescribed roles, began to loosen, allowing for individuals a certain measure of social mobility and personal freedom. Munro speaks in this respect about the internalization of sovereignty that he observes in Warring States Masters literature.⁵⁵ In Ruist theories, he states, “every man was, in a sense, a ruler, if only to himself.”⁵⁶ In the *Mengzi*, chapter 29 “Jin xin shang” 盡心上, this sort of inner or personal sovereignty is associated with the individual’s capacity to become an accountable social being:

君子所性，仁、義、禮、智，根於心。

The qualities that define the nature of the *junzi*, fellow-kindness, right-mindedness (or dutifulness), etiquette and wisdom, are rooted in the heart.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, 50-51. See also Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 184-185, 272-273; and Ulrich Unger, *Grundbegriffe der altchinesischen Philosophie: Ein Wörterbuch für die Klassische Periode* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), 94-95 for similar definitions.

⁵⁵ Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, 58. Graham remarks in this respect that “late in the 4th century B.C. we find in *Mencius* and *Zhuangzi* a shift of attention inwards, to the heart, for ancient China the organ of thought and of approval, and an explicit division of the inner and the outer man (Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 95).

⁵⁶ Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, 62.

⁵⁷ *Mengzi zhengyi* 孟子正義, com. Jiao Xun 焦循, ed. Chen Wenzhuo 沈文倬 (Beijing: Zhonghua

The idea of the *junzi* 君子, often translated as “gentleman,” describes the ideal of a person in its public or political capacity.⁵⁸ The *junzi* is defined here by the adherence to qualities and conventions that enable the individual not only to act on behalf of others, but to become a counterpart, an accountable social being, for his peers in a socio-political context. Those qualities, according to the *Mengzi*, are not, or cannot be enforced upon the individual, as their realization or implementation is contingent on the regulating and evaluating function of the heart. This same function is stressed also in the *Xunzi*, where we find the heart associated with the task of controlling human desires in order to facilitate ordered social coexistence. Compare for instance the following passage from *Xunzi* chapter 22, “Zheng ming” 正名:

故欲過之而動不及，心止之也。心之所可中理，則欲雖多，奚傷於治？欲不及而動過之，心使之也。心之所可失理，則欲雖寡，奚止於亂？故治亂在於心之所可，亡於情之所欲。⁵⁹

Therefore when performance stops short of desire, it is because the heart checks it; but if the heart’s judgment as admissible coincides with pattern, however many the desires what harm is it to order? When performance goes beyond desire, it is because the heart makes it do so; but if the heart’s judgment as admissible misses pattern, however few the desires what can save us from disorder? Therefore order and disorder depend on what the heart judges admissible, not what the authentic in us desires.⁶⁰

Ruist ideas to educate and cultivate individuals with the goal to cause them to adhere to a certain way of socio-political behaviour ultimately proceeded from these

shuju, 1987), 29.21.906.

⁵⁸ Cf. Munro, *The Concept of Man*, 113-116.

⁵⁹ Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 428.

⁶⁰ Burton Watson, trans., *Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 151.

fundamental assumptions concerning the capacities of the heart.

3.3.2 *The heart as the seat for personal loyalty in Springs and Autumns covenant texts*

When it comes to the historical origins and institutional antecedents behind this Warring States anthropology of the heart, Munro's observation points us to the "heart" of the matter, the self-determined individual as a political factor. This factor became important not only in Warring States political philosophy, but already in the institution of the inter-state and inter-lineage covenants in Springs and Autumns times and, as we strive to prove here, even earlier in the proto-political bonds between king and elites in a Western Zhou context. But let us start with what has already been well established and analysed in Early China studies, the political institution of the covenant or blood covenant (*meng* 盟) in Springs and Autumns China. Its context, its implementation and its objectives have been aptly summarized by Mark Edward Lewis:

In the conflicts of the Spring and Autumn period, the primary means devised to create new ties among men no longer tightly bound by the old Zhou order was the blood covenant (*meng* 盟). The practice of sealing these covenants through the collective drinking of the blood of a sacrificial victim became fundamental to the political and social order in the early Eastern Zhou period, and it developed increasing importance and new functions through the seventh and sixth centuries. In the beginning it was employed to forge large coalitions of states under the dominance of a hegemon, and these coalitions replaced the Zhou monarchy as the primary link between increasingly independent states. Over the course of the centuries, as the power of ministerial lineages grew and

the feudal states were riven by internal conflicts, the covenants also came to play the key role in forming alliances between several lineages, between lineages and alien states, and between the various contestants for supremacy in the state and the capital populace.⁶¹

It is in this context that, half way between Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and Warring States Masters literature, the heart becomes first attestable in early China as part of a covenant formula in texts inscribed on stone tablets that have been excavated from pits in two locations on the territory of the ancient state of Jin 晉, in modern day Houma 侯馬, Shanxi, and Wenxian 濇縣, Henan, respectively.⁶² Large numbers of tablets, each inscribed with the name of a different covenantor, but otherwise featuring more or less the same oath formulae, bear witness to groups of individuals pledging their political loyalty to one ruler or covenant lord (*zhu* 主). The covenant lords have been identified with the head of the Zhao 趙 lineage in the case of the Houma corpus and with that of the Han 韓 lineage, one of the ministerial families in the state of Jin, in the case of the Wenxian corpus.⁶³

Archaeologists date both the Houma and Wenxian finds to the first decade after 500 BCE,⁶⁴ a time when the state of Jin underwent some major disruptions as ruling authority passed from the ducal lineage and its branches to more distant and even unrelated lineages.⁶⁵ This dissolution of genealogically founded authority might

⁶¹ Cf. Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, 43-44.

⁶² For the Houma finds see Shanxi sheng wenwu gongzuo weiyuanhui 山西省文物工作委員會, *Houma mengshu* 侯馬盟書 (Shanghai: Wenwu chubanshe, 1978). For the Wenxian finds see Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 河南省文物研究所, “Henan Wenxian Dongzhou mengshi yizhi yihaokan fajue jianbao” 河南濇縣東周盟誓遺址一號坎發覺簡報, *Wenwu* (1983) 3: 77-89. For English treatment of both finds see Susan R. Weld, “Covenant in Jin’s Walled Cities: The Discoveries at Houma and Wenxian” (Ph.D. diss.: Harvard University, 1990); and idem, “The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian,” in Shaughnessy ed., *New Sources of Early Chinese History*, 125-160.

⁶³ Weld, “The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian,” 125-17.

⁶⁴ Shanxisheng wenwu gongzuo weiyuanhui, *Houma mengshu*, 65-68.

⁶⁵ Cf. Cho-yun Hsu (Xu Zhuoyun 許倬雲), *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722-222 B.C.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 82-83; idem, “The Spring and

have caused the need for conflicting parties within the Jin ruling elite to resort to the praxis of large scale covenants in order to ensure loyalty among their respective subordinates.⁶⁶ Although the covenants were centred on powerful lineage leaders, the covenantors, as Zhu Fenghan and as Crispin Williams have shown, came from various different lineage backgrounds.⁶⁷ Indeed, according to Lewis, the institution of the covenant explicitly addressed this particular constellation: “The sealing of covenants extended the sanctions of religion to those interpersonal ties which were not secured through sacrificial duties to common ancestors.”⁶⁸ Hence the covenantors’ relation to the covenant lord was essentially political in nature. “The aim of the majority of covenants from Houma and Wenxian,” Williams states,

is the consolidation of the covenanting group as loyal followers, clearly demarcated from enemy groups. While they are centred on a lineage, the key criterion for membership of the group is not lineage affiliation, but loyalty. They are a tool for political organization and control and, though lineage centred, participation is not restricted to members of a single lineage. [...] Furthermore, the covenants demonstrate that shared lineage affiliation did not ensure loyalty, as is evident from the naming of enemies with the same lineage name as the covenant lord. Thus it appears that, at this time, for the purpose of political organization, lineage affiliation was not a requirement for membership of a particular ruling elite.⁶⁹

This scenario fits well with the conditions that Lewis has pointed out as the reasons

Autumn Period,” in *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 570-575; and esp. Mark Edward Lewis, “Warring States Political History,” in *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 599-600.

⁶⁶ See Crispin Williams, “A Methodological Procedure for the Analysis of the Wenxian Covenant Texts,” *Asiatische Studien* 59.1 (2005): 62-63 and idem, “Ten Thousand Names: Rank and Lineage Affiliation in the Wenxian Covenant Texts,” *Asiatische Studien* 63.4 (2009): 979-980 for the average number of individuals participating in such covenants.

⁶⁷ Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 507-510; and Williams, “Ten Thousand Names: Rank and Lineage Affiliation in the Wenxian Covenant Texts,” 963, 975-981.

⁶⁸ Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, 47.

⁶⁹ Williams, “Ten Thousand Names: Rank and Lineage Affiliation in the Wenxian Covenant Texts,” 962, 983, emphasis in original.

for the development of the blood covenant as the most important political institution in Springs and Autumns China. However, it might also tell us something about the background for certain formulations in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions which, as we will see below, are in many respects quite similar to those found in the Houma and Wenxian loyalty texts.

Let us first look at the pattern from the Houma loyalty texts. The example below has been published as text 1.9 in *Houma mengshu* 後馬盟書.⁷⁰ The text is reproduced here in the transcription and English translation suggested by Susan R. Weld:⁷¹

胡敢不半其腹心以事其室(主)；而敢不盡從嘉之盟，定宮、平陸之命；
If (I), Hu, dare to fail to strip bare my heart and vitals in serving my lord,⁷² or
dare to fail to adhere thoroughly to your covenant and the mandate granted in
Dinggong and Pingsi;

而敢或□改助及哀卑不守二宮者；
or dare in any respect, to initiate breaking of the faith or dispersion [of the
alliance], causing an interruption in the guardianship of the two temples;

而敢又(有)志復趙尼及其子孫于晉邦之地者及群虜盟者
or dare to harbour the intention of restoring Zhao Ni and his descendants to the
territory of the state of Jin or join in a faction to summon others to covenant
[with them];

虞君其明極視之麻臺非是。
may our former rulers, far-seeing, instantly detect me [and] may ruin befall my
lineage.

⁷⁰ Shanxisheng wenwu gongzuo weiyuanhui, *Houma mengshu*, 164.

⁷¹ Weld, “The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian,” 140-142.

⁷² Strip bare, 剖明, see “Houma mengshu zhushi si zhong,” 20; for the interpretation of 室 as 主 instead of 宗 see Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋, “Guanyu Houma mengshu de zhuyao wenti” 關於侯馬盟書的主要問題, *Zhongyuan Wenwu* 中原文物 (1981) 2: 28-29.

This is one example from a total number of 59 verbatim texts in which only the name of the covenantors change.⁷³ “This observation,” Weld remarks, “focuses on one of the most important revelations of the find: that the covenants emphasize the individual, as opposed to the collective.”⁷⁴ The individual is further defined here by his political intent or will (*zhi* 志), associated with the person’s heart and vitals (*fu xin* 腹心). Confronted with political alternatives and the strong possibility of defection, the covenantor is required to prove his loyalty by making this innermost intention visible. The covenantor’s household, by contrast, belongs to a different context. Only if the covenantor fails in his political obligations, the consequences will reach into the level of his lineage.⁷⁵

The covenant texts excavated in Wenxian follow a similar pattern. Below we look at text 1.1.3780 as an example.⁷⁶ Here again, the text given reproduces the transcription and translation of Susan Weld:⁷⁷

辛酉，自今以往，酋敢不怨怨焉中心事其主；而敢與賊為徒者；丕顯晉公大冢，遑極隗女(汝)麻臺非是。

Xin-you: From this day forward, if (you), X, dare to fail to serve your lord from your heart, unfeignedly loyal; or dare to become a follower of the renegades; may the greatly manifest Patriarchs of Jin in their grand tombs, far-seeing, instantly detect you; and may ruin befall your lineage.

⁷³ The entire corpus, according to Zhang Han 張頌, addresses the head of the powerful Zhao 趙 lineage, Zhao Yang 趙鞅, as covenant master.

⁷⁴ Weld, “The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian,” 138.

⁷⁵ Cf. Williams, “Early References to Collective Punishment in an Excavated Chinese Text: Analysis and Discussion of an Imprecation from the Wenxian Covenants,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 74. 3 (2011): 437-467.

⁷⁶ See Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo, “Henan Wenxian Dongzhou mengshi yizhi yihaokan fajue jianbao,” 79.

⁷⁷ Weld, “The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian,” 152-153.

In this example as well, it is the individual who, in the face of political alternatives, is required to loyally, with all his heart, serve his covenant lord. “In the world of the covenant texts, a world held together largely by personal relationships between prince and subject, between one lord and another,” says Weld, “the heart seems to have been viewed as the human capacity for forming personal bonds.” Indeed, a passage from a speech found in the *Zuozhuan* confirms that suggestion:

盟，所以周信也，故心以制之，玉帛以奉之，言以結之，明神以要之。
The [concept of the] blood covenant has been conceived of in order to create pervasive trust. Hence it is formed and regulated within the heart; it is presented together with [ritual gifts of] jade and brocade; words [i.e. authoritative speech] are used to seal it and its observance is entrusted to the bright ancestral spirits.⁷⁸

In fact it is in the context of covenant practices in general that the heart appears as a political factor in many ancient cultures. In his survey of ancient Near Eastern covenant terminology, Moshe Weinfeld extracted the following archetype of a formula common to covenant formulations in Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine, Anatolia, Greece and Rome:

“to serve or to help with all the might and power with all the heart and soul.”⁷⁹

This characteristic emphasis on the “inner person” belongs, according to Assmann, to the sphere of political loyalty which finds its articulation in the language of vassal treaties across the ancient Near East.⁸⁰ Clearly this observation applies to early China

⁷⁸ *Zuo*, Ai 12.1671.

⁷⁹ Weinfeld, “Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and its Influence on the West,” 198.

⁸⁰ Assmann, “Zur Geschichte des Herzens im Alten Ägypten,” in *Die Erfindung des inneren Menschen: Studien zur religiösen Anthropologie*, eds. Jan Assmann and Theo Sundermeier (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1993), 102-103; and idem, *Herrschaft und Heil*,

to a certain extent as well. In the above examples the heart is unequivocally identified with the agency in the autonomous individual that has the ability to enter and to keep political commitments. Hence there seems to exist a direct link between the role of the heart in Springs and Autumns covenant formulae and the functions ascribed to it in Warring States political philosophy.

It is furthermore telling that not only the heart but *de* as well plays a role in Springs and Autumns covenant texts, as the following passages from the Wenxian corpus show. The first example has been filed as text WT1K17-129 by the excavators. Both the direct and the interpretative transcription follow Crispin Williams' suggestions. My English translation as well is based on Williams' analysis of the text:⁸¹

自今己(以)隍(往)，弭(強)梁事丕(其)主(主)敢不□焉聞(判)丕(其)復(腹)心，各(恪)質(慎)丕(其)直(德)台(以)稜(徼)主(主)徧(福)者，□公大塚愆(諦)極(極)覬(視)之，麻(靡)臺(夷)非(彼)是(氏)。

From this day on, I, Qiang Liang, shall serve my lord. Should I dare not to [...], stripping bare my heart and vitals, reverently adhering to my *de* in seeking blessings for my lord, Patriarch [...], in his grand tomb, shall instantly detect me [and] may ruin befall my lineage.

In contrast to the two passages cited above, this text does not address political loyalty against the possibility of defection but against the possible failure to serve one's ruler. Service is defined here chiefly by the obligation to devote oneself to the wellbeing of one's lord. It is in this context that *de*, written here with the near homophonous loan

61-62.

⁸¹ See Wei Kebin 魏克彬 (Crispin Williams), "Shuo Wenxian mengshu de 'ke shen qi de'" 說溫縣盟書的“恪慎其德,” in *Xin chu jian bo yanjiu* 新出簡帛研究, ed. Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allan), and Xing Wen 邢文 (Beijing: Wenwu, 2004), 208–217.

graph *zhi* (*N-t<r>ək) 直,⁸² appears as a personal quality the covenantor has to adhere to by seeking blessings for his lord. There are two aspects we can clearly associate with *de* in this context: the notion of an obligation and the idea to willingly sacrifice part of one's own resources in order to act for someone else's good or, more generally, to act on behalf of a superimposed good not directly related to one's own purposes.⁸³ This particular notion of *de* becomes even clearer in the next example, the passage with the number WT5K14-2. The direct and the interpretative transcription follow Zhao Shiwang's 趙世網 and Crispin Williams' suggestions:⁸⁴

□□巳(以)崑(往)，鄭事元(其)室(主)所敢不□焉中心，各(恪)愆(慎)元(其)惠(德)饗(供)元(其)室(主)之禱者，□公大塚壙(諦)亟(極)覘(視)之，麻(靡)臺(夷)非(彼)是(氏)。

[From this day] on, I, X, shall serve my lord. Should I dare not to [...] with all my heart, reverently adhering to my *de* in providing sacrificial goods for my lord, Patriarch [...], in his grand tomb, shall instantly detect me [and] may ruin befall my lineage.

Here we find *de* written with the graph 惠, consistent with what we have stated above, namely that the shortened form of [德] should read 惠 and not 徯. In this

⁸² It seems safe to accept 直 as a loan graph writing the word *de* 德 in this case as all other examples from this series have 惠 instead of 直. See Wei Kebin 魏克彬 (Crispin Williams), "Wenxian_mengshu WT5K14 mengshu bushi: shuo 'gong' zi" 溫縣盟書 WT5K14 盟書補釋：說‘龔’字, in *Chutu wenxian yu chuanshi dianji de quanshi – jinian Tan Pusen xiansheng shishi liang zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 出土文獻與傳世典籍的詮釋——紀念譚樸森先生逝世兩週年國際學術研討會論文集, ed. Fudan Daxue Chutu Wenxian Yu Guwenzi Yanjiu Zhongxin 復旦大學出土文獻與古文字研究中心 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2010), 101–104.

⁸³ Note that my interpretation of *de* differs markedly from Williams', who, following Kryukov, understands the term to denote a sort of charisma (*wei li* 威力) running within a lineage. See Wei Kebin, "Shuo Wenxian mengshu de 'ke shen qi de'," 213; and idem, "Wenxian_mengshu WT5K14 mengshu bushi: shuo 'gong' zi," 120.

⁸⁴ Zhao Shiwang's 趙世網, "Daoci kao – Wenxian mengshu WT5K14 mengci shidu" 禱詞考 – 溫縣盟書 WT5K14 盟詞釋讀, in *Di si jie guoji Zhongguo guwenzixue yantaohui lunwenji* 第四屆國際中國古文字學研討會論文集, ed. Zhang Guangyu 張光裕 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwendaxue Zhongguo yuyan ji wenxuexi, 2003), 479–492; Wei Kebin, "Wenxian_mengshu WT5K14 mengshu bushi: shuo 'gong' zi," 101–102, 119.

example, part of the service the covenantor has to render to his lord is clearly stated as the providing of sacrificial goods.⁸⁵ This suggests that the sacrifice in question was not a family affair but a political matter to which the covenantor had to contribute, perhaps at the expense of capacities he would otherwise have used in his own lineage ritual.⁸⁶

Several versions of this formula have been identified by Zhao and Williams, among which WT5K14-32 constitutes one of the most detailed and almost completely preserved examples:

自今己(以)崙(往)，□事元(其)宐(主)所敢不□焉中心，各(恪)愆(慎)元(其)惠(德)己(以)免(勉)𠄎(供)元(其)宐(主)之禱祠者，□公大塚壘(諦)亟(極)隄(視)之，麻(靡)臺(夷)非(彼)是(氏)。

From this day on, I, X, shall serve my lord. Should I dare not to [...] with all my heart, reverently adhering to my *de* in striving to provide sacrificial goods for my lord, Patriarch [...], in his grand tomb, shall instantly detect me [and] may ruin befall my lineage.

In this passage, the phrase “to provide sacrificial goods” is further preceded here by the word *mian* 勉, “to strive to.” The thus hinted at burdens of this operation in turn inform the phrase “reverently adhering to my *de*,” which pushes the meaning of *de* even more into the direction of a binding obligation.

In sum we can say that in the context of Springs and Autumns covenant treaties *xin* and *de* define those attributes in the individual person that allow one to assume political obligations, to become accountable for and to adhere to one’s commitments.

⁸⁵ Cf. Williams, “Wenxian mengshu WT5K14 mengshu bushi: shuo ‘gong’ zi,” 117-119 for this nominal interpretation of the term *dao* 禱 (or *daoci* 禱祠 in the example below), usually translated as “to pray to.”

⁸⁶ Williams explains this politicisation of lineage ritual on the level of the ruling elite with an emerging factionalism occurring within lineages. Contribution to lineage ritual was no longer purely a household affair, but in certain cases functioned as an expression of political affiliation. See *ibid.*, 120.

The next step would be to find out whether this holds true for Western Zhou sources as well.

Due to their different context and function, the Houma and Wenxian covenant texts cannot of course be straightaway compared to Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. For once, these texts present proper treaties that were buried underground where the guarantors of these contracts, the ancestral spirits were thought to reside. Western Zhou Bronzes in contrast were used in ancestral ritual where they functioned to merge ancestral authority with political legacy. Moreover, inscriptions placed on bronzes were not obligatory. Where we find them, the inscribed messages merely function to further inform ancestral ritual with a sense of participation in the Zhou network of command. Another main difference between the bronzes and the covenant tablets is the different mood in which they address the bond between king and vessel donor and between covenant lord and covenantor respectively. While texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions do not expect the relation between king and vessel donor to deteriorate, covenant texts expect the breach of the covenant, hence the greater part of the formula addresses the measures sought to prevent such a breach as well as the punitive measures to be taken in the event of a violation of the covenant conditions.

However, we can observe important similarities between the two forms as well. Both Springs and Autumns covenants and Western Zhou royal commands aimed at establishing political bonds in form of a vertical authority relations between a ruler and an individual actor who was supposed to willingly submit to the authority of the former. Hence the concept of the political individual should be more or less identical in both cases. If we stay in a Springs and Autumns context for the moment, we find that ducal commands retained in elite bronze inscriptions indeed address the

appointees in terms of their heart and *de* as well. Let us consider for instance the text from the late Springs and Autumns *Shu Yi zhong* 叔夷鐘 (JC 272-278) and *Shu Yi bo* 叔夷罇 (JC 272-278) bell sets from the state of Qi, of which only the inscriptions survive in copies preserved in the Northern Song *Xuanhe bogu tulu* 宣和博古圖錄 catalogue.⁸⁷ The text purportedly refers to events from the reign of Patriarch Ling of Qi (Qi Ling Gong 齊靈公), preceding the events from the Houma and Wenxian covenant texts about fifty years:⁸⁸

隹(唯)王五月，辰才(在)戊寅，師于淄湏，公曰：「女(汝)尸(夷)，余經乃先具(祖)，余既專(敷)乃心。女(汝)忿(悄)悞(畏)忌，女(汝)不彖(惰)夙夜，宦嬰(執)而(爾)政事。」

It was during the King's fifth month, when *chen* was at *mou-yin*, that the army made station at the bank of the Zi river. The Patriarch spoke: "You, Yi, [formerly] I recalled your forebear's [merits], hence [in the past] I already had you lay bare you heart (i.e. I already requested your loyalty). You have proven to be anxious and cautious [in your affairs]. Day and night you were not lazy in studying and carrying out your governmental affairs.

余引(矧)馱(厭)乃心，余命女(汝)政于朕(朕)三軍。簫(肅)成朕(朕)師旗之政德，諫罰朕(朕)庶民，左右母(毋)諱(違)。」

All the more now I am satisfied with your heart, and thus I command you to take charge of my three armies. Establish a sense of upright *de* among my many troops, admonish and punish my multitudinous *min*, so that left and right none shall oppose me."

「尸(夷)不敢弗愍戒，虔卹卒(厥)死事。[...]

"I, Yi, do not dare not to keep up my alertness, reverently devoting myself to the fulfillment of my obligations. [...]"⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Wang Fu 王黼 et al., eds., *Xuanhe bogu tulu* 宣和博古圖錄, 30 *juan* (Taipei: Guoli Gugong bowuyuan, 1997 [ca. 1110], reprinted after a woodblock print from 1528), 22.11-14.

⁸⁸ Compare the discussion by Cook in *Source Book*, 256-257.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Daxi*, 2.203-209; Rong Geng, *Shang Zhou yiqi tongkao*, 376-382; *Mingwen xuan* #847-848; and *Source Book* #69. See also Chen Mengjia's "Shu Yi zhong bo kao" 叔夷鐘罇考 (1962), in Chen Mengjia, *Chen Mengjia xueshu lunwenji* 陳夢家學術論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016),

Patriarch Ling of Qi downright defines Yi in terms of the latter's heart in this scene of command. It is because of the qualities associated with his heart that the patriarch considers Yi to be capable to establish a *sensus communis* among the troops of Qi. That such formulations, clearly addressing the sovereign individual in its political capacity, have hitherto not been associated with earlier Western Zhou bronze inscriptions has its main reason in the continued belief in traditional Chinese patterns of historiogenesis, developed chiefly in Warring States literature. Especially according to depictions in the *Zuo zhuan*, Western Zhou kingship was essentially a family affair.⁹⁰ Yet if what we have said above is right, and the Zhou ruling organization did in fact constitute a super-imposed structure based on political bonds rather than on kinship ties, this traditional viewpoint has to be questioned. That the idea of the heart as the seat of individual loyalty and political decision making ability is already latently present in uncorrupted Western Zhou sources definitely points into this direction. However, so far the heart as a political factor has not been systematically analysed in a Western Zhou context, which is what we will do next.


3.3.3 The role of the heart in the delegation of ruling authority in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions

In the light of our preceding discussion, it is perhaps no coincidence that we come across the first presumable mentioning of the heart in Western Zhou bronze

596-617.



⁹⁰ See for instance *Zuo*, Xi 24:420-425; and *Zuo*, Zhao 26:1475.




inscriptions within a context involving the authority transfer from the Zhou king to a future ruler of a regional state, an operation that presupposed the appointee's absolute loyalty to the king. The three identical inscriptions cast on the *Ke lei* 克罍, the *Ke lei lid* (NA 1368) and *Ke he*, 克盃 (NA 1367), excavated in 1986 near Liulihe 琉璃河 in the Fangshan 房山 district of Beijing, record an audience of the Patriarch of Shao (Shao Gong 召公), here addressed as Grand Protector (Tai Bao 大保), with the Zhou king. The text depicts the Zhou king to command either the Grand Protector himself or his son, depending on how one interprets the name *Ke* 克, to become ruler in the northern polity of Yan 燕:⁹¹

王曰：大僕(保)，隹(唯)乃明乃心，高(享)于乃辟。余大對乃高(享)，令(命)克侯于匱(燕)。旃(使)糝、馬、戲、季、馭、兕(微)。克(宅?)匱(燕)，入土眾(及)又(有)嗣(司)，用乍(作)寶障彝。

The King spoke: “Grand Protector, you made manifest your heart⁹² and devoted your service to your sovereign. I greatly requite your devotion and command [you / your son,] *Ke*, to act as marquis in Yan, being in charge of Qian, Ma, Cuo, Yu, Yu and Wei.” *Ke* went to take up residence in Yan. He received the land and officials and therefore made this precious sacrificial vessel.

⁹¹ Since their excavation in 1986, these vessels have drawn a tremendous amount of scholarly attention. The Chinese scholarship on the *Ke lei* and *Ke he* inscriptions published up to the year 2005 has been compiled and discussed in Zhou Baohong 周寶宏, *Jin chu Xizhou jinwen jishi* 進出西周金文集釋 (Tianjin: Tianjin Guji chubanshe, 2005), 1-104.

⁹² Scholarly opinions are divided over the question of whether the graphs  (NA 1368) and  (NA 1367) respectively should be transcribed *xin* 心, “heart,” or *chang* 鬯, “fragrant wine.” While most scholars prefer the latter choice, I concur with Li Xueqin, “*Ke lei Ke he de ji ge wenti*” 克罍克盃的幾個問題, in idem, *Zou chu yigu shidai* 走出疑古時代 (Shenyang: Liaoning Daxue chubanshe, 1997); Liu Huan 劉桓, “*Guanyu Liulihe xin chutu Taibao er qi de kaoshi*” 關於琉璃河新出土太保二器的考釋, *Xuexi yu tansuo* 學習與探索 3 (1992): 141-142; Li Zhongcao 李仲操, “*Yanhou Ke lei he mingwen jianshi*” 燕侯克罍盃銘文簡釋, *Kaogu yu Wenwu* (1997) 1: 70-72; Zhu Fenghan, “*Fangshan Liulihe chutu zhi Ke qi yu Xizhou zaoqi de Shao gong jiazhu*” 方山琉璃河出土之克器與西周早期的召公家族, in *Yuanwangji: Shaanxi sheng kaoguyanjiusuo huadan sishi zhounian jinian wenji* 遠望集: 陝西省考古研究所華誕四十周年紀念文, 集 ed. Yuanwangji bianyuanhui 遠望集編委會 (Shaanxi Renmin Meishu chubanshe, 1998), 303-308; Zhao Guangxian 趙光賢, “*Guanyu Liulihe 1193 hao Zhou mu de ji ge wenti*” 關於琉璃河 1193 號周墓的幾個問題, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2 (1994): 3-9; and Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 274, in reading the graph as 心. My reasons for doing so are of a purely contextual nature and will be stated below.

Given that our transcription of the graphs , , and  as *xin* 心 is correct, our main focus lies of course on the phrase “you made manifest your heart” (*nai ming nai xin* 乃明乃心). This formulation shows great similarities to the phrase “X was able to make his heart manifest and bright” (*ke lin ming jue xin* 克彜明厥心) in the above cited Qiu *zhong* inscription. We have associated this statement in the Qiu *zhong* text with the vessel donor’s forebear’s assumption of a commitment “to serve the former kings as his sovereigns” (*xiang bi Xianwang* 享辟先王). In the Ke bronzes as well, the Grand Protector is said to have made his heart manifest, or to have turned his intent visible, by choosing to serve and to regard the Zhou king as his sovereign.⁹³ Here too, *xiang* 享 does not mean “to offer,” or “to feast,” but “to devote oneself to” or “to serve.”⁹⁴ In fact the phrase *xiang yu nai bi* 享于乃辟, seems to represent the full form of the slightly later compound *xiang-bi* 享辟, “to serve someone as one’s sovereign,” wherein *bi* 辟 functions as a verb in the sense of “to treat” or “to regard as sovereign.”⁹⁵ A further example for this usage of *xiang* can

⁹³ In the preceding chapter we came across a somewhat related formulation in the Hu *gui gai* inscription in the vessel donor’s statement concerning his forebears’ brightly manifest ability to serve the former kings (*lin ming ke shi xianwang* 彜明克事先王). We have associated this formulation with the vessel donors’ need to render his forebears’ non-coerced political subordination under the Zhou king’s authority visible and obvious.

⁹⁴ Cf. Chen Ping 陳平, “Ke *lei*, Ke *he* mingwen ji qi you guan wenti” 克彜、克盃銘文及其有關問題, *Kaogu* 考古 (1991) 9: 845-846; Li Zhongcao, “Yanhou Ke *lei he* mingwen jianshi,” 70; Du Naisong 杜迺松, “Ke *lei* Ke *he* mingwen xin shi” 克彜克盃銘文新釋, *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 79:1 (1998): 62; and Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 273-274; 282-283.

⁹⁵ The problem with the phrase *xiang yu* 享于 is that it appears almost exclusively in the sense of “to make offerings to” in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. In the great majority of instances we find it within the formula *xiang (xiao) yu X* 享(孝)于 X, “to offer to X,” or *xiang yu zong* 享于宗, “to make offerings at the lineage ancestral temple.” However, in the text from the two Ke inscriptions it should be understood differently. Let us compare the following passage from the Dong *fang ding* 斿方鼎 (JC 2824) wherein the phrase *xiang yu* 享于 unmistakably means “to render service to”:

斿曰：烏虘(乎)，朕文考甲公、文母日庚，弋(式)休劓(則)尚(常?)。安永宕乃子斿心，安永襲(襲)斿身，畢(厥)復言(享)于天子。唯畢(厥)事(使)乃子斿萬年辟事天子，母(毋)又(有)眈(尤)于畢(厥)身。

be found in the Qiu *pan* inscription:

季朕皇考龔叔，[...]高(享)辟刺(厲)王。

Ah! My august father Gong Shu [...] devoted [himself to] and served King Li as sovereign.⁹⁶

Although from an epigraphic and philological point of view, the alternative reading of the first phrase in the two Ke inscriptions as “you made bright your fragrant wine (reading *chang* 鬯 instead of *xin* 心) and offered it to your ruler,” proposed by the majority of interpreters, cannot be entirely ruled out,⁹⁷ it nevertheless hardly fits the context of the inscription.⁹⁸ Moreover, while the phrases *ming nai xin*, *ming jue xin* 明厥心 or *ming you xin* 明又(有)心 are well attested for in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions,⁹⁹ *chang* 鬯, “fragrant wine,” never occurs in conjunction with *ming*.

What is most important, however, both in bronze inscriptions and in the *Odes* and

Dong spoke: “Alas! My accomplished deceased father, Patriarch Jia, and my accomplished mother Ri Geng, you patterned yourselves on [the King’s] grace, making it your standard. May you eternally make firm (?) your son’s, Dong’s heart; may you eternally shield Dong’s person that I may retrieve your service to the Son of Heaven. May you grant that your son, Dong, can serve the Son of Heaven as his sovereign for ten thousand years. Let no harm inflict on my person.”

The retrieval and paraphrase of the motive *xiang yu tianzi* 享于天子 as *bi shi tianzi* 辟事天子, “to regard and serve the Son of Heaven as sovereign,” in the following sentence makes it very clear that *xiang yu* in this case must mean “to serve,” or, more precisely, “to devote one’s service to.” Compare also the phrase *bi yu xian wang* 辟于先王, “to serve the former Kings as one’s sovereigns” in the Shi Wang *ding* 師望鼎 (JC 2812) inscription discussed below on pp. 293-294. In both cases the locative *yu* 于 functions in the sense of “to render service to,” “to submit oneself to.”

⁹⁶ This translation is reproduced from Sena, “Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China,” 74.

⁹⁷ However, compared to early Western Zhou instances of the graph 鬯, such as 𠄎 (JC 2837), 𠄎 (JC 4133), 𠄎 (JC 4320), 𠄎 (JC 5399), 𠄎 (JC 5400), 𠄎 (JC 5421), 𠄎 (JC 6016), 𠄎 (JC 9096) and 𠄎 (JC 9901), it seems that only the variant 𠄎 could reasonably read as *chang* 鬯. The most recent voice in this discussion is Qiu Xigui, who proposes that 𠄎 and 𠄎 are graphical variants of 心, which were mostly used in compound graphs. See Qiu Xigui, “Shi guwenzi zhong de you xie ‘cong’ zi he cong ‘cong,’ cong ‘xiong’ zhi zi” 釋古文字中的有些“兪”字和從“兪”、從“兪”雙字, in *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 2 (2008): 1-12.

⁹⁸ I assume that the interpretation of the phrase *xiang yu nai bi* in a sacrificial sense prompted many interpreters towards transcribing the graphs 𠄎, 𠄎 and 𠄎 as 鬯 instead of 心 in the first place.

⁹⁹ Compare Zhang Yachu 張亞初, ed., *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng yinde* 殷周金文集成引得 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 522. See also the examples on pp. 293-314 below.

Documents, fragrant wine functions exclusively as a ritual gift granted by a superior to an inferior on the occasion of the issuing of a command. It was never offered by an inferior to a superior, whether living or dead.¹⁰⁰

Our proposed translation in turn not only avoids bending these conventions, it also fits the inscription's context if we understand the phrase "Grand Protector, you made manifest your heart and devoted your service to your sovereign," as part of the king's rhetoric of motives. It could not have been taken for granted that the king would invest Tai Bao or his son Ke as ruler in Yan, based merely on possible ties of descent, celebrated through Tai Bao's ritual offerings in the reading of Li Feng and others.¹⁰¹ It was rather because Tai Bao had proven his loyalty to the royal house during the dynasty's initial establishment and / or during the course of the Wu Geng rebellion that the king decided to install him or his son as ruler in this geo-strategically important northern outpost as an act of political reciprocity (*yu da dui nai xiang* 余大對乃享). Similar to what we have said about the Jing Hou *gui* inscription, the background for this rhetoric of motives might well have been the memory of members of the royal house siding in rebellion with the last Shang prince.¹⁰²

What connects these two inscriptions on a more general, analytical level, are the concerns inherent in the delegation of ruling authority, which always bears in it the potential for crisis and defection. Let us assume for a moment that both Tai Bao and the unnamed vessel donor in the Xing Hou *gui* inscription were indeed close relatives

¹⁰⁰ Cf. He Shuhuan, *Xizhou xi ming mingwen xin jiu*, 89-97. I think Li Feng is far off track here when he proposes that "[t]he ritual recorded in the Ke lei inscription begins with a sacrificial offering to the deceased Zhou kings, presumably King Wen and King Wu" (Li, "Feudalism' and the Western Zhou," 117).

¹⁰¹ See also *Source Book #7*.

¹⁰² Cf. Chen Mengjia, *Duandai*, 358-365; Allan, *The Heir and the Sage*, 103-121; and Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," 310-312, for this mytho-historical episode.

of the Zhou king. With their (and, in the case of the Xing Hou *gui*, their forebear's) assumption of ruling authority, a break had inevitably occurred, in that a primarily genealogical relation changed into a political one. Especially when the authority transfer involved the move to a new domain, and hence the creation of a regional ruling house, the appointee necessarily became a progenitor in his own right, whereas otherwise he would have remained but a member of the royal house, defined merely through his genealogical rank.¹⁰³ By the same token, once the appointee had moved to his new domain and established himself as ruler, his relationship with the royal house could not but become political rather than genealogical. This logic, which underlay not only the foundation of the regional states, but indeed each delegation of authority that entailed the permanent move of an appointee and his family away from his native domain in order to assume control over alien populations and territories, has often been overlooked in Early China studies. It is in this context where the heart or the inner person first appears as a political factor in Early Chinese texts.

¹⁰³ Irad Malkin, who analyses the cultural model of collective migration and foundation in the context of ancient Greece and in the history of the ancient Israelites in the OT, has made an interesting observation in this respect. He states: “[T]here is something inherent in the logic of foundation stories that makes it necessary for the new ancestor to have come from elsewhere. A community can see itself as new in relation to a new place, simply by immigrating there. In contrast, blood has no beginning. Had the ancestor not wandered away but stayed home, he would never have become an ancestor but another link in some other genealogical matrix.” (Irad Malkin, “Foreign Founders: Greeks and Hebrews,” in *Foundation myths in ancient societies: dialogues and discourses*, ed. Nao íse Mac Sweeney [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015], 24). In the Western Zhou context, this view is corroborated by the fact that, at least according to transmitted literary sources, the king is reported to have bestowed upon the appointee a new lineage name. See Chen Jie, *Shang Zhou xingshi zhidu yanjiu*, 238-296.

3.3.4 *The role of the heart in the delegation of ruling authority in the Documents of Zhou*

Even though the text from the *Ke he* and *Ke lei* inscriptions is so far the only known example of this kind of early Western Zhou investiture inscription which explicitly refers to the heart, given the fact that extant early Western Zhou inscriptions pertaining to the delegation of ruling authority over populations and territories amount to no more than a handful,¹⁰⁴ this singular occurrence of the heart nevertheless needs to be regarded as significant. Moreover, the rhetoric of the heart employed in this text matches similar instances found in literary accounts of the initial enfeoffment of royal princes in the *Documents of Zhou*. Of special interest in this respect is the “Kang gao” 康誥 chapter from the *Documents of Zhou*,¹⁰⁵ which purportedly records the instalment of a Zhou prince, Feng, traditionally identified with Kangshu 康叔, brother of King Wu, as a ruler in the newly pacified eastern territories in the aftermath of the Wu Geng rebellion.¹⁰⁶ Although divergent interpretations exist as to the historical identification of the protagonists,¹⁰⁷ what we are interested in here is the generic situation depicted in this chapter. The text begins with an address by the king, in which he explains to Prince Feng the formative

¹⁰⁴ See the examples in Lau, *Quellenstudien*, 65-125; Li, *Landscape and Power*, 66-76; and Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 235-270.

¹⁰⁵ Generally scholars treat this text as an authentic Western Zhou source. However, at least in its present form this chapter features a relatively high number of linguistic features typical for the Eastern Zhou period. This is why Shaughnessy dates it somewhere between the Western Zhou and the Springs and Autumns period (“Lüe lun jinwen Shangshu ‘Zhoushu’ ge pian de zhuzuo niandai,” 916-917). He Dingsheng as well dates the chapter to an unspecified timeframe within the Eastern Zhou period (“Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai,” 180-187).

¹⁰⁶ See, Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 312.

¹⁰⁷ Scholars are in two minds about the question whether the king in this chapter should be understood as King Wu or King Cheng, or perhaps the Duke of Zhou speaking on behalf of King Cheng. See for instance the discussions in Jiang Shanguo, *Shangshu zonglun*, 237-247; Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jishi*, 144-145; and Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft*, 450-451. For our analysis, however, this question is largely irrelevant.

origins of Zhou kingship and the resulting obligations for Feng and himself:

王若曰：「孟侯，朕其弟，小子封。惟乃丕顯考文王，克明德慎罰，不敢侮鰥寡。庸庸，祗祗，威威，顯民，用肇造我區夏，越我一、二邦以修我西土。惟時怙冒，聞于上帝，帝休。天乃大命文王，殪戎殷，誕受厥命越厥邦民，惟時敘。乃寡兄勗，肆汝小子封在茲東土。[...]

The King spoke thus: “You leading prince, my younger brother, youngster Feng! Your greatly illustrious forebear, King Wen, was able to make manifest his *de*-commitment and to consider carefully the use of punishments.¹⁰⁸ He did not dare to maltreat even widowers and widows. He employed the employable, and revered the reverend; he was terrible to those who needed to be awed - so he created distinctions among the *min*-populace.¹⁰⁹ It was thus that he laid the foundations of our Xia-domain, and together with our neighbouring / allied polities, he established order throughout our western land. His fame ascended up to Di on High, and Di [bestowed] his grace [on him]. Heaven accordingly greatly charged King Wen to exterminate Yin, and to grandly receive its appointment, so that the various polities and *min*-populations [of Yin] would be brought to an orderly condition. Your humble elder brother has exerted himself, and thus it is that you, youngster Feng, are now here in this eastern region” [...]¹¹⁰

The idea of a subject population to which the king relates in terms of a vertical solidarity (he does not even dare to maltreat widowers and widows) on the one hand and through the authority to punish on the other concerns me elsewhere.¹¹¹ What we are interested in here is the particular relation between the king and prince Feng, and the changes it underwent in the course of the delegation of authority.

¹⁰⁸ The contrastive- complementary pair of *de* and *fa* 罰 appears first in a Springs and Autumns and Warring States context as the two complementary measures of rulership. Cf. Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1303. Consistent with our argumentation, *de* stands here for the un-coerced creation of a binding *sensus communis*, while *fa* presents coercive measures to enforce compliance.

¹⁰⁹ There exist two conflicting translations of this sentence. See the discussion in Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1304-1305.

¹¹⁰ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 15.358-361. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 383-385; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 39-40.

¹¹¹ See my, “The King as *minzhu* 民主: Conceptualisations of ecumenical rulership in pre-classical Chinese texts,” forthcoming.

At the beginning of his speech the king addresses Feng in familial terms as his younger brother before he delivers an account of the former kings' receipt of the Heavenly Mandate, which redefines their relation in terms of a shared obligation. It is against this background that the King in the following inducts Feng to his duties, which we do not need to list here in detail. What is important for us to note, as soon as the king begins his command, his genealogical ties with Feng fade into the background whereas their political relation comes to the fore:

[...]已！汝惟小子，未其有若汝封之心。朕心朕德，惟乃知。[...]
[...] Alas, though you are still young, there is nobody who has a heart like you, Feng. Only you [are able] to understand [and cherish] my heart (=intent) and my *de*-commitment. [...] ¹¹²

The reason the King invests Feng with the ruling authority over the eastern territories, at least according to the logic of the text, has less to do with the latter being a son of King Wu, than with Feng's accountability and his insight into the king's commitment and political will. One could even read this passage as a claim for the like-mindedness of Feng and the king when it comes to the matters of Zhou rule. The significance of such a like-mindedness and shared political commitment for the cohesion of a ruling organization becomes a major topic in the interpretation of the Shang-Zhou transition in Springs and Autumns and Warring States literature, where we find this aspect referred to in terms of *xin* and *de* as well. So for instance in the following famous passage from the *Zuo zhuan*, purportedly citing the words of King Wu prior to his conquest over Shang:

¹¹² *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 15.366. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 391; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 42.

大誓曰，「紂有億兆夷人，亦有離德。余有亂臣十人，同心同德。」此周所以興也[...]。

The *Taishi* says: “Zhou (the last Shang King Zhou Xin 紂辛 [A/N]) has hundreds of thousands of men, all of them divided in their *de*-commitment. I have under my command ten men, united in their heart and in their *de*-commitment.” This is the reason why the Zhou rose to power.¹¹³

Other than the meaning “commitment,” the semantic range of *de* seems to further comprise the notion of a political will in this context.¹¹⁴ Interestingly, apart from this version from the *Zuo zhuan* there exists a presumably later, parallel passage in the “*Tai shi*” chapter from the corrupted *Ancient Text Documents*, which explicitly states the supremacy of like-mindedness over blood in political matters:

受有億兆夷人，離心離德。予有亂臣十人，同心同德。雖有周親，不如仁人。

Shou has hundreds of thousands of men, divided in their heart and divided in their *de*-commitment; I have under my command ten men, united in their heart and in their *de*-commitment. Though there are nearest relatives, it is better to have those who are bound to each other through a shared concern (or heart).¹¹⁵

¹¹³ *Zuo*, Zhao 24:1450.

¹¹⁴ The proposition by Ai Yinfan 艾蔭范 that *de* in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the *Documents of Zhou* might be a precursor of the word *zhi* 志, Old-Chinese *tə-s, which does not yet appear in these earliest sources, deserves mentioning in this respect. See Ai Yinfan, “‘De’ zai shanggu wenxian zhong de ‘zhixiang’ yi” “德” 在上古文獻中的 “志向” 義, *Journal of Shenyang Normal University (Social Science Edition)* No 2, Vol. 35 (2011): 48-52. So far, however, Ai’s theory has not found much attention.

¹¹⁵ Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shangshu Kongzhuān canzheng* 尚書孔傳參正 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 14.510. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 292. Chen Mengjia divides the transmitted “*Taishi*” chapter into six different layers, two from the Warring States, three from the Han Dynasty and the last one from the Jin Dynasty. The passage quoted above belongs to the second Warring States layer in Chen’s classification. See Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 48-54. Moreover the phrase “*sui you zhou qin, bu ru ren ren*” 雖有周親，不如仁人 appears almost verbatim already in the “*Jian ai*” 兼愛 chapter in the *Mozi* 墨子 (Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Mozi xian gu* 墨子閒詁, ed. Xu Jialu 許嘉璐 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009 [1910]], 4.113). The term *ren* 仁, Old-Chinese *niŋ, is habitually understood to denote the human quality of “fellow-kindness,” or “benevolence,” based on its affinity *ren* 人, Old-Chinese *ni[n], “person,” “human being.” See Unger, *Grundbegriffe*, 39. However, Schuessler remarks that the word’s old graph in the *Shuowen*, 忝, with *qian* 千, Old-Chinese *s.n̥i[n], acting as phonetic, combined with the *Shuowen*’s understanding of the graph as *qin* 親, “to be close to,” as well as the written forms as 忞 or as 息 in the *Guodian* 郭店 manuscripts, suggest

It is of course debatable in how far both, the cited passage from the *Zuo zhuan* and the “Tai shi” chapter, relate to strata of the *Documents* tradition that the “Kang gao” belongs to. However, instead of merely condemning the “Tai shi” and other passages from the *Ancient Text Documents* as fourth century AD fabrications, I would suggest to regard them as part of an apocryphal or deuteronomic tradition that developed around the text of the earliest strata of the *Documents* as early as perhaps the fourth and third centuries BCE.¹¹⁶

Coming back to the king’s speech in the “Kang gao,” it is now up to Feng to develop and maintain his *de*-commitment while conducting his official duties:

王曰：「嗚呼！封，敬哉！無作怨，勿用非謀非彝蔽時忱。丕則敏德，用康乃心。顧乃德，遠乃猷。裕(欲)¹¹⁷乃以民寧，不汝瑕殄。」

The king spoke: “Alas! Feng, be reverent! Do not create animosity [among your subordinates]; do not use bad counsels and improper ways. Respectfully attend upon and devote yourself to your *de*-commitment and hereby make your heart settle. [Always] bear in mind your *de*-commitment and thus make that your plans become far-reaching. Would that you [manage to] keep the *min*-populace pacified and tranquil, so I shall not have to blame you and cast you off.”¹¹⁸

As the last line clearly indicates, paralleling the shift from the context of the

that the graph’s association with *ren* 人 is relatively late. Instead Schuessler assumes that the word *ren* 仁 has a common root with the Proto-Tibetan word *niŋ, meaning “heart,” or “mind” (Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, 440-441). If Schuessler is right, we would have to ascribe *ren* to the conceptual field of the heart. The compound *ren-ren* 仁人 in the passage from the “Tai shi” would then semantically relate to the phrase *tong xin tong de* 同心同德.

¹¹⁶ The same proposal has been voiced in Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics*, 131. For the Springs and Autumns and Warring States origins of many passages from the *Ancient Text Documents* see, Yan Ruoju, *Shangshu Guwen shuzheng*; Wang Xianqian, *Shangshu Kongzhuān canzheng*; and Chen Mengia, *Shangshu tonglun*, passim.

¹¹⁷ For this transcription see Yu Xingwu, *Shuang Jian Chi Shangshu xin zheng*, 129.

¹¹⁸ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 15.370-371. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 397; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 43.

household to that of political authority relations, Feng changes from the king's brother into his allied servant. Consequently, if he does not perform well, the king will have to replace him with someone more suitable regardless of Feng's genealogical rank in the royal line.

The remainder of the king's charge more and more resembles the sort of royal command we are familiar with from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions:

王曰：「嗚呼！肆汝小子封。惟命不于常，汝念哉！無我殄享，明乃服命，高乃聽，用康乂民。」

The King spoke: “Alas! Now, youngster Feng, as to the mandate, it is not eternal, be aware of that! Do not stop serving me,¹¹⁹ make manifest your submission to / your commitment towards the mandate,¹²⁰ listen alertly as to bring protection and tranquillity to the *min*-populace.”¹²¹

王若曰：「往哉！封，勿替敬典，聽朕告，汝乃以殷民世享。」

The King, approving (the charge to Feng), spoke: “Off you go, Feng! Do not abandon your devotion to [my] standards; hear my announcements, so that you may serve with the *min*-populace of Yin for many generations.”¹²²

These last two passages show obvious similarities to the early Western Zhou *Ke lei* and *Ke he* inscriptions. For instance the phrase (*wei nai ming nai xin, xiang yu nai bi*

¹¹⁹ Most Chinese and Western commentators read this sentence either in the sense of “Don’t make me terminate your charge,” or “don’t cause (Heaven) to revoke our charge.” However, in the light of the rhetoric we have observed in the preceding examples, I suggest to interpret *wo* 我 here as the object of the sentence, “me,” standing in an exposed position in front of the predicate. This kind of syntactical accentuation is well known from oath formulae in the *Zuozhuan*. Compare for instance the following two examples: “The covenant said: ‘We shall not deceive you, and you shall not defraud us.’” (盟曰：「我無爾詐，爾無我虞」) (*Zuo*, Xuan 15:761); “With every generation they swore covenants and vows to establish good faith with one another, saying, ‘you will not rebel against us, and we will not force you to sell anything, nor will we in any case importune you or seize anything from you.’” (世有盟誓，以相信也，曰：「爾無我叛，我無強賈，毋或勾奪」) (*Zuo*, Zhao 16:1380).

¹²⁰ Compare Cai Shen’s 蔡沈 (1167-1230) commentary in his *Shujing jizhu* 書經集註 (Taipei: Xinlu shuju, 1996 [ca. 1210]), 143, for my interpretation of the phrase *ming nai fu ming* 明乃服命.

¹²¹ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 15.371. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 397-398; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 43.

¹²² *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 15.371. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 398; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 43.

唯乃明乃心，享于乃辟), appearing in the latter, reads almost like an answer to the king's directive in the “Kang gao:” “do not stop serving me, make manifest your submission to / your commitment towards the mandate” (*wu wo tian xiang, ming nai fu ming* 無我殄享，明乃服命). Both phrases in turn reveal an undeniable family resemblance with the loyalty-formulae we saw in the Houma and Wenxian covenant texts. In other words we can perceive a level of continuity in the conception of political relations, interrelating early Western Zhou accounts of the delegation of ruling authority with passages in the *Documents* and as well as with Springs and Autumns covenant texts. This not only suggests once more that the idea of Zhou kingship, and hence its underlying mechanism of corporate solidarity, was indeed to a significant extent based on the institution of the political bond, it also substantiates our hypotheses that we need to differentiate between a political and a genealogical context when we talk about the organisation of the Zhou ruling elite.

In the *Documents* tradition we find further evidence for this assumption. The last passage from the “Gu ming” 顧命 chapter in the *Documents of Zhou*,¹²³ sometimes considered as a separate chapter named “Kang Wang zhi gao” 康王之誥,¹²⁴ addresses the retrieval and perpetuation of the relation between the newly installed king Kang and the rulers from the regional states in terms of the logic of a political bond:

王若曰：「庶邦侯、甸、男、衛，惟予一人釗報誥。昔君文武丕平富，不務咎，底至齊信，用昭明于天下。」

¹²³ Although the “Gu ming” is generally associated with the twelve “authentic” chapters from the *Documents of Zhou*, both Shaughnessy and He Dingsheng point to a number of linguistic properties in this text that are associated with an Eastern Zhou context. See Xia Hanyi, “Lüe lun jinwen Shangshu ‘Zhoushu’ ge pian de zhuzuo niandai,” 916-917; and He Dingsheng, “Shangshu de wenfa ji qi niandai,” 180-187.

¹²⁴ See Wang Xianqian, *Shangshu Kongzhuo canzheng*, 30.902-904, for a discussion of the treatment of the “Kang Wang zhi gao” in different traditions of the *Documents*.

The king spoke thus: “You [princes] of the many polities and [chiefs] of the Hou, Dian, Nan, and Wei domains,¹²⁵ I, the one man, Zhao, announce and declare to you: ‘The former sovereigns Wen and Wu grandly created prosperity and did not maltreat or incriminate [their subjects]. Arriving at and maintaining an utmost level of impartiality and reliability, they became illustrious and manifest in All under Heaven.’¹²⁶

則亦有熊羆之士，不二心之臣，保乂王家，用端命于上帝。皇天用訓厥道，付畀四方。乃命建侯樹屏，在我後之人。

[That they managed to do so] was also because they had bear-like officers and ministers of no double heart, who (helped them) to protect and secure the royal House. Thus did they initially [receive] the Mandate from Di on High. Thus did August Heaven approve of their ways and entrusted them [with the rule over] the four cardinal regions.¹²⁷ Then they appointed and set up principalities and [thereby] established bulwarks [to the throne], for the sake of us, their successors.

今予一二伯父尚胥暨顧，綏爾先公之臣服于先王。雖爾身在外，乃心罔不在王室，用奉恤厥若，無遺鞠子羞！」 [...]

Now you, my several uncles, I pray you, consider with one another, and carry forth the service which the patriarchs, your predecessors, rendered to [my predecessors,] the former Kings. Though your persons are distant, let your hearts be in the royal House. Share into my anxieties, and act in accordance with them, so that I, the little child, may not be put to shame.” [...]¹²⁸

The first two parts of this passage read like the king’s rhetoric of motives we find in

¹²⁵ For the meaning of *banghou* 邦侯, *dian* 甸, *nan* 男 and *wei* 衛, see the comprehensive discussion in Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 3.1295-1297.

¹²⁶ Compare Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, 4.1858, for the interpretation of the last phrase.

¹²⁷ The meaning of *bi* 畀 as “to give” is unproblematic. As to the meaning of *fu* 付 in this context, one might compare its use in the following passage from the “Zi cai” 梓材 chapter in the *Documents of Zhou*: “Now that August Heaven has committed the *min* and their territories to the former Kings” (皇天既付中國民越厥疆土于先王) (*Shangshu jin- guwen zhushu*, 17.389). Ma Rong 馬融 (79-166) reads *fu* 付 as *fu* 附, to attach (*Shangshu jin- guwen zhushu*, 17.389). Qu Wanli gives *fu* 付 as *yu* 與, “to give” (Qu Wanli, *Shangshu jishi*, 170). See also Xi Zhou jinwen cihui, 146. Based on these interpretations I understand the terms *fu* and *fubi* respectively in the sense of “to entrust,” or “to commit to.”

¹²⁸ *Shangshu jin- guwen zhushu*, 25.507-509. The translation has been adapted from Legge, *The Shoo King*, 566-569; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 73-74.

mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions recording follow-up charges granted to the descendants of Zhou dignitaries. Only here the part of the appointee is staffed with the entire Zhou ruling apparatus.

In the last third of the text however, the king proceeds in a different manner from the Bronze inscriptions, addressing the regional rulers in familial terms as his uncles, urging them to continue their forebears' political obligation in the Zhou ruling organization. This step is particularly interesting. It evokes the image of a family gathering only to deny the efficacy of kinship ties in the perpetuation of the specific constellation the actors find themselves in. The next phrase is even more crucial in this respect as it clearly reveals the limitations of kinship factors in the organization of Zhou rule. The distance, or the outer (*wai* 外), not only refers to a spatial distance between the king and the regional rulers but also, in my view, to a separation in terms of kinship organization. The king's uncles, the local rulers, are now patriarchs in their own right, each standing at the apex of their own kinship groups.¹²⁹ What remains, or better, what is expected to remain of them in the royal house are their hearts, their shared commitment to continue the politico-religious task begun by their forebears.

Although the "Gu ming" chapter is generally considered to be a rather late text among the twelve so called "authentic" chapters from the *Documents of Zhou*,¹³⁰ its conception of the Zhou ruling alliance can be traced all the way back to the early mid-Western Zhou period, to the text of the He *zun* inscription to be precise. This text has already concerned us twice in this study. Let us recall its wording once more at this point:

¹²⁹ See also von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 64-70, for this point.

¹³⁰ Cf. Dirk Meyer, "Recontextualization and Memory Production: Debates on Rulership as Reconstructed from 'Gu ming' 顧命," in *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy*, 110-111.

When the king for the first time took residence in Chengzhou, [...] [he] addressed the heirs from the princely lineages who were congregated in the Great Hall of the Jing palace saying: “Formerly, your deceased fathers were able to ally with King Wen, whereupon King Wen received this [Great Charge]. When King Wu had newly subdued the Great Settlement Shang, he solemnly announced to Heaven the words: ‘I shall reside in this central enclosure / region and from here bring order to the *min*-populations.’ Alas! You are but un-experienced youngsters. Attend to the example of your forebears who have meritorious achievements with Heaven. [Strive to] accomplish the charge and serve reverently! Assist me, your king, in honouring our *de* (i.e. our mutual intent and obligation towards fulfilling the Great Charge), may Heaven instruct us on our insensibilities.” [...]

What are the princes or marquises of the many polities (*zhu bang hou* 庶邦侯) in the “Gu ming” chapter are the descendants of the patriarchs (*zong xiaozi* 宗小子) who have been allied with the Zhou founding kings in the He *zun* inscription. Hence the constellation is basically the same in both texts. Both depict the king to address the perpetuation of the Zhou alliance in terms of a continued trans-generational politico-religious bond. Although there is no direct mentioning of the heart in the He *zun* text, phrases such as to “attend to the example of one’s forebears,” as well as to “strive to accomplish the charge and serve reverently,” are unequivocally associated with the heart in other passages from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, the *Documents* and Springs and Autumns covenant texts. It is therefore perhaps no coincidence that in the He *zun* inscription we come across one of the earliest instances of *de* in Western Zhou epigraphic sources. *De* appears here in the sense of a shared cultural obligation that came with the former king’s assumption of Heaven’s Great Charge.

3.3.5 *Identifying the dividing line between the basic structures of social organization and the enhanced structures of Western Zhou political identity*

So far our analysis seems to confirm our hypothesis that members of the Zhou ruling organization were defined in their capacity as individual political actors rather than through their genealogical affiliation. But does this also mean that kinship factors did not play a role at all in the mechanism of the Western Zhou kingship? Certainly not, Zhu Fenghan and Sena, to name just the most important, have identified the role of lineages and their internal organization as an important factor in the cohesion of Zhou elite society as well as in the implementation of Zhou rule in local contexts.¹³¹ The question is thus whether or not in our sources we can find a conceptual division between politically based authority relations and kinship based authority relations within the level of the Zhou ruling organization. The difficulty in reaching a definite conclusion on this point lies in the fact that Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, like Springs and Autumns covenant texts, concern political bonds between the king / covenant lord and named individuals. Kinship relations are simply not addressed in these sources. However there are a few examples from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions which touch upon matters of kinship organisation as part of the appointee's task. The text from the two identical early Western Zhou Zuoce Ling *fangzun* 作冊令方尊 (JC 6016) and Zuoce Ling *fangyi* 作冊令方彝 (JC 9901) inscriptions proves instructive in this respect:

¹³¹ See Zhu Fenghan, *Shang-Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 309-337, 390-405; and Sena, "Reproducing Society," esp. 209-305. See also von Falkenhausen's review article, "Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China*."

令曰：「今我唯令女(汝)二人亢眾矣，爽左右于乃寮，以乃友事。」[...]
The [king's] command said: “Now I command you two men, Kang and Ze, to flank me on the left and right in your offices and to serve together with your peers.” [...] ¹³²

Zhu Fenghan has shown that term *pengyou* 朋友 or *you* 友, “friends,” “comrades,” “peers,” implies a kinship relation in a Western Zhou context. It loosely refers to one’s male kinfolk, sometimes including one’s affinal relatives, *hungou* 婚媾. ¹³³
However, the political constellation depicted in this passage involves, strictly speaking, only the king and his two appointees. The latter are in turn responsible for ensuring their peers to fulfil their part in contributing to the functioning of Zhou government.

Of special interest in this context are further the following two passages from late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. The first comes from the late Western Zhou Ran *xu* 鬯盥 (*JC* 4469) inscription:

王曰：鬯，敬明乃心，用辟我一人，善效(教)乃友內(納)辟(辟=法) [...] ¹³⁴
The King spoke: “Ran, devoutly make manifest your heart and serve me, the one man, as your ruler. Effectively instruct your kinfolk, so they shall adopt your ways as their standard.” ¹³⁵

¹³² Cf. *Duandai* #19; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 6.276-316; *Mingwen xuan* #95; and *Source Book* #15.

¹³³ Cf. Zhu Fenghan, *Shang-Zhou jiazuo xingtai yanjiu*, 292-297. Interestingly the designation of kinfolk as friends has a parallel in medieval Europe. Mark Bloch remarks: “In the whole of feudal Europe, [...] there existed groups founded on blood-relationship. [T]he ties thus created were regarded as extremely strong. One word is characteristic. In France, in speaking of kinfolk, one commonly called them simply ‘friends’ (*amis*) and in Germany, *Freunde*” (Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961], 123).

¹³⁴ Cf. *Mingwen xuan*, 313 for this interpretation of the graph 辟. Chen Yingjie proposes a slightly different interpretation of this phrase: “Effectively instruct your kinfolk to enter into the service [of their ruler]” (*shan jiao nai you ru bi* 善教乃友入辟) (Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 781).

¹³⁵ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 31.722-732; *Mingwen xuan* #443.

The passage begins with a formula we are by now familiar with from the Ke inscriptions, the “Kang gao” and the Houma and Wenxian covenant texts. Again it is the individual, associated with his heart, who is required to show his loyalty and determination to serve the king. However, Ran is also expected to instruct his kinfolk to follow his example in serving the royal house. In other words, the vessel donor functions here as a sort of pivot between Zhou king and his own kinfolk. A similar instance appears in the inscription on the late Western Zhou Shi Xun *gui*, already dealt with in the preceding chapter:

王曰：[…]¹「今余隹(唯)黼(申)勗乃令，令女(汝)衷離我邦小大猷，邦佑漢辭。敬明乃心，率呂(以)乃友干吾王身。」[…]

The King spoke: [...] “Now I extend your charge and order you to preserve our polity’s objectives great and small, and to broadly bring order to our polity. Devoutly make manifest your heart and lead your kinfolk to shield the person of the King.” [...]

In a way, these two passages precisely show us the dividing line between the basic structures of social organization and the enhanced structures of Western Zhou political identity. Both have their function in the institution of Western Zhou kingship, but only the latter is subject to a political discourse.

3.3.6 *Genealogy and the heart*

Together with the text from the Ke *lei* and Ke *he* inscriptions, the two passages from the Ran *xu* and Shi Xun *gui* are the only examples of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions where the king explicitly refers to the appointee’s heart in the context of

an authority transfer. Interestingly is further that both the *Ran xu* and *Shi Xun gui* inscriptions belong to the rare examples of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that present us with a vision of failure as is the case in Springs and Autumns covenant texts. The above quoted passage from the *Ran xu* inscription continues with the king's following admonition:

[...] 勿事(使)賦(暴)虐從(縱)獄，爰(援)奪戲行道。卒(厥)非正命，迺敢疾訊人，則隹(唯)輔天降喪。 [...]

[...] Do not indulge in cruelties or apply punishments arbitrarily. Do not allow for spoliations or other measures obstructing the right way of governance to happen. Improper charges and daring to harass people will to cause Heaven to send down calamities [on us]. [...]

The beginning of the *Shi Xun gui* has already been cited at the end of the preceding chapter. It starts with an account of the former kings and Shi Xun's forebears having successfully cooperated in receiving the cultural mandate of Heaven, before in the following lines, the text juxtaposes this ideal image with a present crisis:

The King said: "Commander Hong, Alas! In these days Heaven rises awesome and sends down destruction, the initial commitment could not be obeyed, thus there was no one to succeed the former kings. [...]"

That the heart appears so scarcely in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions recording the king's direct speech, and moreover mostly in texts addressing the possibility of failure, should not actually surprise. In times when the bonds between king and elites were strong and unquestioned, a simple pledge by the vessel donor to serve the king indefinitely must have been perceived as sufficient. The heart as the ultimate seat of personal loyalty needed only to be referred to in situations where loyalty bonds were

fragile and in the need for corroboration through bond formulae. Yet the very fact that the heart was made explicit in moments of crisis, tells us that the ideas of corporate solidarity expressed in these rare inscriptions must have been to a certain degree implicit and presumed in all or most other inscriptions as well.¹³⁶

Here lies also the main difference between patron-client relations, the sort of which we have observed in the Houma and Wenxian covenant texts, and the idea of Western Zhou kingship. The former addresses a constellation where the covenantors have the choice to join patrons from rivalling political factions. Consequently the possibility of defection poses the basic issue which the covenant formulae aim to prevent. Zhou kingship by contrast does not calculate this possibility. Although we have said that the authority relations between king and elites were built on the logic of patron-client relations, there still existed an important difference between clients or covenantors on the one hand, and the king's vassals on the other. The latter did not face the choice between rivalling political factions, but the choice whether or not to employ his own resources and to subordinate himself to a superimposed authority by serving the Zhou King as Son of Heaven, a choice that was presumably rather hypothetical than actual in nature. Even though royal commands did not function within pre-existing authority structures, they were nevertheless binding. Perceived as a gift or as an act of munificence, the delegation of royal authority put the recipient

¹³⁶ This seems to be similar to the source situation when it comes to the question of European feudalism. Creel for instance notes that explicit contracts of oaths which are believed to constitute the essence of feudalism are rather to be taken as signs for the decline of that institution (Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 347). This is so for a simple reason as Bloch states: "'To serve' or (as it was sometimes put) 'to aid' and 'to protect' – it was in these very simple terms that the oldest texts summed up the mutual obligations of the armed retainer and his lord, Never was the bond felt to be stronger than in the period when its effects were stated in the vaguest and, consequently, the most comprehensive fashion" (Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 219). Similarly, an elaborate rhetoric of motives and of crisis mark the exception in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. What we find to be a commonplace instead is the king's imperative to serve (*yong shi* 用事), or to serve the king as one's ruler (*yong bi* 用辟).

under an obligation to render the credit of trust and the favours he has received through faithful service.

Nevertheless, it appears to have been important that the appointee expressed his receipt of the command and pledges his allegiance to the king of his own volition, even though in historical reality this may not necessarily have been the case. Without the command's formal receipt, without the recipient's declared assumption of an obligation, so it seems, the authority relation initiated through the king's command could not come into effect. In this point do the relations depicted in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions indeed resemble those in Springs and Autumns covenant texts. As far as our epigraphic and transmitted sources consistently suggest, the king's allies or vassals were not born into this authority relation, they were not "citizens" of a Zhou "state" or indisputable subjects of the king. They did pledge allegiance to the king because they or their forebears assumed an obligation to serve the king in return for becoming part of the Zhou ruling organization (which most likely went hand in hand with the entitlement to socio-economic rights).¹³⁷ Hence what loyalty oaths in the bronzes aim to avert is not defection to another lord, but simply the possible discontinuation of vertical authority relations, or, in the last consequence, the disintegration of the Zhou ruling organization.

This brings us back to what we have pointed out as the ultimate purpose of the bonds between king and elites as well between the Zhou and Heaven, the goal of lasting and endurance. This aspect is completely absent in the Houma and Wenxian covenant texts. "A single covenant type," says Williams, "represents a group of

¹³⁷ For a comprehensive attempt to define what rights these were see Cook, "Wealth and the Western Zhou." Only a couple of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions explicitly mention the conferral of land and populations to the appointee. See Lau, *Quellenstudien*, 169-293.

living individuals at a particular point in time.”¹³⁸ Accordingly, neither do these texts address the covenantors’ forebears nor their descendants.¹³⁹ The bronzes by contrast always address or present the individual within the sphere of interlocution, relating him both to his forebears and to his descendants.

It is in this trans-generational context where the political person, associated with its heart and with its *de*, features most prominently in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. This, of course, has something to do with the nature and function of Western Zhou bronze vessels. As bronzes, like we have said, are not to be mistaken for carriers of vassal documents but were used in ancestral ritual, it should come to no surprise that their messages overtly articulate claims of ancestral legacy. Still these claims are often of a political nature in that they attempt an integration of genealogy and political legacy.

3.3.7 *Lineages vs. political genealogies*

Now we come full circle back to the beginning of our chapter where we have introduced our hypothesis based on the text from the Qiu *zhong* inscription. At this point now we aim to demonstrate how the political individual, defined through *de* and the heart, did play a role not just in the delegation of authority, but also in the creation of political genealogies. In this context too, the heart came to fulfil an important rhetorical function. Let us start our analysis with the second half of the text

¹³⁸ Williams, “Ten Thousand Names: Rank and Lineage Affiliation in the Wenxian Covenant Texts,” 962.

¹³⁹ The ancestral spirits which are invoked to watch over the adherence of the covenant are not ancestors in the sense of role models whom one should emulate but actual spirits existing on the same timeline as the covenantors.

from the mid- Western Zhou Shi Qiang *pan* 史牆盤 (JC 10175) inscription:¹⁴⁰

[...]青(靜)幽高且(祖), 才(在)敷(微)靈(靈)處。雩武王既戡(翦)殷, 敷(微)史刺(烈)且(祖)迺來見武王, 武王則令周公舍國(寓), 于周卑(俾)處。

[...] Tranquil and secluded was my High Ancestor; he dwelt in Wei, the place of our ancestral spirits.¹⁴¹ When King Wu eliminated / cut off the Yin, my glorious ancestor, Scribe Wei, came to audience before King Wu, and King Wu ordered the Patriarch of Zhou to bestow upon him our humble dwelling within the capital domain of Zhou.

𠄎 (柔?) 夷 (惠) 乙且(祖), 逌(仇) 匹(厥) 辟, 遠猷 夙(腹) 心子(孜?) 夙(汲?)。 [...]

Conciliatory and kind was Ancestor Yi; affiliating with his ruler,¹⁴² far-reaching in his designs, he devoted himself with his heart and the vitals to diligently [serving the Son of Heaven]. [...] ¹⁴³

The mentioning of the compound *fu-xin* 腹心 in this passage seems highly reminiscent of its generic use in the Houma and Wenxian covenant texts. However, here it is not employed in an illocutionary act through which the speaker commits himself to a certain course of action. Instead it appears within the vessel donor's

¹⁴⁰ The transcription of this passage follows with minor adaptations that of Dong Shan in Cai Meifen, ed., *He he Zongzhou*, 24. See also Qiu Xigui, "Shi Qiang *pan* ming jieshi" 史牆盤銘解釋, in idem, *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji*, 3.9; and the interpretations by Tang Lan 唐蘭, Li Xueqin, Xu Zhongshu, Yu Xingwu and Lian Shaoming 連劭名 reprinted in Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui, Yin Shengping, eds., *Xizhou Wei shi jiazhu qingtongqi qun yanjiu*, 111-369.

¹⁴¹ Both Shaughnessy (*Sources*, 189) and Cook (*Source Book*, 98) translate *ling chu* 靈處 as numinous place, while Eno ("Inscriptional Records," #72) translates "to dwell spirit-like." Both translations do not seem to make much sense in the context of the inscription. However Wu Xiaoyi 吳小奕, "Shi gu Chu yuci 'ling'" 釋古楚語詞 '靈,' *Minzu yuwen* 民族語文 (2005) 4: 35-37; and Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci*, 397, both suggest that *ling* in certain contexts might be synonymous with *shen* 神, "(ancestral) spirit." The former term, Wu shows, appears with greater frequency in the southern Chu language instead of *shen*. Based on this admittedly weak evidence, I nevertheless propose to interpret *ling chu* as the ancestral lands of the Wei lineage, the numinous aspect perhaps being a perceived consubstantiality with the ancestors at the lineage's ancestral lands.

¹⁴² For the compound word *choupi* 仇匹 see Wang Guowei, *Guantang jilin*, 79; and Chen Jian, "Ju Guodian jian shidu Xizhou jinwen yi li," 25-26.

¹⁴³ See Qiu Xigui, "Shi Qiang *pan* ming jieshi," 15, for the interpretation of the last two graphs.

narrative where it serves to mark the beginning of an authority relation which lies in the past. In this context the image of the heart and vitals stresses the commitment of ancestor Yi to join the enterprise of Zhou kingship, a commitment that, so the inscription claims, has been retrieved from generation to generation until it reached the vessel donor, Qiang, himself:

[...]史牆夙夜不惰，其日蔑曆。牆弗敢取(沮)，對揚天子不(丕)顯休令，用乍(作)寶尊彝。

[...] I, scribe Qiang, am diligent day and night without fail, that my merits may be daily acknowledged. I, Qiang, do not dare to stop extolling the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven's charge, wherefore was cast this precious vessel.

刺(烈)且(祖)、文考弋(式)龔(休?)受(授)牆爾龔(祉?)福。襄(懷)媿(祿)，黃耆彌生，龕(堪)事畢(厥)辟，其萬年永寶用。

My shining grandfather and father have made [the King's] grace their standard and conveyed to me the precious blessings of succession. May I embrace their blessings living a long life to great old age that I may capably serve my ruler [the King] and forever treasure this [this vessel].

In the preceding chapter we have been analysing inscriptions in which the king is depicted to recall the appointee's ancestors' decision to join the founding Kings Wen and Wu in the assumption of the Great Charge. This procedure has been defined as part of a rhetoric of motives through which the King substantiated his decision to issue a charge to the appointee. Here we witness the same operation from the opposite perspective of the vessel donor. What becomes important now is to render obvious the ancestors' volition and commitment that drove them to ally with the former kings as well as the retrieval of this commitment by their descendants. It is in this context where *de* and the heart appear with the greatest frequency in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.

Let us look at some further examples to furnish this point. See for instance the late Western Zhou Guo Shu Lü *zhong* 虢叔旅鐘 (JC 238 - 243) inscription:¹⁴⁴

虢弔(叔)旅曰：不(丕)顯皇考夷(惠)弔(叔)，穆穆秉元明德，御于畢(厥)辟，
暈(得)屯(純)亡敗(愆)。旅敢肇帥井(型)皇考威義(儀)，□御于天子。[...]
Guo Shu Lü declares: “Greatly illustrious was my august deceased father Hui
Shu. Solemnly, he held fast to the primordial manifest *de* (i.e. the initial decision
of one of Hui Shu’s forebears to enter into the service of the Son of Heaven),
attaining flawless integrity in serving his sovereign.¹⁴⁵ I, Lü, dare to succeed
and to emulate my august deceased father’s propriety in [...] serving the Son of
Heaven.”¹⁴⁶

A similar formulation can be found in the text from the mid- to late Western
Zhou Shi Wang *ding* 師望鼎 (JC 2812) inscription:¹⁴⁷

大師小子師望(望)曰：不(丕)顯皇考克公，穆穆克盟(明)畢(厥)心，愆(慎)畢
(厥)德，用辟于先王，暈(得)屯(純)亡敗(愆)。

Commander Wang, the son of the Grand Commander, declares: “My illustrious
august deceased father, Patriarch Qiu, solemnly was able to make manifest his
heart and be attentive to his *de*. Hence he served the former Kings as his
sovereigns, obtaining integrity without flaw.

¹⁴⁴ According to Wu Dacheng, the bell was discovered in a riverbank near Hedicun 河迪村 in the outskirts of the modern city of Xi’an, Shaanxi (Wu Dacheng, *Kezhai jigulu*, Shi wen sheng gao 釋文 贖稿 shang 上. 1). However, nothing is known about the date and circumstances of the find. The vessel was formerly housed in the old collection of Ruan Yuan and has been acquired by the Palace Museum, Beijing, in 1957 (Gugong Bowuyuan 故宮博物院 ed., *Gugong qingtongqi guan* 故宮青銅器館 [Beijing: Gugong chubanshe, 2012], 97). Its inscription was first recorded in Ruan Yuan, *Jigu zhai zhong ding yiqi kuanshi*, 3.11.

¹⁴⁵ There exist varying interpretations for the phrase *de chun wang min* 得純亡愆. See Kryukov, “Symbols of Power and Communication,” 318-319; Noel Barnard and Cheung Kwong-yue, *The Shan-Fu Liang Ch’i kuei and associated inscribed Vessels* (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1996), 46-47; and Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 431-434.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 26.368-381; *Mingwen xuan* #427; and *Source Book* #44.

¹⁴⁷ Although now verified information exists as to its pedigree, according to Zou An, the vessel was discovered in Xinjiang 新疆 province during Zou Zongtang’s 左宗棠 (1812-1885) military campaign to recover the area for the Qing dynasty, which lasted from 1876 to 1878 (Zou An, *Zhou jinwen cun*, 2. supplement 1.1). Its inscription was first recorded in Wu Dacheng, *Kezhai jigulu*, 5.7.

翌(望)肇(肇)帥井(型)皇考，虔夙(夙)夜出內(入)王命。不敢不豢不斐。[...]
Now I, Wang, succeed to emulate the example of my august father, reverently
dispatching the commands of the King night and day. I do not dare not to obey
or not to follow. [...]¹⁴⁸

See further the text from late Western Zhou Liang Qi *zhong* 梁其鐘 (JC 187)

inscription:¹⁴⁹

刃(梁)其曰：「不(丕)顯皇且(祖)考，穆穆異異，克質(慎)畢(厥)德，農臣先
王，臯(得)屯(純)亡敗(愆)。刃(梁)其肇(肇)帥井(型)皇且(祖)考秉明德，虔
夙夕辟天子。 [...]

Liang Qi announces: “My illustrious august forebears, solemnly, were able to be
attentive to their *de*. They industriously served the former Kings, obtaining
integrity without flaw. I, Liang Qi, succeed to emulate the example of my
august forebears, grasping their manifest *de*: Day and night I will reverently
serve the Son of Heaven. [...]¹⁵⁰

In each of these three examples we observe the vessel donor’s attempt to merge his
biological genealogy with a political legacy begun by his forebears. This resonates
with what we have said in the preceding chapter, that an individual’s commitment
towards serving the Zhou king was to be turned into a lineage’s legacy by its
perpetuation across successive generations of office holders. In these three texts now,
as well as in the Qiu *zhong* inscription cited earlier, we see that this operation was
associated with the emulation of one’s forebear’s mind-set as a precondition for the
descendant’s eligibility to receive a royal mandate himself. At least in theory,

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Daxi, 2.80-82; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 22.71-80; *Mingwen xuan* #213; and *Source Book* #77. For the interpretation of the last phrase see *Mingwen xuan*, 146, n. 4.

¹⁴⁹ The Liang Qi bells (JC 187-192) reportedly were discovered in Renjiacun 任家村, Fufeng County, Shaanxi, in 1940 (Shanghai Bowuguan 上海博物館 ed., *Shanghai Bowuguan cang qingtongqi* 上海博物館藏青銅器 [Shanghai: Shanghai Renminmeishu chubanshe, 1964], fuce 附冊.58). Their inscription was first recorded in Yu Xingwu, *Shang Zhou jinwen yilu*, 3.1-4.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *Duandai* #191; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 26.388-400; *Mingwen xuan* #397; Barnard and Cheung, *The Shan-Fu Liang Ch’i kuei and associated inscribed Vessels*, 58-65; and *Source Book* #62.

successive office holding was not a matter of genealogy but of the perpetuation of a political choice across generation boundaries. This choice and the commitment to stick to it is what *de* signifies in these inscriptions. The association of being able to make manifest one's heart and to be attentive to or to hold fast to one's *de* with the purpose of faithfully serving one's ruler / the Son of Heaven is unmistakable. Indeed the phrases *shen / bing de* 慎/秉德 and *nong / yun chen Tianzi* 農/允臣天子 or *yong bi* 用辟 form yet another hendiadys in the rhetoric of Western Zhou kingship.

While most inscriptions that purport to record the direct speech of the vessel donor focus on the political succession from father to son,¹⁵¹ the retrieval and perpetuation of a commitment to serve the Son of Heaven was sometimes depicted to inform a political genealogy stretching across numerous generations of officeholders all the way to the founding of the dynasty, such as it is the case in the Shi Qiang *pan* and Xing *zhong* inscriptions. Whereas the text from the former refers to this retrieval in terms of a detailed narrative expounding each ancestor's particular deeds,¹⁵² the late Western Zhou Xing *zhong* 癘鐘 II (JC 246-256) inscription, cast by Scribe Qiang's son, Wei Bo Xing 微伯癘,¹⁵³ shortens this lengthy narrative by merely referring to his ancestors (whom he indicates, perhaps in a *pars pro toto* fashion, by three successive genealogical positions without the mentioning of personal names) having been able to make their hearts manifest:

癘曰：不(丕)顯高且(祖)、亞且(祖)、文考，克明畢(厥)心，疋(胥)尹龔畢(厥)威義(儀)，用辟先王。癘不敢弗帥且(祖)考。秉明德，鬲(劬)夙夕，左尹氏。
Xing declares: “My grandly illustrious High Ancestor, Subordinated (Ya-ranked) Ancestor and Cultured Father were able to make their heart manifest and to [...]”

¹⁵¹ Compare the instances listed in Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 824-825.

¹⁵² See Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 189-191 for a complete translation of this narrative passage.

¹⁵³ Cf. von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society*, 56-64, for the genealogy of the Wei lineage.

their awesome demeanour, so as to serve the former Kings.¹⁵⁴ I, Xing, do not dare not to emulate my forebears. Holding fast to their manifest *de*-commitment, I exert myself day and night in assisting the ministerial lineage (?).¹⁵⁵

Merging the style of the Shi Qiang *pan* inscription with that of the Xing *zhong*, the text from the lengthy late Western Zhou Qiu *pan* inscription in turn combines the heart / *de* formula with a full-fledged narrative of the vessel donor's ancestors' deeds the latter are claimed to have accomplished during the reigns of the respective Zhou kings they are said to have been allied with:¹⁵⁶

逖曰：「丕(丕)顯朕皇高且(祖)單公，起(桓桓)克明愨(慎)卑(厥)德，夾(暨)文王、武王達殷，膺受天魯令，匍有四方，竝(並)宅(厥)堇(圻)疆土，用配上帝。

Qiu declares: “Greatly illustrious, my August High Ancestor Patriarch Shan,¹⁵⁷ courageously was able to make manifest and be attentive to his *de*-determination, assisting King Wen and King Wu in replacing the Yin and in assuming Heaven's excellent Mandate, spreading it throughout the four cardinal regions. [Patriarch Shan] sided with [the Zhou kings] in taking residence within the [received] territories in order to match Di on High.

季朕皇高且(祖)公弔(叔)，克(仇)逖匹成王，成受大令(命)，方(徧)狄(逖=剔)不(享)，用奠四或(域)萬邦。

Ah! My August High Ancestor Gong Shu! He was able to ally with King Cheng in securing the receipt of the Great Charge and in broadly setting those in order who did not present offerings, and thus settling the many polities of the four cardinal regions.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Cf. von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society*, 64-67, for the terms *gaozu* 高祖 and *yazu* 亞祖.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 50.383-387; *Mingwen xuan* #368; and *Source Book* #33.

¹⁵⁶ My translation has been adapted with some major changes from the rendering in Sena, “Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China,” 72-75.

¹⁵⁷ For an analysis of the ancestral names used in the text from the Qiu *pan* inscription see Sena, “Reproducing Society: Lineage and Kinship in Western Zhou China,” 124-127.

¹⁵⁸ The interpretation of 方 as *bian* 徧, “broadly,” follows Dong Shan, “Lüe lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen,” 43. For the reading of 逖 as *ti* 剔, “to order,” see Li Ling, “Du Yangjiacun chutu de Yu Qiu zhu qi,” 24; and Wang Hui, “Qiu pan mingwen jainshi,” 83.

季朕皇高且(祖)新室中(仲)，克幽明(厥)心，柔遠能邇，會豐康王，方(徧)襄(懷)不廷。

Ah! My August High Ancestor Xin Shi Zhong! He was able to make his heart profoundly manifest. He conciliated the distant and enabled the near. He joined together with and assisted King Kang in broadly embracing those who did not come to court.

季朕皇高且(祖)惠中(仲)懿父，懿(懿)于政，又成于猷，用會邵(昭)王、穆王，盜政四方，(翦)伐楚荆。

Ah! My August High Ancestor Hui Zhong Lifu! Stabilizing and harmonizing in his governing, accomplished in his plans, he joined together with King Zhao and King Mu in extending [the Zhou's] governing to the four cardinal regions and in cutting down and punishing the Chu and Jing.

季朕皇高且(祖)零伯，炎(焜)明(厥)心，不象(惰)[在]服，用辟龔(恭)王、懿(懿)王。

Ah! My August High Ancestor Ling Bo! He made his heart bright and manifest and was not neglectful in his service.¹⁵⁹ Hence he was able to serve King Gong and King Yi as his sovereigns.

季朕皇亞且(祖)懿(懿)中(仲)豉，諫(諫諫?)克匍保(厥)辟考(孝)王、夷王，又(有)成于周邦。

Ah! My August Grandfather Yi Zhong Kuang! [...] ¹⁶⁰ He was able to broadly protect his sovereigns, King Xiao and King Yi, [and thus] he had accomplishments in the Zhou polity.

季朕皇考龔叔，穆穆(穆)懿(懿)于政，明(濟)于德，高(享)[辟]刺(厲)王。

Ah! My August Father Gong Shu! Solemn and respectful, he was harmonizing and fair in his governance. Manifest and succeeding in his de-commitment, he devoted [himself to] and served King Li as his sovereign.

¹⁵⁹ The reconstruction of the missing graph as well as the reading of this phrase follows Dong Shan, “Lüe lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen,” 43

¹⁶⁰ I follow Sena in reading the graph 豉 as part of the ancestor's name. The interpretation of the reduplicative 諫諫 is not clear. Cf. Dong Shan, “Lüe lun Xizhou Shan shi jiazhu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen,” 43. Li Ling, “Du Yangjiacun chutu de Yu Qiu zhu qi,” 24; and Wang Hui, “Qiu pan mingwen jainshi,” 83.

逯肇(纘)朕皇且(祖)考服，虔夙夕敬朕死(尸)事。肆(肆)天子多易(賜)逯休，
天子其萬年無疆，耆黃耇，保奠周邦，諫辭(义)四方」。 [...]

I, Qiu, have been continuing my August Ancestors' and Deceased Father's service [to the Zhou Kings]. Respectfully day and night, I devoted myself to fulfil my obligations. Hence the Son of Heaven has on many occasions bestowed his grace on me, Qiu. May the Son of Heaven for ten thousand years without end, until high age, protect the Zhou polity, may he order and secure the four cardinal regions.” [...]

As has been pointed out by numerous scholars before, while the Shi Qiang *pan* inscription juxtaposes the line of the vessel donor's office holding forebears with that of the succession of Zhou kings, the meticulously arranged narrative from the Qiu *pan* inscription interlocks both strands by relating each mentioned individual from Qiu's line of forebears to the respective kings they are claimed to have successively served.¹⁶¹ However, on closer inspection the text reveals anything but a linear succession of lineage heads as many scholars assume it to be the case. Firstly, as von Falkenhausen and Sena have shown, Qiu, whose full name is given as Shan Shu Wufu Qiu 單叔五父逯 in another inscription from the Yangjiacun cache, was a third-born son whose exalted political position does not seem to concur with his relatively inferior genealogical rank.¹⁶² Secondly, not only is it highly questionable that the eight members of the Shan lineage mentioned in the Qiu *pan* inscription should constitute a continuous, unbroken line of eight successive generations (which

¹⁶¹ See for instance von Falkenhausen, “The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun,” 268; and Shaughnessy, “The Writing of a late Western Zhou Bronze Inscription,” 852.

¹⁶² Cf. von Falkenhausen, “The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun,” 244-247; and Sena, “Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China,” 77. In fact von Falkenhausen speculates: “Arguably, Qiu's wealth, power, and ritual privileges were disproportionate to his position in the kin-based hierarchy within his lineage, and they may conceivably have been disproportionate even to the overall rank of his lineage within the Zhou-wide lineage hierarchy. It is possible that Qiu's exalted standing results from an ad personam augmentation of rank in recognition of meritorious services rendered to the Zhou royal house” (von Falkenhausen, “The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun,” 252).

would equal an average length of more than 31 years for each generation),¹⁶³ their respective positions within the Shan lineage too were rather removed from the main line of descent.¹⁶⁴ Based on these observations von Falkenhausen assumes:

By enumerating, apparently quite indiscriminately, prominent members of his lineage from generations past (some of whom may have been but distantly related to himself), and by connecting them to the former kings, Qiu glosses over his own relative insignificance and establishes the entire Shan lineage as the basis of reference for his own identity.¹⁶⁵

Although far from being impossible, von Falkenhausen's assumption does not fit with the conceptual division between political and lineage context we have ascertained above. Sena's conclusion as to how the choice of ancestors in the Qiu *pan* text might be explained seems much more probable in my view:

Qiu's true predecessors are the younger sons of each generation, his uncles, great-uncles, etc., by whose service the Shan lineage maintained its connection to the Zhou court. These are the ancestors whose service is recalled in the narrative of lineage history provided by Qiu. Thus we can see the ancestor list of the Qiu basin not as a genealogy, but rather as a pedigree that supported Qiu's succession in his particular roles both within the lineage and within the broader socio-political context. We might imagine that in constructing such a pedigree, Qiu would have had choices highlighting particular ancestors, omitting others. Thus the "lineage" provided in the inscription is not simply a reflection of kinship relations, but a creation of the text designed to bolster the political and social claims of its sponsor.¹⁶⁶

If we follow Sena's assumption, which I propose to do here, we may conclude that

¹⁶³ See von Falkenhausen, "The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun," 261-262.

¹⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, 258-267

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 273.

¹⁶⁶ Sena, "Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China," 79

the individual in its capacity as a political actor did play a role not just in the relation between the Zhou King and the elites. Within lineage contexts as well, there seems to have existed a conceptual differentiation between genealogical and political lines of succession. Even though in most cases both lines did actually coincide, this was not necessarily always the case. Hence although the ancestor list in the Qiu *pan* inscription may not represent a complete genealogy, the retrieval of the bond from the times of Kings Wen and Wu down to Qiu is nevertheless envisioned in terms of an unbroken line of commitment. This point is particularly interesting for us, as it shows once again very clearly that *xin* and *de* can and must be understood to belong to the sphere of the political.

While having now identified the different uses of *xin* in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the *Documents*, we still don't know what exactly it meant? If the concept was indeed associated with the heart as the organ responsible for emotive, cognitive and evaluative activity, one might interpret it analogously as a person's "self." However, we must be careful not to mistake this self for any modern day notion of the private inner self, for in our examples *xin* clearly refers to the individual within a socio-political constellation. Instead the early Chinese notion of *xin* comes perhaps closest to what Assmann, with reference to Nietzsche, calls the "social self," defined through its ability to recall as well as through its accountability.¹⁶⁷ It is this accountability which allows individuals to become fellow men,¹⁶⁸ which incidentally seems to be the most appropriate rendering for the compound *ren-ren* 仁人 in the passage from the "Tai shi" chapter cited earlier. In this sense *xin* appears to be the working faculty of the social self. This idea finds its clearest expression in a passage

¹⁶⁷ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 136.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

from the “Pan Geng” 盤庚 chapter in the *Documents of Shang* (*Shangshu* 尚書).¹⁶⁹

The protagonist in this difficult to date Eastern Zhou text is the mythical Shang king Pan Geng, attempting to gain the trust and support of his allies for a planned move of the Yin capital. The passage under consideration reads:

[...]永敬大恤，無胥絕遠！汝分(比)¹⁷⁰猷念以相從，各設中于乃心。[...]¹⁷¹
[...] Perpetually be attentive to our great burdens, do not alienate yourself from me. You shall concur in my plans and thoughts and thus follow me. Each one of you should conform to [these goals and norms] in your hearts. [...]¹⁷²

The heart is here clearly associated with “the place where society inscribes itself with its claims and obligations.”¹⁷³ Hence this social self is not something inborn in man, quite the contrary it needs to be build and cultivated. “Man, that has been raised to become a fellow man,” Assmann states, “needs to remain true to this self. By remaining true to ‘himself,’ he conversely also remains true to his obligations and to his community.”¹⁷⁴ Nothing else than the visible proof for one’s remaining true to one’s social self is meant by the phrase *ming xin* 明心, “to make one’s heart manifest,” from its earliest attestable occurrence in the text from the Ke inscriptions all the way through its formularisation in texts from late Western Zhou bronze

¹⁶⁹ While most scholars, including He Dingsheng and Qu Wanli, date this chapter to the Western Zhou period, Chen Mengjia believes it to be a Warring States text (Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun*, 207). Chen’s suggestion is bolstered by the fact that several Documents-like texts referring to mytho-historical episodes from the Shang narrative have recently come to light with the unprovenanced Qinghua Warring States manuscripts (Qinghua jian 清華簡). Cf. Gao Youren 高佑仁, *Qinghua wu: Shu lei wenxian yanjiu* 清華伍：書類文獻研究 (Taipei: Wan juan lou, 2018).

¹⁷⁰ The Han Stone Classics version of the text writes 比 instead of 分. See Qu Wanli, *Han shijing Shangshu can zi ji zheng* 漢石經尚書殘字集證 (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1963), 2.8. Most commentators choose to amend the transmitted text according to the Stone Classics version. See Yang Yunru, *Shangshu hegu*, 86, for the epigraphic and phonetic relation between 比 and 分.

¹⁷¹ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 6.237.

¹⁷² The translation has been adapted from Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 24.

¹⁷³ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 136.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

inscriptions and in the *Documents* in my view.

Proceeding from this insight, what informs the Zhou ruling organisation, understood as a network of “social selfs” bound to each other through quasi-patron client relations, is *de*.

3.4 From personal *de* to collective *de*

In contrast to the heart, which is necessarily bound to the physical existence of the individual, *de*, as a sort of mind-set or value-based orientation, is something that could be emulated or retrieved by successive generations of individuals. As we have seen in the examples from the Da Yu *ding* inscription and “Kang gao” chapter above, it was also perceived as a shared orientation which served to commit the King and his vassals to a common politico-religious task. In other words *de*, at least according to Western Zhou political rhetoric, constituted an important, if not the major aspect on which political authority relations were based.

The text from the mid- Western Zhou Shi Zai *ding* 師鬲鼎 (JC 2830) inscription,¹⁷⁵ dating from the eight year of the reign of King Gong 恭 (r. 917/15-900 BCE),¹⁷⁶ presents us with a rare example where both these contexts are depicted in conjunction:¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ The vessel was found in a bronze hoard detected during ground levelling works in Qiangjiacun 强家村, Fufeng county, Shaanxi, on December 5th 1974. The find was first published in *Wenwu* (1975) 8: 57-62.

¹⁷⁶ See Li Xueqin, “Xizhou zhongqi qingtongqi de zhongyao biaoqi,” 31-32, for the dating of the vessel.

¹⁷⁷ The transcription is reproduced with amendments from Dong Shan in Cai Meifen, ed., *He he Zongzhou*, 80. The translations follows, with several major adaptations, this of Eno, “Inscriptional Records” #65

唯王八祀正月，辰才(在)丁卯。王曰：師鬻！女(汝)克蠱(蓋=進)乃身，臣朕皇考穆王。用乃孔德璣(遜)屯(純)，乃用心引(矧)正乃辟安德，夷余小子肇(肇)盥(淑)先王德。

It was in the King's eighth year, in the first month at *ding-mao* day. The King spoke: "Commander Zai! You were able to offer up yourself in the service of my August Deceased Father King Mu.¹⁷⁸ Because your vast reaching *de* is integer, you were able to employ your heart and to make upright and settle the *de* of your ruler as well,¹⁷⁹ assisting me, the young heir, in succeeding to match the former Kings' *de*.¹⁸⁰

Commander Zai, a member of the Guoji 虢季 sub-lineage associated with the eastern branch of the polity of Guo 虢,¹⁸¹ is described here by the young King Gong as having been able, based on his *de*-commitment, not only to serve the King's father, King Mu, but also to confirm and fortify the latter in his own *de*-commitment and determination. Moreover, instead of discontinuing the authority relation after the death of King Mu, Zai, the text claims, devoted himself to assisting King Gong, who

¹⁷⁸ The interpretation of the graph 蠱 follows Yu Haoliang 于豪亮, "Shaanxi Fufengxian Qiangjiacun chutu Guoji jiazhu tongqi mingwen kaoshi" 陝西扶風縣強家村出土虢季家族銅器銘文考釋, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 9 (1984): 251-252. Yu reads 蠱 as *jin* 蓋(進) in the sense of "to offer up (oneself)." See also Li Xueqin, "Shi Zai ding sheng yi" 師鬻鼎剩義, in idem, *Xin chu tongqi yanjiu* 新出銅器研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1990), 95.

¹⁷⁹ The rendering of *yin* 引 as *shen* 矧, "all the more," "also," "likewise," follows Chen Chusheng 陳初生, ed., *Jinwen chang yong zi dian* 金文常用字典, (Xi'an: Shaanxi Renmin chubanshe, 1987), 1063. See also Qiu Xigui, "Shuo jinwen 'yin' zi de xuci yongfa" 說金文 "引" 字的虛詞用法, *Gu Hanyu yanjiu* 古漢語研究 (1988) 1: 1-3, rpt, in idem, *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji*, 3.45-49. An alternative interpretation of this phrase has been proposed by Yu Haoliang who reads "Shi Zai was guiding his ruler in the in the latter's *de*," taking *yin* 引 as *yindao* 引導 and *an* 安 as the locative particle *yu* 於. See Yu Haoliang, "Shaanxi Fufengxian Qiangjiacun chutu Guoji jiazhu tongqi mingwen kaoshi," 254.

¹⁸⁰ For the interpretation of 夷 as *zhu* 助, "to assist," in this passage see He Shuhuan, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji*, 259-260.

¹⁸¹ See Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 359-363, and Li, *Landscape and Power in Early China*, 251-258, for the Guo lineage and its branches as well as for the polity of Guo during the Western Zhou period. While the location of the Shi Zai *ding* must be associated with the metropolitan residence of the Guoji sub-lineage, many other Guoji bronzes have been discovered in 1990 in the modern vicinity of Sanmenxia 三門峽, Henan, now identified as the cemetery of the Guoji sub-lineage. Cf. Henan sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所 and Sanmenxia shi Wenwu Gongzuodui 三門峽市文物工作隊, eds., *Sanmenxia Guoguo mu* 三門峽虢國墓 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1999).

by the time was probably still a minor or at least unprepared to step into the position of the Son of Heaven and to become a capable ruler in the succession of the former Kings. The situation depicted here proves to be more or less identical to the constellations we have seen in the Da Yu *ding* and Shi Xun *gui* inscriptions respectively, cited at the end of the last chapter. In the Da Yu *ding* inscription the king's words were:

Alas, you have helped me from the hazy dawn of my youth: When I was engaged in my youthful studies, you did not abandon me, your ruler, the solitary man. Now I assume to emulate and grasp the upright [sense of] *de* of King Wen, and charge the various officials as he did. Now I charge you to assist Rong in devotedly holding up the standards of *de*: be assiduous in remonstrating with me, from dawn to dusk serving in awe of Heaven's awesomeness.

Similarly in the text from the Shi Xun *gui* inscription we read:

[F]ormerly, out of your integer concern for the Zhou polity, you placed me, the young heir, upon the throne and carried out your duties, firmly protecting the person of the King.

Now I extend your charge and order you to help preserving our polity's objectives great and small, and to broadly bring order to our polity.

In the Shi Zai *ding* inscription as well, the king, now settled in his position, requites his appointee's proven commitment to the institution of Zhou kingship with a renewed charge, and thus with the official retrieval of the bond between Shi Zai and the Zhou King, begun during the reign of King Mu:

易(賜)女(汝)玄袞黼(黼)屯(純)、赤市、朱纁、緼(纁)旂、大師金雁(膺)、攸(箆)勒。用井(型)乃聖且(祖)考隣(鄰)明齡(令)辟前王，事余一人。

“I present you with a dark ceremonial robe with embroidered hem, a red apron, a vermilion jade pendant, a banner hung with bells, a grand commander’s breast plate of bronze, and a bridle adorned with bronze. Use these to emulate your sage forbears’ brightly manifest and exhaustive service to the former Kings, and so serve me, the solitary man.”¹⁸²

In his staged response to the King’s charge, Commander Zai, for his part as well, traces his *de*-commitment back to the retired Grand Commander, who was perhaps his uncle:¹⁸³

飢拜稽首，休白(伯)大師肩(夷)鬪(任)飢臣皇辟。天子亦弗諱(忘)公上父馱(胡)德。飢蔑曆白(伯)大師：不(丕)自乍(作)小子，夙夕專(薄)由先且(祖)刺(烈)德，用臣皇辟。白(伯)亦克繇(纂)由先且(祖)壘(壘)，孫子一鬪(任)皇辟歆(懿)德，用保王身。

Zai bowed prostrate. The retiring elder Grand Commander put forward Zai to serve his august ruler.¹⁸⁴ Nor did the Son of Heaven forget the far reaching *de* of Patriarch Shangfu.¹⁸⁵ Zai praised the valour of the Grand Commander. “I myself am merely a small child. Reverently day and night I strive to follow the example of my forebears’ bright *de* in serving my august ruler.¹⁸⁶ The elder Grand Commander as well was truly able to continue his forebears’ affairs.¹⁸⁷ Together their descendants share into the burden of their august ruler’s

¹⁸² Compare page 209, n. 207 for the interpretation of *ling bi* 齡(令)辟 as “to serve someone with all one’s capacity and strength.”

¹⁸³ See Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu*, 359-363, for the possible genealogical relation between Shi Zai and the Grand commander.

¹⁸⁴ See Yu Haoliang, “Shaanxi Fufengxian Qiangjiacun chutu Guoji jiazhu tongqi mingwen kaoshi,” 258-260, for the interpretation of this passage. There is a similar formulation to be found in the mid-Western Zhou *Yu yan* 遇甌 (JC 948) which supports our translation: “Commander Yongfu sent Yu to serve under the Marquis of Hu” (師雍父肩史(事)遇事(使)于胡侯). For the rendering of the graphs 肩鬪 see also Li Xueqin, “Shi Zai ding sheng yi,” 95.

¹⁸⁵ For the possible association Shangfu with the Patriarch of the Guoshu 虢叔 lineage segment or even of the Guo trunk lineage see *ibid*, 363, and Li Xueqin, “Lun Xizhou wangchao zhong de Qi Taigong houyi” 論西周王朝中的齊太公後裔, *Yantai daxue xuebao* (Zhhexue shehuikexue ban) 煙臺大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) (2010) 4: 99-101.

¹⁸⁶ For the transcription of 專 as *bo* 薄, interpreted in the sense of *nu* 努, “to strive,” see Chen Chusheng, ed., *Jinwen chang yong zi dian*, 357-358.

¹⁸⁷ For the rendering of the graph 繇 as *zuan* 纂, “to continue,” as well as of the graph 壘 as *gu* 壘, here used as a loan for *shi* 事, “business,” “affairs,” (cf. Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa* [Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1996 [1957]], 52a) see Yu Haoliang, “Shaanxi Fufengxian Qiangjiacun chutu Guoji jiazhu tongqi mingwen kaoshi,” 262.

exclusive and enduring *de*-commitment,¹⁸⁸ protecting the person of the King.

𠄎敢𠄎(𠄎)王，卑(俾)天子(萬)年。𠄎(東=範)𠄎(𠄎=圍)白(伯)大師武(=迹)臣
保天子，用𠄎(厥)刺(烈)且(祖)介德。

I, Zai, dare to pray for the King's good fortune;¹⁸⁹ may the Son of Heaven be granted ten thousand years! I, Zai, shall follow the scope and pattern of the elder Grand Commander in serving and protecting the Son of Heaven;¹⁹⁰ in this, I shall follow my bright forebears' brilliant *de*.

𠄎敢對王休，用妥(綏)乍(作)公上父𠄎(尊)于朕考𠄎(號)季易父𠄎(秩)宗。
Zai dares to respond to the King's grace, wherefore I made [this vessel] to comfort and to honor Patriarch Shangfu in the lineage temple of my deceased father Guo Ji Yifu.¹⁹¹

In sum, we observe how *de*, as a sort of politico-religious commitment or orientation, comes to inform the two political genealogies of the King and his appointee in the context of their continuous relation of interdependence in this text. In other words *de* appears here as a *leitmotiv* underlying the perpetuation of the Zhou ruling organization. Just as the Heavenly command constituted a shared theo-political obligation for the entire Zhou ruling organization, there had to exist a common mind-set, a *sensus communis* with the German connotation of *Gemeinsinn* (solidary mind-set) that would commit its members to this shared cultural task. The concept I have in mind here to delineate the scope of *de* in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions coincides more or less completely with Karl von Rotteck's definition of *Gemeinsinn* in the *Rotteck-Welckersches Staats-Lexikon* in its third edition from 1862:

¹⁸⁸ The interpretation of *yi* 一, "one," as *jie* 皆, "all," follows *ibid*.

¹⁸⁹ The verbal interpretation of the graph 𠄎(𠄎) as *zhu li* 祝釐, "to pray for good fortune," follows *ibid*, 263.

¹⁹⁰ The interpretation of this sentence follows Qiu Xigui, "說 '𠄎' 白大師武" Shuo "XX bo taishi wu," *Kaogu* (1978) 5: 318-320, rpt in *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji*, 3. 18-20

¹⁹¹ Cf. *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 49.233-251; *Mingwen xuan* #202; Sena, "Reproducing Society," 161-163; and *Source Book* #29.

What we mean by *Gemeingeist* or *Gemeinsinn* is not at all what the French and the English call “sens commun” and “common sense” respectively, both of which refer to the common (or sound) human understanding or mind. Instead we mean a shared mind-set that affectionately binds the members of a corporate solidarity to the pursuit of a set of interrelated common or mutual interests. Hence it is different from or even opposed to the tendency in humans that only strives for egoistic, individual and other particular ends.¹⁹²

These are exactly the issues that *de* addresses both in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in passages from the transmitted *Documents of Zhou*. In the context of the Zhou ruling organization, we may conclude, *de* refers in the broadest sense to the terms of corporate solidarity based on the affectionate, i.e. un-coerced commitment to a shared theo-political or cultural task. It is in the form of *de* that this task informs the social self which we have associated with the heart above.

Here now comes into play Munro’s definition of *de* as a consistent attitude towards the Heaven-decreed norms, or, as we have modified this definition, as a consistent commitment towards fulfilling the Heaven-decreed norms. Indeed in numerous inscriptions we find the hendiadys of *shen / bing de* 慎/秉德 and *nong / yun chen Tianzi* 農/允臣天子 or *yong bi* 用辟 to be informed by the goal to perpetuate the Zhou alliance’s receipt of the Heavenly Mandate or to fulfil the tasks associated with the latter, such as governing and controlling the four cardinal regions

¹⁹² „Gemeingeist oder Gemeinsinn ist uns hier keinesfalls daß, was die Franzosen und Engländer mit dem Ausdrücke ‚sens commun‘ und ‚common sense‘ bezeichnen, nämlich der gemeine (oder auch gesunde) Menschensinn oder Verstand, sondern die von den Mitgliedern eines gemeinen Wesens oder einer Gesamtheit derselben liebend zugewandte Gesinnung, die Richtung des Gemüths auf die Verfolgung allgemeiner oder gemeinsamer, d.h. einer durch irgendein Band unter sich verbundenen Gesamtheit eigener Interessen, verschieden also von oder entgegengesetzt derjenigen Richtung, welche bloß egoistische oder individuelle oder denselben mehr oder minder verwandte particuläre Interessen sich zum Ziele des Handelns und Strebens setzt“ (Karl von Rotteck and Karl Welcker, eds., *Das Staats-Lexikon: Encyklopädie der sämtlichen Staatswissenschaften für alle Stände*, 14 vols., 3rd rev. ed. [Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1862], 6.284). The slightly shortened English translation is my own.

as well as its populations.¹⁹³ So for instance in the mid- Western Zhou Fansheng *gui* lid 番生簋蓋 (JC 4326) inscription:¹⁹⁴

不(丕)顯皇且(祖)考，穆穆克慎(厥)德，嚴才(在)上，廣啟(厥)孫子于下，
勳(嗣)于大服。

Greatly illustrious were my August Forebears! Solemnly, they have been able to be attentive to their *de*-commitment. Impressively residing on high, they broadly opened up the path for their descendants below to carry on with their great task.¹⁹⁵

番生不敢弗帥井(型)皇且(祖)考不(丕)杯(丕)元德，用黷(申)鬪(紹)大令，粵(屏)王立(位)。虔夙夜尊(溥)求不替(僭?)德，用諫四方，醜(柔)遠能猷(邇)。
Fansheng does not dare not to emulate his August Forebears' greatly felicitous initial *de*-commitment so as to extend and continue the Great Charge and to protect the throne.¹⁹⁶ Reverently day and night, I strive and seek a genuine sense of *de* in order [to be able] to govern their four cardinal regions, to conciliate those distant and to employ those near.

王令飀(兼)嗣(司)公族、卿事、大史寮[...]。番生敢對天子休，用乍(作)殷(簋)，永寶。

The King orders me to jointly supervise the ducal lineage, the ministers and the Grand Secretariat. [...] Fansheng dares to respond to the Son of Heaven's grace,

¹⁹³ See Toyota Hisashi, *Shūdai shi no kenkyū*, 12-94, for the task of ecumenical rulership implied in the notion of the Heavenly Mandate. However when speaking about *sifang* and *min*, we need to keep in mind that these terms probably did not designate actual territories or populations. They rather functioned as ordering symbols indicated to render articulate the idea of an ecumene as subject to Zhou rule. Cf. my “The Term *min* 民 as a Political Concept in Western Zhou Thought.”

¹⁹⁴ Nothing is known about the place, date and the circumstances of the discovery of this vessel which is currently housed in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Its inscription was first recorded in Duan Fang 端方, *Taozhai ji jin lu* 陶齋吉金錄, 8 juan (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997 [1908]), 2.16. See Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 63-65, for the dating of this vessel.

¹⁹⁵ My interpretation of the graph 勳 as 嗣, “to continue,” “to carry on with,” “to inherit,” follows Xu Zhongshu in Zhou Fagao 周法高 *et al.*, ed., *Jinwen gulin* 金文詁林, 16 vols. (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1975), 2.244. For a discussion of other possibilities see Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 442-443.

¹⁹⁶ My understanding of the compound 黷(申)鬪(紹) follows Wang Hui 王輝, “‘Shao,’ ‘yao,’ ‘jing,’ ‘shenshao,’ ‘shenjing’ zhu ci zai kaobian” 鬪、繇、彙、黷鬪、黷彙諸辭再考辨, in *Di er ci Xizhou shi xueshu taolunhui lunwenji* 第二次西周史學術討論會論文集, ed. Shaanxi Lishi Bowuguan 陝西歷史博物館 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993), 257; and He Shuhuan, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji*, 315-316.

wherefore had commissioned this *gui-tureen*, may it be treasured forever.¹⁹⁷

The same purpose informs the use of *de* in the late Western Zhou Zuoce Feng ge 乍冊封鬲 (NA 1556 -1557) inscription:¹⁹⁸

乍(作)冊封異(式)井(型)秉明德。虔夙夕卹周邦，保王身，諫薛(辭)四或(域)。
Document Maker Feng patterns himself on [his forebears],¹⁹⁹ holding fast to their manifest *de*-commitment. Reverently day and night his concerns are with the Zhou polity, with protecting the person of the King, as well as with administering and controlling the four cardinal regions.

王弗段謹(忘)，宮(享)畢(厥)孫子多休。封對揚天子不顯魯休，乍(作)隳(尊)鬲，封其萬年眉壽永寶。

The King has never once forgotten [the deeds of Feng's forebears],²⁰⁰ and bestows his grace on their descendant on many occasions. Feng responds to and extols the Son of Heaven's greatly illustrious grace, wherefore has been cast this *zun-ge* vessel. May Feng live a long life of a myriad years and forever treasure [this vessel].²⁰¹

Further in the text from the late Western Zhou Shan Bo Taisheng *zhong* 單伯吳生鐘 (JC 82) inscription we read:²⁰²

單白(伯)吳生曰：不(丕)顯皇且(祖)刺(烈)考，徠(仇)匹之(先)王，爵(功)董大

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Daxi, 2.133-134; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 27.421-432; and *Mingwen xuan* #310. Compare also the translation in Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 65-66.

¹⁹⁸ This vessel pair has been discovered near Cangjiemiacun 倉頡廟村, Qishan 岐山 county, Shaanxi in 2000. Their identical inscriptions have first been published in *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* (2002) 2: 4-6.

¹⁹⁹ The interpretation of the graph 異 as *shi* 式 follows Qiu Xigui, “Buci ‘yi’ zi he *Shi*, *Shu li de* ‘shi’ zi”, in *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji*, 1. 218-224.

²⁰⁰ For the interpretation of *fu xia wang* 弗段忘 see Chen Yingjie, *Xizhou jinwen zuo qi yongtu mingci yanjiu*, 448-450.

²⁰¹ Cf. Wang Guanying 王冠英, “Zuoce Feng ge mingwen kaoshi” 乍冊封鬲明文考釋, *Zhongguo Lishi Wenwu* (2002) 2: 4-6.

²⁰² Nothing is known about the date, place and the circumstances of the discovery of this bell which is currently housed in the Shanghai museum. Its inscription was first recorded in Wu Shifen, *Mei gu lu jinwen*, 2.3.78.

令，余小子肇(肇)帥井(型)朕皇且(祖)考愍(懿)德，用保奠。

Shan Bo Taisheng declares: “Greatly illustrious were my august and bright forebears. Allying with the former Kings, they had accomplishments in the toils for the Great Charge. I, the young heir, succeed to emulate my August Forebears’ exclusive and enduring *de*-commitment, striving to protect and to settle [the Great Charge and / or the position of the King].”²⁰³

Finally the late Western Zhou Da Ke *ding* 大克鼎 (JC 2836) inscription deserves being mentioned in this context:²⁰⁴

克曰：穆穆朕文且(祖)師華父，愍(聰)譽(襄)畢(厥)心，盥(寧)靜于猷，盥(淑)愍(慎)畢(厥)德。

Ke said, “Solemn and grand was my cultured ancestor Commander Huafu. His heart was clear and modest; his plans were calmly made; With utmost clarity, he was attentive to his *de*-commitment.

肆(肆)克葬(恭)保畢(厥)辟葬(恭)王，諫辭(乂)王家，惠(惠)于萬民，頤(柔)遠能猷(邇)。[...]

Thus was he able to reverently protect his ruler, King Gong, to secure the royal household and to benefit the multitudinous *min*. He was conciliating towards those distant and knew to employ those near. [...]

[...]天子[...]罔(經)念畢(厥)聖保且(祖)師華父，勩(嗣)克王服，出內(入)王令，多易(賜)寶休。

[...] “The Son of Heaven [...] remembers [his forebears’] sagely protector, Commander Huafu, and he thus placed the latter’s successor, Ke, in royal service to transmit the orders of the King, and on numerous occasions bestowed on me his precious grace.

不(丕)顯天子。天子其萬年無疆(疆)，保辭(乂)周邦，眈(允)尹四方。[...]

Greatly illustrious is the Son of Heaven. May the Son of Heaven live for myriads of years without limit, in order to [be able to] protect and secure the

²⁰³ Cf. *Duandai* #141; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 23.87-94; and *Mingwen xuan* #235.

²⁰⁴ According to Rong Geng, the vessel was reportedly found at a site near Renjiacun, Fufeng, Shaanxi, in 1890 (Rong Geng, *Shang Zhou yiqi tonggkao*, 66). Its inscription was first recorded in Wu Dacheng, *Kezhai jigulu*, 5.1-5.

Zhou polity and to trustily administer the four cardinal regions.”²⁰⁵

From reading these examples it becomes clear that *de*, in conjunction with the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate, describes a quality that made it possible for the authority relations between King and elites to transcend the confines of simple patron-client relations. Similar to the transformation of the King’s charges into the theo-political Mandate of Heaven in the rhetoric of late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, *de* extends from the sphere of individual political commitments to the shared politico-religious commitment of the entire Zhou alliance. In the end, it was through the display of *de* that the human sovereign has been able to secure divine patronage in Western Zhou ideology, as it is claimed to be the case in the famous and highly exceptional late Western Zhou Mao Gong *ding* 毛公鼎 (JC 2841) inscription.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Cf. *Duandai* #185; *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 28.490-511; *Mingwen xuan* #297; Lau, *Quellenstudien*, 233-255; and *Source Book* #46. The English translation has been adapted with some major changes from Eno, “Inscriptional Records” #96.

²⁰⁶ The Mao Gong *ding* tripod, which is on permanent exhibition in the Palace Museum, Taipei, was reportedly discovered at a site in Qishan county, Shaanxi, around the year 1850. Its inscription was first recorded in Xu Tongbo, *Cong gu tang kuan shi xue*, 16.18. Apart from Zhang Zhidong, whose judgment on the matter must be treated with caution (Cf. p. 106, n. 154 above), Noel Barnard was the first to question the authenticity of the Mao Gong *ding* on a scientific basis in his “Chou China: A review of the third volume of Cheng Te-k’un’s *Archaeology in China*,” *Monumenta Serica* XXIV (1965): 395-434. Barnard’s doubts were rebutted in Zhang Guangyuan 張光遠, *Xizhou zhong qi Mao Gong ding: bo lun Aozhou Ba Na boshi wuwei zhi shuo* 西周重器毛公鼎一駁論澳洲巴納博士誣偽之說 (Taipei: Geda shuju, 1973). In response to this, Barnard renewed his doubts and presented a list of thirteen decisive points which might lead to the identification of the Mao Gong *ding* as a later day forgery. See Barnard, *Mao Kung Ting, a Major Western Chou Period Bronze Vessel: A Rebuttal of a Rebuttal and Further Evidence of the Questionable Aspects of its Authenticity* (Canberra: Privately Published, 1974). However in 1982, Zhang Shixian 張世賢 published the outcomes of a X-ray examination of the vessel, the results of which he compared to radiographs from further Shang and Zhou vessels in the collection of the Palace Museum in Taipei. The outcome of this examination suffices to establish the authenticity of the Mao Gong *ding* as a late Western Zhou artifact. See Zhang Shixian, “Cong Shang Zhou tongqi de neibu tezheng shi lun Mao Gong *ding* de zhen wei wenti” 從商周銅器的內部特徵試論毛公鼎的真偽問題, *Gugong jikan* 故宮季刊 16 (1982) 4: 55-77. This article was later translated by Barnard and re-published as Chang Shi-hsien, “Authentication of the Mao Kung Ting through X-Ray Radiography of the Internal Characteristics of Shang and Chou Bronzes,” in *Ancient Chinese and Southeast Asian Bronze Age Cultures*, 535-568. In the same volume, Nivison published a study in which he established the credibility of the text from the Mao Gong *ding* inscription by identifying an archaic construction in it which is otherwise only known from the early

王若曰：「父曆，不(丕)顯文武，皇天引(矧)厥(厥)德，配我有周。雁(膺)受大命，衎(懷)不廷方，亡不聞(覲)于文武耿光。

The King approvingly spoke: “Father Yin! Greatly illustrious were Kings Wen and Wu, so August Heaven was increasingly satisfied with their *de* and thus made our Zhou its counterpart. [Kings Wen and Wu thereupon] received and shouldered the Great Charge, they offered succor to those far distant who had not previously heeded the court, and so none did not assist in [the perpetuation of] the brilliant light of Wen and Wu.

唯天畀(將)集(厥)命，亦唯先正(襄)辭(乂)畢(厥)辟(恭)董(勤)大命。肆(肆)皇天亡(斃)，臨保我有周，不(丕)巩(鞏)先王配命。

That Heaven would concentrate its Mandate [on Zhou] was also because the former ministers assisted their rulers in their exertions and labours [towards implementing] the Great Charge.²⁰⁷ Hence August Heaven had no cause to be displeased. [Heaven thus] watched over our Zhou, protecting us, and greatly consolidated the former Kings in their possession of the Mandate.

啟(旻)天疾(威)，司余小子弗(威)彼，邦(將)害(曷)吉，(亂)四方，大從(縱)不靜。烏(乎)，(懼)余小子，(困)于(難)，永(鞏)先王。

But now Heaven rises awesome, and if I, a mere child succeeding to the throne, am not anxious and diligent, how can the polity fare well? Everywhere the four cardinal regions loose themselves in turmoil. Alas! I fear that I, this child, shall see this house sink in danger, [unable to] eternally secure [the achievements of] the former Kings.²⁰⁸

王曰：「父曆，今余唯(鞏)王命，命女(汝)辭(乂)我邦、我家內外。

Western Zhou He zun inscription that has been discovered in 1975. Hence a 19th century forger could not have been familiar with it. See Nivison, “The Authenticity of the Mao Kung *Ting* Inscription.” In sum, the Mao Gong *ding* and its inscription are now considered to be authentic by the great majority of scholars working in the field of ancient Chinese archaeology and epigraphy. My English translation of the text has been adapted with some major changes from Eno, “Inscriptional Records” #119.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Wang Hui, *Shang Zhou jinwen*, 264, n. 8, for the interpretation of 襄 as *xiangzan* 襄贊, “to help,” “to assist.”

²⁰⁸ The last sentence follows my own reading of the text. Instead of reading 巩 as kong 恐, “to fear,” as most commentators do, I read *gong* 鞏, “to secure,” “to consolidate,” taking the phrase *yong gong Xianwang* 永(鞏)先王 as a parallel to the phrase *pi gong Xianwang pei ming* 不(丕)巩(鞏)先王配命 above. This reading requires the interpolation of a negation before 永(鞏)先王 in the English translation.

愆(攬)于小大政，聳(屏)朕立(位)，號(赫)許(戲)上下若否季四方。死(尸)母(毋)童(動)余一人在立(位)。

The King spoke: “Father Yin! I now succeed to recall the former King’s orders and charge you to protect my polity and my household, both within and without. Be attentive to administrative matters large and small; protect my position, praising the good and punishing the bad of the four cardinal regions, from the high to the lowly. Unto death let none disturb the place of this Solitary Man.

引唯乃智(知)，余非辜(庸)又聞(昏)。女(汝)母(毋)敢妄(荒)盜(寧)，虔夙夕衷我一人。讎(攤=攬)我邦小大猷，母(毋)折緘告余先王若德，用印(仰)邵(昭)皇天，黷(申)鬪(紹)大命，康能四或(域)。俗(欲)我弗乍(作)先王憂。」[...] Make known to me faults of mine you learn of. Dare not to neglect your office, be reverent night and day in assisting me, the Solitary Man.²⁰⁹ Uphold our polity’s objectives great and small, never fail to instruct me in the [sense of] *de* of the former Kings, that we may face August Heaven and continuously extend [our receipt of] the Great Mandate,²¹⁰ bringing peace to the four cardinal regions. I do not wish to cause the former Kings concern.” [...] ²¹¹

Almost all the issues we have been paying attention to throughout this study come together in this single inscription: A retrieval of authority relations between Zhou King and an elite individual coincides with a royal succession crisis during a time of incipient political decline. As has been the case in the Da Yu *ding* and Shi Xun *gui* inscriptions, the King’s rhetoric of motives and of crisis transcends the involved parties’ mutual obligations into the shared commitment of the entire Zhou alliance towards fulfilling conditions of the Heavenly Mandate. This commitment is now explicitly associated with *de*, which in a way constitutes the entire Zhou alliance’s answer to the Great Charge. Having demonstrated earlier how the concept of the Heavenly Mandate was based on the same pattern as the quasi patron-client relations

²⁰⁹ For the interpretation of 衷 see He Shuhuan, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji*, 257-258.

²¹⁰ The interpretation of the phrase *shen shao da ming* 黷(申)鬪(紹)大命 follows He Shuhuan, *Qingtongqi yu Xizhou shi lunji*, 315-316.

²¹¹ Cf. *Duandai* #201; *Mingwen xuan* #447.

connecting the elites with the Zhou King, it perhaps does not surprise to see that the mind-set which connected the Zhou alliance to its politico-religious task shares its basic features with the sort of loyalty and commitment that the King required from his vassals.

Coming full circle, we can now say that not only did there exist a notion of the individual as a political actor in Western Zhou times, we also clearly perceive of the idea of a sort of ideologically based corporate solidarity between political individuals in our sources which had its roots in the institution of royal commands. This form of (proto-) political organisation no doubt intersected with lines of descent and marriage alliances as well as with the lineage-transcending genealogical hierarchy introduced during the late Western Zhou ritual reform, as each person was primarily defined through its gender, genealogical rank, lineage- and clan affiliation in Western and Eastern Zhou elite society. However, for analytical reasons it is important to differentiate between these two factors. Genealogical rank, lineage- and clan affiliation all work together in defining a person's identity within intersecting social groups. Royal commands by contrast resulted in a special sort of personal bond which transcended these social groups by cutting right across them.²¹² Moreover, while genealogical hierarchies and lineage affiliation rest on biological and ritual structures, (proto-) political bonds had to develop into a symbolic dimension as they were based on a system of moral values, ideas and obligations. As we have sufficiently demonstrated throughout this study, it is this symbolic dimension alone which unfolds in the ideology of Zhou kingship as we find it in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the *Odes* and *Documents*.

²¹² Compare in this context the definition of patron-client relations in Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, clients and friends*, 10.

3.5 Outlook

One could continue the discussion from the preceding two chapters by going one step further and looking at the relations between ruler and subjects as they are depicted in pre-classical literary sources with respect to the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate and to *de*.²¹³ Although the subjects of Zhou rule hardly appear as a topic in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, we nevertheless have come across several instances where they do play a role. So for instance in the He *zun* inscription:

When King Wu had newly subdued the Great Settlement Shang, he solemnly announced to Heaven the words: ‘I shall reside in this central region and from here bring order to the *min*-populations.’

Further examples where the obligations that come the Great Charge imply the agenda task of ruling the *min* (*yi min* 义民), appear in the Da Yu *ding* and in the Shi Qiang *pan* inscriptions. Two questions need to be asked here: Who, and in what capacity, is implied by the term *min*, and how was this “rule” over the *min* envisioned?

As to the first question, it has been pointed out by several scholars that in texts from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the *Documents*, *min* often designates non-Zhou populations located on the fringes of the Zhou sphere of influence, especially within the newly acquired eastern territories formerly subject to Shang hegemony.²¹⁴ Although the context of many instances of *min* in these texts clearly

²¹³ This topic can only be outlined here. For an in-depth analysis see my “The King as *minzhu* 民主: Conceptualisations of ecumenical rulership in pre-classical Chinese texts,” forthcoming.

²¹⁴ See Shirakawa, *Kinbun tsūshaku*, 48.174; Léon Vandermeersch, *Wangdao Tome II*, 153-156; Crone, “Der Begriff *min* 民 in Texten der Westlichen Zhou-Dynastie (1050-771 v. Chr.);” and Toyota Hisashi, *Shūdai shi no kenkyū*, 325-332. The traditional and still widely accepted opinion that *min*

corroborates this suggestion, I argued elsewhere that what *min* actually denotes are not these populations as such, but the concept specifying their presumed role within the theo-political vision of order in the minds of the Zhou elites.²¹⁵ As my analysis of relevant passages has shown, *min* overtly refers to a political idea that allowed the Zhou elites to affiliate with populations outside their own ruling alliance within the overarching authority structure provided by the Heavenly Mandate. *Min* thus collectively denotes non-Zhou populations that were not part of the Zhou alliance's network of command and obligation by assigning them a position within the enhanced structures of a collective Zhou identity we find articulated in the literary sources. What connected these populations to the Zhou, in the latter's political imagination, were neither kinship ties or political alliances, nor militarily enforced tribute relations, but a cultural obligation associated with the Heavenly Mandate.²¹⁶ For instance, it is no coincidence that we find the term *min* mentioned sixty-five times in the five "gao" chapters from the *Documents of Zhou* alone. These chapters claim for themselves to originate from the time of King Cheng in the aftermath of the consolidation of Zhou power. Each depicts an announcement or an instruction spoken at the assumption or the transferral of ruling authority. On these occasions the protagonists expound on the Heaven-delegated order which places the Zhou elites in a position of authority and responsibility over the *min*.²¹⁷ The "Shao gao" 召誥 chapter from the *Documents of Zhou* is perhaps the most important source to

refers to "commoners" or "the people" in Western Zhou and later pre-Qin contexts, is discussed in the second paragraph of my, "The Term *min* 民 as a Political Concept in Western Zhou Thought."

²¹⁵ "The Term *min* 民 as a Political Concept in Western Zhou Thought."

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Numerous instances throughout the *Odes* and *Documents* explicitly equate Zhou kingship with the rulership over the *min*. In the *Odes* these are "Huang yi" 皇矣 (Mao 241), "Jiong zhuo" 洞酌 (Mao 251), "Dang" 蕩 (Mao 255), "Yi" 抑 (Yi), "Zheng Min" 烝民 (Mao 260) and "Si wen" 思文 (Mao 275). The respective passages in the *Documents* are "Kang gao" 康誥, "Zi cai" 梓材, "Shao gao" 召誥, "Luo gao" 洛誥, "Duo shi" 多士 and "Duo fang" 多方.

corroborate this view:

王來紹上帝，自服于土中。且曰：『其作大邑，其自時配皇天，毖祀于上下，其自時中乂；王厥有成命治民。』

“May your majesty come to assist Di on High, and commit yourself to the centre of the land [in order to comply with Di’s design]. [Zhou Gong] Dan spoke: ‘Now that this great settlement has been built, the King shall from here become the counterpart to August Heaven, and reverently sacrifice to [the spirits] above and below; from this central [position] he shall govern. The King will then have accomplished his Charge to govern the *min*.’”²¹⁸

But what does governance or rule mean in this context? It would be highly anachronistic to think that *min* refers to “the people” of a clearly defined dominion or centralised state, tightly ruled by a central government.²¹⁹ Instead the question pertains to the fundamental issues of human co-existence and organisation we have addressed in the first chapter of this study. The idea of ecumenical rulership would have posed not just a socio-political or military task for the Zhou alliance, it also presupposed a certain conception of humanity and human co-existence. Peter Weber-Schäfer remarks in this respect:

We are dealing with a more profound, philosophical layer of the problem. It turns out the humanity that should populate and organize the ecumenic empire is no given date or given thing as an object in physics which can be governed. Rather it is a symbol of an experience, the experience of human co-existence, of the awareness of a shared participation in a transcendent order.²²⁰

²¹⁸ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 18.397-398. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 428; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 49.

²¹⁹ Such a scenario would become plausible only after reforms of Shang Yang around 350 BCE. Compare p. 232 above.

²²⁰ Weber-Schäfer, *Oikumene und Imperium*, 16. The translation from German is my own.

It should come as no surprise thus that the *min* entered the Zhou worldview through the same superimposed ideology the members of the Zhou alliance used to define themselves as a community of purpose, through the Heavenly Mandate. They did so not as enemies or populations that needed to be subjugated, but as part of the Zhou alliance's shared obligation to extend their ties of corporate solidarity to "All under Heaven." The idea of the king's responsibility for the *min*'s wellbeing and thus for their integration into the structure of Zhou corporate solidarity is addressed very clearly in the following passage from the "Shao gao" chapter:

「天亦哀于四方民，其眷命用懋，王其疾敬德。 [...]

"Now that Heaven pities the *min* within the four cardinal regions, may [your majesty] pay attention to the Mandate and be industrious in its implementation. Your majesty shall be anxious when it comes to honour your *de*-commitment [towards fulfilling the Mandate]. [...]"²²¹

[...] 其惟王位在德元，小民乃惟刑用于天下，越王顯。上下勤恤，其曰我受天命。」

[...] If the King constitutes the origin of this *de*-commitment, the lesser *min* will imitate him throughout the *Tianxia*-ecumene, and the King will thus become illustrious. Let above and below labour with a mutual sympathy, saying: 'We have received the Mandate of Heaven.'"²²²

Consistent with the observation that the Zhou king relates to the *min* through the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate, this passage identifies *de* as the cohesive which binds the *min* to Zhou rule. *De* stands here for the king's commitment to apply the ideal order, envisioned in terms of Heaven's Command, to the socio-political realities

²²¹ *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 18.396. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 426-427; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 49.

²²² *Shangshu jin-guwen zhushu*, 18.400. Cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*, 431-432; and Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 51.

and, by doing so, attracting other political actors to contribute to and comply with this order. Similar to the constellation depicted in elite Western Zhou bronze inscriptions where it is the parties' shared commitment which leads to the initiation and the perpetuation of political bonds, here it is the king's assumption of the obligation to fulfil the tasks imposed on him by Heaven, that encourages politically unrelated lineages and polities to share into the Zhou alliances *de*-commitment, or, in the words of Wang Guowei, to become part of this *dao-de tuanti*.

Yet although forming an inherent part of a ruling house's corporate solidarity, other than the ruler's allies, the *min* were nevertheless bound to remain a passive factor within this constellation. Moreover, due to them being responsive only to *de*, in a way the *min* became the token of the mandate to rule. Their loyalty functioned as the main indicator of a ruler's moral performance in the context of Western and especially Eastern Zhou political thought. We can find this point explicitly thematized in a passage from the *Zuo zhuan*, listed under the fifth year in the reign of Patriarch Xi 僖 of Lu 魯 (655 BC), where a minister named Gong Zhiqi 宮之奇 is depicted as remonstrating with the Patriarch of state of Yu 虞 against the latter's decision to allow the army of Jin 晉 to pass through Yu's territory. Gong suspects Jin of harbouring intentions to take over Yu and its subject-populace whilst crossing through its territory. The patriarch rejects Gong's doubts by referring to the ritual logic of *do ut des*:

公曰：「吾享祀豐絜，神必據我。」對曰：「臣聞之，鬼神非人實親，惟德是依。故周書曰：『皇天無親，惟德是輔。』又曰：『黍稷非馨，明德惟馨。』又曰：『民不易物，惟德絜物。』如是則非德，民不和，神不享矣。神所馮依，將在德矣。若晉取虞，而明德以薦馨香，神其吐之乎？」

The Patriarch spoke: "My offerings and sacrifices are abundant and pure, the

spirits [of the ancestors] cannot but sustain me.” [Gong Zhiqi] responded: “I have heard that ghosts and spirits are not actual kin to the living, it is *de* that they attach to. Thus in the *Documents of Zhou* it says: ‘August Heaven has no kin, Heaven only supports [those displaying] *de*.’ It also says that ‘millet alone is not fragrant; it is manifest *de* which makes it fragrant.’ Further it says: ‘the *min*-populations do not alter their customs, it is *de* which binds [those of different] customs together.’²²³ Therefore if it is not for *de*, the *min* will not be in accord with each other / will not be responsive [to the ruler]²²⁴ and the ancestral spirits will not consume the offerings. Whom the spirits will stand by is he who displays *de*. If Jin seizes Yu and presents offerings in a manner displaying manifest *de*, are the spirits going to spit it out?”²²⁵

The *min* are compared here with the transcendent world of the spirits. Just as it is the case with Heaven in Western Zhou sources, the spirits in this passage can not be controlled by lavish offerings, for they too “stand free in transcendent judgement of how the rulers of men perform both their ritual and moral duties.”²²⁶ Similarly the *min* are not bound to a certain ruling house through any kind of familial or customary ties. In political theory at least, the *min* could switch their affiliation from one ruling house to another, similar to clients switching patrons. However the reason for them to do so was interpreted in purely moral terms, the same terms that apply the standards associated with the Heavenly Mandate.

At this point our topic enters into a new field associated with the speeches in the

²²³ My interpretation of these two phrases is based on Takezoe Kōkō’s 竹添光鴻 commentary: “‘Millet alone is not fragrant; it is manifest *de* which makes it fragrant.’ The same applies to the *min* as well. Although they do not alter their customs, if there is *de*, they will submit to it (黍稷非馨，明德惟馨。民亦如此，雖不易物，唯有德則服也)” (*Zuo zhuan hui jian* 左傳會箋, ann. Du Yu 杜預 and Takezoe Kōkō [Taipei: Tiangong shuju, 2005 (1911)], 354).

²²⁴ Takezoe interprets the word *he* 和 in this context as *yinghe* 應和, “to be responsive” (*Zuo zhuan hui jian*, 354).

²²⁵ *Zuo*, Xi 5.8, 307-310.

²²⁶ Schwartz, *The world of Thought in Ancient China*, 50. That Schwartz’s definition of the Western Zhou concept of Heaven fits with the notion of the ancestral spirits in this presumably early Warring States source might be related to a trend in the late Springs and Autumns period funerary praxis that emphasized the discontinuity instead of the communality between the living and the dead. See on this von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 293-301.

later strata of the *Documents*, in the *Zuozhuan* and in the *Guoyu*, as well with the political philosophy in Warring States masters literature. It remains to be demonstrated by future analyses how the mechanisms worked out in this study have been adapted and advanced in Warring States political thought.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this study stood the question of the institutional context behind the formation of the ideology of Zhou kingship in Early Chinese literary sources. Arguing with Vico, we assumed that as a symbolic system, the idea of Zhou kingship must have had its origins within a specific institutional order as well as within a certain understanding of humanity and its relation to the physical world and the supernatural. We thus started our analysis by asking about the culture-historical preconditions necessary for the concept of Zhou-rule, a king and his allies representing a transcendent, divine authority within the human ecumene, to take shape. This took us back to a transitional period in early Chinese cultural history which began with the late Shang or Anyang period and may have lasted well into the mid- to late Western Zhou period, when literary accounts testifying to the ideology of Zhou kingship first occurred in a significant number in datable epigraphic sources.

The bond as the pattern of Zhou cultural formation

In a first step, we outlined the few known facts about the organisation and the objectives of the late Shang ruling elite, which we then juxtaposed to the assumptions voiced in reflexive passages of Zhou ideology in early to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. We found that the ideological differences between these two “ruling organisations” point to a major change in the perception of humanity and its institutions, which resembles the pattern of what Eric Voegelin has termed “a leap in being” from so called cosmological societies, marked by a compact mythological

consciousness to political or historical societies, characterised by a differentiated, reflexive consciousness as well as by possessing a notion of transcendence.¹

By focusing on these fundamental changes in the apprehension of human co-existence and authority relations as well as on the emergence of a transcendent ultimate moral instance in the early to mid- Western Zhou period, this study picks up a perspective that to my knowledge has not been considered systematically since Benjamin I. Schwartz's *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, published in 1985.² The present study goes beyond Schwartz's considerations in that it relates these developments in the history of ideas to institutional changes reflected in the textual, especially the epigraphic tradition. In the course of this operation we found that the order of ideas centred on the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate was ultimately based on the notion of a bond, be it the theological bond between transcendent Heaven and the king, the theo-political affiliation between the Zhou polity and the *sifang* ecumene, or the proto-political ties between the Zhou king and his allies. Consequently we identified the concept of the (proto-) political bond and its various implementations in Western- and early Eastern Zhou literary sources as the institutional context for the Ideology of Zhou kingship in the pre-classical literary tradition. This left us with the question of how these two fields, socio-political praxis

¹ Among other factors, these issues are also generally associated with the concept of the axial age, a term coined by Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) in his *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Munich: Piper, 1949). It should be noted in this respect that Jasper's idea for the concept derived from the work of his colleague Alfred Weber (1868-1958), *Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1935), a fact first brought to the attention of the sinological world by Rudolf G. Wagner. See von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 10, n. 21.

² This is not to say that the topic of the axial age has not been recognized in Early China studies, yet it is normally associated with culture-historical developments that took place during the Warring States period. See for instance Heiner Roetz, *Die chinesische Ethik der Achsenzeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992), or the enhanced English translation of this study, *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age: A Reconstruction under the Aspect of the Breakthrough toward Postconventional Thinking* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993). More recently, developments associated with the late Western Zhou ritual revolution are also sometimes discussed in terms of generic axial age phenomena. See for instance Vogelsang, "The Parting of the Gods."

and theo-political reflection, relate to each other.

We approached this issue by engaging with a culture-historical model developed by Jan Assmann, who traces the ideological deep-structure of ancient Near Eastern forms of representative theocratic kingship back to the institution of patron-client relations. Following Assmann's theory of a transfer of authority relations from the socio-political into the theo-political realm, we have demonstrated how in the Western Zhou case too, the reflexive idea of representative theocratic kingship describes ultimately an extension of the proto-political bonds between the king and the elites into the theological sphere. Taking the logic of patron-client relations as its pattern, its function was to transcend the particularistic nature of the former into an enhanced, superimposed politico-religious identity.

With this find, we have managed to establish a plausible, clearly defined frame of reference for the interpretation of the symbolic order of Zhou kingship not just in Western Zhou bronzes but also in the pre-classical passages from the *Documents* and the *Odes*. This bears some important implications for how to deal with other aspects associated with the Zhou grand narrative such as the question of cultural memory and rhetorical uses of the past. We can now say that although this narrative was employed in elite ancestral ritual, both due to internal references and by being inscribed on sacrificial vessels used in this context, we are nevertheless dealing with the political memory of individual elites and their forebears that was tied first and foremost to the institution of royal commands. This memory intersected with and informed the ancestral ritual of the lineage to which a vessel donor belonged. However, further research is necessary in order to determine in how far we can already talk about a sort of collective memory which served as a cohesive for the lineage as a whole, or indeed for the entire Zhou elite.

When it comes to the opinion held among many scholars that reflections on a foundational past and the memory of the former kings first appeared as a literary counter draft to the Zhou dynasty's actual decline, we also need to be careful not to mistake the Zhou grand narrative for something it perhaps never was, or at least not was in the first place. Vogelsang, the foremost proponent of this perspective, cites as main evidence for his point the narratives from the Shi Qiang *pan* and Qiu *pan* inscriptions. He convincingly argues that these texts attempt to conceal or even negate the existence of historical breaks by suggesting an unbroken continuity in the textual realm.³ As to the rhetorical mechanism of Qiu *pan* inscription Vogelsang remarks:

A finely woven network of intratextual references pervades throughout this inscription and interlocks the individual passages with each other: One ancestor ties on to the next, each king acts in the same way his predecessor did – as if nothing had ever changed. This inscription dates from a time marked by transformations, a 'ritual revolution' and fundamental social changes, [...] but no word of all of this is to be found in it. There is no mention of the break in the political system and in the fabric of society which characterised the era. Quite to the contrary: The inscription exclusively emphasizes continuities, from the first ruler to the reigning king and 'for 10000 years without limit.'⁴

Without questioning the validity of Vogelsang's important observation, our own analysis of the text has brought yet another, slightly different perspective to the fore. We have shown that the continuity the text emphasises is clearly focussed on an unbroken *political commitment*, stretching from Qiu's assumed first forebear to have allied with the Zhou royal house all the way to the protagonist himself. To be sure,

³ Vogelsang, *Geschichte als Problem*, 118-131.

⁴ *Ibid*, 127.

the narrative creates and takes the unchanged continuity of Zhou rule as its frame of reference, yet its primary objective was to state the continuous retrieval of interpersonal bonds between the Zhou kings and Qiu's forebears, based on the perpetuation of a political mind-set across an unbroken line of succession on the side of Qiu's genealogical, and, more importantly, political ancestors. In fact, as we have demonstrated, all Western Zhou inscriptions featuring the donor's direct speech share this central focus with the Qiu *pan* inscription.

Moreover, in view of the fact that many if not most of the mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions which refer to the Zhou grand narrative were composed from the perspective of individuals from lineages genealogically unrelated to the royal house and its princely branches, including chiefs from ethnically different non-Zhou polities as is the case in the inscriptions from the Lu Bo Dong *gui* and from the Guai Bo *gui*, this focus needs to be taken even more seriously. Not only was the foundational memory of the early kings related to the institution of political bonds, but it was especially called upon in cases where the king and his appointee were not related through kinship ties. In other words, apart from suggesting continuity in the historical or temporal dimension, the Zhou narrative was also employed to bridge genealogical and perhaps even cultural differences by emphasising cohesion between the Zhou king and his appointees on the ideological level. Both these dimensions in turn must be understood in the context of royal commands and their trans-generational perpetuation.

If we were to ask again now why references to the Zhou founding myth are so much more numerous in texts from mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions than in those from the early period, the most obvious answer, in my view, would be that the time from the reign of King Mu onwards witnessed a rapidly increasing

number of re-appointment inscriptions, a genre which was almost entirely absent before the time of King Zhao. Thus the important question for future research to ask would be why the institution of royal appointments, especially re-appointments of the descendants of deceased or retired office holders, became ever more prominent with each reign after King Zhao, or, perhaps better, why more and more re-appointments were commemorated in this particular way during the mid- to late Western Zhou period. In any case, it seems that the socio-political prestige and authority resulting from the receipt of the king's charge was no longer uncontested and needed to be emphatically claimed and justified following the reign of King Mu and especially after 850 BCE. This development of course might well have been directly related to the fundamental social-political changes associated with the late Western Zhou ritual reform. We will come back to this question shortly below.

The emergence of the political in Early China

The second major point we have addressed in this study proves to be closely related to the foregoing discussion. As each individual in early Chinese elite society was defined through a layered identity conforming to lineage-, clan- and ethnic affiliation respectively, we assumed there must have also existed a "layer" within a person's identity that appealed to the institution of the bond. Yet different from the former, biologically defined layers, the latter had to be some kind of mind-set or evaluative capacity, as political bonds are by definition contingent on shared symbolic values as well as on voluntary personal obligations. In other words we were searching for the political or social self in our sources, which we associated with the

concept of the heart. We have shown that the conceptual field of the heart was inextricably linked to a set of bond formulae, which have been employed not just in the receipt of royal commands as they are commemorated in Western Zhou epigraphic sources, but also in the sealing of Springs and Autumns covenants. Hence we identified the heart in these contexts as the working facility of the social self, as “the place where society inscribes itself with its claims and obligations.”⁵ We furthermore came up with a radically new interpretation for the term *de* 德 in this context. Often understood as some kind of charismatic force the Zhou founding kings are believed to have received from Heaven and then passed on to the elites along family lines,⁶ this study suggests a more plausible interpretation of *de*, taking into account the term’s serial context in pre-classical texts. *De*, according to our analysis, had its origins not in the supernatural sphere, but in the context of mutual obligations between individuals. Associated with the conceptual field of the heart, *de* initially belonged to the idiom of loyalty and commitment. In our sources it functions to symbolize a sort of personal, trans-generational obligation on the one hand, and a shared commitment towards the theo-political task associated with the Heavenly Mandate on the other. Paralleling the shift from the king’s commands to Heaven’s Great Charge, *de* too developed from a personal into a collective commitment or *sensus communis* in the literary realm of early Chinese foundational texts. Yet as is the case with the Heavenly Mandate, the pattern of this *sensus communis* remained inextricably linked to the conditions of interpersonal obligations between inferior and

⁵ Assmann, *Herrschaft und Heil*, 136.

⁶ See for instance Cook, *Ancestors, kings, and the Dao* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017) for the most recent study promoting this perspective. I found Cook’s assumptions concerning the nature of *de* too problematic to meaningfully engage with them in the context of the argument advanced in this dissertation. However, the author plans to address these issues in a forthcoming review of Cook’s monograph.

superior in the (proto-) political setting of royal commands.⁷

In sum, with its focus on the social self and the latter's capacities to enter personal commitments, the institution of royal commands describes a clearly delineated idea of corporate solidarity consisting of particularistic, personal relations based on instrumental obligations. This form of (proto-) political organisation intersected with and, at times, cut across or superseded the irreducible kinship structures which assigned to each individual a fixed non-negotiable position in elite society. As such it constituted a new type of solidarity framework closely resembling the model of patron-client relations in modern anthropology. Since these relations are by definition voluntary (although involving the creation of vertical authority relations between unequal partners in a quasi-contractual manner) and based on mutual obligations, they necessarily envision their participants in terms of political or social individuals, i.e. as moral beings, regardless of their differences in lineage-, clan-, and ethnic affiliation.

The consolidation of the ideology of Zhou kingship as a conservative reaction?

This insight now finally allows us to resume an important question raised at the beginning of this study, namely how the ideology of Zhou kingship and the model of corporate solidarity it describes relate to the measures associated with the ritual

⁷ Interestingly, Fei Xiaotong 費孝通 (1910-2005) argues that the concept of morals in traditional rural China as well describes an extension of particularistic interpersonal obligations from the individual and his immediate social contacts into larger social groupings in a concentric manner. See his seminal study *Xiangtu Zhongguo* 鄉土中國 (Hong Kong: Open Page Publishing, 2017 [1947]), 59-68.

reform. The latter, again, refers to sudden major changes in vessel types and ornamentation style among late Western Zhou ritual bronze paraphernalia suggesting a thorough reorganisation of the ancestral cult. Indeed, while in late Shang and early Western Zhou elite society patrilineal kinship groups potentially grew indefinitely, thus increasing the burden of ancestral sacrifice for each new generation, inscriptional evidence from the late Western Zhou period indicates that from about 850 BCE onwards, ancestral ritual had been limited to lineage founders (including trunk- and branch-lineage founders) and ancestors from the relatively recent past.⁸ This observation bears significant implications for the social organisation of the elite at that time. “Such discrimination in the ritual realm,” states von Falkenhausen,

mirrors two essential features of segmentary lineage organization: the differentiation of a lineage into a trunk and several branches (segments) that were unequal vis-à-vis one another, and the role of these ranked lineage segments or branch lineages as the basic building blocks of the social order.⁹

In other words, the ritual reform promotes the institutionalisation of lineage splitting as a means to stratify elite society. Von Falkenhausen further explains in this respect:

[A] system of regular lineage-splitting automatically created a hierarchy based on kin seniority and genealogical distance from the focal ancestors, thereby establishing clear differences in access to the prerogatives of status.¹⁰

Such a genealogically defined stratified hierarchy stands of course diametrically opposed to the idea of the political bond and thus to the institution of royal

⁸ Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 66.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 67.

commands and the network of patron-client relations it creates. Why then, we have to ask, is it that inscriptions commemorating the receipt of royal commands in the context of the ideology of Zhou kingship occur in significant numbers only during the mid- to late Western Zhou period? To be sure, more research needs to be done in order to answer this question in a satisfactory manner. However, my guess at this point is that the genre of re-appointment inscriptions, in which more or less all of the extant epigraphic references to the Zhou grand narrative are to be found, might have actually developed as a conservative reaction to the ritual reform. The system of royal commands, as we have demonstrated, became the backbone for the (proto-) political organisation of the Zhou ruling elite at least from the reign of King Cheng onwards. However, apart from a few exceptions testifying to the contrary, there was apparently no pressing need to justify the delegation of royal authority in the medium of elite bronze inscriptions. With the introduction of the ritual reform, these structures and the privileges connected to it likely faced the danger of becoming obliterated. Accordingly, the descendants of the Zhou kings' long-time allies must have felt the need to emphatically claim their position within the Zhou ruling organisation along the lines of traditional authority structures, especially in cases where an individual's high political status did collide with a relatively low genealogical rank in the newly established lineage-transcending elite hierarchy. Moreover, this ritual hierarchy was apparently implemented to varying degrees and with local idiosyncrasies.¹¹ Often this led to individuals exercising far greater power and enjoying far greater privileges than their status in the genealogical hierarchy would have allowed them to. In these cases as well, the claim for a political pedigree, whether constructed or real, may have served to justify an individual's power and

¹¹ Ibid. 126.

prestige by resorting to the institution of royal commands.

In any case, it seems highly probable that it was against the background of the ritual reform that the Zhou network of quasi patron-client relations developed into an emphatically enhanced “*dao-de* cooperation,” the conditions of which were negotiated in the literary realm. It is thus not at all surprising that we do not find any references to the ritual reform in the literary legacy, for the latter had its *raison d'être* in perpetuating an entirely different model of corporate solidarity. Moreover, whereas a hierarchy based on kin seniority and genealogical distance from the focal ancestors constitutes an ascribed, non-negotiable framework of solidarity, the volitional bonds between the Zhou king and the elites were based on sets of shared values and objectives that had to be symbolically articulated and required the participants to develop a memory of obligation. These needs ultimately found their expression not just within reflexive passages from Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, but also in the initial formation of our earliest transmitted texts such as the *Odes* and *Documents*.

To come full circle, by revealing the crucial connections between the institution of Zhou royal commands and the ideology of Zhou kingship, this study has established the former as the most plausible context for the initial formation of the Zhou grand narrative. However, in making this point, we also have to recognise the present study's limitations. In working with literary texts we are confronted not with talking facts, but with narratives devised to render articulate an order of ideas. Although I do relate the ideas and images developed in the textual sources to their possible institutional context, these associations necessarily have to remain tentative at least. A model derived from texts must remain but a model for an explanation, albeit a plausible one. Hence it is my hope that this study will contribute to a growing understanding of early Chinese cultural formation and provide valuable insights to

other disciplines in the field of Early China studies.

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