

# INSCRIPTIONAL RECORDS OF THE WESTERN ZHOU

Robert Eno  
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## Note to Readers

The translations in these pages cannot be considered scholarly. They were originally prepared in early 1988, under stringent time pressures, specifically for teaching use that term. Although I modified them sporadically between that time and 2012, my final year of teaching, their purpose as course materials, used in a week-long classroom exercise for undergraduate students in an early China history survey, did not warrant the type of robust academic apparatus that a scholarly edition would have required.

Since no broad anthology of translations of bronze inscriptions was generally available, I have, since the late 1990s, made updated versions of this resource available online for use by teachers and students generally. As freely available materials, they may still be of use. However, as specialists have been aware all along, there are many imperfections in these translations, and I want to make sure that readers are aware that there is now a scholarly alternative, published last month: *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions*, edited by Constance Cook and Paul Goldin (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 2016). The “Source Book” includes translations of over one hundred inscriptions, prepared by ten contributors. I have chosen not to revise the materials here in light of this new resource, even in the case of a few items in the “Source Book” that were contributed by me, because a piecemeal revision seemed unhelpful, and I am now too distant from research on Western Zhou bronzes to undertake a more extensive one.

Over the years, to my dismay, I have seen these translations occasionally cited in published scholarship. That was never their purpose. I plan to continue to make these materials available online for use in instructional contexts, but would like to stress that there is no longer any reason to cite these translations where more scholarly alternatives are now available.

Bob Eno  
January 2017

Additional Translations  
and Other Materials

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## INSCRIPTIONAL RECORDS OF THE WESTERN ZHOU

In using the translations on the following pages, readers should be aware of certain conventions:

1. The structure of the inscriptions. Western Zhou inscriptional texts exhibit a good deal of regularity, particularly after the earliest period. In reading these texts you will quickly become aware of a “template” that many of them build on. This structure includes: [1] a dating formula (standard complete version: “In the King’s  $n^{\text{th}}$  year, in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  period of the  $n^{\text{th}}$  month on the day  $x-y$ , the King was at X”); [2] the description of an event resulting in a gift or office being given to the person who has had the vessel cast; [3] a formula of gratitude (“So-and-so bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven”); [4] a dedication (“Wherefore was cast this vessel for Ancestor X”); [5] a prayer (“May I live forever with oodles of blessings; may my descendants treasure this always”).

The template itself gives us a certain degree of information about the early Zhou, and variations on elements 1, 3, 4, and 5 add more, but the chief value of the inscriptions lies in 2, the event, or in inscriptions which simply do not fit the mold (so to speak).

2. The letter “X”. The bronze inscriptions include many characters with pronunciations or meanings of which we remain uncertain. “X” simply denotes one of these characters.

3. Inscription titles. These texts are translations of inscriptions which were cast into ceremonial bronze vessels. The name of each inscription consists of two parts: [1] The personal name of the individual who authored the inscription and commissioned the casting of the vessel (the name of this person generally appears in the narrative portion of the text, and the vessel is generally dedicated for use in sacrificing to his or her ancestor, named towards the end of the text), and [2] A word describing the type of vessel on which the inscription appears. Thus text #1 was cast on a “*gui*” type vessel (a tureen), and was commissioned by a person named Li.

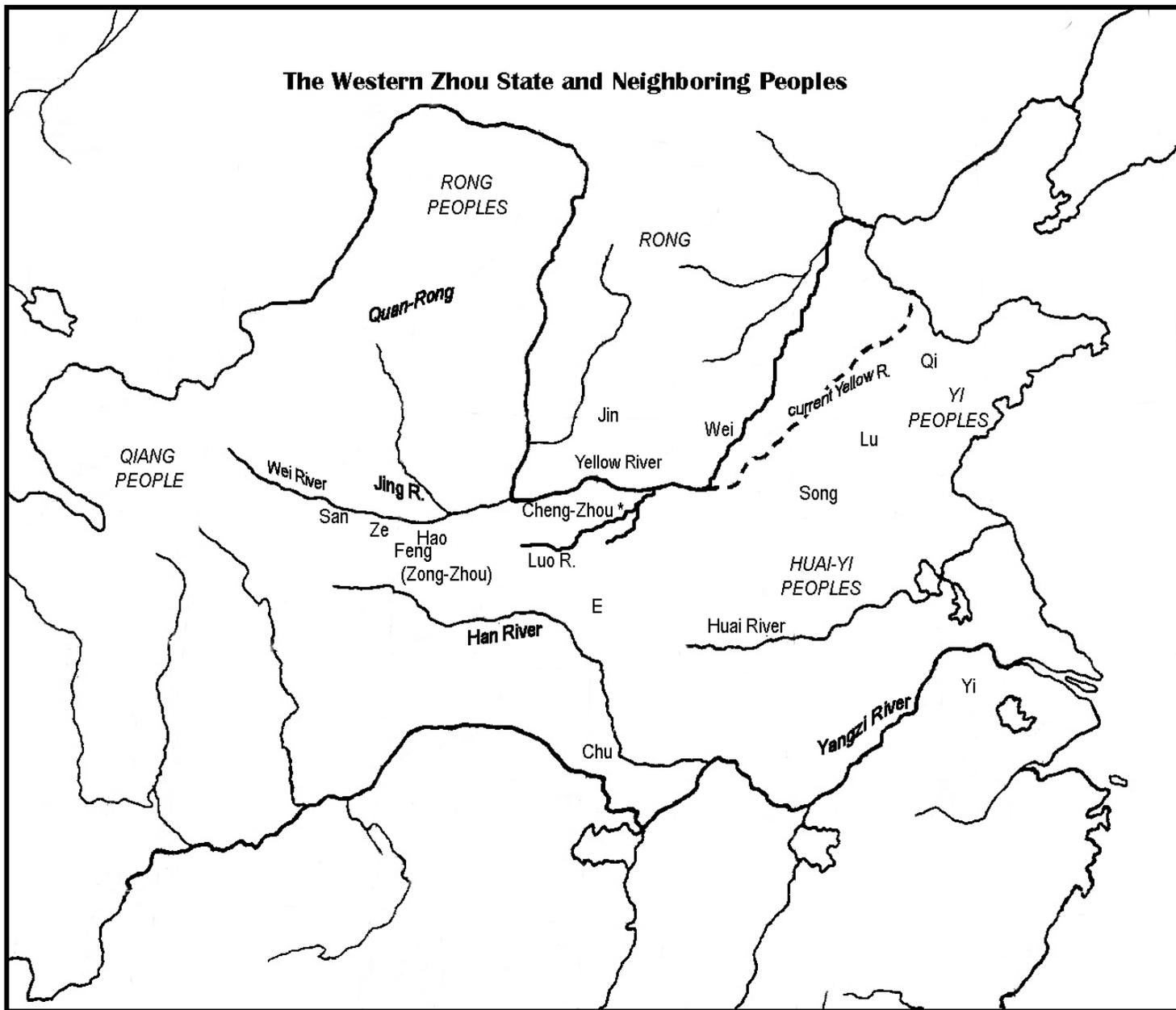
5. Homophonous names. When you use the inscriptions here for research purposes, remember that because Chinese is a “syllable poor language,” there are far more homophones than is the case in English. This may cause confusion with monosyllabic names of people; in these inscriptions there are many people named Li, or Wei, or whatever. Do not assume that all people designated by the same names are the same person.

6. The dating of the kings. Scholars disagree on the dates of the western Zhou kings. For the purposes of this class, we will simply adopt one dating system initially proposed by David Nivison, a specialist at Stanford University.

7. The dating of the inscriptions. In the case of some of the inscriptions that follow, the approximate date of their creation is clear. In other cases there may be widely divergent views. I have assigned the vessels to kings according to my own views, but in many cases the finer distinctions are dictated more by the need for simplicity in presentation than by conviction.

Bronze inscriptions have been collected in a standard edition known as *Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* (Collected bronze texts of the Yin [Shang] and Zhou periods), and inscription index numbers for that edition are provided.

### The Western Zhou State and Neighboring Peoples



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## Major Vessel Types of the Western Zhou

### Food Vessels

*ding*



*fangding*



*gui*



*li*



*dou*



*yu*



*yan*



### Wine and Water Vessels

*jue*



*hu*



*zun*



*you*



*fangyi*



*he*



*pan*



### 1) Inscriptions from the era of King Wu (post-conquest, 1045 - 1043)

#1 *Li gui* 利簋 (Li's tureen)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4131]



King Wu campaigned against the Shang. It was at dawn on the day *jia-zi*. Jupiter was the morning star and by evening the Shang armies were routed. On the day *xin-wei* the King was at the encampment at Jian and presented the scribe Li with metals, wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for Lord X.

*The inscription on this vessel was composed by the scribe Li to commemorate a gift of precious metals (probably bronze or its component ores) presented to Li by King Wu seven days after the conquest of the Shang, an event which the inscription describes. The text, if this interpretation is valid, is very valuable as confirming a later tradition which claimed that the battle of Muye was fought only after the Zhou ruler had determined that the planet Jupiter was in an auspicious position. It also seems to confirm that the battle was brief and decisive. However, the language of the inscription is vague in key places, and there is, in fact, no consensus as to the meaning of the third sentence (some interpreters believe it merely specifies sacrificial preparations and foresees the coming victory).*

*We do not learn why the King rewarded Li, but we may suppose that Li played a role in a ceremony on the day *xin-wei* marking the victory. Note that the structure of the text sets a model for most later inscriptions: a) A dating section begins the text by relating the events to*

*be described to the actions or calendar of the King; b) The central text describes an event which the vessel itself commemorates; c) The text concludes by naming a person in whose honor the vessel was cast. Usually this is a deceased ancestor of the person who composed the inscription. In this case, X ("X" always means a character which we do not know how to read) may be the family name of the ancestor or the land over which he held a "feudal" title (his "fief"). The term "Lord" translates "Gong 公," which could be used either as a term of respect for an elder or as a "feudal" title: "Duke." In many cases we cannot tell which sense is appropriate.*



#2 *Tian Wang gui* 天亡簋 (*The tureen of Wang of the Tian clan*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4261]

On the day *yi-hai* the King conducted a great ceremony. The King set off by boat, sailing in three directions. The king performed a sacrifice at the shrine of Heaven and then descended.

Tian Wang aided the King, who then performed a grand sacrifice to the King's great and brilliant father, King Wen, who pleases with service Di, Lord on High. King Wen looks down from above. With the great and brilliant King surveying above, the great and upright King carried on below and brought to a grand close the sacrifice to his father

On the day *ding-chou* the King held a banquet with a great meal of meats. The King bestowed upon me, Wang, a vessel of rank . . . and I was praised. Earnestly do I raise up the grace of the King to my exalted Elder.



*This remarkable inscription is generally interpreted as referring to ceremonies conducted by King Wu soon after the conquest at the capital city of Zong-Zhou, where, late textual accounts tell us, the royal palace complex included a great lake with an central island, apparently the place where the King set ceremonial sail in this account. This vessel also gives us perhaps the clearest portrait of the theology of the Zhou royal house, with its picture of the former king assisting Di above and supervising his son below. (Some scholars date this vessel to the reign of King Kang [1005-978].)*

#3 *Bao you* 保卣 (*Bao's pot*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #5415]

On the day *yi-mao* the King ordered Bao to go to the five lords of the eastern states of Yin, presenting as gifts six items. Bao was received with ceremonial praise of his valorous service and was given gifts. Wherefore was cast a precious sacrificial vessel to my patterned father of the *gui*-branch lineage shrine. These events occurred at the time when those from the four quarters gathered for the King's great *you*-sacrifice at Zhou, in the second month, during the period of the full moon.



*Since this inscription records events of a great meeting at the Zhou capital shortly after the conquest, it is likely that Bao (we do not know who he was) merely was appointed to visit the places where the lords of the eastern lands were staying while attending the ceremonies. (However, it is possible that "Bao" was actually his title rather than his name, which would mean he was the very high ranking "Protector" of the realm.) "Yin," the name of the last Shang capital, was often used by the Zhou as a name for the Shang. These "Hou" (a "feudal" title which means literally "archer-lord") were the brothers and other relatives of the King who had been appointed to rule over lands near the old Shang homeland in Henan.*

## 2) Inscriptions from the era of King Cheng (1042 - 1006)

*When King Wu died two years after the conquest, his son was still a child. To prevent the disintegration of the new Zhou empire, King Wu's brother, the Duke of Zhou, managed to take power as regent, ruling from Zong-Zhou, the capital city on the Western edge of the Zhou polity, on behalf of the young King-to-be. Three other brothers of King Wu resisted this arrangement. These three had all been given fiefs in the East, near present day Luoyang. It was here that the defeated Shang royal lineage and people had been resettled by King Wu after the conquest. The three disaffected brothers seem to have cast their rebellion as an attempt to restore the Shang, uniting behind the son of the last Shang ruler, whose life King Wu had spared in order to ensure that the Shang ancestors would receive sacrificial sustenance from their descendants. The regent, the Duke of Zhou, acting in the name of the young ruler, later known as King Cheng, led armies eastward from the Zhou capital and defeated the rebels. After the war, the Duke of Zhou determined that to avoid further rebellions in the East, it would be wise to construct a second capital city in the region of Luoyang. This became the Eastern Capital of Cheng-Zhou, which was completed about the time that the duke retired as regent and returned the reins of power to the rightful heir, King Cheng.*

### – Campaigning against the rebels

**#4 Xiaochen Shan zhi** 小臣單觶 (*Petty Minister Shan's jug*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #6512]

During the King's later punitive conquest of the Shang he was at the encampment at Cheng. The Duke of Zhou presented Petty Minister Shan ten strings of cowries. Wherefore was cast this precious ritual vessel.

*One of the great problems of the bronze inscriptions is our sketchy understanding of the meaning of many official terms. The officer Shan mentioned here has an official title which translates into English as a minor post, but which the inscriptions themselves suggest could, in some cases, be a highly influential one.*

**#5 Mei Situ Yi gui** 湑司土送簋 (*The tureen of Yi, Minister of Lands in Mei*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4059]

When the King attacked the Shang cities he granted a new fief of the land of Wei to Tu, the Marquis of Kang. Yi, the Minister of Lands in Mei, along with Tu cast this sacrificial vessel for their late father.

*This vessel is also known as the Kang Hou gui, or the tureen of the Marquis of Kang. Most commentators agree that the Marquis of Kang of this inscription is the man who at the focus of the Book of History chapter, "The Announcement to the Marquis of Kang," the brother of the Duke of Zhou (see also the Appendix to these inscriptions).*

**#6 Ming Gong gui** 明公簋 (*Duke Ming's tureen*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4029]

The King ordered Duke Ming to send the three corps in pursuit, attacking the eastern lands. At X, the Marquis of Lu showed unusual merit, wherefore was cast this campaigning vessel.

*Duke Ming was the son of the Duke of Zhou (see #22); his fief was actually the state of Lu and some commentators think that Duke Ming and the Marquis of Lu are the same person.*

*The inscription seems to confirm a tradition that from the earliest days of the dynasty, the armies of the Zhou were organized in three divisions: the armies of the left, right, and center. We will see further references to this military configuration in other inscriptions. However, in this inscription, the phrase "three corps" (more literally, three clans) is not the term we encounter in later texts and inscriptions.*

**#7 Zhi ding** 寘鼎 (*Zhi's cauldron*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2731]

The King charged Qian to suppress the rebel Eastern Yi. From the first, Zhi followed Qian in the campaign. He was superior in battle, none was his equal. Surveying the corpses, Zhi took a halberd as booty. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel; may Zhi's descendants treasure it forever.

*The Eastern Yi were the most powerful non-Chinese tribes of the late Shang and early Zhou. Later in the Western Zhou, the branches of the Yi tribes known as the Huai Yi (the Yi of the Huai River valley) and the Southern Yi become more prominent, but these may all have been closely related groups.*

**#8 Ran fangding** 鬯方鼎 (*Ran's square cauldron*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2739]

When the Duke of Zhou campaigned against the Eastern Yi, he destroyed the Elder of Feng and the Pugu state. When the Duke returned he performed a *zhui*-sacrifice at the Temple of Zhou. On the day *wu-chen*, we performed libations with wine of *qin* grain and the Duke rewarded Ran with a hundred strings of cowries. Wherefore was cast this ritual caldron.

*Feng and Pugu are elsewhere recorded as states allied to the forces rebelling against the Duke.*

#9 *Qin gui* 禽簋 (*Qin's tureen*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4041]

The King attacked the Marquis of Gai. The Duke of Zhou laid out the plans, Qin served as the sacrificial liturgist and Qin also supervised the sacrificial offerings. The King presented Qin with one hundred *lie* of precious metals. Wherefore Qin cast this precious vessel.

*Qin was a son of the Duke of Zhou. There is considerable dispute with regard to sorting out the Duke of Zhou's sons; most commentators believe that Qin was the Duke's eldest son, who became, de facto, the first man to rule over the Duke of Zhou's fief, the state of Lu, as the Duke of Zhou himself resided in the capital at Zong-Zhou. Lu was in Eastern China, in the western part of present day Shandong Province.*

*The value of the weight measure lie is not known.*

#10 *Xue ding* 鬲鼎 (*Xue's cauldron*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2740]

The King attacked the Eastern Yi. The Duke of Lian charged Xue and Scribe Yu saying, "Take the commanders and officers of the lately pacified lands and attack X." Xue captured cowries, wherefore has been cast this precious sacrificial vessel for X Gong.

#11 *Xiao chen X gui* 小臣諶簋 (*Petty Minister X's tureen*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4238]

When the Eastern Yi raised their great rebellion, Elder Maofu campaigned against the Eastern Yi with the eight divisions of the Yin. In the eleventh month they were dispatched from the encampment at X and following the eastern slopes they attacked at the seacoast. 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 X was singled out for praise and presented with cowries, wherefore was cast this precious vessel.

*The bronze inscriptions have taught us that the heart of the Zhou armies was divided in two. At the Western Capital of Zong-Zhou, six corps were encamped. An eight corps army was stationed at the Eastern Capital, Cheng-Zhou. This latter area, near present day Luoyang city, had been the original land to which the Shang peoples had been moved following the conquest, and had been the core area of the great revolt against the Duke of Zhou. For this reason, the armies stationed there were named the divisions of Yin. Elder Maofu was a prominent military figure in the early Zhou (see #17-20).*

#12 *Lü ding* 旅鼎 (*Lü's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2728]

It was in the year when the Great Protector came to attack the rebellious Eastern Yi. In the eleventh month on the *geng-shen* day the Great Protector was at the encampment at Li. He presented Lü with ten strings of cowries. Lü thereby cast this sacrificial vessel for his father.

*The Great Protector was an official post which was first held by the Duke of Shao, cousin of the Duke of Zhou. One of the Duke of Zhou's sons later succeeded to it. The apparent descendants of the Duke of Shao figure in two puzzling inscriptions of the reign of King Xuan (#121-122).*

#13 *He zun* 兕尊 (*He's goblet*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #6014]

It was when the King first removed his residence to Cheng-Zhou that, carrying on anew the rites of King Wu, he performed *fu*-sacrifices beginning from the altar of Heaven.

In the fourth month on the day *bing-xu* the King addressed the junior members of [our] lineage in the Great Hall of the Jing Palace saying, “Formerly your late father assisted King Wen and aided King Wen in receiving this [great mandate]. When King Wu had newly conquered the Great City of Shang he made an announcement in the courtyard



at the altar of Heaven saying, ‘I shall reside in this central country and from it rule the people.’ Pay attention, inexperienced youths! Attend to the example of your forbear, whose sacrificial vessels stand on the altar of Heaven. Carry on his mandate and sacrifice to him with care. May the great virtue of the former Kings bathe the altar of Heaven and guide us in our ignorance.”

When the King had completed his address, he bestowed upon He thirty strings of cowries, wherefore has been cast this precious sacrificial vessel for X Gong.

It was in the King's fifth year.

*This vessel describes the establishment of a royal residence at the new capital five years after King Cheng assumed the throne. The inscription, which is unclear in parts, was composed by He, who received a speech and gifts from the King. We do not know who his father was nor what role he played in the Zhou conquest, but it is possible that He and his lineage were originally not members of the Zhou tribe. The inscription is particularly interesting in that it demonstrates that the primacy of the deity Tian was already established. “Tian” is a Zhou term for the highest divine force; Shang oracle texts employed the term “Di” in a similar sense.*



### - **The King's Consort Jiang**

*A number of inscriptions from the era of King Cheng refer to one of the consorts of the King, a lady of the Jiang clan who is referred to as “Wang Jiang” (“the King's Jiang,” or Queen Jiang). These inscriptions indicate that Queen Jiang was a political actor of some stature, and in some ways she resembles Fu Hao, the consort of the Shang ruler Wu-ding, another woman who seems to have wielded considerable power. Later bronze texts refer to other royal consorts named Queen Jiang, and it may be that princesses of the Jiang lineage who married into the Zhou royal clan of Ji customarily occupied the status of principal wife (the mythical progenitor of the Zhou clan, Hou Ji (Prince Millet), was said to have been the son of a lady of the Jiang lineage). Some scholars link this Jiang clan to the Qiang peoples, non-Chinese tribes who flourished in Western China during the Shang. The Qiang were the bitterest enemies of the Shang, according to the oracle texts, which record frequent sacrifices of massive numbers of Qiang captives, particularly during the reign of Wu-ding (c. 1240 - 1180). That the Zhou may have had close relations with this powerful western tribe may help explain how the Zhou were able to rise to political and military prominence so rapidly at the close of the Shang. It is, however, possible that the Jiang and Qiang were not related groups.*

*In addition to the texts immediately below, Queen Jiang appears also in #21.*

#### **#14 Shu you** 叔卣 (Shu's pot)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4132]

The King sacrificed at Zong-Zhou. Queen Jiang ordered Shu to serve the Great Protector, and rewarded Shu with special spirits of grass, white precious metal, and grass-fed oxen. Shu, in thanks for the grace of the Great Protector, cast this precious sacrificial vessel.

#### **#15 Yu ding** 旃鼎 (Yu's cauldron)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2704]

In the first period of the eighth month Queen Jiang presented to Yu three fields in Daisu. Commander Lu supervised the ceremony of bestowal. Wherefore, requiting the King's grace, forever may my descendants treasure this.

*The dating formula in this inscription introduces an important Zhou calendrical innovation: the month period. From the corpus of Zhou inscriptions we know that the Zhou not only noted months by number and days by the cyclical stem system, but also divided each month into four periods: “initial auspiciousness,” “post birth of the crescent,” “post full moon,” “post death of the crescent.” Most commentators view these as four quarter-month periods, but some believe they refer to four periods of only two or three days each. The month period system does not appear in Shang inscriptions, and fell into disuse after the period of the inscriptions. Its significance is unclear.*

*Yu appears to be the same man as “Scribe Yu,” mentioned in #10 above.*

**#16 Zuoce Xuan you** 作冊鬲卣 (*Recorder Xuan’s pot*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #5407]

In the nineteenth year when the King was at An, Queen Jiang charged Recorder Xuan to calm the Elder of the Eastern Yi. The Elder of the Yi received Xuan as a guest, bestowing upon him cowries and cloth. Raising up Queen Jiang’s grace in thanks, Xuan thereby cast this precious sacrificial vessel for his late patterned Father Gui.

*This inscription, one of several which records the King’s visit to An (perhaps, Yan), a place most likely near China’s east coast, was cast midway through King Cheng’s reign (the “nineteenth year” means the nineteenth year of King Cheng’s reign). The Eastern Yi have now become much more closely linked to the Zhou (their leader is referred to by the Zhou feudal title “Bo,” here translated as Elder), and it has been suggested that Queen Jiang was in fact an Eastern Yi princess married to King Cheng at the close of the Zhou-Yi wars early in King Cheng’s reign. Here, Queen Jiang seems in charge of making arrangements to keep the Zhou on good terms with the Yi, Xuan being her deputy to the Yi. (Note that in this case, it is Queen Jiang who receives the thanks of Xuan although it is the leader of the Yi who bestows them.) In a different inscription also by Recorder Xuan, the same event is recorded in slightly different language: #16a Xuan zun (Xuan’s goblet): At An, my ruler charged me, Recorder Xuan, to calm the Elder of the Eastern Yi. The Elder of the Yi gave me guest gifts of cowries and cloth. Wherefore I cast this campaigning treasure for my late patterned father of the day gui. Here, the word “ruler” must stand for Queen Jiang, suggesting that Xuan was her personal retainer.*

– **Inscriptions concerning the acts of Elder Maofu**

*A number of interesting inscriptions refer to a high ranking person named Bo Maofu, or Elder Maofu. We know nothing about Elder Maofu other than what the inscriptions tell us, but he was apparently an influential military commander of the King Cheng era who has been forgotten in history. That he was active early in the era is clear from #11 above, which recounts his actions in the campaign against the Yi. The inscriptions which follow may refer to that campaign, but are equally likely to refer to later campaigns against other rebels and border tribes. (There is a theory, not adopted here, that Elder Maofu was the son*

*of the Marquis of Kang who appears in #5 above; this would involve dating all the following inscriptions to the reign of the next Zhou king.)*

**#17 Shao zun** 鬯尊 (Shao's goblet)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #6004]

In the ninth month, at the encampment at Yan, on the day *jia-wu*, Elder Maofu presented Shao with a white horse with tan withers and black mane. Brilliant Shao shall assiduously follow at Yan in service of the companions of the glorious Elder Maofu. Wherefore was cast this campaign vessel of the Duan Palace, that Shao's brilliance may shine ten thousand years.

*Was the Duan Palace Elder Maofu's residence? If so, perhaps Shao was a personal retainer who lived there. In general, the term "palace" may refer either to a royal edifice, the domicile of a lesser lord, or even, in later inscriptions, perhaps the dwelling of military officials of lesser political influence. In this text, this grandiose term may even refer merely to the ancestral shrine of Shao's clan.*

**#18 Xiao chen Zhai gui** 小臣宅簋 (Petty Officer Zhai's tureen)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4201]

In the fifth month on the day *ren-chen* the Duke of Dong 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 Duke and Elder Maofu in thanks, wherefore was cast a sacrificial vessel for Lord Yi. May Zhai's descendants treasure it and use it to serve the King's comings and goings for ten thousand years.

**#19 Shi Qi ding** 師旂鼎 (Commander Qi's cauldron)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2809]

In the third month on the day *ding-mao*, the soldiers of Commander Qi did not follow the King into battle against Lei of the Yu border tribe. Commander Qi had his comrade Hung report this to Elder Maofu at X. Elder Maofu ordered a fine of 300 *lie* worth of goods, not to be collected immediately. Maofu issued an order saying, "It would be proper to cast out all who failed to follow their commander. However, they will not be cast out. Instead, they will remit their fines to Commander Qi." Hung reported this to the scribe of the central battalion to be recorded. Qi recognizes the payment of the fines by means of this vessel.

**#20 Yuzheng Wei gui** 御正衛簋 (*Chariot Officer Wei's tureen*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4044]

In the first period of the fifth month on the day *jia-shen*, Maofu rewarded Chariot Officer Wei with a horse from the King. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for Father Wu.

*Chariot Officer Wei was the author of another inscription: #20a Wei ding (Wei's cauldron): Wei has cast a great ding for his late patterned father Jizhong, whereby he may offer up prayers seeking eternal blessings, and whereby he may entertain the King's comings and goings, and serve gentlemen and friends. May his descendants forever treasure it.*

– *The inscriptions of Recorder Ling of Ze*

*Some of the most vivid inscriptions of the era of King Cheng were composed by an historically unknown individual named Ling, who held the scribal office of Recorder. In these inscriptions, figures such as Queen Jiang, the Duke of Zhou, and the King himself all play a role. No texts are richer in evoking the atmosphere of the reign of King Cheng. (There are some very plausible arguments for dating these texts to the reign of King Zhao, a half-century later, but the more widely accepted dating is retained here.)*

**#21 Ling gui** 令簋 (*Ling's tureen*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4300]

The King was attacking the Elder of Chu and was in Yan. It was in the ninth month, on the day *ding-chou*, during the period of the waning moon. Recorder Ling of Ze performed a reverent service on behalf of Queen Jiang. Queen Jiang rewarded Ling with ten strings of cowries, ten households of retainers, and one hundred individual laborers. The three high ministers of Ji, in the region of Shu, which had been presented to the late Elder Father Fu, were also given to Ling. Ling held high the grace of the King, the reward of his late father Lord Ding, that Ling's descendants may benefit by them. Truly, these are the rewards of the Elder Ding. Ling shall be fully attentive to the august King. Ling dares to raise the grace of the King in thanks and casts a precious *gui* dedicated to the Elder Ding, to be reverently used at the august clan shrine to serve the King as he comes and goes and to feast the officials. May wives, sons, and later descendants treasure it forever. [A Scribe-Clan sign is appended.]

#22 *Ling fangyi* 令方彝 (*Ling's square vessel*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #9901]

It was in the eighth month when the dating-planet was at *jia-shen*, the King ordered Ming Bao, the son of the Duke of Zhou, to take charge of the Ministers of the Three Tasks and of the Four Quarters, and to appoint the lower officials. On the day *ding-hai*, the King ordered Ze to report at the palace of the Duke of Zhou. The Duke ordered him to go and assemble the officials.

In the first period of the tenth month on the day *gui-wei*, Duke Ming (i.e. Ming Bao) arrived to hold court at Cheng-Zhou and issued charges to the Ministers of the Three Tasks, and then also to the lower officials, the various officers, the neighborhood headmen, the craft heads, and to the many lords: the marquises, the field-lords, and the labor-lords, thus issuing the orders to the four quarters. Thus was the issuing of orders completed. On the following day *jia-shen*, Duke Ming sacrificed oxen at the Jing Palace. On the following day *yi-you*, he sacrificed oxen at the Kang Palace. All this having been done, he sacrificed oxen at the precincts of the King.



When Duke Ming returned from the precincts of the King he presented the Commander of Kang with spiced spirits of grain, precious metals, and a calf, saying, “Sacrifice with these.” He gave to Ling spiced spirits of grain, precious metals, and a calf, saying, “Sacrifice with these.” Then he charged them saying, “Now I order you two, Kang and Ze, to assist as companions your fellow officials.”

Recorder Ling dares to raise up in thanks the grace of the governor Duke Ming and cast a precious sacrificial vessel for Father Ding. He dares to pass on Duke Ming’s reward to Father Ding so as to brighten the glory of Father Ding. [Ling’s Scribe-Clan sign is appended.]

*This inscription allows us to glimpse the passage of political power from the generation of the Zhou founders to their sons. Despite the fact that from the conquest on the Duke of Zhou had served as the highest minister of state at the Zhou capital in Zong-Zhou, he had also been granted a sizable fief in the East, in the land known as Lu (not the Lu of #14). Unable to supervise his lands directly, the Duke of Zhou had deputed one of his sons, Ming Bao (literally, Protector of the land of Ming) to represent him in Lu (we saw Ming Bao in #6, where he is also referred to as the Lu Hou, or the Marquis of Lu). The text of this inscription seems to picture the Duke of Zhou as an aging minister at the capital, turning over to his son his own status as the premier lord of Eastern China. Ming Bao was probably in the East when the King issued orders to him through Recorder Ling of Ze to assume the supervision over the Eastern officials from his father. Three days later, Ze Ling received confirming orders from the Duke of Zhou himself (suggesting that the Duke of Zhou still retained substantial powers). Ling then presumably traveled quickly to Lu to deliver the*

orders to Ming Bao, who then traveled to Cheng-Zhou, the Eastern Capital, to proclaim his initial edicts as premier lord of Eastern China, arriving fifty-nine days after the King had issued the initial order.

*The Ling fangyi gives us an interesting inventory of the early Zhou bureaucratic structure in the East, naming various levels of officials from the Ministers of the Three Tasks (the highest ranking officials of the royal government apparatus at Cheng-Zhou) down through local officers of the Cheng-Zhou region, and then listing three levels of landed lords (Hou, Dian, and Nan: marquis, field-lord, labor-lord) who were presumably outside the bureaucratic line of command but still under the supervision of Ming Bao.*

*An inscription by a different recorder recounts the same events briefly: #22a Zuoce X you (Recorder X's pot): In the year when Ming Bao held a group audience in Cheng-Zhou the Duke presented Recorder X with spiced spirits of grain and cowries. X raised up the Duke's grace in thanks, wherefore has been cast a precious sacrificial vessel for Father Yi.*

**#23 Ling ding** 令鼎 (*Ling's cauldron*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2803]

The King performed the Great Ploughing ceremony at the fields of Qi and then held the ceremonial banquet there. Afterwards, the King led the archery match; the Supervisors then shooting in ranks opposite the Commanders and Princes. The King returned from the fields of Qi riding in a chariot with the Duke of Lian at the reins. Ling and Fen led the way before the horses. The King said, "Ling and Fen, whichever of you arrives first I will reward with thirty officer households." When the King reached the Lian Palace he ruled for Ling. Ling bowed prostrate and said, "Your humble servant shall study to be worthy." Ling raised in thanks the King's grace.

*The Ling ding gives us a portrait of the early Zhou elite in an environment of ritual play. The Great Ploughing ceremony was a continuation of the Shang practice of having the King initiate the farming season by himself ploughing the first furrow to ensure that the spirits would bless the fields with fertility. A number of early inscriptions refer to the King's ritual function in the structure of Zhou state religion, and indicate the connection of ritual acts with large scale feast celebrations, which served as important social occasions for the elite. Here is another example from the era of King Cheng: #23a Chen Chen he 臣辰盃 (Officer Chen's kettle): It was in the year when the King performed the Great Harmony ceremony at Zong-Zhou upon the occasion of removing his residence to the Royal Palace at Hao. During the full moon period of the fifth month on the day xin-you, the King charged Retainer Shang and Scribe Yin to appear in audience together at Cheng-Zhou. He presented them with one hundred live sacrificial pigs and rewarded them with a flask of spiced spirits of grain and cowries. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for Father Gui. Minister Chen.*

*The Great Harmony ceremony seems to have involved a grand convocation the members of the royal clan.*

### 3) Inscriptions from the era of King Kang (1005 - 978)

*Traditional histories tell us next to nothing about the reign of King Kang, other than that it was peaceful. The inscriptions we see here seem to confirm the general absence of strife, although they do indicate that the King continued the task of expanding the Zhou state by launching military campaigns against areas on the periphery of the Zhou polity. The inscriptions chosen here begin with a series pertaining to the Marquis of Xing and his recorder Mai, which probably bridge the end of the era of King Cheng and the early years of King Kang's reign. The two long inscriptions at the end, authored by a senior official named Yu in about 983 B.C., are the most spectacular texts of the early Zhou period.*

**#24 Xing Hou gui** 井侯簋 (The Marquis of Xing's tureen) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4241]

In the third month the King ordered Rong and the Inner Scribe saying, “Allot to the Marquis of Xing robes of office. Give him ministers of three categories: men of Zhou, men of Zhong, and men of Yong.” Bowing prostrate before the gracious Son of Heaven I received his great gift. May I serve well the Lords above and below, eternally under the mandate of the Zhou. In pursuance of filiality, upright I dare not fail, continuing our blessed sacrifices, ministering steadfast to the Son of Heaven. To record the orders of the King, I cast this vessel for the Duke of Zhou.

*The word translated as “Lords” here is the term “Di,” which during the Shang denoted either the highest deity or the pantheon of deities conceived as a whole (or both). The Zhou tended to use the term interchangeably with Tian, “Heaven,” and it is a question whether Di may denote more than one deity. Note that it is during the reign of King Kang that the custom of referring to the King as the Son of Heaven (Tian) first begins.*

**#25 Mai zun** 麥尊 (Mai's goblet) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #6015]

The King charged our lord the Marquis of Xing to depart from Pu and become Marquis in Xing. In the second month, the Hou appeared in audience at Zong-Zhou according to his orders. This was just at the time when the King went to the Pang in the Capital District for the *rong* sacrifice ritual. On the following day, the King sailed upon the great moat to perform the Great Feng sacrifice. The King shot a great bird. The Marquis sailed in attendance on a boat with a vermilion 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. That

evening, when the King was at An, the Marquis was presented with a red battle axe and two hundred households of ministers. He returned riding a royal chariot drawn by horses with bronze-embellished tackle, clothed in ceremonial hat, jacket, kneepads, and sandals. In Xing the Marquis gave thanks for the Son of Heaven's brilliant grace, and made a complete and accurate temple report, the presenting the plumage of the fowl to bring contentment to his illustrious late father.

Recorder Mai received precious metals from our lord the Marquis, and raised them in thanks. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel intended to serve the Marquis's comings and goings and glorify his bright commands. It was in the year when the Son of Heaven bestowed his grace upon Mai's lord Marquis. May his descendants forever pursue virtue thereby and bring many blessings by the assiduous pursuit of their commands.

*This inscription and the following two were all penned by a single individual. The great moat was a man-made circular lake at the royal capital precinct Feng, at the center of which was an island. Upon the island, tradition tells us, was the most sacred of all royal shrines, the "Bright Hall." The Bright Hall is not mentioned in the inscriptions, but it may simply go by another name. A second royal precinct, Hao, was constructed at Zong-Zhou early in the dynasty.*

**#26 Mai yi** 麥彝 (Mai's vessel)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #9893]

In the eighth month on the day yi-hai, our lord the Marquis of Xing bestowed glory upon his senior officer by feasting in the domicile of Mai. Mai received a gift of precious metals. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial vessel, for use in feasting the Marquis of Xing as he comes and goes in order to carry out his great commands. May Mai's descendants treasure it forever.

**#27 Mai he** 麥盃 (Mai's kettle)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #9451]

The Marquis of Xing glorified his officer Mai by feasting in the domicile of Mai. The Marquis presented Mai with precious metals. Wherefore was cast this urn for following the Marquis of Xing in affairs of war, that he may be served assiduously night and day and feasted as he comes and goes.

#28 *Yi Hou Ze gui* 宜侯矢簋 (*The tureen of Ze, Marquis of Yi*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4320]

In was in the fourth month when the date-planet was in *ding-wei*. The King was surveying the territory of Shang which had been conquered by King Wu and King Cheng, going on to survey the state lands of the east. The King stood at the earthen altar of the shrine of Yi, facing south. The King charged Ze, the Marquis of Qian, saying, “Be now the Marquis of Yi.” The King presented him with a flask of spiced spirits of grain, a Shang wine ladle . . . , a scarlet lacquer bow and one hundred scarlet lacquer arrows, ten black bows and one thousand black arrows. The King presented also land of three hundred and . . . parcels, one hundred and . . . , thirty-five settlements, and one hundred forty . . . . He gave him . . . tens and seven the King’s men at Yi, seven senior officials of Zheng with retainers numbering 1,050 men, and six hundred . . . and six common men of Yi. Ze, the Marquis of Yi, raised up in thanks the King’s grace and cast a sacrificial vessel for Father Ding, the Duke of Qian.



*Note that Ze’s title appropriately changes in mid-text, an indication that great care was given to the composition of these texts (the issue of who actually composed the rhetoric of the inscriptions, and why so many of them conform so closely to a single model has not been much studied). Concerning the scale of largess granted here, see #36 below.*

#29 *Hezi you* 貉子卣 (*Hezi’s pot*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #5409]

In the first month on the day *ding-chou*, the King descended to Lü to hunt. The King led in herding the beasts into a ravine until all was complete. The King then ordered Retainer Dao to convey to Hezi three deer. Hezi raised in thanks the King’s grace. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel.

*We learn from other inscriptions that Hezi was the name of the Marquis of Ji. Thus this vessel shows us ritual courtesies between the King and high ranking nobility connected with hunting activities.*

#30 *Shi Shou ding* 史獸鼎 (*Scribe Shou's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2778]

The Royal Consort ordered the Scribe Shou to submit his works at Cheng-Zhou. In the twelfth month on the day *gui-wei*, the Scribe Shou presented his works to the Royal Consort. When he had completed his presentation the Royal Consort rewarded the Scribe Shou with a ceremonial ornament of jade, and presented him with a pig-shaped cauldron and a beaker. Shou raised in thanks the glorious grace of the Royal Consort. Wherefore was cast this eternally treasured sacrificial vessel to Father Geng.

#31 *Geng Ying you* 庚嬴卣 (*Geng Ying's pot*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #5426]

It was in the King's tenth month in the period of the full moon, the date-planet was at *ji-chou*. The King descended to the domicile of Geng Ying. The King praised Geng Ying's valor and presented Geng Ying with ten strings of cowries, and also a cylinder of cinnabar powder. Geng Ying raised in thanks the King's grace. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel to her patterned mother-in-law; may her descendants treasure it forever.

*Most interpreters believe this vessel was cast by a woman. There are not too many such examples, but they are not unknown (see #40, for example).*

#32 *Tuo gui* 它簋 (*Tuo's tureen*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4330]

Tuo says, Bowing prostrate I dare to report with all care and clarity to my late father: You ordered me, the Lord of Shen, to perform services at the clan shrine of the Duke of Zhou to the two late Dukes. I dared not fail to do so. Through the grace of the Duke of Tong, I may succor my late father by making bright the commands I have received from him.

Oh! I recall to myself how the former Kings and the former Dukes conquered the Yin and announced the completion of their achievements. My father prevailed through his virtuous gentleness and so his son the Lord of Shen now cherishes the blessings bestowed by the Dukes. Oh! The merits of the Lord of Shen have pleased this Duke, who has bestowed upon me revenues from the lands of Bi and Niu. I have therefore cast this vessel to feast you, my father Ji Gong, and to call down the many Dukes – may they show kindness and pity to your son Tuo, Lord of Shen,

and bring him blessings. May they grant him long life – may they live forever. I wish thereby to aid my younger brothers, my sons and grandsons; may they study my exemplary father and be worthy as sons.

*As the dynasty progresses, retrospective inscriptions in which the author reflects upon the contributions of his ancestors early in the dynasty become increasingly frequent. A number of these do not include accounts of particular recent events, and the immediate occasion for the inscription is unclear. In this instance, a grandson of the Duke of Zhou, whose father was apparently a secondary son of the Duke, boasts of the rewards that he has brought to his father's branch lineage in Shen by having pleased the current Duke (who would have been the senior grandson of the Duke of Zhou), apparently, in part, through assiduous sacrifices to his trunk-lineage ancestors (and also, it seems, through the aid of the Duke of Tong, who may have been a collateral member of the lineage).*

**#33 Ning gui gai** 寧簋蓋 (Ning's tureen cover)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4021]

Ning has had fashioned a sacrificial *gui* vessel for Father Yi. May it bring down the hundred spirits; may it bring many blessings; may later generations of descendants treasure it.

**#34 Zuoce Da fangding** 作冊大方鼎 (Recorder Da's square cauldron) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2758]

The Duke came to cast a huge cauldron to venerate King Wu and King Cheng. In the fourth month in the period of the waxing moon on the day *ji-chou*, the Duke rewarded the Recorder Da with a white horse. Da raised up in thanks the precious gift of the Great Protector the Heavenly Chancellor and employed it to cast a precious vessel to revere his *ding*-grandfather.

*“Recorder” and “Scribe” are titles denoting officers whose duties included writing and record keeping. We most frequently see these officials at court ceremonies reading out the written orders of the King. Their precise roles are not well understood, but they clearly had religious duties in addition to their scribal ones. Scribes may have included the people who actually composed the inscriptions themselves.*

#35 *Cheng Wang fangding* 成王方鼎 (King Cheng's square cauldron) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #1734]

Sacrificial for King Cheng.

*This vessel is of interest solely because it is one of a very few which was apparently dedicated for use at the royal shrines for sacrifice to a former King. It is a puzzle of Western Zhou inscriptions why so few royal pieces have been unearthed (the Fu zhong and the "Fu gui" of the King Li era represent two others). It may be because the royal vessels were more generally buried in the tombs of those who had them cast or in whose honor they were cast. The tombs of the Western Zhou kings have not yet been found and excavated. It is tempting to speculate that this vessel could be the one referred to in #34 above.*

#36 *Da Yu ding* 大盂鼎 (The larger cauldron of Yu)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2837]

It was in the ninth month when the King was at Zong-Zhou. The King charged Yu saying, "Yu! Shining King Wen received the great mandate from Heaven. When King Wu succeeded Wen, he created a state, opening hidden lands, possessing all the four quarters, and setting right their peoples. In ceremonial affairs involving wine, oh! – he permitted no excess; at sacrificial rites, he permitted no drunkenness. Hence Heaven in its greatness watched closely over its sons and protected the former Kings in their possession of the four quarters. I have heard that the Yin loss of the mandate was due to the fact that its greater and lesser lords and the many officials assisting the Yin sank into drunkenness and so were bereft of their city.

"You have helped me from the hazy dawn of my youth: When I was engaged in my youthful studies, you never coerced me but always helped me. Now I am attempting to emulate and grasp the



upright virtue of King Wen, and charge the many officials as he did. Now I charge you to assist Rong in attending to the constancy of harmonious virtue: be assiduous in remonstrating with me

from dawn to dusk serving in awe of Heaven’s awesomeness.”

The King said, “Oh! I charge you Yu to emulate your late grandfather Nan Gong, whom you succeed.”

The King said, “Yu, assist me by overseeing until death the affairs of war. Assiduously remonstrate and upbraid me. From dawn to dusk help me to govern the four quarters and follow the former Kings in receiving charge of the people and the lands.

“I give to you a flask of sacrificial liquors, ceremonial cap, robes, kneepads, and sandals, and a chariot with horse. I present to you the banner of your late grandfather Nan Gong for you to lead in hunting. I give to you four estate officials and 659 servant from charioteers to common peasants. I give you thirteen officials of the rank of King’s officers to guard your borders, and along with them 1,050 servants. Move them promptly from their current lands.”

The King said, “Yu! Be attentive to your government and do not disobey my charge.”

In gratitude for the favors of the King, Yu casts this precious cauldron for his late grandfather Nan Gong.

It was in the King’s twenty-third sacrificial year.



*This inscription and the one following are the two most important of the early reigns. Among the aspects worth noting about the Da Yu ding are the parallels between it and the “Announcement on Wine” in the Book of History.\* The reference to “youthful studies” is also interesting. We know next to nothing about early Zhou education, but we are certain that an important (and perhaps the primary) component of it was military training, particularly archery. It is highly unlikely that “study” here refers to book learning. (Late Zhou texts seem to suggest that the most fundamental component of Western Zhou education was ritual dance.) The Da Yu ding is also important because it gives us insight into the scale of enfeoffment and the huge numbers of people whose lives could be disrupted by the royal decision to open up new lands (or reorganize old states) and deputize a lord to rule over them.*

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\*A translation of the “Announcement on Wine” is appended at the end of this reading. The inscription on this vessel has led many former skeptics to view that text as an authentic document from the early Western Zhou.

#37 *Xiao Yu ding* 小盂鼎 (*The smaller cauldron of Yu*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2839]

It was in the eighth month in the period of the full moon, the date-planet being at the *jia-shen* position. At first light the three lords at the left and the three lords at the right entered and presented wine offerings. At dawn, the King descended to the Temple of the Zhou . . . guests and the guests from the border states garbed in their campaigning robes stood facing east. Yu entered from the South Gate with banners. Hung from his sash were Gui tribal . . . .

Yu reported saying. “The King ordered me to take . . . and attack the Gui tribe . . . . I have captured three leaders, over 4800 scalps, 13,081 prisoners . . . tens of horses, thirty chariots, 355 oxen, and thirty-eight sheep.”

Yu further . . . said, “. . . called on me to campaign, and I captured one leader, 237 scalps . . . prisoners, 104 horses, and over one hundred chariots.”

The King said, “Excellent!” Yu bowed prostrate and brought forth the captured leaders into the Great Court.

The King ordered Rong to . . . the leaders, inquiring their reasons. . . . “The Elder of Ke . . . the Guihun tribe. The Guihun thereupon took a new . . . and followed the Shang.” The leaders were then beheaded at . . . .

The King called upon . . . to charge Yu thus, “Take the captured scalps through the temple gate to present at the Western Shrine. Take the . . . in to make burnt offerings at the Temple of Zhou.

Yu . . . entered the third gate and took his place in the Inner Court facing north. Yu reported. Then the Elder of Bi took his place and reported . . . and the Elder of Ming, the Elder of Ji, and the Elder of X. When the reports had all been made, Yu, with the many Marquises and Field-lords . . . . When Yu had completed his report of the campaign the guests took their places. The guests were served, the King calling for them to be served. Yu . . . presented the guests . . . .

At mid-morning, the three officers of the Zhou entered and presented wine offerings. The King descended to the temple. The liturgist . . . the state guests poured libations . . . . Oxen were slaughtered in sacrifices to the royal forbears, the Zhou kings King Wu and King Cheng . . . . The King poured libations. After the libations, the state guests were served.

The King called upon . . . to charge Yu, “Go drive in the beasts which you have brought back that they may be distributed by ranks.”

On the following day *yi-you*, the Ministers of the Three Tasks entered and presented wine offerings. The King descended to the temple and feasted the royal state guests who had joined in the campaign. The King ordered that Yu be rewarded with . . . ., a bow and one hundred arrows, one embellished bow sheath, one helmet fringed with cowries, one suit of bronze armor, two halberds . . . .

Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for Elder X.

It was in the King's twenty-fifth year.

*This text has the distinction of being the most important nearly illegible inscription of the Western Zhou! The vessel on which it was inscribed has been lost since the Taiping Rebellion of the 1850s, and the rubbing of the inscription which we have now is so poor that guesswork rather than scholarship has yielded many of the interpretations of its text. Nevertheless, what we can read is astonishing. The scale of warfare, the masses of prisoners of war, and the elaborate nature of military ritual are all portrayed here. One of the charming customs of early Chinese warfare was the taking of scalps (actually only the left ears were carried back for presentation at court), and here we can see that tales of "mountains of ears" which later texts report may not have been wild exaggerations. The enormous number of prisoners raises for the Zhou the same sorts of issues about a "slave economy" underlying early Chinese society which we discussed for the Shang. One puzzling aspect of the inscription is its report that the rebel leaders of the Rong tribes (who generally lived to the west of the Zhou) were "following the Shang." Could the idea of a Shang restoration have persisted as late as the closing years of King Kang's reign? We have no other evidence that it did. Some commentators prefer to date this vessel to the reign of King Cheng, and this is one reason; others, peering through their magnifying glasses at the nearly obliterated graphs of this sentence claim that the reading of "Shang" is simply an error.*

#### 4) Inscriptions from the era of King Zhao (977 - 957)

*Historical texts tell us next to nothing about the reign of King Zhao other than that the King campaigned extensively in the South, ultimately meeting his death there (the texts say that he was hit by a thunderbolt; more likely it was a Southern Yi arrow).*

##### #38 *Yiyu gui* 秣馭簋 (*Yiyu's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #3976]

Yiyu followed the King campaigning in the South. Attacking Chujing he obtained booty. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for Father Wu.

##### #39 *Guo Bo gui* 過伯簋 (*The Elder of Guo's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #3907]

The Elder of Guo followed the King in attacking the rebellious Jing and captured metals. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for his clan shrine.

– *The following three vessels are unusual in that they are principally concerned with the affairs of women.*

##### #40 *Yin Ji li* 尹媯鬲 (*The steamer of lady Yin of the Ji clan*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #754]

Mu Gong had a clan shrine for Yin Ji built in the woods of Yu. In the sixth month in the period of the waxing moon on the day *yi-mao*, the gracious Royal Consort, not forgetting how Mu Gong had served the former King with sagacity and illumination, descended to the clan shrine of Yin Ji in the woods of Yu. The Royal Consort praised the valor of Yin Ji and presented her with five objects of jade and four horses. Bowing prostrate and raising in thanks the grace of the Royal Consort; thus was cast this precious *qi*-cauldron.

*One of the most troublesome phrases in the inscriptions is the one rendered here as “praising valor.” The term becomes increasingly common through the middle of the Western Zhou, and then dies out. Eastern Zhou texts give no hint as to its meaning. It seems obviously connected with merit on the battlefield, yet in this instance, it appears to be applied to a woman, raising the question of whether, as with Fu Hao in the Shang, the consorts of warlike nobles did not themselves sometimes play a role in military affairs (something that would have been unthinkable a few centuries later).*

**#41 Gong Ji li** 公媯鬲 (*The steamer of lady Gong of the Ji clan*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #753]

In the twelfth month in the period of the waxing moon, Zizhong fished in X Lake. The Royal Consort praised Gong Ji's valor and had her presented with three hundred fish. Bowing prostrate and raising in thanks the Royal Consort's grace; thus was cast this precious *qi* cauldron.

**#42 Ci zun** 次尊 (*Ci's goblet*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #5994]

In the first period of the second month on the day *ding-mao*, Gong Ji ordered Ci to supervise the men of the fields. Praising the accomplishments of Ci, she presented him with a horse and a fur jacket. Raising in thanks the grace of Gong Ji; thus was cast this precious vessel.

### 5) *Inscriptions from the era of King Mu (956 - 923)*

#### #43 *Changfu he* 長白盃 (*Changfu's kettle*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #9455]

In the first period of the third month on the day *ding-hai*, King Mu was encamped at Xiayu. King Mu led the ceremonial banquet at the residence of the Elder of Xing. When the archery match that followed was initiated by the Senior Liturgist, the King commanded Changfu to serve as aide to the Elder of Xing. When it came the Elder of Xing's turn to shoot, his steadiness was such that he did not miss. Changfu was praised for his valor. He dared to raise in thanks the magnificent grace of the Son of Heaven; wherefore he set out to cast this sacrificial vessel.

#### #44 *Yu gui* 適簋 (*Yu's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4207]

In the sixth month during the period of the waxing moon the august King Mu was at the capital at Hao. The King performed the Ceremony of Hailing the Fish at the Grand Lake, and then led a wine banquet. Yu attended there without flaw, and King Mu himself presented Yu with a waterfowl. Yu bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of King Mu. Wherefore was cast a sacrificial vessel for my patterned Father Yi; may my descendants treasure it forever.

#### #45 *Jing gui* 靜簋 (*Jing's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4273]

In the first period of the sixth month the King was at the capital district of Pang. On the day *ding-mao* the King ordered Jing to supervise ceremonies at the Hall of Archery Instruction. The princelings, the envoys, the petty ministers, and the footmen all practiced archery.

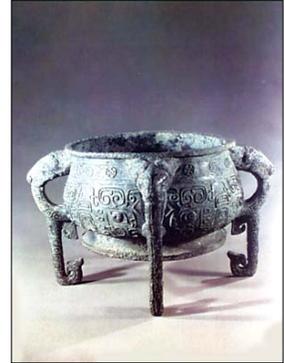
In the first period of the eighth month on the day *geng-yin*, the King led Wu X and Lü Gang in assembling the troops from Bin and Reng for a match among the leaders of the various states of the capital district, shooting at the Grand Lake. The instruction of Jing proved to be without flaw, and the King presented Jing with a leather-stringed sword scabbard. Jing dared to bow prostrate and raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast a

sacrificial *gui* for my patterned mother Wai-Ji; may my descendants employ it for ten thousand years.

**#46 *Ban gui*** 班簋 (*Ban's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4341]

It was in the first quarter of the eighth month, at Zong-Zhou on the day *jia-xu*. The King ordered the Elder of Mao to succeed to the office of Duke Cheng of Guo in shielding the throne of the King, and take charge of lands of Gun, Shu, and Chao. The Elder of Mao was presented with a harness hung with bells. When this had been completed, the King charged the [now] Duke of Mao to act as chief commander of the states, and to lead the charioteers and halberdeers to attack the X-rong tribe of the eastern lands. When the order had been given, the King charged the Elder of Wu saying, “Lead your troops on the left in support of Father Mao.” The King ordered the Elder of Lü saying, “Lead your troops on the right in support of Father Mao.” Then Qian issued orders saying, “Lead your clan troops and follow Father Mao in battle to Cheng. Protect Father Mao’s person and within three years bring peace to the eastern lands so that none do not submit to the awesomeness of Heaven. Trouble shall follow if it is not so.”



When the Duke announced his success to the King he said, “Those people who create disturbances and are blind to the Mandate of Heaven must die.” This is truly so, it is clear. Be attentive to your virtue and transgress in no way.

[The Duke of Mao] Ban bows prostrate saying, “Oh, my glorious father the Duke received the great blessings of the royal lineage and was nurtured by the grandchild of King Wen and his consort Wang Si. He rose to high office and broadly achieved success. This descendant of King Wen never failed to emulate King Wen’s example and none surpassed him in merit.”

Ban dares not look upon him, and merely cast this vessel for his late father of the Zhao clan moiety and for his mother, consecrating it with the words, ‘Great Governance.’ May generations of his descendants treasure it forever.

#47 *Jing you* 競卣 (*Jing's pot*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #5425]

Elder Xifu set out eastwards with the armies of Cheng, having been charged with guarding the Southern Yi. In the first month, in the quarter of the waxing moon on the day *xin-chou*, at Bi, Elder Xifu glorified Jing, descending to the camp quarters to praise Jing's valor and present him with a ceremonial ornament of jade. Jing raised up in thanks the Elder's grace. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for Father Yi; may his descendants treasure it forever.

#48 *Xiaozi Sheng zun* 小子生尊 (*Retainer Sheng's goblet*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #6001]

When the King campaigned in the South he was at X. The King charged Sheng with supervising the affairs of the shrine of the Duke of X. Retainer Sheng received metals and sacrificial spirits of grass. Wherefore was cast a precious sacrificial vessel, whereby to raise in thanks the King's grace; may it be treasured for ten thousand years, may it feast officials as they come and go.

#49 *Yu yan* 鬲 (Yu's steamer)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #948]

In the sixth month on the *bing-yin* day of the waning moon, Commander Yongfu was leading the guard of the encampment at Ku and Yu was following. Commander Yongfu had Yu enter the service of the Marquis of Fu. The Marquis of Fu praised Yu's valor and presented Yu with precious metals. Wherefore was cast this campaigning steamer.

#50 *Yu ding* 鬲鼎 (*Yu's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2721]

In the eleventh month, Commander Yongfu surveyed the roads to Fu; Yu was following. Father Qi praised Yu's valor and presented Yu with precious metals. Yu raised in thanks Father Qi's grace, wherefore was cast this precious cauldron.

#51 *Lie ding* 刺鼎 (*Lie's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2776]

In the fifth month, the King was at X. The sun was at *ding-mao*. The King performed the Di-sacrifice, offering up a bull in the Great Chamber to King Zhao. Lie acted as an attendant. The King presented Lie with thirty strings of cowries. May the Son of Heaven live ten thousand years! Lie raised in thanks the King's grace. Wherefore was cast a sacrificial cauldron for Huang Gong; may my descendants treasure and employ it forever.

#52 *Kai ding* 趟鼎 (*Kai's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4266]

In the third month, the King was at Zong-Zhou. On the day *wu-yin* the King descended to the Great Temple. Mi Shu accompanied Kai to his place. The Inner Scribe then issued the orders: The King's words were, "Kai! I order you to serve as the high Minister of War for the troops of Bin. You shall inherit supervision over the charioteers and the archers, the knights and the runners, and the aides of all ranks. You shall draw a stipend of five *lie*. I present you with scarlet kneepads, a black demi-circlet of jade, and a banner hung with bells that you may fulfill your duties." Kai bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the grace of the King. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial vessel to Ji Jiang; may my descendants treasure and use it for ten thousand years.

*This text describes a formulaic "investiture ceremony" which becomes increasingly common in inscriptions through the rest of the dynasty.*

#53 *Shan ding* 善鼎 (*Shan's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2820]

It was in the first period of the twelfth month, when the date-planet was in *ding-hai*. The King was at Zong-Zhou. The King descended to the palace of the High Commander. The King said, "Shan! In the past, the former King previously charged you to be in the service of the Marquis of Chan. Now I extend the charge of the former King and order you to serve the Marquis of Chan. Oversee the corps of guards of the troops of Bin. I present you with the banner of your grandfather that you may fulfill your duties." Shan dared to bow prostrate and raise in thanks the magnificent grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast a precious sacrificial vessel for the clan shrine. May it succor and call down in blessings my patterned ancestors, whose virtue was

reverent and pure. May I use it to assemble the princes of my clan and members of all clans. May I use it to pray for great blessings for ten thousand years. May it be treasured forever.

**#54 Shi Ju fangyi** 師遽方彝 (*Commander Ju's square vessel*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #9897]

In the first month, during the period of the waxing moon on the day *ding-you*, the King was at Zhou conducting a ceremonial feast in the Chamber of Kang. The valor of Commander Ju was praised before his comrades. The King called out to the Steward Li to present Commander Ju with a *miangui* jade and four carved jade ornaments. Commander Ju bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for my patterned grandfather Ye Gong that I may pray for long life everlasting; may my descendants treasure it for a hundred generations.

– *Inscriptions of Lu Bo Zhong*

*The next six inscriptions (#55-60) are extremely rich in content, and all were composed by (or for) the same man. Who Zhong, the Elder of Lu, was we are not sure, but it is interesting indeed that he refers to his father as “King Li.” The title King (Wang) could be used only by the Zhou King; however, it is well established that states which were not considered integral parts of the Zhou polity did, in fact, depart from standard usage, and it may be that Lu was such a state. If Lu was not a Zhou state, the inscriptions are all the more remarkable: they provide as much insight into the ideas and values of the time as any texts and the ideas expressed seem essentially Chinese. They further would illustrate an important diplomatic point, in that the Zhou King is referred to by his most august title, Son of Heaven, perhaps to exalt him over the local “King,” the Elder of Lu’s father.*

**#55 Bo Zhong gui** 伯戎簋 (*Elder Zhong's tureen*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4115]

The Elder Zhong cast this treasure for the Western Palace. May it serve to succor the spirits and cherish them, calling down the former patterned men with their virtue reverent and pure. I pray for long life. May my descendants forever treasure this.

**#56 Lu gui** 鲁簋 (*Lu's tureen*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4122]

Bo Yongfu came from Hu and praised Lu's valor. He presented Lu with red metals. Raising in thanks the Elder's grace, thus was cast a precious cauldron for my patterned grandfather Xin Gong; may my descendants treasure it forever.

**#57 Zhong ding (I)** 鬲鼎 (Zhong's cauldron #1)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2789]

It was in the ninth month in the period of the full moon on the day *yi-chou*, at the encampment at Tang. Queen Yijiang had the Inner Scribe assist Yuan in presenting Zhong black robes with red hems. Zhong bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the grace of Queen Yijiang. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial cauldron that he may unstintingly day and night sacrifice filially to his patterned grandfather Yi Gong and his patterned grandmother Ri Xu; may his descendants treasure it forever.

*Note that the two vessels above are dedicated to two different grandfathers. This suggests either that the maternal grandfather was an object for sacrifice in the rituals of the ruling clans of Lu, or, more likely, that the full generation of paternal father's brothers were considered objects of sacrifice as "forbears." More evidence on this appears below. (Note that this Lu is not the same as the state of Lu granted to Zhou Gong, from which Confucius came.)*

**#58 Lu Bo Zhong gui** 鲁伯鬲簋 (The tureen of Zhong, Elder of Lu)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4302]

In the first month, when the date-planet was in *geng-yin*, the King's words were, "Zhong, Elder of Lu, as your grandfather and father rendered great service to the state of Zhou and helped to open up the four quarters, making broad the Mandate of Heaven, may you continue their work without failure. Now I present you with a flask of sacrificial black millet wine, a chariot with bronze fixtures: the carriage with decorated handrail cover, a red harness, and a tiger pelt canopy lined in red, bronze tipped axle shafts, painted shaft belts, a bronze yoke ring, painted yoke straps, and four horses with bridles trimmed in bronze." Zhong, the Elder of Lu dared to bow prostrate, and raised in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast a precious sacrificial tureen for my august father King Li. May I live to treasure it forever, and may my descendants follow this proper example and receive this grace.

#59 *Zhong gui* 戎簋 (*Zhong's tureen*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4322]

It was in the first period of the sixth month on the day *yi-you*, at the encampment at Tang. The Rong tribes attacked X. Zhong led the supervisors and the commanders, rushing to repulse the Rong at the woods of Yu, and striking them a blow at Hu.

My patterned mother guided with great care my every action, made my heart firm, and eternally cloaked my person that I might conquer my enemies.

I took one hundred scalps, and captured two leaders along with many weapons: shields, spears, halberds, bows, quivers, arrows, battle clothes, and armor: altogether one hundred and thirty-five items. In addition, I captured one hundred and fourteen Rong troops. The blows of the troops inflicted no wounds upon Zhong's own body.

Your son Zhong bows prostrate and dares to raise in thanks the blessed glory of his patterned mother. Wherefore was cast a precious sacrificial tureen for patterned mother Ri Geng. Let your son Zhong live ten thousand years that he may unstintingly day and night perform filial sacrifice to his patterned mother. May his descendants treasure this forever.

#60 *Zhong ding* (II) 戎鼎 (*Zhong's cauldron #2*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2824]

Zhong said, "Oh! The King recalls Zhong's valorous late father Jia Gong, and thus has the King caused your son Zhong to lead the tiger braves to repulse the Rong of Huai." Zhong said, "Oh! My patterned father Jia Gong and my patterned mother Ri Geng! May your grace and example ever make firm the heart of your son Zhong and ever cloak the person of Zhong, that he may continue in service to the Son of Heaven. May you grant that your son Zhong may serve the Son of Heaven for ten thousand years. Let no harm touch upon his person." Zhong bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the charge of the King. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for patterned mother Ri Geng, that Zhong may solemnly night and day filially sacrifice to her and be blessed; may his descendants forever treasure this merit.

*It was noted above that Zhong dedicates sacrificial vessels to two grandfathers. We have also seen him dedicate vessels to two women: one of his grandmothers and his mother, Ri Geng. Another vessel is dedicated to his father, the unusually titled King Li. We might suppose that the “father Jia Gong” mentioned in this inscription refers to this king, but there is a further confusion. Yet another vessel by Zhong refers to his father as “Yi Gong”: #60a Lu Zhong you (Zhong of Lu’s pot): The King commanded Zhong saying, “Oh! The Huai Yi dare to attack our inner states. Let you take the armies of Cheng-Zhou and mount a defense at Ku.” Elder Yong-fu praised Lu’s valor and presented him with ten strings of cowries. Lu bowed prostrate and raised up the grace of the Elder. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for patterned father Yi Gong. [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #5420 ] We seem forced to conclude, therefore, that the Lu ruling clan applied kinship terms in a much broader manner than was usual in the Zhou polity, and that rules of sacrificial privileges may have differed as well. This suggests that ethnic diversity may have been a prominent feature of the Zhou polity during its first few centuries.*

### 6) Inscriptions from the era of King Gong (922 - 904)

#61 *Shi You gui* 師酉簋 (*Commander You's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4288]

It was in the King's first year, in the first month, when the King was at Wu. The King descended to the Great Temple of Wu. Li, the Gong of the lineage X, entered accompanying Commander



You, who took his place at the center of the court. The King called out to Recorder Qiang to recite the written order to Commander You: “Assume your ancestors’ hereditary office over the townsmen and over the tiger braves from the Yi people of Ximen, the Yi of Quan, the Yi of Qin, the Yi of Jing, and the Yi of X-shen. I newly present you with a red apron and vermilion

sash with buff colored belt, and a bronze adorned bridle. Be assiduous day and night, never disobeying my orders.”

Commander You bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial *gui* for my patterned father Yi Bo and mother Qiu Ji. May You's descendants treasure it forever.

#62 *Shi Wang ding* 師望鼎 (*Commander Wang's cauldron*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2812]

Commander Wang, the son of the Grand Commander, said, “My brilliant and august father, Qiu Gong, was solemnly able to make bright his heart and let shine his virtue. Hence did he aid the former Kings, being faithful without flaw. I emulate the example of my august father, and dispatch the commands of the King night and day. I dare not exceed my place or cross the proper bounds. Thus the King has not forgotten the descendant of the sage and has given him many gifts in praise of his valor. I dare to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore I cast this sacrificial cauldron for my august father Qiu Gong. May the descendants of Commander Wang treasure it forever.

## #63 Pengsheng gui 棚生簋 (Pengsheng's tureen)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4262]

In the first period of the first month on the day *gui-si*, the King was at Cheng-Zhou. The Elder of Ge received fine horses and chariots from Pengsheng in exchange for the estate taxed produce of thirty field areas. The tally was split to confirm the contract. The Elder of Ge violated this. Yiren and Qi accompanied the Elder of Ge in tracing the field lines along pear grove in the valley of Du and the mulberry grove in the valley of X, crossing then to the East Gate. The Scribe Zhiwu had markers erected to create a boundary. Wherefore was cast this precious tureen in order to record the land holdings of the Elder of Ge. May my descendants preserve and use it forever.

*This is among the earliest inscriptions to have been cast as a record of land disputes and settlements. The purposes for which vessels were cast are important to consider when building a model of Zhou religious practice. Bear in mind that the vessels were generally meant for use in sacrifices to ancestors, and the inscriptions were, in a sense, the vehicles through which the nobility kept their ancestors informed of the accomplishments “down below.” The importance of recording legal affairs in bronze was not only a matter of getting “hard copy” of contracts, but was a means of integrating the expansion of clan land into the ritual history of the lineage itself. Presumably, this vessel was cast by Pengsheng, who seems to have prevailed in this dispute.*

## #64 Xiao zun 效尊 (Xiao's goblet)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #6009]

It was in the first quarter of the fourth month on the day *jia-wu*. The King conducted a ceremonial review at Chang. The Duke feasted the King within the Eastern Palace, and the King presented the Duke with fifty strings of cowries. The Duke then bestowed upon his compliant son Xiao twenty strings of the cowries from the King. Xiao gave thanks for the Duke's grace. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial vessel. Oh! For ten thousand years Xiao shall not dare day or night to cease his assiduous service and shall raise in thanks the Duke's grace, may his descendants treasure it forever.

*Note that the relationship between son and father here is recorded in the rhetoric of political patrician formality.*

#65 *Shi Zai ding* 師鬲鼎 (*Commander Zai's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2830]

It was in the King's eighth year, in the first month when the sun was in *ding-mao*. The King said, "Commander Zai! You were able to exhaust your person in the service of my august father, the solemn King Mu. Because your great virtue is pure and your heart is steadfast, you were able to assist your ruler to make settled his virtue. I, a mere child, am following the clear virtue of the former King, and 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 as they were bright in service of the former King, and so serve me, the Lone Man."

Zai bowed prostrate. The retiring elder Grand Commander put forward Zai to serve his august ruler. Nor did the Son of Heaven forget the fine virtue of Gong Shangfu, Zai praised the valor of the Grand Commander. "I myself am merely your small child. Night and day I shall follow the example of my grandfather's bright virtue in service of my august ruler. The elder Grand Commander was truly able; following my grandfather's example, I, his grandson, shall succeed to office under the exemplary virtue of the august ruler that I may protect the person of the King.

"I, Zai, dared to assume office under the King; may the Son of Heaven live forever, brilliant! The elder Grand Commander protected the Son of Heaven as his minister in war; I, Zai, shall follow my bright grandfather's virtue."

Zai dared to thank the King for his grace, and thereby shall I offer succor and cast a vessel for my father Gong Shangfu, offering seasonal sacrificial gifts at the shrine of my father.

*The term, "I, the Lone Man" was a phrase reserved for the King's use alone. It seems to have suggested at once the King's incomparably superior status and also his vulnerability and heavy burden.*

#66 *Yong yu* 永盂 (*Yong's bowl*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #10322]

It was in the twelfth year, in the first period of the month on the day *ding-mao*. The Duke of Yi entered to receive his orders from the Son of Heaven. Subsequently, the Duke went out to carry out his orders. He presented to Commander Yong fields on the north and south of the River Luo

and fields belonging to Commander Sufu. Those who joined the Duke in carrying out these orders included the Elder of Xing, the Elder of Rong, the Officer of Scribes, Commander Sufu, and Qian Zhong. The Duke then charged Hanfu, the Minister of the Populace in Zheng, along with X, the Minister of Works in Zhou, the Chief Scribe, the Chief Commander, Town Leader Chuanfu, and Commander Tong of Bi, to secure for Yong his lands, and determine their proper boundaries.

Yong bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the order by the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore I, Yong, cast this sacrificial bowl for my patterned father Yi Bo. May the descendants of Yong treasure it forever.

**#67 Ji Cao ding** 趙曹鼎 (*Ji Cao's cauldron*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2784]

It was in the fifteenth year, in the fifth month in the period of the waxing moon on the day *ren-wu*. King Gong was at the New Palace in Zhou. The King performed archery at the archery pavilion. The Scribe Ji Cao received a bow, arrows, a tiger skin shield, a spear, a helmet, armor, and a war staff. Ji Cao dared to say in thanks, “I bow prostrate and dare to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven.” Wherefore was cast this precious cauldron that I may feast my friends.

– *Inscriptions of Qiu Wei*

*Qiu Wei (literally “the fur-craftsman Wei”) seems to have been a member of a fairly prominent family in the capital districts who was extremely active in expanding his family’s landholdings. Fortunately for us he recorded many of these transactions on bronzes for his clan shrine, and through them we can see not only some patterns of land holding during the mid-Western Zhou, but also possible evidence of the decline of the royal house. The fact that Qiu Wei’s transactions were supervised by a wide array of prominent nobles (many of the men mentioned here figure in other inscriptions of the period as well) rather than by the King suggests that the power to distribute and regulate the transfer of lands had fallen from the King’s hands.*

**#68 Wei gui** 衛簋 (*Wei’s tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4256]

It was in the twenty-seventh year, in the third month during the period of the waxing moon on the day *wu-xu*. The King was at Zhou and descended to the Great Hall and assumed the throne. The

Elder of Nan entered accompanying Qiu Wei through the gate and to his place at the center of the court, facing north. The King called out to the Inner Scribe to present Wei with a leather apron, a vermilion sash, and bells. Wei bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this *gui* to my patterned forbears. May my descendants treasure it forever.

*This inscription properly dates from the reign of King Mu, but is located here to place it in sequence with other vessels of Qiu Wei.*

**#69 Wei he** 衛盃 (Wei's kettle)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #9456]

It was in the third year, in the third month during the period of the waxing moon on the day *ren-yin*. The King conducted a review of the banner troops at Feng. The men under the Elder of Ju received royal audience jades from Qiu Wei, in value worth eighty strings of cowries, in return for which Wei received ten fields. Ju also received to vermilion jade pendants, two tiger pelt capes, and a decorated apron, in value worth twenty strings of cowries, in return for which Wei received three fields. Qiu Wei reported this transaction through an oath taken before the Elder Yifu, the Elder of Rong, the Elder of Ding, the Elder of Jing, and the Elder of Shan. the Elder of Yifu, the Elder of Rong, the Elder of Ding, the Elder of Jing, and the Elder of Shan then issued the appropriate orders to the regional Ministers of the Three Affairs: Minister of Lands Wei Yi, Minister of War Shan Yu, and Minister of Works Fu of Yi, and to those managing the transfer of lands, Xian and Fu. Wei's retainer X then arranged a feast for all involved. Wherefore Wei has cast a precious vessel for my patterned father Huimeng. May Wei treasure it forever.

**#70 Wei ding (I)** 衛鼎 (Wei's cauldron #1)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2832]

In the first period of the first month on the day *geng-xu*, Wei reported the words of Li, lord of an estate within the capital district, to the Elder of Xing, the Elder Yifu, the Elder of Ding, the Elder of Jing, and Elder Sufu. He reported Li's words as, "I serve the humane government of King Gong. I have, in the Great Hall of King Zhao's shrine, carried out sacrifices to the two rivers at the east and north, declaring, 'I give to you, [Wei,] the land of five fields.'" The officers

questioned Li saying, “Are these lands whose produce has been assigned to you?” Li confirmed this saying, “The produce of the five fields are under my control.”

Whereupon Xing, the Elder Yifu, the Elder of Ding, the Elder of Jing, and Elder Sufu required Li to take an oath, and then ordered the regional Ministers of the Three Affairs, Minister of Lands Fu of Yi, Minister of War Bang of Mo, Minister of Works Tao Ju, and also the Inner Scribe Yusi Chu to survey and transfer to Qiu Wei lands comprising four of Li’s fields.

The residences of the walled settlements were included in the transfer. The land extended north to Li’s lands, east to the lands of San, south to the lands of San and the lands of Zhengfu, and west to the lands of Li.

The estate lord Li then had the transfer of lands to Qiu Wei arranged by his kinsman Su, his steward Chou Ji, Qing Gui, Xian Biao, Gan of Jing, and Chang Xi of Xing. Wei’s retainers arranged the banquet and gifts.

Wherefore Wei has cast this precious cauldron for his patterned father; may Wei treasure and employ it forever.

It was in the King’s fifth year.

**#71 *Wei ding* (II)** 衛鼎 (*Wei’s cauldron #2*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2831]

It was in the ninth year, in the first month during the period of the waning moon on the day *geng-yin*. 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 honors. At this time, Ju received a touring chariot: its carriage included a decorated handrail, a tiger skin cover, a fox skin canopy, painted straps, a whip, braided ropes, silk reins, and a bronze adorned bridle. In addition, Lady Jiang of Ju received three bolts of silk. In return, Ju gave to Qiu Wei the woods of Ni district. These formerly belonged to Yan. Therefore, I, Qiu Wei, presented to Yan Zhen a team of large horses, and to Lady Si of Yan a garment woven of black and green. I presented to Yan’s steward Shou Shang a badger fur gown and a leather rail cover. Then Ju, along with Lian Lin charged Shou Shang and Di saying, “Survey and turn over to Qiu Wei the woods of Ni district.”

Thereupon, they surveyed and constructed mound markers at all four corners marking the

territory, with the retainers of Yan together constructing the markers under the supervision of Shou Shang. To Li Mao were given two ram pelt garments; to Ye was given a pair of humped ox leather boots; to Qu was given an ingot of copper; to Wu was given a pair of ox hides. Lian received a tiger skin cover and a decorated leather chariot hand hold, Dong Chen a lambskin jacket, and Yan two bear pelts.

When the land had been transferred, the retainers of Wei presented these gifts in ceremony. Wherefore Wei has cast this precious cauldron for my patterned father; may Wei treasure and employ it forever.

*The mention of Mei Ao is of particular interest. The term “Ao” is later recorded as very common in the official titles of the leaders of the state of Chu, which becomes prominent in the Spring and Autumn era as a patrician state with such ethnic independence that its ruler is referred to as a King (wang) rather than a duke or marquis. Mei Ao figures importantly in a further inscriptions of this period, which suggests that he is identical with the caster, one Elder Guai (who refers to himself as Gui Feng), whose ancestors are pictured as having been allies at a distance from the time of the Zhou founding: #71a Guai Bo gui 乖伯簋 (Elder Guai’s tureen): It was in the ninth year in the ninth month on the day jia-yin. The King ordered Duke Yi to campaign against Mei Ao. Duke Yi returned and made a report. In the second month, Mei Ao arrived to be seen in audience, bearing tribute gifts. On the day ji-wei the King ordered to Zhong to send to Elder Guai a badger coat. The King’s words were, “Elder Guai, when my grand and brilliant ancestors Kings Wen and Wu received the great mandate, your ancestors aided those former kings, assisting from their countries in the receipt of the mandate. I have surely not ceased to rule the state, and I present to you a badger coat.” Elder Guai bowed prostrate at the grace of the Son of Heaven, that this small and distant state has not been forgotten. Gui Feng dares to raise up the splendid grace of the Son of Heaven, wherefore is cast this precious gui for my august father, Martial King Ji of Guai. May I use it to be filial at my ancestral temple to delight, day and night, friends and my many relatives by marriage. I pray for grace and eternal life for me and my descendants. May I, Gui Feng forever offer daily filial duties at the ancestral shrines.*

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4331]

**#72 Shi Qiang pan** 史牆盤 (*Scribe Qiang’s pan*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #10175]

Of old, when King Wen first brought harmony to governance, the Lord on High sent down beautiful virtue to guard him as he came into possession of all above and below, convening and receiving the many states.

Martial King Wu campaigned in all the four quarters. He thrashed the Yin and led the people, never fearing. He campaigned far and struck the Yi tribes of the East.

Sagely King Cheng, his advisors assembled orderly and strong, first brought order to the states of the Zhou.

Deeply wise King Kang brightly ruled the land he inherited.

Vastly blessed King Zhao, broadly did he strike the land of Chujing, campaigning through to the South.

Brilliant King Mu carried out the great plan of his forbears.

Guardian of the peace, this Son of Heaven, he carries forth the lasting merit of Wen and Wu; may he live forever as a standard for all above and below, as a beacon for those far and near, shining without end. May Di on High watch over the Son of Heaven, and protect his receipt of the Mandate. With many blessings and fruitful harvests, may there be no distant tribes or Man

peoples in the South who do not come to acknowledge his suzerainty.

Tranquil and deep my High Ancestor; spirit-like he dwelt in Wei. When King Wu destroyed the Yin, my glorious ancestor, Scribe of Wei, came to audience before King Wu, and King Wu ordered the Duke of Zhou to bestow upon him our humble dwelling within the capital domain of Zhou.

Magnanimous my Great Grandfather Yi; he assisted his ruler in his far reaching plans, devoting himself mind and body.



Shining bright my clan

branch founder Grandfather Xin; he removed his children to nurture them with numberless blessings, that with all order and sincerity they could properly perform their sacrificial duties.

Grand and peaceful my patterned father Yi Gong; his grand virtue so bright, he guided our crops without flaw and with every harvest opened new lands.

Filial and fraternal, I, the scribe Qiang, am diligent day and night without fail, that my valor may be daily praised. I dare not err, and raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven's charge, wherefore was cast this precious vessel.

My shining grandfather and my patterned father have conveyed to me the precious blessings of succession. May I embrace their blessings to great old age, never dying, that I may serve my lord and forever treasure this.

*This spectacular inscription gives us many insights into the history of the Western Zhou, and into the perceptions which nobles held of their own clan histories. Even though Scribe Qiang writes only a few phrases about each of the early Zhou Kings, these give us some idea of the perception of Zhou history which had emerged by the mid-Western Zhou, and the very fact that Qiang sees his family in terms of generation by generation service to successive Kings and achievements for the clan gives us a direct illustration of the lineage-based ideology of the early Zhou. Note that the Xing inscriptions (#87-93 below) were composed by Qiang's son. One of these later texts (#92) overlaps with this text.*



### 7) *Inscriptions from the era of King Yi (903 - 877)*

#73 *Kuang you* 匡卣 (*Kuang's pot*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #5423]

In the first period of the fourth month on the day *jia-wu*, King Yi was at the archery pavilion for a performance of the Xiang Dance. Kuang led the performance of the second coda of the Xiang music. The King said, "It is beautiful!" Kuang bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this precious vessel for my patterned father Ri Ding; may my descendants treasure it forever.

*Not all commentators agree on the interpretation of this text; a number think that the subject involved was not a ritual dance but the construction of ritual musical instruments. Regardless, the inscription highlights the importance of ritual and the ritual arts in the culture of the early Zhou, a stress which became the focus of later Confucian philosophy.*

#74 *Mao gui* 卯簋 (*Mao's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4327]

It was in the King's eleventh month, in the period of the waxing moon on the day *ding-hai*. Rong Ji entered accompanying Mao, who stood at the center of the court. The Elder of Rong called out a charge to Mao, saying, "Your forbears supervised until death the affairs of the lord's household of Rong. Of old, your grandfather also charged your father to supervise until death the men of Bang. Alas, our family pillar has now been taken from us and we are bereft. Though I dare not dream of matching the deeds of the former lord, I shall endeavor to fill the office of the former lord. And now I charge you to supervise until death the men of Bang of the Palace of Bang. Dare not fail to be good! I present you with four jade libation ladles, a ceremonial jade, a set of sacrificial shrine vessels; treasure them. I present you with ten horses and ten oxen. I present you a field at X, I present you a field at Y, I present you a field at Dui, and I present you a field at Zai."

Mao bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Elder of Rong. Wherefore was cast a precious sacrificial *gui*. May Mao live for ten thousand years; may his descendants treasure this forever.

#75 *Tong gui* 同簋 (*Tong's tureen*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4271]

In was in first period of the twelfth month on the day *ding-chou*. The King was at Zong-Zhou and descended to the Great Temple. The Elder of Rong accompanied Tong, who stood at the center of the court facing north. The King charged him, “Tong! Assist Dafu of Wu and supervise the farmers, foresters, fishermen, and herdsmen from Hu east to the Yellow River and north to the Dark River. Your descendants shall inherit this office of assistance to Dafu of Wu. Never fail in your duties.”

The grace of the Son of Heaven was raised in thanks. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel to my patterned father Hui Zhong; may my descendants treasure it forever.

#76 *Shi Hu gui* 師虎 (*Commander Hu's tureen*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4316]

It was in the first year, in the first month during the period of the full moon on the day *jia-xu*. The King was holding court on tour at Du, and descended to the Great Hall. The Elder of Xing entered accompanying Commander Hu, who took his place at the center of the court facing north. The King called out to the Inner Scribe Wu saying, “Issue the written orders to Hu.”

The King's words were, “Hu! The former Kings previously charged your forbears to assume office as supervisors over the many corps of the armies of the left and right. Now I emulate the example of the former Kings and charge you to accede to the office of your forbears and supervise the many corps of the armies of the left and right. Be watchful day and night and never disobey my orders. I present you with the red sandals of office that you may fulfill your duties.”

Hu dared to bow prostrate and raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast a sacrificial tureen for my valorous father Ri Geng; may my descendants treasure it forever.

#77 *Hu ding* 鬲鼎 (*Hu's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2838]

It was in the King's first year, in the sixth month during the period of the full moon on the day *yi-hai*. The King was at the Great Hall of King Mu in Zhou. The King's words were: “Hu! I

charge you to succeed your forbears in supervising divination affairs. I present you with a red embroidered apron and a banner that you may fulfill your office.”

When the King was encamped at Tiao, Xing Shu presented Hu with thirty measures of copper. Hu received the grace of the King and used this metal to cast a cauldron ox-steamer for my patterned father Qiu Bo. May Hu use it to sacrifice for ten thousand years; may my descendants treasure it forever.

In the King's fourth month, during the period of the waxing moon, when the sun was in *ding-yu*, Xing Shu was at Yi, hearing disputes. Hu had his retainer X lay before Xing Shu the accusation of Hu against Xian: “Formerly I remitted to Xian's retainer Xiaofu a horse and a bolt of silk in exchange for five men. Xian then reneged on the agreement. He said, ‘Guo will return the horse to you.’ Xiaofu was himself to return the silk. But Guo and Xiaofu reneged again. Then my retainer X arranged a further pledge at the wooden column of the King's Third Gate. There, they pledged to deliver the five men in exchange for one hundred cash measures. They did not, however, deliver the five men and Guo changed the amount of cash demanded.”

Xing Shu said, “Thus do I rule: Men serving the King must fulfill transactions without fail. Guo must deliver the men to Hu without duplicity.” Hu bowed prostrate and received the five men, whose names were Pei, Heng, Lei, Jin, and Xing. The cash was delivered and it was so reported to Guo, who was made to give Hu wine, sheep, and silk as security against delivery of the men. Hu then instructed Guo saying, “You must give five bundles of arrows to my retainer X. Moreover, you must order the five men to dwell in their new town and till their new fields.” Guo then agreed to convey these orders.

Formerly, in a year of famine, twenty men of the troops of Kuang stole ten measures of grain from Hu. Hu reported Kuang Ji at the Eastern Palace. The lord of the Eastern Palace replied, “Seek out your men. If you cannot apprehend them, you, Kuang, shall suffer heavy penalties.” Kuang then bowed prostrate before Hu and offered him five fields, a member of the troops named Ran, and household servants named Zhi, Qu, and Dian. Kuang said, “Take these four men; I bow before you. I have no means to catch the thieves and make good the grain. If the fields I give do not yield as much grain, let me be whipped”

Hu once again reported Kuang to the Eastern Palace saying, “My grain must be repaid.” The lord of the Eastern Palace then said, “Repay to Hu his ten measures of grain plus ten

measures as penalty, for a total of twenty measures. If these have not been repaid by the coming year, you must repay forty measures.” Whereupon Kuang gave Hu two additional fields and a man.

Altogether, Hu was given seven fields and five men, and Hu forgave Kuang thirty measures of grain.

*This inscription and one following were cast by the same person.*

**#78 Hu hu** 盥壺 (Hu's pot)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #9728]

In the first period of the first month on the day *ding-hai*, the King descended to the Palace of Cheng. Duke of Xing entered accompanying Hu. The King called out to the scribe to recite the written order to Hu, which said, “Succeed to the position of your forbears as Minister of Troops for the eight divisions at Cheng-Zhou. I present to you a flask of black millet wine, black court robes, a red apron with a dark sash, vermilion sandals, a bronze bridle, and a banner hung with bells that you may fulfill your duties.”

Hu bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the charge of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial pot to my patterned father Li Gong. I, Hu, pray for long life everlasting and many blessings; may my descendants treasure this forever.

**#79 Li maxing zun** 盃馬型尊 (The horse-shaped goblet of Li)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #6011]

It was in the King's twelfth month, when the sun was at *jia-shen*. The King was at An and commenced the rite of corralling the yearlings. The King called out to Commander Ju to summon Li. The King himself addressed Li and presented him with two yearlings.

Bowing prostrate Li said, “The King has not forgotten the children of the old lineage and has glorified my person. The King has laid the great foundation that shall sustain our multitude of lineages.” Li said, “I dare to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore shall I cast a



precious sacrificial vessel for my patterned father Dazhong.” Li said, “May the generations of my descendants treasure this forever.”

*This inscription and the one following it are both the products of Li. The record of the horse gathering ritual here is unique, although later texts refer to the ritual, and the vessel itself is in the shape of a horse. Excavated along with this vessel and the one below were two vessel covers bearing inscriptions related to this one, one of which reads: The King corralled yearlings at An, and presented Li with a yearling. . . . foaled from a blue and white piebald mare. The other is identical, except the King is at a place called Dou, and the mare is white with a black mane. Some commentators think that rather than herding up the yearlings, the King was assisting in the delivery of newly foaled colts.*

#80 *Li yi* 盞彝 (*Li's vessel*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #9899]

It was in the first period of the eighth month. The King descended to the Temple of Zhou. Mu Gong accompanied Li, who stood in the center of the court facing north. The King gave a written order to the Officer who presented Li with a red apron, a black collar, and a bridle adorned with bronze, saying, “With these supervise the six armies and the King’s touring Ministers of the Three Affairs: the Minister of Lands, the Minister of War, and the Minister of Works.” The King charged Li saying, “Supervise both the six armies and the eight armies.” Li bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the King’s grace. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial vessel for my patterned grandfather X Gong. Li said, “May the magnificent blessings and works of the Son of Heaven protect our many states.” Tuan dared to bow prostrate saying, “May my person be bright and carry on after my forbears in protecting the King’s affairs.

### 8) Inscriptions from the era of King Xiao (876 - 868)

#81 *Mu gui* 牧簋 (*Mu's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4343]

It was in the seventh year, in the thirteenth month in the period of the waxing moon on the day *jia-yin*. The King was at Zhou, at the palace of Commander Zifu, and he descended to the Great Hall and assumed the ruler's seat. Gong X entered accompanying Mu, who took his place at the center of the court. The King called out to the Inner Scribe Wu to recite the written order to Mu.

The King's words were, "Mu! Previously the former King ordered you to be the Minister of Retainers. Now I alter your charge and order you to supervise the many officers. Many of their affairs have fallen into disorder; they do not follow the examples of the former Kings, and they are also often cruel to the people. Their subordinates and officers are not exemplary and do not act fairly. Supervise them with vigor and henceforth let their crimes be treated according to the facts.

The King said, "Mu! Do not dare to fail to emulate the bright example of the former Kings. Dare not to be other than shining, true, and exemplary before your subordinates. In your governance dare not fail to correct those who are untrue or not exemplary. Now as I broaden your charge, I present you with a flask of sacrificial black millet wine, a chariot with bronze fixtures: the carriage decorated, with painted shaft belts, a red handrail and harness, a tiger pelt cover lined in red, a banner, four horses of Yu, and . . . Be attentive night and day; do not disobey my commands."

Mu bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the King. Wherefore was cast a precious sacrificial *gui* for my patterned father Yi Bo. May Mu live for ten thousand years, and may his descendants forever treasure this.

#82 *Wu Ji gui* 無異簋 (*Wu Ji's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4225]

In was in the thirteenth year, in the first period of the first month on the day *ren-yin*. The King campaigned against the Southern Yi. The King presented Wu Ji with four horses. Wu Ji bowed prostrate and said, "I dare to raise in thanks the great grace of the Son of Heaven." Wherefore I,

Wu Ji, have cast this sacrificial *gui* for my august grandfather Li Ji. May my descendants treasure it forever.

*This is one of the few inscriptions which indicate that the endlessly repeated ceremonial formulas which appear in the text may have been words spoken at court at the time that gifts were presented.*

**#83 Jian gui** 諫簋 (*Jian's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4285]

It was in the fifth year, in the first period of the third month on the day *geng-yin*. The King was at the palace of Commander Lu. At dawn, the King descended to the Great Hall and assumed the throne. Minister of War Gong accompanied Jian through the gate, and Jian stood in the center of the court. The King called out to the Inner Scribe Xian to recite the written orders to Jian, which said, "The former King previously charged you with the supervision of the royal hunting parks. Your plans were never foolish, not did you ever dare to behave badly. Now I follow in charging you to continue, and present you with a bronze adorned bridle." Jian bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial vessel to my patterned father Hui Bo; may my descendants treasure it forever.

**#84 Shi Chen ding** 師農鼎 (*Commander Chen's cauldron*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2817]

It was in the third year, in the first period of the third month on the day *jia-xu*. The King was in Zhou, at the palace of Commander Lu. At dawn, the King descended to the Great Hall and assumed the throne. Minister of War Gong accompanied Commander Chen through the gate, and Chen stood at the center of the court. The King called out to the recorder to recite the written order. "Commander Chen! Succeed Commander Su in supervising the men of Yi: the petty ministers, the quartermasters, the wardens, the masters of the hounds, and the men of Dian: the quartermasters and the wardens. I present you with red sandals."

Chen bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial vessel to my patterned grandfather Xin Gong. May generations of my disciples treasure it forever.

**#85 Shi Yu gui** 師隸簋 (*Commander Yu's tureen*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4277]

It was in the third year, in the first period of the third month on the day *jia-xu*. The King was in Zhou, at the palace of Commander Lu. At dawn, the King descended to the Great Hall and assumed the throne. Minister of War Gong accompanied Commander Yu through the gate, and Yu stood at the center of the court. The King called out to the recorder and inner scribe to recite the written order. “Commander Yu! Assume the office of Protector. I present you with a red apron, a vermillion sash, and a banner.”

Yu bowed prostrate. May the Son of Heaven live to the greatest old age, ten thousand years firm upon the throne! May my valor be praised, and may I daily receive gifts!

Yu dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this precious *gui*; may my descendants forever serve and protect the Son of Heaven.

**#86 Bo Chen ding** 伯農鼎 (*Elder Chen's cauldron*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2816]

In the King's eighth month when the sun was in *bing-wu*, the King charged Elder Chen, the Marquis of Heng, saying, “Succeed your forbears and be Marquis in Heng. I present you with a flask of black millet wine, dark ceremonial robes, black axe-pattern robes of office, red sandals, a chariot with painted harness straps, leather covered sides, a tiger skin cover lined with black, and a bronze adorned bridle, five campaigning vessels, a red bow and red arrows, a black bow and black arrows, a spear, and tiger-pelt battle armor. Be diligent day and night and never disobey my commands.”

Chen bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of the King. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial cauldron for the shrine of my patterned father Pin Gong; may my descendants treasure it forever.

*During this later period of the Western Zhou, gifts of ornate chariots seem to become increasingly common. The authors of the inscriptions seem anxious to report, presumably to their ancestors, the various luxury appointments of these chariots, which may have corresponded to certain rank or status levels. It was perhaps to give play to this level of social symbolism that chariots became so ornate during this period.*

– *The inscriptions of Xing*

*The following seven inscriptions were all unearthed together in Shensi in 1976. All were composed by a man named Xing, a member of the Wei clan. Xing's father, Ding Gong (mentioned in #93), was Scribe Qiang, the author of inscription #72.*

**#87 Shisan nian Xing hu** 十三年癩壺 (*Xing's pot cast in the thirteenth year*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #9723]

It was in the thirteenth year, in the first period of the ninth month on the day *wu-yin*. The King was in Cheng-Zhou at the palace of the Minister of Troops Hu. The King descended to the Great Hall and assumed the throne. Jifu accompanied Xing. The King called out to the recorder and scribe to present Xing with a decorated shawl, a fine jacket, and red sandals. Xing bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the King's grace. May Xing treasure it forever.

*This inscription properly belongs to the reign of King Gong. It is located here to be linked to others by Xing.*

**#88 San nian Xing hu** 三十年癩壺 (*Xing's pot cast in the third year*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #9724]

In the ninth month of the third year on the day *ding-si*, the King gave a ceremonial feast at Dian, and called on Guo Shu to summon Xing. The King presented Xing with a sacrificial cooking vessel. On the day *ji-chou*, the King was at Gou Hill giving a banquet of toasts, and called on Commander Shou to summon Xing. The King presented Xing with a pig-shaped vessel. Bowing prostrate, Xing dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial pot for my august grandfather and patterned father; may I, Xing, treasure it forever.

**#89 Xing xu** 癩盥 (*Xing's platter*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4462]

It was in the fourth year, during the second month, in the period of the waxing moon on the day *wu-xu*. The King was at the palace of Commander Lu in Zhou. Descending to the Great Hall, the King assumed the throne. Minister of War Gong accompanied Xing. The King called out to Scribe Nian to recite the written order, presenting Xing with a shawl, a leather apron, and a bronze adorned bridle. Xing dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore

was cast this precious *gui* for my patterned father; may my descendants treasure it forever.

**#90 *Xing gui*** 癩簋 (*Xing's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4170]

Xing said, “My shining and august forbears filled their offices with nobly awesome demeanor so as to serve the former Kings. They dared not disobey and were diligent night and day. The King has treated Xing with magnanimity and presented him with jade pendants, wherefore is cast this *gui* for my forbears that I may sacrifice to the great spirits, and that the great spirits may bestow many blessings upon me. May I treasure it forever.”

**#91 *Xing zhong* (II)** 癩鐘 (*Xing's bell #2*) [*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #247]

Xing says, “My brilliant High Ancestor, clan branch founding ancestor, and father all made their hearts bright, rectified their nobly awesome demeanor so as to serve the former Kings. Xing dares not fail to follow his forbears and grasp their bright virtue and unceasingly day and night assist the royal officers. The august King has treated Xing’s person with magnanimity and presented him with jade pendants. I dare to cast this great treasure for my patterned father, this harmonious bell. With it I shall pursue the path of filiality and reverently sacrifice that I may call down and please the great spirits. May the great spirits watch over and aid me as they ascend and descend, and bring succor through many blessings, bestowing upon my their grace with great abundance. May I live forever, long life everlasting, and daily ring this bell for ten thousand years to come.



**#92 *Xing zhong* (III)** 癩鐘 (*Xing's bell #3*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #251-56]

Of old, when King Wen first brought harmony to governance, the Lord on High sent down beautiful virtue to guard him as he came into possession of the four quarters, convening and receiving the many states. When King Wu had destroyed the Shang, my glorious ancestor, Scribe

of Wei, came to audience before King Wu, and King Wu ordered the Duke of Zhou to bestow upon him lands to dwell in, fifty in number. Now I, Xing, am reverently diligent night and day, fulfilling their offices, held until death. I now cast this harmonious *lin* bell. May I be showered with many blessings, and may the person of Xing have all broadly opened before him and enjoy everlasting life. May I be lovingly given beautiful blessings and a blessed lifespan. May I forever shine in martial greatness. May the limitless brilliant blessings of the patterned spirits protect and glorify Xing's person; may I treasure this forever.

**#93 Xing zhong (I)** 癩鐘 (*Xing's bell #1*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #246*]

Xing is unceasing night and day in his care against failure, pursuing filial devotion to his patterned High Ancestor Xin Gong, his patterned grandfather Yi Gong, and his august father Ding Gong by means of this harmonious *lin* bell. May I use it to call down and give joyous pleasure to my patterned forbears. May I use it to pray for long life everlasting, and an unceasing train of grace. May I requite my august forbears who brightly watch from high above. May they shower down upon me many blessings, that the person of Xing may have all broadly opened before him and enjoy everlasting life. May I be lovingly given beautiful blessings. May I forever shine in martial greatness. May the limitless brilliant blessings of the patterned spirits may protect and glorify Xing's person; may I treasure this forever.

### 9) *Inscriptions from the era of King Yí (867 - 860)*

**#94 *Cai gui*** 蔡簋 (*Cai's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4340]

In the first year, in the period of the full moon on the day *ding-hai*, the King was at Yong. At dawn, the King descended to the temple and assumed the throne. Steward Hu entered accompanying Cai, who stood at the center of the court. The King called out to Scribe Nian to recite the written order to Cai.

The King's words were, "Cai! In the past, the former King charged you to assume the office of steward and supervise the household of the King. Now I extend your charge, and order you and Hu to attentively see that all is sufficient, complementing one another, and supervising unto death the inner and outer affairs of the royal household. Dare not fail to be aware of all things. Oversee the many artisans and receive and dispatch the orders of the Royal Consort Jiang. Those who would appear in audience and those who would receive orders, let them not dare to enter the inner court directly without first reporting to you, Cai. Do not fail to instruct well those attendant upon the Royal Consort Jiang; let none dare do wrong, that they may bring an end to complaints of law.

"I present you with dark ceremonial robes and red sandals. Be attentive day and night; never disobey my orders."

Cai bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast the precious sacrificial *gui*. May Cai have long life everlasting; may his descendants treasure this forever.

**#95 *E Hou ding*** 噩侯鼎 (*The Marquis of E's cauldron*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2810]

The King campaigned in the South, attacking the Yong and Yu. On returning from the campaign, the King encamped at Huai. Yufang, the Marquis of E offered ceremonial tribute to the King. In the sacrificial libations, Yufang assisted the King. The King hosted a great feast followed by an archery match. Yufang shot in rank with the King. Yufang shot well, and the King feasted him, whereupon all drank. The King personally presented Yufang with five pairs of jade pendants, a

team of four horses, and five bundles of arrows. Yufang bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the gifts of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast a sacrificial cauldron. May my descendants treasure it forever.

*In this inscription, Yufang and the King appear to be good buddies, but their relationship was likely to have been based on adversarial tensions which these ritual ceremonies were designed to allay. The conflicts between the state of E, which most commentators believe was in the southeast, and the Zhou can be seen to have broken into the open in #104. Further, in #117, an identically named lord of E is seen aligning with tribes from the northwest in attacks on the Zhou (it may be that Yufang was a title rather than a name, and that the later inscription records the activities of the son of this Yufang).*

**#96 Da Ke ding** 大客頂 (The larger cauldron of Ke)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2836]

Ke said, “Solemn and grand was my patterned grandfather Commander Huafu. His heart was clear and modest; his plans were calmly made; his virtue was pure and bright. Thus was he able to reverently protect his lord King Gong, bring order to the royal household, benefit the many peoples, be gentle towards those distant and nurture the abilities of those near. He was able to . . . august Heaven and be reverent towards the spirits. His virtue was pure without flaw and he bestowed limitless grace, always with the thought of compliantly serving his lord, the Son of Heaven.

“The Son of Heaven with a clear heart manifests his filiality towards the spirits, and always thinking of their sagely protector, Commander Huafu, he has placed Ke in royal service to transmit the orders of the King, and bestowing on Ke many gifts. May the glorious Son of



Heaven live forever, protecting the states of Zhou and controlling the four quarters!”

The King was at Zong-Zhou. At dawn, the King descended to the Temple of Mu and assumed the throne. Chong Ji escorted Quartermaster Ke through the gate, and Ke stood in the middle of the court facing north. The King called out to the scribe to recite the written order to Quartermaster Ke.

The King’s words were, “Ke! In the past I ordered you to be the bearer of my orders. Now I extend your charge and present you with an undyed apron and a dark lined sash. I present you

with fields in Ye, fields in Bei, and fields in Jun belonging to the house of Xing, along with their servants and women. I present you with fields in Kang, fields in Yan, fields in Fuyuan, and fields in Hanshan. I present you with scribe officers, flutes, and bells. I present you with those men of Xing, Wei, and Jun who are captives and those men of Xing who have fled towards the East. Be diligent day and night and never disobey my commands.”

Ke bowed prostrate and raised in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this precious steamer cauldron for my patterned grandfather Commander Huafu. May my descendants treasure it forever.

**#97 Ke xu** 克盥 (*Ke's platter*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4465]

In the eighteenth year, in the first period of the twelfth month on the day *geng-yin*, the King was at Zhou in the Kang-Mu Palace. The King ordered Officer You and Commander Jin to register for Quartermaster Ke a gift of field hands. Ke bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven, and cast a campaigning food vessel. May I use it to feast the commanders and officers, my friends, and my kinsmen by marriage. May I use it night and day to present offerings to my august grandfather and father; may they shower numberless blessings down upon me, long life everlasting, that I may steadfastly serve the Son of Heaven. May I daily receive limitless grace. May my descendants treasure this forever.

**#98 Xiao Ke ding** 小克鼎 (*The smaller cauldron of Ke*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2796]

In the King's twenty-third year in the ninth month, the King was at Zong-Zhou. It was the year when the King ordered Quartermaster Ke to transmit his orders to the camp officers of the army of the eight divisions. Ke cast a precious clan shrine vessel for his august grandfather Li Ji; may I daily bear the grace of my lord. Wherefore I pray for great happiness and aid, long life everlasting without end. May my descendants treasure this forever.

#99 *Shu Xiangfu Yu gui* 叔向父 (*The tureen of Yu, known as Uncle Xiangfu*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4242]

Shu Xiangfu Yu said, “I am but a small person succeeding to the position of my father. I shall emulate the reverent bright virtue and awesome demeanor of my patterned grandfather as I carry on the task of settling and preserving my state and my household. Wherefore I cast this sacrificial vessel for my august grandfather You Dashu. May he look down from above and send down blessings numberless, and may the person of Yu have all broadly opened before him even to life everlasting; may my descendants treasure this forever.”

### 10) Inscriptions from the era of King Li (859 - 842)

#### #100 *Fu zhong* 馡鐘 (*Fu's bell*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #260]

The King set out to survey the lands which King Wen and King Wu had with great effort gained. Fu Zi of the southern lands had dared to encroach upon our territories. The King led a fierce campaign against him and attacked his capital city. Fu Zi then sought peace and emerged to welcome the King. The Southern Yi and the Eastern Yi all assembled in audience, twenty-six states altogether.

May august Di above and the hundred spirits preserve me, this young son, and may my plans meet with unfailing success. As the successor of the former kings who served august Heaven I have cast this precious bell of Zong-Zhou. Let it ring, let it chime, let it welcome down my glorious grandfather and father Kings. May the former Kings look down from above and send great blessings down upon me, gracing me, their obedient grandson, with ten thousand years long life, that I may firmly protect the four quarters.

*This inscription and the one following are thought by most commentators to have been authored by King Li himself, whose personal name was Fu. They represent the only two texts which we possess which may be certifiably from the hand of a Western Zhou King.*

#### #101 *Fu gui* 馡簋 (*Fu's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2834]

The King said, “I, this young son, unstintingly day and night serve and succor the former Kings that they may assist august Heaven. I robe my heart in care of the four quarters, and thus I employ my retainers and my people to bring order to the shrine of the former Kings.

I, Fu, have cast this great vessel, this precious *gui*, to sustain with grace my grandfathers and fathers, august, patterned, and bright. May it welcome down the former men of patterns; may they descend and rise to the court of Di, preserving the grace of Di’s mandate, august and great. Wherefore may they protect well my house, my throne, and my person. May they ever send down blessings upon me, and guide me in my thoughts as I make distant plans. I, Fu, dedicate this eternal vessel; may it be filled for my every offering. Wherefore I pray for long life that I may be

forever firm upon the throne and never fail here below.

In the King's twelfth year.

**#102 Kang ding** 康鼎 (*Kang's cauldron*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2786]

It was in the first period of the third month on the day *jia-xu*. The King was at the Palace of Kang. The Elder of Rong entered accompanying Kang. The King ordered, "Supervise until death the household of the King. I charge you with the dark sash and bronze adorned bridle of office. Kang bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this precious *ding* for my patterned father Li Bo; may my descendants treasure it and use it in sacrifice forever.

**#103 Yu gui** 敌簋 (*Yu's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4323]

In the King's tenth month the King was at Cheng-Zhou. The Southern Yi of the Huai River had moved to Shu and attacked Mi, Ang, Sanquan, Yu, Min, and the lands north and south of the Luo River. The King ordered Yu to pursue them from the upper reaches of the Luo River and Xi Valley to the Yi River. When Yu returned he carried one hundred severed heads hoist upon spears, forty captives, and four hundred recovered Zhou prisoners. He encamped at the homeland of the Elder of Rong. There he returned to his lord the written orders that had dispatched him to Xi.

In the King's eleventh month, the King descended to the Great Temple at Cheng-Zhou. Yu Gong accompanied Yu, who reported his capture: one hundred scalps and forty captives. The King praised Yu's valor, and ordered the scribal official to give to Yu a jade libation ladle, fifty strings of cowries, fifty fields in Han and fifty fields in Zao. Yu dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial vessel; may Yu live forever, and his descendants treasure this always.

#104 *Yu ding* 禹鼎 (*Yu's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2833]

Yu said, “My brilliant and august ancestor Mu Gong was able to aid and assist the former Kings to settle the four quarters. Nor did Wu Gong forget my sagely grandfathers You Dashu and father Yishu. He has ordered me, Yu, to assume the government of Xing as my forbears before me. I dare not fail; I shall revere the charge of my lord!

“But alas! Heaven sent down great calamities to the lands below, and Yufang, the Marquis of E, led the Southern Yi of the Huai River and the Eastern Yi in broadly attacking the lands of the South and East as far as Linei.

“Thereupon the King charged the six divisions of the West and the eight divisions of Yin saying, ‘Fiercely attack Yufang, the Marquis of E, and spare neither young nor old!’ But the armies were filled with fear, and could not attack E.

“Thereupon Wu Gong deputed me to lead one hundred of his war chariots, two hundred cavalymen, and a thousand infantry troops, saying, ‘Lead my six divisions of the West and eight divisions of Yin with stern kindness, and attack Yufang, the Marquis of E, sparing neither young nor old!’

“Thereupon I, Yu, led the troops of Wu Gong against Yufang, reaching all the way to E. I struck boldly at E, and happily captured its lord Yufang. Having succeeded, I dare to raise in thanks the shining brilliance of Wu Gong. Wherefore was cast this great precious cauldron; may my descendants treasure it forever.”

*See the note to #95.*

#105 *Fan Jusheng hu* 番菊生湖 (*Fan Jusheng's pot*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #9705]

In the twenty-sixth year, in the first period of the tenth month on the day *ji-mao*, Fan Jusheng cast a dowry pot for the dowry of his eldest child Meng Fei X. May her descendants treasure it forever.

*Eastern Zhou bronze texts include many dowry dedications, but this is one of the earliest examples of such an inscription, suggesting that the inclusion of vessels in a daughter's dowry was rare until mid-Zhou.*

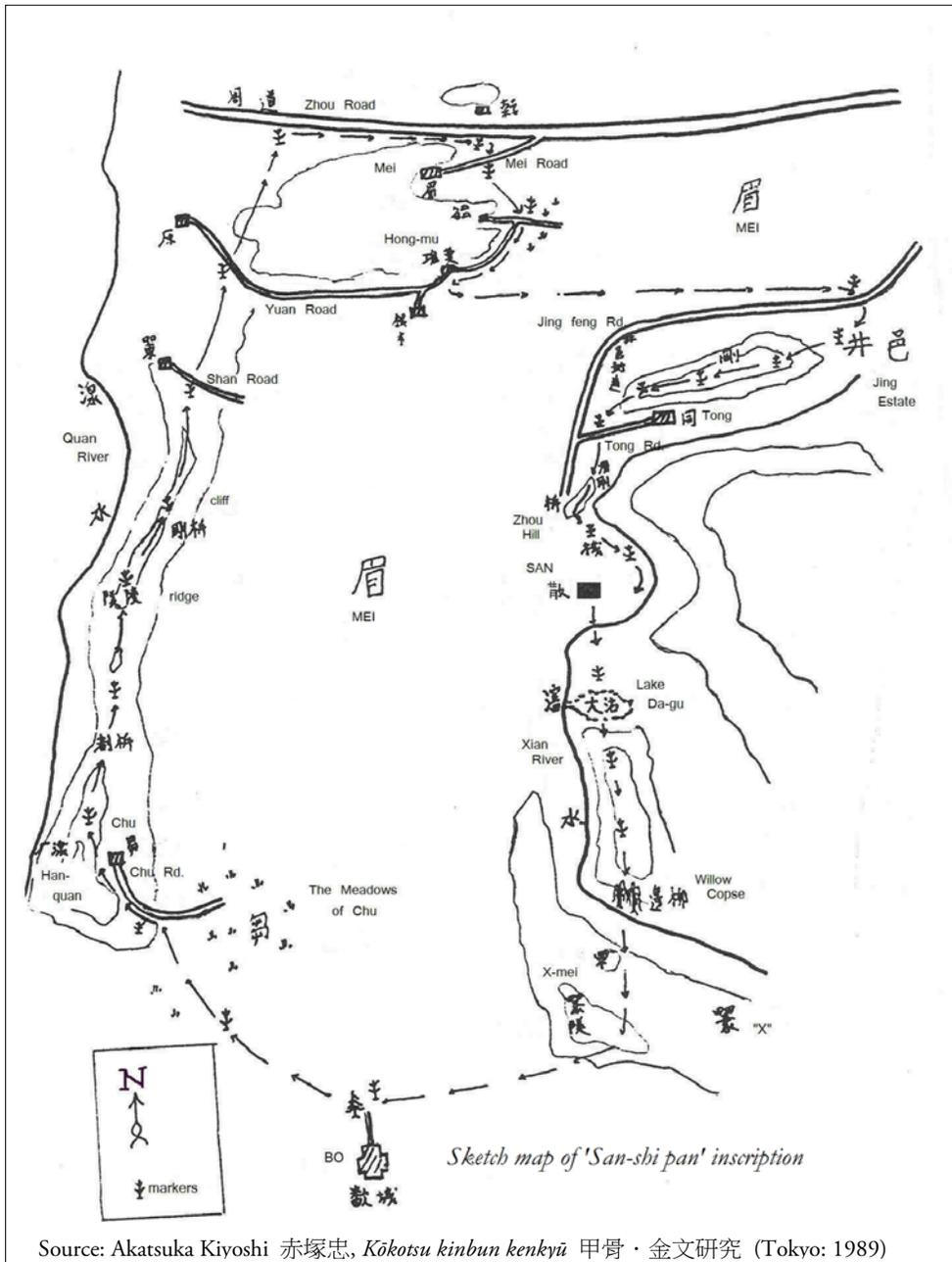
#106 *Sanshi pan* 散氏盤 (*The pan of the San clan*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #10176]



Because Ze attacked the estate of the San clan, the possession of certain fields is transferred to the San. In Mei: from the Xian River, crossing it to the south, to the marker of raised earth at Lake Dagu,

up past the two markers on high ground to the willow copse border, re-crossing the Xian, up to



Yu and to X-mei, west to the marker at the mulberry tree by the wells of Bo, to the markers in the meadows of Chu, to the marker within the Chu road, up to Chu, climbing to the marker at Hanquan, along the embankment at Zhu, along the *mei*-ridge and the cliff bank to the marker on the Shan Road, the marker on the Yuan Road, and the marker on the Zhou Road, east to the marker at the eastern border of

X, then right, returning to the marker on the Mei Road, south to the marker on the X-lai Road,

and then west to Hongmu. Then proceeding to the fields of the Jing estate in Mai: from the Genmu Road left to the marker east of the *feng*-road in the Jing estate, returning west to the marker, rising past the three markers along the hill, descending south to the marker on the Tong Road, climbing up Zhou Hill, then climbing the embankment and descending past the two markers at Yu.

These were the officers from Ze: From Meitian: Xian, Ju, Wei, Wufu, and Xigong Xiang. From Dou: the game-keeper Kao, the forester Zhen, and the commandant Yousheng. From Xiaomen: Yao. From Yuan: the gamekeepers Ren and Huai, the officer of works Huxiao, and Yue Fengfu. From Hong: the officers Xing and Kao. Altogether fifteen men.

These were the officers acting for San in overseeing the transfer of fields in Mei from Ze to San: The officer of fields Ni-X, the marshal Shan-X. From Xin, the officer of works X-jun, the steward Defu. From San, the noble son Rong of Meitian, Weifu, and Xiao Juefu. From X, the officers Tuo, Zhoujing, and Shuconguo. Altogether, ten officers for San.

In the King's ninth month, on the day *yi-mao*, Ze directed Xian and Ju to pledge an oath before the troops, swearing, "We have given to the clan of San these fields and their implements. If we renege on our agreement we have robbed the San clan of their trust and we shall be fined a thousand *lie* and receive a thousand lashes and be exiled. Xian and Ju made their pledge before the troops and so swore. Then Xigong Xiang and Wufu were made to swear, saying, "We have given the clan of San these wet fields and dry fields. If we renege on our agreement, we will be fined a thousand *lie* and receive a thousand lashes." Xigong Xiang and Wufu so swore.

Then the deed was given to the King of Ze in the east court of the New Palace at Dou.

– Keeper of the left tally, the official scribe Zhongnong.

#107 *Zhen yi* 備彝 (*Zhen's vessel*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #10285]

In the third month in the period of the waning moon on the day *jia-shen* the King was in the Upper Palace in Pang. Elder Yangfu passed judgment saying: "Muniu, you must be heavily punished! You have dared to contest with your officer. You have broken the oath you took before; now you must swear anew. Go to Se and make amends to Zhen; give to him these five men. Then make your oath, and follow its every word. According to the standards of punishment I should

have you whipped a thousand lashes and branded. Now I pardon you and have you whipped a thousand lashes and dispense with branding, and now I will pardon you further and have you whipped five hundred lashes and fined three hundred *lie*.” Then Elder Yangfu made Muniu take a new oath which said ‘Henceforth I shall not disrupt any matter great or small.’ “If your officer reports you again,” said Elder Yangfu, “you shall be whipped a thousand lashes and branded.” Muniu took the oath, and it was recorded at court by the recorders Zhu and Hu. When the record of Muniu’s oath was complete, the fine was administered. Wherefore Zhen has cast this campaigning vessel.

– *Inscriptions from the era of the Gong He Interregnum (841 - 828)*

*Historians of the Western Zhou disagree about the circumstances surrounding the later years of King Li's reign. Historical texts tell us that King Li was a corrupt monarch, and was exiled from the Zhou capital in 842 B.C. At the time, King Li's son, the future King Xuan, was too young to assume the throne, and so for a time the throne was empty. This era is known in the historical texts as the "Gong He" era, and it is clear that even the earliest historians were unsure what had happened during this period. The Chinese characters for "gong-he" mean "cooperative peace," and at least some early writers thought that this was a time when the leading grandees of the Zhou had joined together to run the state. However, some texts refer to a shadowy "He, the Elder of Gong," as controlling the government at this time, and say that this man at an earlier time had held the position of Minister of War. Over time, interpreters of the bronze inscriptions have come to identify a set of pieces dating from the ninth century which seem to refer to precisely this person, first as Minister of War under King Li, and then as Commander Hefu, or Elder Hefu. It seems likely, then, that the era following the exile of King Li was indeed a regency under a single man, whose biography has been forgotten to history.*

*The following inscriptions, which span the era from King Li to King Xuan, are those which seem to deal with the person of He, the Elder of Gong.*

**#108 Shi Dui gui (I)** 師兌簋 (Commander Dui's tureen #1) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4274]

It was in the first year, in the first period of the first month on the day *jia-yin*. The King was at Zhou and he descended to the Kang Temple and assumed the throne. Dong Zhong escorted Commander Dui through the gate to his position at the center of the court. The King called out to the Inner Scribe to recite the written order. "Commander Dui! Assist Commander Hefu in supervising the infantry and chariots of the left and right and the infantry and chariots of the five cities. I present you with the apron of your grandfather, five sashes, and red slippers."

Dui bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this *gui* for my august grandfather Cheng Gong. May my descendants treasure it forever.

**#109 Shi Dui gui (II)** 師兌簋 (Commander Dui's tureen #2) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4318]

It was in the third year, in the first period of the second month on the day *ding-hai*. The King was at Zhou and he descended to the Great Temple and assumed the throne. The Elder of Dui escorted Commander Dui through the gate to his position at the center of the court. The King

called out to the Inner Scribe to recite the written order. “I formerly ordered you to assist Commander Hefu to supervise the infantry and chariot of the left and right. Now I renew your charge to supervise the infantry and chariots. I present you with a flask of black millet wine, and a bronze adorned chariot with decorated carriage sides, a red leather covered armrest, a tiger skin canopy with dark lining, a carved yoke, a painted leather-wrapped axle, a shaft with painted belts and bronze fittings, and a team of four horses with bronze bridles.”

Commander Dui bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this great *gui* for my august father Li Gong; may my descendants treasure it forever.

**#110 Shi Song *gui*** 史頌簋 (*Commander Song's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2787]

It was in the third year, in the fifth month on the day *ding-si*. The King was at Zong-Zhou, and he ordered Scribe Song to go survey the land of Su, and lead its officers, its village headmen, and its clan leaders to come to Cheng-Zhou to execute a pledge. This mission was completed well. Su presented Song with gifts due a guest: a ceremonial jade, four horses, and precious metals. Wherefore was cast a cauldron. May Song live forever that he may daily carry out the brilliant commands of the Son of Heaven. May his descendants always treasure this.

**#111 Shi Hui *gui*** 師獸簋 (*Commander Hui's tureen*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4311]

It was in the King's first year, in the first period of the first month on the day *ding-hai*. The words of Elder Hefu were, “Commander Hui! Your father and grandfather served my family with great merit. Although you are but a youth, I order you to serve my house unto death, and to supervise the charioteers, the artisans, the servants and their attached women of the eastern and western wings of my armies, managing affairs both internal and external. Dare not fail to act well. I present you with a decorated lance, fifteen red horse headplates, a bell, five stone chimes, and metals. Be assiduous day and night.”

Hui bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of his august ruler. Wherefore was cast this *gui* for my patterned father Yi Zhong. May my descendants treasure it forever.

*The language of this text has caused commentators to wonder whether it reveals a full act of usurpation on the part of Elder Hefu. Hefu speaks in a manner suited to a King and the date of the event in “the King’s first year” leads scholars to wonder whether Hefu had declared a new reign calendar upon his succession to the “throne.” Yet since he is still referred to here as an Elder (Bo), and since Commander Hui, although calling him an “august ruler,” does not call him the Son of Heaven, the text fails to provide solid evidence for a theory of outright usurpation.*

**#112 Shi Li gui** 師釐簋 (Bell Master Li’s tureen)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4325]

Commander Hefu died. Li, wearing a plain silk apron reported with all trepidation to the King.

It was in the eleventh year, in the first period of the ninth month on the day *ding-hai*. The King was at Zhou and descended to the Great Hall, assuming the throne. The Steward Diao Sheng entered escorting Master Li. The King called out to the scribe to recite the written orders to Master Li. The King’s words were, “Master Li! In the past, under the former King you were apt and obedient in your youthful studies, and the former King ordered you to succeed to the office of your forbears as Master of Bells. Now I renew your charge to supervise your grandfather’s old office of Master of Bells and Gongs. I present you with a plain silk apron, bronze pendants, red sandals, and a bronze adorned bridle that you may fulfill your duties. Be diligent night and day, never disobeying my orders.”

Master Li bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial *gui* for my august father, the Elder Bell-Master. May I live ten thousand years, and my descendants treasure this forever.

*The occasion for this ceremony of investiture appears to have been the death of He, Elder of Gong, whom historical texts tell us retired upon King Xuan’s attaining his majority and assuming the throne in his own right. (There are problems with the date – we would expect this to be the 14th year, reflecting the reported length of the “Gong He” interregnum.) It may be that the office of military music master which Li occupied called for him to make the official report of the former regent’s death. However, the interpretation of the first phrase is hotly disputed, and some scholars claim that what it actually tells us is not that He died, but that he orchestrated the ceremony of report and investiture which is recounted (the report, obviously, concerning unstated matters other than He’s own death). The title “Master” is identical with the military office of “Commander”; music and war were closely linked in the traditions of the Western Zhou. Late Zhou texts report that at the start of the dynasty, education of the young was in the hands of military men who were experts primarily in ritual dances, including war dances.*

**#113 Xing Ren Ning zhong** 井人佞鐘 (*The bell of Ren Ning of Xing*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #109]

Ren Ning of Jing said, “Bright and pure my patterned grandfather and august father. They were able to make bright their virtue in full integrity and grace, and lived their full measure of years in good fortune. I, Ning, dare not fail to emulate the austere grasp of virtue of my patterned grandfather and august father. I ever bear in mind their sagely rectitude rooted in our clan shrine. Wherefore was cast this *lin*-bell for Hefu, so as to pursue filial service pleasing to my patterned forebears. May my patterned forebears look down from above and shower upon me blessings without measure. May I live forever, and may my descendants ever treasure and receive this vessel’s pleasure.”

*This piece seems to have been cast by the son of Bo Hefu upon the occasion of his father’s funeral. It properly belongs to the reign of King Xuan, as may #112.*

*11) Inscriptions from the era of King Xuan (827 - 782)***#114 Song ding** 頌鼎 (*Song's cauldron*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2827*]

It was in the third year, in the fifth month during the period of the waning moon on the day *jia-xu*. The King was at the Palace of Kang and Zhao at Zhou. At dawn, the King descended to the Great Hall and ascended the throne. Zai Hong accompanied Song who entered through the gate and proceeded to his place the center of the court. The Officer in Charge received from the King the written order. The King called out for the Scribe Guo Sheng to recite the written order to Song.

The King said, “Song! I charge you with the office of supervising the twenty warehouses of Cheng-Zhou and with the duty of overseeing the creation of new warehouses, that the produce therein may be expended for the royal palace household. I present you with a black robe hemmed with embroidery, a red apron, a vermilion sash, a banner hung with bells, and a bridle ornamented with bronze that you may fulfill your duties.” Song bowed prostrate and receiving the written order, he hung the tablet from his belt as he went out. Then he returned to submit ornamental jades.

Song dares to raise in thanks the brilliant grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this precious sacrificial cauldron to my august father Gongshu and my august mother Gong-Si, that I may in all filiality pray for great assistance and all blessings for eternal life. May Song live to great old age, ten thousand years, that he may boldly serve the Son of Heaven and live out his full lifespan. May his descendants treasure this.

**#115 Ke zhong** 克鐘 (*Ke's bell*)[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #204-5*]

It was in the sixteenth year, in the first period of the ninth month on the day *geng-yin*. The King was at the Bright Palace of Kang. The King called out to the high officer Hu to summon Ke. The King personally ordered Ke to survey the lands from the River Jing east to the encampment at Jing. He presented Ke with a hunting chariot and a team of horses. Ke dares not to fail and will carry out the King's orders fully. Ke dares to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast this precious *lin* bell for my august grandfather and my father the Elder. I

pray for great blessings and everlasting life. May my descendants treasure this forever.

**#116 Guoji Zibo pan** 虢季子伯盤 (*The pan of Zibo of Guoji*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #10173]

It was in the twelfth year, in the first period of the first month on the day *ding-hai*. Guoji Zibo cast this precious basin. Brilliant Zibo, fierce and warlike in martial feats, has brought the four quarters under control and beaten down the Xianyun tribes on the northern banks of the River Luo. He has cut off the heads of five hundred and taken fifty more captive, leading in the vanguard of war. Ever steadfast Zibo presented his scalps before the King. The King grandly praised the righteousness of Zibo. The King descended to the Archery Pavilion of the Temple of Zhou to banquet there. The King said, “Venerable Bo, you are grandly brilliant!” The King presented him with a team of horses, with which he shall assist the King. He presented him with also with a bow and red arrows, and a battle axe that he might rectify in war the Man tribes of the South. May my descendants live forever without limit.

**#117 Bi Qi gui** 不嬰簋 (*Bi Qi's tureen*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4329]

In the first period of the ninth month on the day *wu-shen*, the Elder said, “Bi Qi! Yufang and the Xianyun tribes attacked us broadly at our western borders. The King ordered me to pursue them well in the West and now I return to present to the King my captives. I ordered you to defend us by pursuing them to X, and you used my chariots to strike the Xianyun hard at Gaoling, cutting off many heads and taking many captive. The main armies of the Rong tribes pursued you and you fought a fierce battle with them, and fought it well. You did not lead my chariots into danger; you made many captive and cut off many heads.” The Elder said, “Bi Qi! You are young, but schooled in the arts of war. I present you with a bow and a bundle of arrows, five households of servants, and ten fields. Use them to carry out your duties.”

Bi Qi bowed prostrate at this grace. Wherefore was cast this sacrificial *gui* for my august ancestors Gong Bo and lady Meng Ji. I pray for many blessings and old age without limit, long life everlasting. May my descendants forever use this in sacrifice.

*As the Western Zhou moves towards its close, we begin to see in the inscriptions a widening variety*

*of non-Chinese tribes harrying the Zhou: the Huai Yi, the Southern Yi, the Man peoples due south, the Xianyun and Rong nomads to the west. It was eventually these last which sacked the capital and brought the Western Zhou to a close in 771.*

*See also the note to #95.*

**#118 Duo You ding** 多有鼎 (*Duo You's cauldron*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #2835]

It was in the tenth month. Because the Xianyun tribes had arisen and launched a broad attack upon the Jing garrison, it was reported to the King that troops be put in pursuit of them. The King commanded Wu Gong, "Dispatch your finest soldiers to the Jing garrison in orderly pursuit." Wu Gong commanded Duo You to lead the duke's chariots to the Jing garrison in orderly pursuit. On the day *guiwei* the raiders attacked at Xun and took captives. Duo You pursued them west. On the morning of *jiashen* we hit them at Mai. Duo You beheaded enemy and took captives. The chariot corps altogether cut off two hundred . . . five heads and took thirty-three captives. It also seized 117 enemy chariots and rescued the captives from Xun. Another party we hit at Gong, beheading thirty-six and taking two captives, along with ten chariots. We further pursued raiders to Shi, where Duo You again cut off heads and took prisoners. Then we chased them [by chariot] as far as Yangzhong, where the duke's chariot corps beheaded 115 men and took three prisoners. Their chariots could not be brought along and were accordingly burned; the horses were driven back with the troops and the remainder of the captives from the Jing garrison were recovered.

Duo You presented the booty, scalps, and captives to the duke. Wu Gong presented them to the King who addressed Wu Gong, saying, "You have now brought peace to the Jing garrison, and I will reward you. I present you with lands and fields."

On the day *dingyou* Wu Gong was at the Hall of Presentation and ordered Xiangfu to call Duo You into the Hall of Presentation. The duke himself addressed Duo You, saying, "I sent you off and your conduct was excellent and free of disobedience. You succeeded in this affair, caught many enemy, and you brought peace to the Jing garrison. I present you with one fine soup steamer, one set of bells, and 100 measures of copper."

Duo You dared to raise up the grace of the duke, wherefore is cast this precious cauldron, wherewith to befriend companions. May my descendants treasure it forever.

#119 *Mao Gong ding* 毛公鼎 (*The Duke of Mao's cauldron*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2841]

The King's words were, "Father Yin! Glorious were Wen and Wu. August Heaven was greatly content with their virtue, and so allotted to our Zhou the receipt of the Great Mandate. They offered succor to those far distant who had not previously heeded the court, and so none did not meet the brilliant light of Wen and Wu. Hence Heaven broadened the Mandate, and as the former ministers served their rulers uprightly and were assiduous in fulfilling the Great Mandate, august Heaven had no cause to be displeased, and watched over our Zhou, protecting us, and adding greatly to the stability of the former Kings' worthiness of the Mandate.



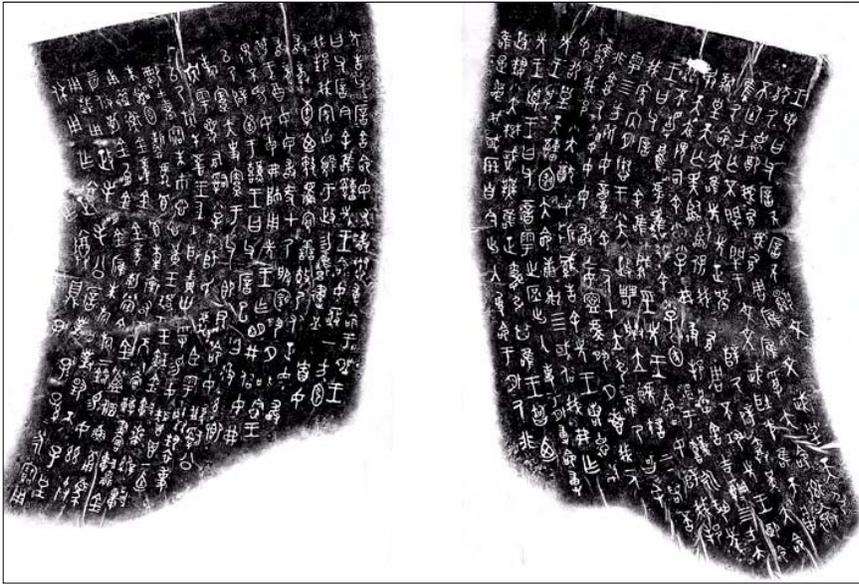
"But now Heaven rises awesome, and if I, a mere child succeeding to the throne, am not anxious and diligent, how can the state fare well? Everywhere the four quarters loose themselves in turmoil. Alas! I fear that I, this child, shall see this house sink in danger, and evermore be fearful of the former Kings.

"Father Yin! I now follow the path of the former King's order and charge you to manage my state and my household, both within and without. Be attentive to administrative matters large and small; protect my throne, praising the good and punishing the bad of the four quarters, from the high to the lowly. Unto death let none disturb the place of this Lone Man.

"Make known to me faults of mine you learn of. Dare not to neglect your office, be reverent night and day in serving this Lone Man. Participate with me in making plans great and small for our state, never failing to instruct me in the virtue of the former Kings, that we may look up towards august Heaven and broaden the Great Mandate, bringing peace to the lands of the four quarters. I do not wish to cause the former Kings concern."

The King said, "Father Yin! Join with the other officers of the court in administering affairs both within and without, in proclaiming my orders and in carrying out my government, and in ensuring proper remittance of taxes great and small. Do not let your governance be clouded. If your actions do not serve as a means of broadening the cognizance of your King, then

our state shall be lost! Henceforward let none who carry communications back and forth between myself and the outside fail first to report to you, Father Yin; when you, Father Yin, transmit my orders, let none dare to be dilatory in carrying out those orders.”



The King said, “Father Yin! I now broaden the charge of the former King and order you to take exclusive control over this one area. Make great our state and my household. Do not be careless in your duties; do not tamper with the proper taxation of the people; do

not enrich yourself, such conduct is abuse of the widows and widowers among the people. Serve as a model for the officials under your command. Do not drink wine to excess; do not be lax in your duties; concentrate night and day upon the majesty of the King; do not fail to emulate the bright example of the former Kings, that you do not lead your ruler to fall into danger.”

The King said, “Father Yin! You have previously been told that the various ministers and the various scribal officials shall be under your command. Now I charge you to supervise as well the royal clan corps, the Ministers of the Three Affairs, the retainers, the commanders, the tiger brave troops, and the affairs of my inner household. Let your clan corps be a shield for the person of your King, each member receiving thirty *lie* cash.

“I present you with a flask of black millet wine, a libation ladle with a jade handle, a red apron with a green sash, a circlet of jade, and a jade tablet; a chariot with bronze fittings, patterned silk covered carriage sides, vermillion leaning board and harness straps, a tiger skin canopy with dark lining, yoke bar bindings and axle couplings of painted leather, a bronze fitted shaft with painted belts, bronze brake fittings bound with leather and painted with gilt, a bronze adorned bow sheath and a fish-skin quiver, a team of four horses with bronze bridles and gilt girth straps, and a scarlet banner hung with two bells. I present you with these gifts that you may

sacrifice and carry out your administrative duties.”

Yin, the Gong of Mao, raised in thanks the august grace of the son of Heaven. Wherefore was cast a sacrificial cauldron. May my descendants treasure it forever.

*The Mao Gong ding is the longest and most famous of all Zhou bronze inscriptions. It is remarkable that a man of such power as Yin, the Duke of Mao, should have disappeared from the historical record, yet we do not now know anything of him, other than what this inscription records. Like some other inscriptions from the era of King Xuan, this text makes explicit reference to the troubles of the King's reign. More telling, perhaps, is the implicit weakness of a ruler who delegates such extraordinary and far reaching powers to a single minister: The Duke of Mao is to act as the steward of the royal household, the supervisor of all officials from the high ministers down, the overseer of the armies, and the King's personal chief of staff, serving as a conduit for all correspondence between the King and the world outside. It seems problematic what significant powers would be left to a ruler whose chief of staff so entirely screens him from the machinery of government.*

**#120 Shi Hong gui** 師匱簋 (Commander Hong's tureen)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4342]

The King's words were, “Commander Hong! Brilliant Wen and Wu broadly received the Mandate of Heaven . . . . Your sage forbears were able to assist the former Kings, acting as their arms and legs, aiding their rulers to establish the Great Mandate, bringing peace though government. Thus was august Di in no way dissatisfied and watched over and protected our Zhou and the four quarters, so that nowhere were the people not happy and tranquil.”

The King said, “Alas, Commander Hong! Today Heaven rises awesome and sends down destruction, Even those of foremost virtue cannot put things right, hence none can succeed the former Kings.

“In the past, out of your great anxiety for the state of Zhou, you placed me, a small child, upon the throne. Carry out your duties and firmly protect the person of the King. Now I extend your charge and order you to preserve our state plans great and small, and broadly bring order to our state. Attentively make your heart bright; lead your fellows to shield the person of the King. Do not let your ruler fall into danger.

“I present you with a flask of black millet wine, a libation ladle, and three hundred Yi captives.”

Hong bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven.

Wherefore was cast this precious *gui* for my shining grandfather Yi Bo and consort Yi Ji. May I live ten thousand years, and my descendants forever treasure this. Let this be a treasure of the X Palace.

It was in the first year, in the second month during the period of the full moon, on the day *geng-yin*. The King descended to the Great Hall, and Rong escorted Hong.

*This interesting inscription may suggest that a combination of people, among which Commander Hong was included, instigated the restoration of the Zhou royal line and the installation of King Xuan. However, some scholars date the inscription to a much earlier period, based on the evidence of a similar inscription excavated several years ago.*

**#121 Diao Sheng *gui* (I) 瑀生簋 (Diao Sheng's tureen #1)**

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4292]

It was in the first month of the fifth year on the day *ji-chou*. I, Diao Sheng, performed sacrifice and Shao lineage members came to take part. I presented a pot to the elder woman of the clan. She reported thus: “The Ruling Lady has ordered saying, ‘Growing old I shall now step down. Our attached retainers and fields produce much contention. Let you, leader of your lineage branch, agree that for every field that yields five measures, the lineage branch of Hu, the Elder of Shao, shall receive three and yours shall receive two, and for every field yielding three measures, the lineage branch of Hu, the Elder of Shao shall receive two and yours shall receive one.’”

I have been greatly graced by the Ruling Lady, receiving from her a great ceremonial jade. I requite the elder woman of the clan with a bolt of silk and a jade demi-circlet. Hu, the Elder of Shao said, “Having received the charge of my late father and my mother, I dare not tamper with it. I shall fulfill the orders of my late father and my mother.” Whereupon Diao Sheng requited him with a ceremonial jade.

*This may be the most problematic inscription in the entire Western Zhou corpus, and one of the most interesting. From other inscriptions we know that Diao Sheng was the Chief Steward of King Xuan, a very high court position. Hu, the Elder of Shao, appears in the Book of Poetry as a military commander, leading an expedition for King Xuan against the Eastern Yi; he is known there as Duke Mu of Shao, so his proper title would seem to be “Duke,” rather than “Elder.” This inscription and its companion (#122, below) have long generated wildly divergent interpretations; all are much troubled by the female figures in the text. The translation here is based on the following theory of the inscription's background: The two adversaries in the lawsuit are first*

*cousins, Hu being senior in the clan hierarchy (and the ruler of Shao) and Diao Sheng being junior (but a powerful man in his own right). The adjudicating body is led by a woman member of their common clan, and the litigation is a clan affair, conducted within the clan shrine, Diao Sheng initiating the suit through a ritual gift upon the occasion of a sacrifice initiated by him, as leader of the clan's junior lineage branch. The dispute involves the disposition of lands perhaps brought into the clan by the grandmother of the two litigants, the Lady Ruler. Based on the next inscription, it is possible that the grandfather of both cousins, a late Duke of Shao to which the next vessel is dedicated, was a brother of that a Zhou King. The elder clan woman rules according to the wishes of the grandmother. Apparently Diao Sheng is delighted to receive rights to some of the income from the fields, and Hu is willing to cooperate. What stands out most forcefully here is the apparently commanding role of the women: both the grandmother, in actually determining the division of land rights, and the female clan elder in presiding over the affair. Given the political prominence of the two principals, both in their clan and in the wider polity, it is surprising to see them submitting to their female kin in this way.*

*In 2007, the inscription of a newly excavated vessel authored by Diao Sheng was published. It records events approximately eight months later. #121a Diao Sheng zun (Diao Sheng's goblet):* It was in the first period of the ninth month of the fifth year. Shao Jiang presented Diao Sheng with five measures of X and two pots, and conveyed the order of the Ruling Lady saying, "Growing old I shall now step down. Our attached retainers and fields produce much contention. Let us agree we shall not allow them to be dispersed, and that for every five measures, our major lineage shall receive three and your lineage branch shall receive two, the branch of the elder having priority and the branch of the younger following." I was graced with a great ceremonial jade; I requited the elder woman of the clan with a bolt of silk and a jade demi-circlet, and presented two jade disks to the officer and to X. I, Diao Sheng, thereupon raise in thanks the grace of my clan ruler, wherefore I cast this goblet for Lord Shao. Thereby I pray for foremost wealth, pure virtue, and a numinous end. May my descendants ever treasure it and use it in sacrifice. If any among them should violate this command, let it be said to them: "If you do not serve the people of the Shao clan, the branch of the elder has sworn to put you to death."

*The new information provided by this inscription has modified our thinking about the two Diao Shang vessel inscriptions traditionally received (#121-122), though analysis is not yet by any means settled. (The translations here reflect revisions informed by discussions at a 2009 University of Chicago workshop, and incorporate new ideas contributed by Maria Khayutina, Edward Shaughnessy, and other workshop members.)*

**#122 Diao Sheng gui (II)** 瑀生簋 (Diao Sheng's tureen #2)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4293]

It was in the sixth year, in the fourth month on the day *jia-zi*. The King was at Pang. Hu, the Elder of Shao, reported saying, "I report good news! It is that the Duke has received my cowries and endorsed the settlement of contention, all in accord with the orders of my late father, Elder

You, and my mother You Jiang. I report good news! I have already instructed the officers concerning the settlements in question; I have recorded the divisions but have not yet dared to erect boundary markers. Now having previously instructed the officers saying, ‘Obey these commands,’ and having previously affixed my name to the title deed, I present the title deed to the elder, and receive from him in return a disk of jade.”

I, Diao Sheng, thereupon raise in thanks the grace of my clan ruler, wherefore I cast this tureen for offerings to my shining grandfather, Lord Shao. May my descendants ever treasure it and use it in sacrifice at the clan shrine.

*The “Elder” mentioned by Hu should be a formal reference to Diao Sheng. It is of great interest to note that if the interpretation of this inscription is correct, it was necessary for the full legal formalities of the contract reached between the two cousins here to be sanctioned by the King. The state of Shao was probably located in the capital districts surrounding Zong-Zhou; this was the domain of the first Duke of Shao, who was the brother of the Duke of Zhou and the first to occupy the post of Great Protector (see #12, #14). Perhaps in this era of declining royal power, the King’s right to sanction all land divisions was honored only in the capital areas, and it may have been pro forma (after all, the King does not actually speak in the inscriptional text here, and it is puzzling that the contending cousins brought the results of the suit before the King many months after an internal clan settlement had been reached). Nevertheless, we may perhaps conclude that at an earlier time the King’s prerogatives in such matters had been absolute.*

#123 *Shi Yuan gui* 師寰簋 (Commander Yuan’s tureen)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4313]

The King’s words were, “Commander Yuan! The Huai Yi formerly have submitted to us goods and crops and served us as subjects. Now they dare to arouse their multitudes, make their officers treacherous, and fail to keep order in our eastern lands.

“Now I charge you to lead the troops of Qi, Ji, Lai, Li, and X, and the Tiger Braves of the left and right, and punish the Huai Yi. Kill the leaders of their states: that is, Ran, Yi, Ling, and Da.”

I, Commander Yuan, was reverent in carrying out my order without fail; night and day I attended to my great task. How fine was my achievement! We cut off their heads; we took them captive – limitless numbers of troops and charioteers; we captured their men and their women, their sheep and their oxen; we captured their precious metals.

And now, at ease after campaigning, I have cast this vessel for generations of males to use

in the great winter sacrifice; may my descendants treasure it forever.

**#124 Xi Jia pan** 兮甲盤 (*Xi Jia's pan*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #10174]

It was in the fifth year, in the third month during the period of the waning moon, on the day *geng-yin*. The King first came to attack the Xianyun at Pengya. Xi Jia followed the King, and in cutting off heads and taking prisoners he was without flaw. The King presented Xi Jia with a team of four horses and a yearling chariot. The King charged Jia, “Administer from Cheng-Zhou the taxed fields in all four quarters, even to the lands of the Southern Huai Yi. Formerly, the Huai Yi submitted to us goods and crops, and served us as subjects. They shall not dare fail to offer up goods, tax grain, laborers, and rent grain. They shall not dare fail to bring their tax to the army headquarters and bring their surplus grain to the established markets. If they disobey, you shall strike at them in punishment.

“As for our various lords and the peoples, their grain tax must also be brought to market, nor may they steal grain from the Man peoples; if they do, they too shall be punished.”

Jifu, the Elder of Xi, cast this basin. May I enjoy long life without limit; may my descendants forever treasure this.

**#125 Ge Bi xu** 鬲比盥 (*Bi of Ge's bowl*)

[*Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* #4466]

It was in the King's twenty-fifth year, in the seventh month in the period of the full moon on the day . . . The King was in Yong at the palace of Commander Tian, and ordered Petty Minister Cheng to bear commands to . . . Inner Scribe Wu Qi and Head Scribe Yi. The commands were, “Let the game warden of Zhang remit land to Ge Bi, including the towns of X, Y, and Zhi, and further return to Ge Bi the land with the towns of Su and Yan. Also, let the steward of Zhang remit land to Ge Bi with the towns of Ji, Goushanger, and Choucai. And let him also demarcate lands for Ge Bi with the towns of Jing, E, and Jia, and also the towns of Zhou and Lu. Hence on this day there shall be altogether thirteen towns transferred to Ge Bi. Quartermaster X shall accompany Ge Bi in this affair.”

Wherefore I, Ge Bi, have cast this vessel for my august grandfather Ding Gong and my

patterned father Hui Gong. May my descendants treasure it forever.

**#126 *Ge You Bi ding*** 鬲攸比鼎 (*You Bi of Ge's cauldron*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #2818]

It was in the thirty-second year, in the first period of the third month on the day *ren-chen*. The King was at the Kang Palace in Zhou, and approached the Great Hall. Ge Bi brought complaint against You Weimu saying, “You encroached upon my fields and pastures without seeking my permission.” The King ordered an investigation. Scribe Nan brought the matter to Guo Lü, whereupon Guo Lü made You Weimu take an oath: “If I do not pay to Ge Bi rent according to the proper division of fields and towns, let me be punished.” You Weimu so swore.

I, Bi, have therefore cast this sacrificial cauldron for my august grandfather Ding Gong and my august father Hui Gong. May I, Ge You Bi live forever, and my descendants forever treasure this.

**12) Inscriptions from the era of King You (781 - 771)****#127 Qian gui** 鄺簋 (*Qian's tureen*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4297]

It was in the second year, in the first period of the first month. The King was at the Zhao Palace in Zhou. On the day *ding-hai*, he descended to the Archery Pavilion. The Elder of Mao entered through the gate and escorted Liturgist Qian to his place at the center of the court. The King called out to the Inner Scribe to recite the written orders to Qian. The King said, "Qian! Previously, the former King ordered you to be in charge of the establishment of cities, and to act as the chief liturgist of the five cities. Now I renew your charge, and present you with a red apron, a patterned hemp sash, and a banner hung with bells that you may fulfill your duties."

Qian bowed prostrate and dared to raise in thanks the grace of the Son of Heaven's order. Wherefore I cast this sacrificial *gui* for my august father Gong Bo. May I live forever, and may my descendants treasure this always.

*Qian seems to have been a religious official whose chief duty was to perform the necessary rites connected with laying out city walls. Since his father's posthumous name includes in it the character for "liturgist," we can presume that the post was hereditary.*

**#128 Han Huangfu gui** 函皇父簋 (*The tureen of Huangfu of Han*) [Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4141]

Han Huangfu has cast for Diao Yun a basin, a pitcher, and a sacrificial meat tray, one each; cauldron cooking vessels from large to small totaling eleven, eight meat trays, two storage pots, and two flasks. May her descendants treasure these forever.

**#129 Zong fu Jie Ping ding** 宗婦鄩嬰鼎 (*Cauldron of the clan woman Ping of Jie*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4084]

Ping of Jie, woman of the clan of the King's son the Duke of Lie, has made clan shrine vessels and cooking vessels; may they be treasured forever, that they may bring down great blessings and protect the lands of Jie.

*This vessel may have been a dowry object fashioned for Cheng upon the occasion of her marriage to the ruler of the border state of Jie (probably located southwest of the central Zhou polity). The marriage was probably an attempt to strengthen military ties with an allied, non-Chinese state.*

– *An Eastern Zhou inscription by the Duke of Qin*

*This last inscription dates from the early years of the Eastern Zhou (scholars date it variously in the period 663 - 537 B.C.), and illustrates the dissolution of central power after the fall of the Western Zhou. Qin was among the least assimilated of the lands of Zhou China, situated on its westernmost edge. The semi-barbarian rulers of Qin did not receive formal enfeoffment from the Zhou kings until the ninth century B.C., yet here, the leader of Qin is bold enough to claim that the first of the Qin duke's not only participated in the Zhou polity, but "received the Mandate of Heaven," a statement which would be unthinkable at earlier time, when the Zhou kings were strong, and the Mandate's location was in no way in doubt. The rhetoric of the piece is in every way that of the Zhou kings: the Duke even claims that his rule extends over both the Xia (Chinese) peoples and the Man (southern non-Chinese) states. The only restraint evident in the inscription is that the Duke has not yet usurped the title "King," something which would follow later in the Eastern Zhou period, and be legitimized in the third century B.C., when the Qin lords did, in fact, conquer China and succeed to the royal offices of the long defunct Zhou kings.*

**#130 Qin Gong gui** 秦公簋 (*The tureen of the Duke of Qin*)

[Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng #4315]



The Duke of Qin said, "Brilliant were my august forbears who received the Mandate of Heaven, and settled amongst the fields of the Xia peoples! The twelve former Dukes are at the place of Di, reverently upholding the Mandate of Heaven by watching over their Qin, which brightly attends to both Man and Xia.

"Although I am but a child, I solemnly emulate their bright virtue. Bright and strong, I direct the myriad peoples and nurture the heroic warriors. Strong in both civil and military affairs, I pacify those who do not heed the court and attend reverently to my sacrifices.

"Wherefore I have cast this clan shrine vessel to glorify my august forbears, that they may watch over me and descend to me and bestow great blessings upon me, long life everlasting. May I be firm upon Heaven's throne; high and broad with blessings may I possess the four quarters."

## Appendix: The “Announcement on Wine”

*The “Announcement on Wine” is a text from the Book of Documents. It is supposed to have been spoken by King Wu to his younger brother, Feng, when he was made Kang Hou of Wei (named here as Mei), a region where the king wished to settle many of the former people of the Shang. (Inscription #5 concerns Feng’s investiture.)*

*The text of the “Announcement” is related to the “Da Yu ding” inscription, #36*

The words of the King were: Make the Great Mandate shine in the land of Mei!

Your august father, King Wen, created a state in the west country. From dawn to dusk he would tell the many lords of estates and the many officers and the minor officials, “At sacrificial ceremonies wine may be drunk. Heaven has sent down its Mandate upon our people and we must stage primal sacrifices. But when Heaven sends down its awesome terrors because our people have created great disruptions and lost their virtue, this is inevitably due to their indulgence in wine. And the reasons why estates great and small have been lost is inevitably due to the crimes of wine.”

King Wen instructed royal youths, the administrators, and the officers not to overindulge in wine. And as for the various states, wine should be employed only in sacrifice: in their virtue they must banish drunkenness.

He said, “Let our people and youths cherish only the fruit of the land; let their hearts be pure. Let them hark well the lessons handed down from their forefathers; in matters of great virtue and small, let them always be of one mind.”

In the land of Mei, may you strengthen your sinews and devote your efforts to the cultivation of the millet harvests. Assiduously serve you fathers and your elders. Lead your ox carts far to trade in goods that you may nurture your parents with filial devotion. When your parents are thus blessed, then may the wine be poured next to the finest of dishes at table.

You *shi* and you officers, and you lords of estates, listen closely to my instructions! Only once you have served your elders with abundance and your ruler as well, then may you eat your fill and drink your fill of wine. Yet I tell you that you must ever keep watch over yourselves! Only if you measure yourselves against the standards of virtuous conduct may you mount lavish ceremonies of sacrifice. If you thus maintain the highest forms of order, then you may be considered a true minister of your king’s affairs.

In this way, the primal virtue of Heaven will never be lost from the royal house.

The king said: Feng! In the western lands we never acted incautiously. We followed always

the instruction of King Wen and never allowed ourselves to indulge ourselves with wine. And it is thus that today we have received the Mandate of the house of Yin.

The king said: Feng! I have heard that the former wise kings of Yin feared the awesomeness of Heaven and illuminated their people, constantly cleaving to virtue and holding to wisdom. From the reign of Tang the successful down to that of Di-*yi*, they made the kingship an awesome thing. The ministers who assisted their work were reverent and did not presume to be careless or lax. How much less did they dare to give themselves over to drinking! In the outer regions, the marquises, counts, protectors of the realm, and all patrician rulers; in the capital precincts, the ministers, supervisors, chancellors, artisan masters, and the village headmen among the people – none dared to lose themselves in wine. No only did they not dare to do so, they were never at leisure to do so, busy as they were, ever assisting to complete the brilliant work of their kings and reverently assisting their officers.

And I have also heard it said that this last successor to the Yin throne debauched himself in drink. His ordinances were unenlightened, and though the protectors of the people conveyed to him their resentments, he would not reform. He loosed himself from restraint and sank in immoral dissipation, thereby losing his power to awe, and there were none among the people who did not feel wounded to the heart. He wasted himself in drunken indulgence, never curtailing his faults. His heart was perverse in its cruelty and he possessed no fear of death.

His crimes accumulated in the city of Shang, and though the annihilation of the Yin was approaching, he would allow no fragrant offerings of virtue to ascend to Heaven. Rather the grievances of the people at the drunkenness of those at court sent a stench on high. It was for this reason that Heaven sent down destruction upon the Yin. It no longer held any love for Yin, for it was given over to excess. It is not that Heaven is arbitrary and cruel, but that people bring down upon themselves the fruits of their crimes.

The king said: Feng! It is not I alone who instruct you in this way. The ancients had a saying, “Do not examine your reflection in water; examine your reflection in people.” See now how Yin has lost its Mandate. Can we fail to examine ourselves in light of them and base our conduct on what we see?

I say to you, issue clear orders to the servants of Yin, to their marquises, counts, protectors of the realm, and also to the chief of the scribes and the scribes of the inner court, to the masters of the artisans, and also to the officers and those who supervise the territories and the estate croplands, and also to your closest ministers, the marshal of the chariots who sees that few transgress against you, and the minister of agriculture, who serves as the great protector of the

people, and the great elder who settles the regulations – and also to yourself: maintain strict control over wine.

Should it be reported to you that groups of men are together drinking, do not be lax! Arrest every one of them and send them back to the Zhou capital. I will have them killed.

As for the followers of Yin, their various former ministers and artisans, should such men give themselves over to wine, there is no purpose in killing them, they will require for a time to be instructed. In this way, they may be brought to enlightenment. But if they steadfastly refuse to follow my words, I, their ultimate ruler, will take no pity upon them. If they cannot reform their ways, they will enter the list of those to be put to death.

The king said: Feng! Hark well to my orders! Under no circumstances allow your officers or people to indulge themselves in wine.

## Note on Sources

As noted on the title page, the translations in these pages cannot be considered scholarly. They draw on several standard reference compendia, noted further down on this page, but do not reflect the level of research care that would be expected of published sources.

For those who find the history behind these texts of interest, a short selection of major English language monographs on the Western Zhou is listed below (a long selection would not much differ – the Western Zhou is a much understudied era). Excellent scholarly translations of many of the texts in this reading appear throughout these books, and also in a relatively brief overview of the period provided in Edward Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 292-351.

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