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SHAMANISM, DEATH, AND THE ANCESTORS:
RELIGIOUS MEDIATION IN NEOLITHIC AND SHANG CHINA
(CA. 5000-1000 B.C.)

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The degree to which the culture of early China and the cultures, say, of Mesopotamia or the Classical world differed at comparable stages of development requires little comment. Because those differences were shaped and reinforced by religious conceptions, however, it is instructive, if one wishes to identify significant features of early Chinese culture, to consider the nature of early Chinese religion and its social and political correlatives. Much having been made in recent scholarly writings of the importance of shamanism in early China, I want, in this article, to explore artifacts, as well as early texts, that may throw light on the general question of religious mediation in Neolithic and Bronze Age China. What kind of evidence for shamanism is there? How significant a role did it play? To what degree was religious mediation, shamanistic or not, shaped by other cultural concerns?

The view that the Late Shang kings (who reigned ca. 1200-1050 B.C.) were shamans has frequently been advanced. Chen Mengjia, for example, identified the early king as chief of the shamans (*qunwu zhi zhang* 群巫之長).¹ Akatsuka Kiyoshi advanced fourteen arguments to show that shamanism flourished in Shang times.² Zhang Minghua has referred to the

* A version of this article was originally presented at the Kunsthaus Zürich on 5 June 1996 in connection with the exhibition, “Das Alte China: Menschen und Götter im Reich der Mitte, 5000 v.Chr.-220 n.Chr.” I am grateful for the valuable comments and bibliographical suggestions provided by Stephan Peter Bumbacher, Donald Holzman, Terry F. Kleeman, Michael Nylan, and Lothar von Falkenhausen that helped to strengthen the article. Its weaknesses remain my own.

1 Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, “Shangdai de shenhua yu wushu 商代的神話與巫術,” *Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報 20 (1936), 535.

2 Akatsuka Kiyoshi 赤塚忠, *Chūgoku kodai no shūkyō to bunka: In ōchō no saishi* 中國古代の宗教と文化: 殷王朝の祭祀 (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1977). For discussion and page references, see David N. Keightley, “Akatsuka Kiyoshi and the

Shang king as a “shaman master” (*wushi 巫師*).³ And Kwang-chih Chang has stated that, “What is remarkable about the ancient Chinese civilization is its close relationship with shamanism....” In his view, power and wealth were inextricably entwined, and

the key to this circular working of ancient Chinese society was the monopoly of high shamanism, which enabled the rulers to gain critical access to divine and ancestral wisdom, the basis of their political authority....

The shamans—religious personnel equipped with the power to fly across the different layers of the universe with the help of the animals and a whole range of rituals and paraphernalia—were chiefly responsible for the Heaven-Earth communication....

Animals were the main helpers of the ancient shamans, their images adorning the ritual vessels and weapons of bronze and other materials. Rituals at which the vessels were used were likely the occasions where the actual flights took place, and on these occasions other instruments for the flight also came into display: food, drink, music, dances, costumes and their appendages, and perhaps a little sexual flirtation. The shamans may on occasion have worked themselves into ecstasy, undoubtedly helped along by alcohol.⁴

It has also been argued, on philological grounds, that the word *wang* 王, “king,” was related to words like *wang* 羁, “emaciated, crippled,” and *kuang* 狂, “mad,” which shared the same graphic and phonetic element; these shamanistic attributes, deformity and madness, are thus thought to

Culture of Early China: A Study in Historical Method,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 42 (1982), 299-301.

- 3 Zhang Minghua 張明華, “Liangzhu yufu shitan 良渚玉符試探,” *Wenwu* 文物 1990.12, 35.
- 4 Kwang-chih Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 4th ed., 1986), “Epilogue: Ancient China and its Anthropological Significance,” 414-15, 415, 418. See, too, K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), “Shamanism and Politics,” 44-55.

have been characteristic of the shaman-king himself.⁵ Others have argued that the word *wu* 巫, translated as “shaman” or “spirit medium,”⁶ and the word *wu* 舞, “dance,” derived from the same oracle-bone form, thus linking the shaman to his dance.⁷ Others have interpreted the animal-mask

5 E.g., Edward H. Schafer, “Ritual Exposure in Ancient China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951), 160-62; Li Zhengfu 黎正甫, “Guwenzi shang zhi Tian Di xiangyi suyuan 古文字上之天帝象義溯源,” *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 31.2 (1965), 20. Bernhard Karlgren (*Grammata Serica Recensa* [Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1957], no. 739) places all three words in the same word family. For a full exploration of the possible links between shamanism and deformity see Michael Carr, “Re-examining the Hunchback and Dwarf Enigma,” *Renwen yanjiu* 人文研究; *Review of Liberal Art* 81 (1991), 15-81. It may be noted, however, that in recent anthropological thinking shamanism is not generally considered to be the result of mental illness (Åke Hultkrantz, “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” in *Shamanism in Siberia*, eds. Vilmos Diószegi and Mihály Hoppál (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), 50; Jane Monnig Atkinson, “Shamanisms Today,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 [1992], 309).

6 “Spirit Medium” is the translation offered by Lothar von Falkenhausen (“Reflections on the Political Role of Spirit Mediums in Early China: The *Wu* Officials in the *Zhou Li*,” *Early China* 20 [1995], 279-300) for *wu* as it appears in Eastern Zhou texts.

7 See, e.g., L.C. Hopkins, “The Shaman or Chinese *Wu*: His Inspired Dancing and Versatile Character,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1945), 3-16; Chen Mengjia, “Shangdai de shenhua yu wushu,” 536-43. Because I do not believe that oracle-bone graph 卜, which is often read as *wu* 巫, referred to “shaman” or “spirit medium,” I do not consider the Shang use of the term relevant to the present enquiry. For the meaning of the word in the oracle-bones, see, e.g., Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (*Yinxu buci zongshu* 殷虛卜辭綜述 [Beijing: Kexue, 1956], 577-78), who treats the word as the name of a spirit and a place; Jean A. Lefèuvre (“Grands et Petits Territoires,” in *En suivant la Voie Royale: Mélanges en hommage à Léon Vandermeersch*, eds. Jacques Gernet and Marc Kalinowski [Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient: Études thématiques 7, 1997], 46-47. Many scholars, moreover, accept the reading of *shi* 篒 for oracle-bone 卜 in contexts that appear to deal with divination; see, e.g., Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Xi Zhou jiagu de jidian yanjiu 西周甲骨的幾點研究,” *Wenwu* 1981.9, 11; Chao Fulin 晁福

designs on Neolithic painted pots and jades, or the motifs on Shang ritual bronzes, as remnant symbols of shamanistic activity and power, or as representations of the shaman's animal familiars.⁸ These projective philosophical or ethno-artistic arguments—a form of what might be called scholarly Rorschach tests—can hardly be conclusive in the absence of native informants from the Neolithic or Bronze Ages. Scholars have also noted Eastern Zhou references to the role played by shamans in the courts of early rulers, some of whom were said to have visited Di 帝, the High God, or Tian 天, Heaven;⁹ but the evidence being late and of uncertain historicity, its value is hard to assess.

1. Shamanism: The Problem of Definition

Understanding of these matters will depend to a significant degree upon how one defines shamanism, a term that comes, through Russian, from the Tungus term *saman*, meaning “one who is excited, moved, raised.”¹⁰

林, “Shang dai yigua shifa chutan 商代易卦筮法初探,” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 1997.5, 58.

8 Jordan Paper, “The Meaning of the ‘T’ao-T’ieh,’” *History of Religions* 18.1 (1978), 18-41; K.C. Chang, “The Animal in Shang and Chou Bronze Art,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41.2 (1981), 527-54; Wang Zhengshu 王正書, “Jiagu ‘X’ zi bushi 甲骨‘筮’子補釋,” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1994.3, 87. For a summary of previous discussions about early Chinese shamanism, see David N. Keightley, “Royal Shamanism in the Shang: Archaic Vestige or Central Reality?” (Paper prepared for the Chinese Divination and Portent Workshop, Berkeley, CA, 20 June-1 July 1983), 1-3; Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, “The Ghost Head Mask and Metamorphic Shang Imagery,” *Early China* 20 (1995), 79-92.

9 Chen Mengjia, “Shangdai de shenhua yu wushu,” 485-576; Schafer, “Ritual Exposure in Ancient China,” 130-33, 160-62; K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual*, 45, 56-80; idem, “Shang Shamans,” in *The Power of Culture: Studies in Chinese Cultural History*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1994), 10-36.

10 Larry G. Peters and D. Price-Williams, “Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism,” *American Ethnologist* 7.3 (1980), 408, n. 1. For the etymology of

There have, in fact, been so many different definitions proposed by particular scholars, who derive their understandings from particular cultures and times and who privilege one or other aspect of the shamanic experience, that one is reminded of Humpty Dumpty's observation, "When I use a word,... it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." As one specialist in the subject has concluded, "It is an endless task to enumerate the definitions of shamanism.... It seems even more hopeless to make consensus among the definitions found in the literature concerning shamanism."¹¹ "Shamanism," another specialist has remarked, "is intractably resistant to attempts to universalize."¹² And a survey of the scholarship has led to the conclusion that "Among cultural anthropologists there is widespread distrust of general theories about shamanism, which run aground in their efforts to generalize. The category simply does not exist in a unitary and homogenous form."¹³ Shamanism, indeed, is much in the eye of the beholder; determining its presence or absence in purely formal terms, accordingly, can become a sterile and circular exercise.¹⁴ A purist may also wonder if the invocation of a religious concept whose actual existence is only known from relatively recent times is not troublingly anachronistic.¹⁵

the terms involved, see too S.M. Shirokogoroff, *The Psycho-Mental Complex of the Tungus* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1935), 268-69.

11 Mihály Hoppál, "Shamanism: Universal Structures and Regional Symbols," in *Shamans and Cultures*, eds. Mihály Hoppál and Keith D. Howard, with the assistance of Otto von Sádovszky and Taegon Kim (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993), 183.

12 Keith D. Howard, "Introduction," in *Shamans and Cultures*, x.

13 Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," 308.

14 Thus Clifford Geertz had, in a passage often quoted, declared "shamanism" to be one of the "desiccated" and "insipid categories by means of which ethnographers of religion devitalize their data" by dissolving the individuality of religious traditions ("Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton [London: Tavistock, 1966], 39).

15 According to the work of the Russian ethnographer S.M. Sirokogorov, originally writing in 1919, the modern Tungus reckon that the complex of beliefs known as shamanism is no more than two or three centuries old. He subsequently wrote that

Nevertheless, in an article that wishes to consider the existence of shamanism in early China—or, more accurately, that wishes to consider how suitably the term may be applied to the early Chinese evidence—it is necessary to provide some general sense of what shamanism is and how to recognize it. It has often been assumed that the shaman, “who is a mediator between the spirits and men,” is often “aided by abnormal neurotic or epileptic-like states” (but on this point see n. 5 above), that during the course of “autohypnotic trances” he journeys “to the abodes of gods and demons,” and that he afterwards announces “the results of his conversations with them.” Dancing, ventriloquy, juggling, and other tricks may also play a strategic role in his behavior.¹⁶

Mircea Eliade had argued that the “least hazardous” definition would equate shamanism with a “technique of ecstasy.” “The shaman,” according to this view, “specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld.”¹⁷

“the Tungus complexes are saturated with elements borrowed from Buddhism and Lamaism” and that “shamanism among the groups here studied cannot be regarded as a very old cultural complex. The Tungus themselves consider it as a complex which originated, according to the Manchus, in the eleventh century, and according to other groups...still later” (Shirokogoroff, *The Psycho-Mental Complex of the Tungus*, 282, 285-86). This, of course, does not mean that particular elements, such as ecstasy and the belief in tutelary spirits, could not have been far older. On these points, see Karl-Heinz Kohl, “Ein verlorener Gegenstand?: Zur Widerstandsfähigkeit autochthoner Religionen gegenüber dem Vordringen der Weltreligionen,” in *Religionswissenschaft: Eine Einführung*, ed. Hartmut Zinser (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1988), 255-57. Compare the conclusion of Michael Taussig, writing in 1989, that shamanism was a “made-up, modern, Western category” (cited by Atkinson, “Shamanisms Today,” 307).

- 16 Joseph Needham, with the research assistance of Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 2: History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 132.
- 17 Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: Bollingen Series 76, 1964), 4. Kwang-chih Chang evidently had this definition of shamanism in mind when he referred to the shamans as “religious personnel equipped with the power to fly across the different layers of the universe” (quoted on p. 764 above).

Eliade's "globally attractive but ultimately locally untenable perspective on the 'archaic technique of ecstasy'"¹⁸ has been criticized as unhistorical and ideologically biased.¹⁹ Åke Hultkrantz, furthermore, has rejected this emphasis on the soul-journey, arguing that in many instances in Siberia and North America, "the shaman does not depart from his body, but waits for the arrival of the spirits" while the shaman is in ecstasy. It is the ecstasy, in his view, not the soul flight, that is essential to the shaman's role.²⁰

Hultkrantz, agreeing with Julian Steward, also noted that "shamanism operates mainly on the family level. The great tribal ceremonies, the collective ritual undertakings, are rarely part of the shaman's duties *qua* shaman. His concern is the single individual more than the group."²¹ Anthropologists, in fact, generally distinguish between the role of a shaman and the role of a priest (a distinction to which I will return in my conclusion).

A shaman's powers come by "divine stroke," a priest's power is inherited or is derived from the body of codified and standardized ritual knowledge that he learns from older priests and later transmits to successors....

18 Howard, "Introduction," ix.

19 See, e.g., Kurt Rudolph, "Eliade und die 'Religionsgeschichte,'" in *Die Mitte der Welt: Aufsätze zu Mircea Eliade*, ed. Hans Peter Duerr (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 59, 64, 68; Kohl, "Ein verlorener Gegenstand?," 255-57. Anthropologists, moreover, "Shying away from the flamboyance of Eliade's term 'ecstasy,' ... have favored the more behavioristic connotations of trance," a term, however, that "has its own problems" (Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," 309; she cites the work of A. Siikala). For the existence of religious ecstasy as "virtually a cultural universal," see William Wedenoja, "Ritual Trance and Catharsis: A Psychobiological and Evolutionary Perspective," in *Personality and the Cultural Construction of Society: Papers in Honor of Melford E. Spiro*, eds. David K. Jordan and Marc J. Swartz (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 284.

20 Åke Hultkrantz, "A Definition of Shamanism," *Temenos* 9 (1973), 29, 34. Shirokogoroff (*The Psycho-Mental Complex of the Tungus*, 274) had a similar view of the importance of ecstasy: "A candidate who would not know how to bring himself into a state of ecstasy, would never be credited by the people to have shamanistic power, and could not become a shaman."

21 Hultkrantz, "A Definition of Shamanism," 35.

The medium, shaman, and prophet communciate in a person-to-person manner: they are in what Buber ... would describe as an I-thou relationship with the deities or spirits. The priest, on the other hand, is in what may be called an I-it relationship with the transhuman. Between the priest and the deity intervenes the institution. Priests may therefore be classified as institutional functionaries in the religious domain, while medium, shaman, and prophet may be regarded as subtypes of inspirational functionaries. This distinction is reflected in characteristically different modes of operation. The priest presides over a rite; the shaman or medium conducts a seance.²²

That the roles of priest and shaman might overlap, however, or that a religious practitioner might serve first as shaman and then as priest, adds further difficulties to any modern understanding of the Shang situation, where the evidence is sparse. And even for the modern period, the shaman-priest distinction is not always easy to maintain. It was noted, for example, that the spirit expulsions performed by the Tungus shamans of Siberia, in the 1930s, were capable of restoring "psychic equilibrium" to whole communities and not just to individuals.²³ The "microcosm of shamanic diversity" found in modern Korea, moreover, amply demonstrates "that the distinction between ecstatic 'shamans' and hereditary 'priests' is problematic."²⁴ The validity of such a shaman-priest distinction when applied to the Shang may also, accordingly, be called into question.

Finally, although Eliade had noted that "Shamanism in the strict sense is pre-eminently a religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia,"²⁵ Joseph Kitagawa has proposed the possible existence of at least two geographically distinct traditions of shamanism:

22 Victor W. Turner, "Religious Specialists: Anthropological Study," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968). vol. 13, 439. Turner refers, in particular, to William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, eds., *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach* (New York: Harper, 1965, 2d ed.), 410.

23 S.M. Shirokogoroff, *The Psycho-Mental Complex of the Tungus*, 265.

24 Howard, "Introduction," x; see too n. 33 below.

25 Eliade, *Shamanism*, 4.

According to the Siberian prototype, the shaman is believed to have the ability, by virtue of certain techniques of ecstasy, to cure the sick and to escort souls of the dead to the otherworld. On the other hand, in another tradition, that of Southeast Asia and Oceania, the shaman serves primarily as a medium while possessed by gods or spirits.²⁶

Once again, however, such traditions are by no means mutually exclusive. It is entirely possible, in modern cases at least, for both forms of shamanism, involving flight or possession, to co-exist in one culture.²⁷ The possibility exists, accordingly, that both forms of Shamanism might have been present at the Shang court. It is also possible that, at least in some modern traditions, shamanism need not involve ecstasy or trance at all.²⁸

26 Joseph Kitagawa, “[Book Review of] Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 36.2 (1977), 360.

27 An account of the struggle against shamans, published in Yan'an in 1944, for example, recorded that “Shamans can be divided into two types.... The first type pretend that they themselves are spirits or ghosts.... The other type specializes in the ruse of ‘sending their souls’: chasing, capturing, and beating spirits” (Shen-Gan-Ning Border Region Government Public Office, “Develop the Struggle Against the Shamans,” tr. Richard C. Kagan, *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology (The Chinese Approach to Shamanism)* 12.4 [1980], 37). The tables of Peters and Price-Williams (“Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism”) show that for accounts of shamanism in North, South, and East Asia, 36 percent of the cases involved possession trance only, 64 percent involved magical flight and possession trance together (N=11). For Southeast Asia/Oceania, 30 percent involved magical flight only, 50 percent involved possession trance only, and 20 percent involved magical flight and possession trance (N=10). In neither area did they find cases of “trance only” (pp. 416-18, tables 3-5).

28 Writing of the *tan'gol*, the shamanic practitioners of southwestern Korea, Keith D. Howard notes that they “know no ecstasy” and that “trance is not utilized in their rituals. Rather, their authority is based on heredity proved through an immense knowledge and a skillful manipulation of texts, music, drama and local data.” He notes that Im Sokchae “claims *tan'gol* represent a unique Korean branch of ‘mu-ism’, *mu* being the Sino-Korean character contemporarily used for anything shaman,” and that “the related and largely non-ecstatic Cheju *shimbang* practitioners

Following these discussions, any attempt to provide a working definition of shamanism that is not impossibly broad will clearly be open to challenge from those who appeal to local, discrepant manifestations. Nevertheless, and to provide analytical structure to the discussion of shamanism that follows, I would propose that some form of trance or altered state of consciousness will be involved in either a Siberian-style shamanism, with its emphasis on the spirit journey, or in a Southeast Asian-style shamanism, with its emphasis on mediation and the coming of the spirits to the shaman as medium.²⁹ At the same time, while in an altered state of consciousness, the shaman will be in control of the spirits and of his emotions.³⁰ And I will, of course, in considering the evidence in early China, also be on the look out for the violent contortions, speaking in tongues, animal-like behavior, drumming, dancing, and so on that have frequently been associated with shamanic activities in other cultures. And for those who prefer a more inclusive definition, I would suggest Hultkrantz's identification of the shaman as "a professional and inspired intermediary" who establishes "means of contact with the supernatural world by... ecstatic experience,"³¹ while reserving to myself the view that a definition of such broad scope severely restricts the term's ability to generate significant comparative insights.

are often said to offer the most 'authentic' Korean shamanism" ("Without Ecstasy: Is There Shamanism in South-West Korea?," in *Shamans and Cultures*, 3).

- 29 "The identification of shamanism with altered states of consciousness has become so strong that indeed the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably" (Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," 310-11).
- 30 Shirokogoroff, *The Psycho-Mental Complex of the Tungus*, 267, 271, 274; Hultkrantz, "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism," 50; Peters and Price-Williams, "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism," 399. Jordan Paper emphasizes the importance of volition in matters of possession: "shamans request the spirit(s) to come and assist them; mediums are usually involuntarily possessed... by spirits who control them" (*The Spirits are Drunk: Comparative Approaches to Chinese Religion* [Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1995], 86).
- 31 Hultkrantz, "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism," 30.

My main concern in this article, in any event, is not to “rectify names,” but to assess the quality of the early Chinese religious experience itself.³² Whether or not there were shamans at the Late Shang court, whether or not they practiced ecstatic trance, it will still be fruitful to determine, as best we can, what the Late Shang religious practitioners were actually doing. I am less interested in assigning labels, more interested in understanding. For all shamanisms are local.³³ All shamanisms are rooted in particular, historical contexts. All shamanisms must be understood as part of a larger cultural complex.³⁴ My primary concern in what follows, accordingly, is to explore the nature of religious mediation and its context in the Neolithic and the Shang.

- 32 For a view of shamanism that resists the necessarily partial nature of the usual definitions, focusing instead on an emic account of activities associated with shamans, see Caroline Humphrey and Urunge Onon, *Shamans and Elders: Experience, Knowledge, and Power Among the Daur Mongols* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Their book, as the authors write, “discusses individual shamans, as opposed to ‘the shaman’” (pp. 5-6); scholars are not, however, sufficiently well supplied with evidence to approach Neolithic or Shang shamans in the same way.
- 33 It is worth recalling that there are two kinds of shamans in contemporary Korea: “one is hereditary and is mainly distributed through the southern part of the Korean peninsula, and the other is charismatic, distributed in the centre of the peninsula” (Kim Kwang-iel and Tae-gon Kim, “Deities and Altered States of Consciousness of Korean Shamans,” in *Shamans and Cultures*, 47).
- 34 Shirokogoroff emphasized this point: “Once I had the idea to recommend to the reader some chapters and sections of general interest, but after the last reading of the work I gave up this idea because *the Tungus Psychomental Complex can be understood only as a whole, as a complex, and reading of isolated chapters and sections may give a distorted picture of the Tungus....*” (*The Psycho-Mental Complex of the Tungus*, xii [italics in original]). And he prefaced his discussion of shamanism itself with the words, “An abstraction of this complex is neither possible nor desirable for this complex forms only *a complex* within a larger complex.... I have a serious objection to giving this part the title ‘shamanism’; such a title may give a wrong impression that I have the idea of considering shamanism as an abstraction or giving an independent existence to shamanism parallel to Buddhism, Taoism, Mohammedism, Lamaism and other systems....” (*ibid.*, 241).

2. The Neolithic

The archaeological evidence in the Chinese Neolithic abounds with tantalizing clues that will in many cases accept a shamanistic interpretation—though not, I think, require one. For the Yangshao 仰韶 period (ca. 5100-3000 B.C.), for example, dancing stick figures on a pot from the site of Datong 大通 in Qinghai, figures of animals (frogs) with human heads, human figures that show the skeleton within the body, and a supposedly hermaphroditic human figure (from Liuwan 柳灣, Qinghai), have all been taken as “consistent with shamanistic beliefs and rituals....”³⁵ For the subsequent Longshan 龍山 period (ca. 3000-2000 B.C.), similar shamanistic claims have been made for the jade *cong* 琮 tubes—“square on the outside and circular on the inside” and decorated with animal masks—found in Liangzhu 良渚 burials in southeastern Jiangsu and northeastern Zhejiang. These jades have been regarded

as shamanistic symbols or tools, the circular shape symbolizing heaven, the square shape symbolizing earth; the hollow tube is the *axis mundi* connecting the different worlds and the animal decorations portray the shaman’s helpers. In short, the *cong* encapsulates the principal elements of the shamanistic cosmology.³⁶

35 K.C. Chang, “The ‘Meaning’ of Shang Bronze Art,” *Asian Art* 3.2 (Spring 1990), 14; Kwang-chih Chang, “Ritual and Power,” in *Cradles of Civilization: China: Ancient Culture, Modern Land*, ed. Robert E. Murowchick (North Sydney, Australia: Weldon Russell, 1994), 62-63. See too Wang Wei 王巍, “Liangzhu wen-hua yucong chuyi 良渚文化玉琮芻議,” *Kaogu* 考古 1986.11, 1015; Sun Qigang 孫其剛, “Shenqi de samanjiao gugeshi yishu 神奇的薩滿教骨骼式藝術,” *Wenwu tiandi* 文物天地 1990.6, 40-43.

36 Kwang-chih Chang, “Ritual and Power,” 66. See too, Zhang Guangzhi 張光直, *Zhongguo qingtong shidai (er ji)* 中國青銅時代 (二集) (Beijing, Sanlian: 1990): “Shangdai de wu yu wushu 商代巫與巫術,” 39-66, and “Tan ‘cong’ ji qi zai Zhongguo gushi shang de yiyi 談‘琮’及其在中國古史上的意義,” 67-81; Huo Wei 霍巍 and Li Yongxian 李永憲, “Guanyu cong, bi de liangdian chuyi 關於琮, 璧的兩點芻議,” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1992.1, 60. Other explanations of the rôle of the *cong* have, of course, been advanced. Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, for

And for the Shang dynasty, some of the more notable motifs on the ritual bronzes have been understood in shamanistic terms; the one in which a human figure is represented with its arms around a tiger and its head within the tiger's jaws, has, for example, been interpreted as "a shaman and his alter ego."³⁷

It is probable that most of these objects played a role in the local religious practices and beliefs of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages in China, but I cannot label their role "shamanistic" with a great deal of confidence. How can we be sure, for example, that the dance in which the dancing figures of Datong in the northwest participated was somehow shamanistic rather than say ithyphallic? How can we tell if the hollow tube of the jade *cong* in the southeast was truly an *axis mundi*, rather than, say, a receptacle for the stalks of plant offerings?³⁸ We need to be as precise as we can about how these objects might have served shamanistic functions and about how widely those functions, identified in one local culture, would have been shared by other cultures elsewhere in China. Ethnographic

example ("Chūgoku kodai no gyokki: sō ni tsuite 中國古代の玉器: 琮について," *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 60 [1988], 1-72), has proposed that the *cong* served as a form of ancestor tablet (*zhu* 主). For a list of the various theories that have been offered about the meaning and function of the *cong*, see An Zhimin 安志敏, "Liangzhu wenhua jiqi wenming zhu yinsu de pouxi—Jinian Liangzhu wenhua faxian liushi zhounian 良渚文化及其文明諸因素的剖析—紀念良渚文化發現六十周年," *Kaogu* 1997.9, 80.

37 Kwang-chih Chang, "Ritual and Power," 69; he provides a photograph of the famous *you* 酒 wine container in the Sumitomo collection. For other representations of what he calls "the man-beast motif," see K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual*, 62, fig. 25. For further discussion, see Xu Lianggao 徐良高, "Shang-Zhou qingtongqi 'renshou muti' wenshi kaoshi 商周青銅器‘人獸母題’紋飾考釋," *Kaogu* 1991.5, 442-47, 404. For the southern provenance of the man-tiger motif in Bronze-Age China, however, and the way in which, as adapted by the Late Shang of the Central Plains, the motif became more decorative and less religious, see Shi Jingsong 施勁松, "Lun dai hushiren muti de Shang Zhou qingtongqi 論帶虎食人母題的商周青銅器," *Kaogu* 1998.3, 62-63. See too the second half of n. 168 below.

38 This is the suggestion of Hayashi, "Chūgoku kodai no gyokki," 8, 38, 60-61.

analogy—with its appeal, for example, to the role played by the dance in other cultures—is a weak foundation on which to build major cultural conclusions. A study of some of these supposedly shamanistic phenomena in context may, however, provide a fuller understanding of how they functioned in the symbol and belief system of the time.

2.1 Death and Religious Mediation

Religious mediation in Neolithic China took place, as it was to do in the Bronze Age, in a world where death was commonplace. The inhabitants would have experienced the general demographic pattern of premodern societies, sobering to us and different from our own experience:

... an expectation of life at birth of between twenty-five and thirty-five years. Infant mortality rates... often... above two hundred per thousand, marriages... last[ing] on average for about ten years before being broken by death, most of a person's close relatives hav[ing] died by the time he or she reaches the age of twenty.”³⁹

Of the 194 persons buried in the cemetery from the first half of the fifth millennium B.C. at Yuanjunmiao 元君廟, near the mouth of the Wei River valley in eastern Shaanxi, for example, at least 1 in 5 had died before the age of 15, nearly 1 in 3 had died between 20 and 30, and only 1 in 8 had reached the ages of 40 to 50.⁴⁰ These and similar mortality rates suggest that the inhabitants in many parts of Neolithic China would have accepted death, not as a violent affront to their expectations, but as a

39 Alan Macfarlane, “Death and the Demographic Transition: A Note on English Evidence on Death 1500-1750,” in *Mortality and Immortality: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Death*, eds. S.C. Humphreys and Helen King (London: Academic Press, 1981), 249-50. Studies cited and revised by Kenneth M. Weiss (“Demographic Models for Anthropology,” *Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology* 27 [1973], 49-50, tables 23, 24) suggest a Neolithic life expectancy of between 20 to 30 years.

40 Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Yuanjunmiao Yangshao mudi* 元君廟仰韶墓地 (Beijing, Wenwu: 1983), 131.

common, inevitable, and not inharmonious consequence of life itself.⁴¹ It is no surprise, accordingly, that much of the religious activity from this period appears to have involved treatment of, or communication with, the dead.

It is not possible in the space of this article to address all the initiatives with which the Neolithic Chinese dealt with death, but I will consider briefly: (1) the posture of the dead, (2) the orientation of the dead, (3) secondary burial, (4) urn burial, (5) mortuary ritual, (6) mortuary jades, and (7) communication with the dead, trying, where possible, to relate the evidence to the definitions of shamanism introduced above. The Neolithic and Bronze Age dead are, in fact, the best native informants available to us. The treatment they received can provide much evidence about archaic religious attitudes and about the context in which early forms of shamanism would have had to operate.

2.1.1 *Posture of the Dead*

The early Chinese invested remarkable care in the orderly disposal of the corpse.⁴² By the end of the fifth millennium, if not earlier, neat ranks of graves had become a routine characteristic of Chinese cemeteries, the dead frequently lying parallel, in identical posture, and in similar orientation.

41 For life expectancies averaging from 27 to 30 years, in two other Neolithic cemeteries, see Song Zhenhao 宋鎮豪, “Xia Shang renkou chutan 夏商人口初探,” *Lishi yanjiu 歷史研究* 1991.4, 105-106; Wang Zhankui 王占奎, “Wangjia Yinwa mudi hunyin xingtai chutan 王家陰洼墓地婚姻形態初探,” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1996.3, 35. At the Diaolongbei cemetery in Hubei, 72 percent of the deceased whose age could be estimated (N=71) had died by the age of 23 (Zhang Jun 張君, “Hubei Zaoyang shi Diaolongbei xin shiqi shidai rengu fenxi baogao 湖北棗陽市雕龍卑新石器時代人骨分析報告,” *Kaogu* 1998.2, 76, Table 1).

42 Such care reminds us that, in death as it must have done in life, the body served as a primary means of symbolic statement about social and religious values. See Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley, “Ideology, Symbolic Power and Ritual Communication: A Reinterpretation of Neolithic Mortuary Practices,” in *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, ed. Ian R. Hodder (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 134.

The prevalence of the extended posture, supine or prone,⁴³ demonstrates the willingness of the mourners to expend the extra energy required to dig a pit large enough for the body to be laid out full-length. A tightly flexed corpse could have been buried in a smaller pit, but the Neolithic Chinese, in matters of mortuary posture, as in so many other aspects of their burial practices, did not wish to stint.

2.1.2 *Orientation of the Dead*

Regional traditions of burial orientation, moreover, had begun to emerge by the fifth millennium. In the area centered on northern Henan, for example, bodies were generally laid in the ground with their heads to the south. Throughout much of the Neolithic, however, the dead buried in Eastern graves lay with their heads oriented in a range between north and east; in Northwest China, from the fifth millennium on, by contrast, bodies were generally buried with their heads to the west or northwest. The preference for this orientation was so strong that even the skeletons of the secondary burials at certain sites, such as Yuanjunmiao—where the bones were laid out to simulate primary burial—lay with their heads at, or facing to, the west.⁴⁴ Burial orientations might vary within regions and

43 For recent surveys of mortuary posture, see Xu Jijun 徐吉軍 and He Yun'ao 賀雲翱, *Zhongguo sangzang lisu* 中國喪葬禮俗 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin chubanshe, 1991), 215, 224; Pu Muzhou 蒲慕州, *Muzang yu shengsi: Zhongguo gudai zongjiao zhi xingsi* 墓葬與生死—中國古代宗教之省思 (Taibei: Lianjing, 1993), 31; Corinne Debaine-Francfort, *Du Néolithique à l'âge du bronze en Chine du nord-ouest: La culture de Qijia et ses connexions* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1995), 219, 224, 225.

44 *Yuanjunmiao Yangshao mudi*, 61-65, figs. 24-28; 72, figs. 29-30, etc. For general surveys of burial orientation, see William Watson, *Cultural Frontiers in Ancient East Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 18-20, fig. 10; David N. Keightley, “Dead But Not Gone: The Role of Mortuary Practices in the Formation of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Chinese Culture, ca. 8000 to 1000 B.C.” (Paper prepared for the Conference on “Ritual and the Social Significance of Death in Chinese Society,” Oracle, Arizona, 2-7 January 1985), 16-17; Pu Muzhou, *Muzang yu shengsi*, 31-36. For more recent excavation reports that support these

might vary by social status within cemeteries,⁴⁵ but there is no doubt that the Neolithic dead went to their final rest buried not only in the ground but in a web of enduring cosmological forces and religious traditions. The inhabitants of Neolithic China treated their dead in an orderly way.

2.1.3 Secondary Burial

Secondary burial in China is as old as the Neolithic itself. One of the earliest instances is represented by the disarticulated skeleton of a five-to-six year old child found in a small cluster of other burials, one of which may have been that of the mother, at Zengpiyan 電皮岩, a site near Guilin in Guangxi that may date anywhere from the ninth to the sixth millennium B.C.⁴⁶ Single secondary burial was widely practiced in the millennia that

generalizations, see, e.g., Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Shaanxi gongzuodui, "Shaanxi Huayin Hengzhen yizhi fajue baogao, 陝西華陰橫陣遺址發掘報告," *Kaoguxue jikan* 考古學集刊 4 (1984), 9; Xie Duanju 謝端琚, "Lüelun Qijia wenhua muzang 略論齊家文化墓葬," *Kaogu* 1986.2, 149-56; Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Longgangsi—Xinshiqi shidai yizhi fajue baogao* 龍岡寺—新石器時代遺址發掘報告 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1990), 59-95, 183-215; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Hubei gongzuo dui, "Hubei Huangmei Ludun xinshiqi shidai muzang 湖北黃梅陸墩新石器時代墓葬," *Kaogu* 1991.6, 496, table 2; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Henan yidui, "Henan Jiaxian Shuiquan Peiligang wenhua yizhi 河南郟縣水泉裴李崗文化遺址," *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1995.1, 45, fig. 9, 47, fig. 10, 72-76; Zhao Chunqing 趙春青, "Jiangzhai yiqi mudi chutan 姜寨一期墓地初探," *Kaogu* 1996.9, 56-59, figs. 5-8.

45 Pu Muzhou, *Muzang yu shengsi*, 34-36; Watanabe Yoshirō 渡辺芳郎, "Bochi ni okeru tōi hōkō to kaisōsei—Daimonkō iseki o chūshin ni 墓地における頭位方向と階層性 - 大汶口遺跡お中心に," *Kōkogaku kenkyū* 考古學研究 40.4 (1994), 12-26, 147; Debaine-Francfort, *Du Néolithique à l'âge du bronze en Chine du nord-ouest*, 197-203.

46 Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqu wenwu gongzuodui and Guilin shi geming weiyuanhui wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, "Guangxi Guilin Zengpiyan dongxue yizhi de shijue

followed, though it was rarely dominant in any area.⁴⁷ The custom suggests that living survivors kept the dead in mind, and devoted considerable ritual attention to their remains, during the months or, more probably, years between the time when they first buried the corpse and the time when they exhumed it, cleaned off the bones, and reburied them.⁴⁸ Such an extension of mortuary concerns beyond the moments of death and initial interment provides a strong indication, in fact, for the development of some kind of commemorative cult of the dead, involving rites and ceremonies that would have lasted for at least the time between the first and second burials.

Collective secondary burial, moreover, was well established as early as the first half of the fifth millennium. At Yuanjunmiao, for example (Fig. 1), of fifty-one graves (seven of which no longer contained a skeleton), twenty-eight were collective burials which contained sixty-four percent of

廣西桂林甑皮岩洞穴遺址的試掘,” *Kaogu* 1976.3, 176. For the dating of the site, see Kwang-chih Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 105.

47 Single secondary burial is said to have been common, for example, in Daiziping 岱子坪 style sites (ca. 2000 B.C.) in central Hunan (He Jiejun 何介鈞, “Chang-jiang zhongyou yuanshi wenhua chulun 長江中游原始文化初論,” *Hunan kaogu* 湖南考古 1 [1982], 66). For brief surveys of the custom, see, e.g., Keightley, “Dead But Not Gone,” 19-23; Wang Renxiang 王仍湘, “Wo guo xinshiqi shidai de erci hezang ji qi shehui xingzhi 我國新石器代的二次合葬及其社會性質,” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1982.3, 43-51; Xu Jijun and He Yun'ao, *Zhongguo sangzang lisu*, 216; Debaine-Francfort, *Du Néolithique à l'âge du bronze en Chine du nord-ouest*, 217.

48 No Neolithic evidence indicates the time interval involved. In recent Chinese practice, the survivors rebury their dead anywhere from three to ten years after the primary burial. See, e.g., Jack Potter, “Wind, Water, Bones and Souls: The Religious World of the Cantonese Peasant,” *Journal of Oriental Studies* 3 (1970), 144; Emily A. Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village* (Stanford, 1973), 165; Burton Pasternak, “Chinese Tale-Telling Tombs,” *Ethnology* 12 (1973), 262. James L. Watson (“Of Flesh and Bones: The Management of Death Pollution in Cantonese Society,” in *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, eds. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry [Cambridge, England, 1982], 155) observes that “the final stage may not occur until decades or even generations after death.”

all the people buried in the cemetery; the number of deceased placed in each of these collective burials ranged from two to twenty-five, with the average being four-plus.⁴⁹ The practice may have appeared by about 4000 B.C. or a little later in Dawenkou sites such as Wangyin 王因 (fourth millennium) in southwest Shandong.

A variety of collective secondary burial patterns has been identified: the reburied bones might be found in a common grave with a skeleton or skeletons that had received only primary burial; the common grave might contain only secondary burials. In some collective graves, as in the case of single secondary burials, bones might be neatly arranged beside or under each skull, they might be laid out to simulate the original skeleton (often in the preferred, supine-extended posture), or they might be arranged far more carelessly. All combinations of age and sex have been found. In some cemeteries, such as that at Wangyin, joint reburials of the same gender predominated; in other areas there was a general mix of male and female, young and old, in the secondary graves.⁵⁰ Particularly suggestive is the proposal, based on craniometric evidence, that in some Yangshao cemeteries of the fourth millennium B.C., like that at Shijia 史家 in eastern Shaanxi, brothers and sisters were reburied together. Assuming the practice of patrilocal residency, it would appear that, in the minds of the mourners who buried them, the primary allegiance of the women was to the kinship unit of their siblings rather than to the kinship unit of their husbands.⁵¹

The collective burials of the Chinese Neolithic are impressive by reason of their size, their good order, and their communal nature. These elements indicate that a large, communal ritual would have taken place at

49 *Yuanjunmiao Yangshao mudi*, 19-20. As of early 1981 some 1,400 collectively reburied skeletons had been identified in close to twenty Neolithic sites found mainly in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow river, but also in Gansu in the Northwest, in the Yangzi drainage to the south, and in Heilongjiang in the Northeast (Wang Renxiang, "Wo guo xinshiqi shidai de erci hezang," 44-46).

50 Wang Renxiang, "Wo guo xinshiqi shidai," 44-47.

51 Gao Qiang and Lee Yun Kuen, "A Biological Perspective on Yangshao Kinship," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 12 (1993), 266-98. Such attempts to establish biological relationship on the basis of cranial measurements will need to be confirmed by other techniques such as DNA analysis.

the time of the second interment as various social groups, some kin-based, gathered to reinter their dead in a communal ceremony. Whether, in terms of the distinctions proposed above, shamans or priests might have been involved in such rituals, or whether the surviving kin would have presided, is hard to determine.

2.1.4 Urn Burial

In general, Neolithic urn burial was practiced for the burial, either primary or secondary, of children and, less frequently, for the secondary burial of adults; it was most common in Yangshao sites in the upper Yellow River and Wei River valleys; it was also practiced in southern Henan, northern Hubei, and the Han River drainage.⁵² It is evident that in some sites at

52 Li Yangsong 李仰松, “Tantan Yangshao wenhua de wenguanzang 談談仰韶文化的甕棺葬,” *Kaogu* 1976.6, 356. For further examples and discussion, see Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Fengxi fajue baogao* 澄西發掘報告 (Beijing: Kaoguxue zhuankan ding zhong 12, 1962), pl. 93.3 for M103; Ji Faxi 吉發習 and Ma Yaoqi 馬耀圻, “Nei Mengu Zhungeerqi Dakou yizhi de diaocha yu shijue 內蒙古准格爾旗大口遺址的調查與試掘,” *Kaogu* 1979.4, 312 (tr. as Ji Faxi and Ma Yaoqi, “Survey and Trial Excavation of a Neolithic Site at Dakou, Jungar Banner, Inner Mongolia,” *Current Anthropology* 23 [1983], 481, 482, 485-486); Anyang diqu wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, “Henan Tangyin Baiying Longshan wenhua yizhi 河南湯營龍山文化遺址,” *Kaogu* 1980.3, 195, 197; Jin Zegong 金則恭, “Yangshao wenhua de maizang zhidu 仰韶文化的埋葬制度,” *Kaoguxue jikan* 考古學集刊 4 (1984), 227; Shang Minjie 尚民杰, “Guanyu Jiangzhai yizhi de jige wenti 關於姜寨遺址的幾個問題,” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1992.5, 78. The urn burial of children has been sporadically reported for Late Neolithic and post-Neolithic sites; it was apparently a practice that continued well into the historical period; see Max Loehr, “The Stratigraphy of Hsiao-t’un (Anyang), with a Chapter on Hsiao-t’un Foundation Burials and Yin Religious Customs,” *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957), 448, n. 15. Adult urn burial has been a prominent feature of mortuary practice in modern south China, but its rationale, involving geomantic influence on the living and eventually, though rarely, tertiary burial, may have been quite different. See Potter, “Wind, Water,” 144-46; Watson, “Of Flesh and Bones,” 181-82.

least, the mourners had followed an established, orderly procedure as they placed the bones in the urn.⁵³

Urn burial also alerts us to the degree of caution that must be exercised before Neolithic images can be identified as shamanistic. As I have indicated (pp. 765-66 above), a number of scholars have identified the mask designs—such as the “fish-masks” found on some of the Banpo 半坡 basins (ca. 4000 B.C.)—as religious, if not shamanistic, in nature, representations of the religious mediator adopting an animal guise. This is entirely possible, but it is worth noting that the basins bearing these designs were often used as covers to seal the urn-burials of children and that, in each case, the basins had been perforated with a hole, which presumably served as a “safety valve” that permitted the vapors from the decomposing body to escape.⁵⁴ The regular association between the bowls with these animal designs and the urn burial of children at least raises the possibility that these had been the childrens’ bowls in life and that the designs may have been created primarily to delight the child rather than to serve as major religious symbols, although the two possibilities, of course, are not exclusive.

53 At Hongshanmiao, a Yangshao site in Henan, for example, 136 urn burials had been placed in thirteen rows. Most of the urns contained skulls, pelvises and limb bones, with the pelvis generally placed at the bottom, the skull in the middle, and the four limb bones placed upright around the edges of the skull; see Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, “Henan Ruzhou Hongshanmiao yizhi fajue 河南汝州洪山廟遺址發掘,” *Wenwu* 1995.4, 7.

54 Li Yangsong, “Tantan Yangshao wenhua de wengguanzang,” 358. For examples of what I have called the “soul hole,” found only in the case of infant or child burials (presumably because the urn burials of adults involved simply the reburial of the bones, so that no vapors from decomposition were generated in the urn), see, e.g., Zhongguo kexueyuan Kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Xi'an Banpo: Yuanshi shizu gongshe juluo yizhi* 西安半坡: 原始氏族聚落遺址, Zhongguo tianye kaogu baogaoji kaoguxue zhuankan ding zhong 14 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1963), 213, fig. 156, pls. 117, 189.3, 191.4, 191.6. It may be suggested that the vapors associated with the decomposition of the body had already, in Neolithic times, given rise to the traditional conception of a *hun* 魂 or “cloud soul” that ascended, while the *po* 魄 or “white (?) soul” remained with the white bones in the urn below.

2.1.5 Mortuary Ritual

The increasing size of villages by the Late Neolithic, which is indicated in part by the increasing size of the cemeteries, suggests that funerals would have become a more common part of community experience.⁵⁵ Their frequent repetition would have served to stabilize mortuary traditions; it would have served to define and reiterate the values symbolized by the ritual acts associated with death; and it would, in all likelihood, have encouraged greater conceptual articulation of the beliefs—involving good order, timing, and communal rituals—suggested by the evidence.⁵⁶

Neolithic mourners appear to have drawn a distinction between the vessels they placed next to the corpse—which presumably had belonged to the deceased in life—and those they placed at a greater distance, as on the ledge above the corpse or outside the walls or lid of the burial chamber. One may note, for example, at least four burials at Banpo in which a *ping* 瓶 amphora was found in the earth-fill a half a meter or more above the grave chamber. Unlike those amphoras, which were often standing upright, found in the graves, these four were on their sides,⁵⁷ suggesting that

55 For the growth in population between the Yangshao and Longshan periods in northern and central Henan and in western Shandong, see Wang Qing 王青, “Shi-lun shiqian Huanghe xiayou de gaidao yu gu wenhua de fazhan 試論史前黃河下游的改道與古文化的發展,” *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 1993.4, 67; Liu Li, “Settlement Patterns, Chiefdom Variability, and the Development of Early States in North China,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 15 (1996), 261, 267.

56 Lewis R. Binford (“Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Their Potential,” in *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, ed. James A. Brown, *Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology* 25 [1971], 6) proposes that a high frequency of encounter brings with it greater conceptual elaboration; he refers, unfortunately (in view of more recent scholarship; see, e.g., Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* [New York, Morrow: 1994], 57, 67), to Benjamin Whorf’s Eskimo and snow principle.

57 *Xi'an Banpo*, 205-206, for M3, M8, M32, M42, M9; see too p. 205, fig. 150 and pls. 177.1,2, 181.1, 182.2.

the mourners had emptied them in some last funeral rite, as the grave was being filled with earth.⁵⁸

By the third millennium B.C., the large number of *dou* 豆 serving stands, tall-stemmed *bei* 杯 goblets, *hu* 壺 vases, or *ping* amphora placed on the second-level ledges of some Eastern tombs suggests the remains of a funeral banquet.⁵⁹ In the two late-period burials, M10 and M25, at Dawenkou 大汶口, in west central Shandong, for example, only two goblets lay next to the corpse in each case, whereas eight goblets and twenty goblets respectively lay, in clusters, on the ledge or outside the coffin or burial chamber.⁶⁰ If we may associate the goblets with mourners, and assume, on the basis of their relatively small capacity, one goblet per mourner, then we may envision a group of eight mourners at the first grave (that of a female), twenty at the second (probably that of a male).⁶¹

The ritual significance of the *bei* goblets at Dawenkou is further suggested by the fact that, with only one exception, the mourners never placed such goblets in child burials, suggesting that the children themselves were not expected to use them; and in the one exception, M94, the *bei* lies in the fill, indicating it had been used in the burial rituals conducted for the child. It is plausible to assume that the tall-stemmed goblets, which were characteristic East Coast vessels, may have been associated in these mortuary rituals with the drinking of millet ale and the disorder of intoxication, as a means of assuaging grief, perhaps, and also as a symbolic expression of

58 The placing of objects in the grave fill was practiced in other Northwest China sites, but by no means universally so.

59 E.g., M11 at Xixiahou (Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Shandong dui, "Shandong Qufu Xixiahou yizhi di yici fajue baogao 山東曲阜西夏候遺址第一次發掘報告," *Kaogu xuebao* 1964.2, 64 [fig. 8]; other cases at pp. 62-64); M17 at Dafan zhuang (Linyi wenwu zu, "Shandong Linyi Dafan zhuang xinshiqi shidai muzang de fajue 山東臨沂大範庄新石代墓葬的發掘," *Kaogu* 1975.1, 14 [fig. 3]).

60 Shandong sheng wenwu guanlichu and Jinan shi bowuguan, *Dawenkou: Xinshiqi shidai muzang fajue baogao* 大汶口: 新石器代墓葬發掘報告 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1974), 24 (fig. 17), pl. 12; 26 (fig. 18), pl. 13.3.

61 For the sex of the grave occupants, see Anne Underhill [Kingscott], "A Mortuary Analysis of the Dawenkou Cemetery Site, Shandong, China" (M.A. diss., University of British Columbia, 1983), 218.

vitality and disorder to counter the sterility and order of death.⁶² It is precisely such disorder, in fact, that catches one's attention since it suggests the possibility of some form of shaman-like activity in which the normal patterns of reality are disrupted. It may be noted, however, that the context, in this case, was that of mortuary cult—involving rites and ceremonies, presumably in a kinship context—that appears to have been governed by rather strict rules and regulations about such matters as the placement and use of particular vessel types. There is no doubt that some shamans can follow ritual prescriptions (see nn. 102, 103 below), but these frequently involve the prescribed disorder of loss of consciousness, convulsions, wild leaps, and so on,⁶³ rather than the systematic, orderly arrangements observable in the Neolithic mortuary evidence. Even if the Dawenkou mourners had been drunk, they had still been able to cluster the goblets in the earth fill, at the head of the corpse (M10) or at the feet (M25). Their placement of these ritual utensils had not been haphazard.

2.1.6 Mortuary Jades

Jade *cong* tubes, which, like *bi* 璧 disks, have been found only in mortuary contexts, bear animal-mask designs that many scholars have viewed as shamanistic (see n. 36 above).⁶⁴ The ritual significance of these jades is suggested by the Liangzhu stratum tomb, M3, at Sidun 寺墩 in southern Jiangsu (ca. 2500 B.C.), in which a male who was about twenty years old had been buried with 120-plus grave goods, fifty-seven of which were jade *cong* tubes and *bi* disks (Fig. 2). A reconstruction of the funeral rites provides an unusually vivid sense of what happened in one Lower Yangzi burial some forty-five hundred years ago. First, the mourners placed over

62 On the rôle of intoxication at funerals, see Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 114-16.

63 Vladimir N. Basilov, "Chosen by the Spirits," in *Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia*, ed. Marjorie Mandelstram Balzer (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), 10.

64 Huo Wei and Li Yongxian ("Guanyu *cong*, *bi*," 61-65) provide a useful account of the *cong* and *bi* found in Neolithic graves.

ten jade *bi* on the ground, together with at least three perforated axes; these were then burnt—perhaps in a rite that served a purifying or exorcistic function—in a fairly intense conflagration.⁶⁵ As the fire was about to go out, the corpse was placed on top of these jades. The mourners then carefully surrounded the deceased with jade *cong*: four were placed below the feet, twenty-seven were placed around the dead man, and one was placed squarely in front of his face. In addition, one sand-tempered red-ware *gui* 盍 basin was placed at his head, and a *hu* vase, high-footed *dou* serving stand, and *pan* 盤 dish were placed beyond his feet. The mourners positioned most of the fourteen jade and stone tools at the right side and by the left arm of the dead man, with one perforated axe being placed under his head; only two adzes were placed under his legs. Nine jade ornaments, perhaps worn by the dead man before he was placed on the ground, were situated at appropriate positions on the body, including thirty-nine jade beads and tubes which may originally have been strung together in a necklace placed around the head. One other jade bead, however, had been placed in the *pan*-dish which lay by the feet. (Since, when excavated, the tubes and beads were scattered around the head, it is conceivable that the necklace had been deliberately rent at the time of burial, with one of its beads specially placed in this way.) At the end, the mourners laid the two finest jade *bi*-disks over the chest and abdomen of the deceased and covered the entire assemblage with earth.⁶⁶

The large numbers of jade *bi* and *cong* found in Lower Yangzi burials of the third millennium confirm the importance of jade objects as grave goods at this time and place. It has been argued that the animal masks found on the jade *cong* were shamanistic, but before that view is accepted at least two points are worth considering. First, the *cong* were found in

65 The fire had broken a perforated shale axe (M3:45) and a perforated jade axe (M3:86), both showing no traces of use, into over ten pieces; a similar axe (M3: 94) was broken into seven or eight pieces, again as the result of burning (Nanjing bowuyuan, “1982 nian Jiangsu Changzhou Wujin Sidun yizhi de fajue 1982 年江蘇常州武進寺墩遺址的發掘,” *Kaogu* 1984.2, 115-16).

66 Nanjing bowuyuan, “1982 nian Jiangsu Changzhou Wujin Sidun yizhi de fajue,” 113-114 (fig. 5); Wang Zunguo 汪遵國, “Liangzhu wenhua ‘yu lian zang’ shulüe 良渚文化‘玉斂葬’述略,” *Wenwu* 1984.2, 29. See too K.C. Chang, “An Essay on *Cong*,” *Orientations* 20.6 (1989), 40-41.

graves, not in the living areas of the sites. While it is possible that the *cong* had been placed in graves because they had been shamanistic emblems that were now being buried with the dead shaman, alternative explanations are also plausible. It is possible, for example, that the *cong* and their motifs were important elements in the mortuary rituals of the time and were designed in some way to protect the dead rather than to permit the living to communicate with the religious Powers of the world. Or it is possible that the *cong* and *bi* may have served as social markers, manufactured and placed in the ground to symbolize the status of the deceased and of those who mourned them. Although their presence in Neolithic graves suggests that the *cong* and their motifs played an important religious role, we cannot assume that that role was necessarily shamanistic. It is just as likely to have been associated with the commemoration, worship, protection, and representation of the Neolithic dead.⁶⁷ The Liangzhu mortuary rites provide no evidence of shamanic flight, trance, or possession.

2.1.7 *Communication with the Dead*

The nearly complete absence of Late Neolithic buildings specifically devoted to religious cult presumably reflects the undifferentiated nature of early ancestor worship and religion in general.⁶⁸ The secular and sacred,

67 My own hypothesis is that the registers of masks on the *cong* tubes represented generations of impersonalized ancestors; but it is not a hypothesis that will be easy to confirm.

68 For the argument that, in the Xinglongwa 興隆洼 and Zhaobaogou 趙寶溝 cultures of the Northeast, rituals were performed in dwellings rather than in special structures, see Liu Guoxiang 劉國祥, “Hongshan wenhua gouyun xing yuqi yanjiu 紅山文化勾雲形玉器研究,” *Kaogu* 1998.5, 74-75. For a survey of the relatively few platform altars that have been found in the Neolithic, see Zhang Deshui 張德水, “Jitan yu wenming 祭壇與文明,” *Zhongyuan wenwu* 1997.1, 60-67; see too, for Liangzhu altars, n. 69 below. The Neolithic structures devoted to religious use would include the so-called “temple of the goddess” at Niuheliang 牛河梁 (see, e.g., Liaoning sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, “Liaoning Niuheliang Hongshan wenhua ‘nūshen miao’ yu jishi zhongqun fajue jianbao 遼寧牛河梁紅山文花‘女神廟’與積石冢群發掘簡報,” *Wenwu* 1986.8, 1-17)

houses and shrines were, for the most part, not distinct. The graves of the ancestral dead—some of which, as in the Liangzhu sites, were associated with altars⁶⁹—were, fittingly, the major religious structures of early China.

The living communicated their respect, and perhaps their prayers, to the dead by means of animal and human sacrifice, grave goods, and burial rites. That millet (or rice?) ale may have played a role in such rituals is suggested by the emergence of the increasingly elaborate pouring and drinking vessels in East Coast sites, with *bei* goblets frequently buried in a ritual context, above the burial chamber rather than with the corpse (p. 785 above). The early use of alcohol is also indicated by the role—as revealed by both the oracle-bone inscriptions and the numerous bronze vessels devoted to such offerings—subsequently played by Shang millet-ale libations.⁷⁰ Ritual drinking and, possibly, a dreamy intoxication may

and the stone-circle shrines at Qinweijia and Dahe zhuang (discussed at n. 75 below); these circles, significantly, were placed in burial areas. Also of interest is a rectangular structure, 0.9 meters long by 0.6 meters wide, made of river cobbles of roughly equal size, found at Sanlihe 三里河 near the southeast Shandong coast; a dog skeleton laid on a level bed of black-pottery sherds was discovered about one meter to the southwest; a round pit whose floor was covered with river cobbles was also nearby (Changwei diqu yishuguan and Kaogu yanjiusuo Shandong dui, “Shandong Jiaoxian Sanlihe yizhi fajue jianbao 山東膠縣三里河遺址發掘簡報,” *Kaogu* 1977.4, 263); these structures, suggestive of cult activities, also lay in a burial area.

69 See, e.g., Zhejiang sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, and Yuhang shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, “Zhejiang Yuhang Huiguanshan Liangzhu wenhua jitan yu mudi fajue jianbao 浙江余杭匯觀山良渚文化祭壇與墓地發掘簡報,” *Wenwu* 文物 1997.7, 4-19.

70 The dominance, in the Late Shang burials at Anyang, of bronze ritual vessels for serving alcohol is well known; see, e.g., Liu Yiman 劉一曼, “Anyang Yin mu qingtong liqi zuhe de ji ge wenti 安陽殷墓青銅禮器組合的幾個問題,” *Kaogu xuebao* 1995.4, 403. The word most associated with alcoholic offerings in the divination inscriptions is *chang* 酝, “aromatic millet ale”; see Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄 and Takashima Ken-ichi 高嶋謙一, *Kōkotsumoji jishaku sōran* 甲骨文字字釋綜覽 (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, [1993, not for sale] 1994),

already by Neolithic times have been involved in the sacrifices offered to the ancestors. The dead being notoriously thirsty in other cultures,⁷¹ it is possible to suppose that, in early China too, the living communed with them by the offering and sharing of liquids.

The Late Neolithic emergence of pyromantic divination, another form of communication, also appears to have been associated with the developing cult of the dead. The cracking of animal bones to foretell or influence the future was taking place at a variety of Neolithic sites from the middle of the fourth millennium onwards.⁷² The practice presumably arose from the accidental cracking and popping of bones when meat was placed in a fire; if the meat had been a sacrifice for the spirits, it is plausible to suppose that the sacrificers would have interpreted the cracks, both their sound and their shape, as the spirits' response.⁷³ Late Shang oracle-bone

no. 0660, and the inscriptions transcribed at Yao Xiaosui 姚孝遂 and Xiao Ding 肖丁, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan* 殷墟甲骨刻辭類纂 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 1096.1-98.2. On the manufacture of alcohol in Shang, see Guo Shengqiang 郭勝強, “Lüelun Yindai de zhijiu ye 略論殷代的制酒業,” *Zhongyuan wenwu* 1986.3, 94-95. If we consider later evidence, the “Jiu gao 酒誥” (which Legge translates as “The Announcement About Drunkenness”) chapter of the *Shangshu* 尚書 presumably records Zhou reactions to the Shang use of alcohol; see James Legge, tr., *The Chinese Classics, Volume III: The Shoo King or the Book of Historical Documents* (London: Frowde, 1865), 399-412.

71 Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 57.

72 Keightley (*Sources of Shang History*, 6, n. 16) reviews the discoveries of oracle bones in Neolithic sites published up to the end of 1977. For more recent summaries, see Li Hengqiu 李亨求, “Bohai yan'an zaoqi wuzi bugu zhi yanjiu—Jianlun gudai dongbei Ya zhu minzu zhi bugu wenhua 渤海沿岸早期無字卜骨之研究—兼論古代東北亞住民族之卜骨文話,” *Gugong jikan* 故宮季刊 16.1 (1981), 41-56; Xiao Liangqiong 蕭良瓊, “Zhouyuan buci ye Yinxu buci zhi yitong chutan 周原卜辭和殷墟卜辭之異同初探,” in *Jiaguwen yu Yin Shang shi* 甲骨文與殷商史, ed. Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣 (Shanghai: Guji, 1983), 276-80, tables 1-4.

73 Here I follow the suggestions of Kaizuka Shigeki 貝塚茂樹 (*Kyōto daigaku jimbun kagaku kenkyūjo zō kōkotsu monji. Hombun hen* 京都大學人文科學研究所

inscriptions reveal both that the bulk of Shang divination was directed towards the management of ancestral sacrifices and that some divinations were performed in an ancestral temple.⁷⁴ The possibility that it was the ancestors who were thought to make the *bu* 卜-shaped cracks in the bones seems, accordingly, to be strong.

Some Neolithic evidence, in fact, supports this view that the “divinees”—the spirits to whom the divinations were addressed—were the ancestors. The finding of oracle bones in burial areas, associated with clusters of stone-circle shrines, graves, and house foundations at the aeneolithic sites of Qinweijia 秦魏家 and Dahe zhuang 大何莊 in east central Gansu, encourages us to think that the spirits whom the Neolithic diviners consulted were likely to have been those of departed ancestors, each family, perhaps, addressing its scapulimantic queries to its own dead kinsmen, at its own stone circle, near which its dead lay buried.⁷⁵ The Late Neolithic peoples of China had found a way to talk to their dead.

藏甲骨文字. 本文編 [Kyoto, 1960], 354) and Itō Michiharu 伊藤道治 (“In izen no ketsuen soshiki to shūkyō 殷以前の血緣組織と宗教,” *Tōhō gakuhō* 東洋學報 32 [1962], 256) who noted the rôle of the animals used in early sacrifices as mediators between the human and spiritual realms.

74 Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 35. See the postfaces of the form *zai mou zong bu* 在某宗卜, “cracked in the temple of ancestor So-and-so” (as in inscriptions [1A] and [1B] below): eight inscriptions transcribed at Shima Kunio 島邦男, *Inkyo bokui sōrui* 殷墟卜辭綜類 (Tokyo: Kyūko, 1971, 2d rev. ed.), 270.2-3; sixteen inscriptions transcribed at Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan*, 1320.2.

75 On these finds, see Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Gansu gongzuodui, “Gansu Yongjing Qinweijia Qijia wenhua mudi 甘肅永靖秦魏家齊家文化墓地,” *Kaogu xuebao* 1975.2, 59, 60 (fig. 3), 62, 68, 87 (fig. 23); Wu Ruzuo 吳汝祚, “Qijia wenhua muzang chubu pouxi 齊家文化墓地初步剖析,” *Shiqian yanjiu* 史前研究 1983.2, 64-65 (fig. 6). The association between circles, graves, and residence units was first proposed by Itō Michiharu, “In izen no ketsuen soshiki,” 246, n. 63. For the possibility that the stones at Dahe zhuang had been used as weights to anchor a tent perimeter, see Louisa G. Fitzgerald-Huber, “Qijia and Erlitou: The Question of Contacts with Distant Cultures,” *Early China* 20 (1995), 39, n. 57; as she notes, however, these stones were remarkable for their

2.1.8 Early Mortuary Cult: Conclusions

In China, from at least the sixth millennium on, there is increasing evidence—in the form of primary, secondary, collective, joint, and urn burials, in the assiduous attention to the posture and orientation of the corpse, in the elegance of grave goods and tomb construction, in the practice of mortuary rituals and sacrifices—that the dead mattered and that the living devoted significant effort to their service. Lack of space prevents me from introducing such aspects of early mortuary ritual as the treatment of skulls, the use of ochre and cinnabar to redden the bones, the occasional placing of jade pieces in the mouth, and so on.⁷⁶ There can be no doubt, however, that we are dealing with a varied, rich, and sophisticated mortuary tradition that reveals much about the constellation of religious practices in early China.

The various segregations of the dead suggest the importance that the early Chinese attached to considerations of kinship, sex, and age, and, in all likelihood, lineal descent.⁷⁷ Their burial practices undoubtedly mirrored increasing social complexity and stratification, but what is most striking is the concern with order. If one assumes that mortuary practice reflects a society's vision of itself, at least as it wishes to be if not as it

“regularity in size and placement,” which encourages the view that they formed a special structure. And even if they mark habitations, the evidence would still permit the conclusion that scapulimancy had been performed near the bodies of the dead.

76 For an introduction to these mortuary practices in early China, see Keightley, “Dead But Not Gone”; Xu Jijun and He Yun’ao, *Zhongguo sangzang lisu*; Pu Muzhou, *Muzang yu shengsi*.

77 For kinship clusters in Neolithic burials, see, e.g., Gao Qiang and Lee Yun Kuen, “A Biological Perspective.” For kinship groupings in Late Shang cemeteries, see, e.g., Yang Hsi-chang, “The Shang Dynasty Cemetery System,” in *Studies of Shang Archaeology: Selected Papers from the International Conference on Shang Civilization*, ed. K.C. Chang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 55-57; Han Jianye 韓建業, “Yinxu xiqu mudi fenxi 殷墟西區墓地分析,” *Kaogu* 1997.1, 62-72.

is,⁷⁸ then the great emphasis that the inhabitants of Neolithic and Bronze Age China laid on the consistent, orderly, and careful treatment of the dead suggests a general concern, an *ordnungswille*, that must have reflected, and presumably reinforced, ideals of status and order held by the living, not simply about the treatment of the dead, but about the conduct of life in general.

For the evidence suggests that the living and the dead in early China were not fully separable. The dead relied upon the services of the living. The living used the dead and the sacrifices that the dead demanded to enhance their own status. Rituals for the dead, presumably the ancestral dead, were a central and characteristic activity in early China. The increasingly demanding burial practices of the emerging elites testify to a profound belief in the power and prestige of the dead. The economic, emotional, and political impact of such belief was remarkably deep and enduring. And it is plausible to assume that the most significant forms of religious mediation took place within the context of that emerging ancestral belief.

3. The Late Shang

3.1 Mortuary Rites

Concern with the orientation of the dead, already noted for the Neolithic, continued to play a role in the Late Shang. The cardinality of the great, four-ramp, royal tombs at Xibeigang 西北岡, for example, was marked, the long axis of their ramps being oriented north-by-east/south-by-west,⁷⁹ and the generally north-south orientation of Shang or Shang-style elite burials is confirmed by a variety of finds from other contemporary Bronze-

78 For burial customs as expressions of social ideals rather than social realities, see Ian Hodder, "Social Structure and Cemeteries: A Critical Appraisal," in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979: The Fourth Anglo-Saxon Symposium at Oxford*, eds. Philip Rahtz, Tania Dickinson, and Lorna Watts (BAR British Series 82, 1980), 165.

79 I obtain these approximate orientations from measuring the tomb plans in the published reports.

Age sites.⁸⁰ The great attention the early inhabitants of China paid to orientation and posture was a significant characteristic of both the Neolithic and early Bronze Age cultures.

By Late Shang, in fact, the care of the royal and elite dead had become one of the great Bronze-Age industries. The constant draining of wealth—labor, tools, weapons, bronzes, ceramics, jades, ornaments, food, drink, and animal and human victims—to furnish the elite graves, to say

80 These other sites would include Dasikong cun 大司空村, just north of Xiaotun; Panlong cheng 盤龍城 in east Central Hubei, just north of the Yangzi; Luoshan 羅山 in southern Henan; and Sufutun 蘇埠屯 in north central Shandong. The north-south orientation of the tombs in all these sites is similar to that of the city walls (when they exist) or building foundations. See Cheng Te-k'un, *Archaeology in China: Volume II: Shang China* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1960), 70; Kwang-chih Chang, *Shang Civilization*, 87, 94, 95, 112, 299, 311; Xinyang diqu wenguanhui and Luoshan xian wenhuanquan, "Henan Luoshan xian Mangzhang Shangdai mudi di yici fajue jianbao 河南羅山縣蟬張商代墓地第一次發掘簡報," *Kaogu* 1981.2, 111-18. The petty-elite burials at Yinxu West were also oriented to the cardinal directions, with a clear bias, generally of ten degrees "to the right." The report indicates that 399 burials were oriented roughly to the north (most common orientation, 10 degrees), 328 to the south (most common 190 degrees), 104 to the east (most common, 95 degrees, followed by 100 degrees), and 107 to the west (most common, 280 degrees). I derive these figures from Zhongguo shehui kexue-yuan Kaogu yanjiusuo Anyang gongzuodui, "1969-1977 nian Yinxu xiqu muzang fajue baogao 1969-1977 年殷墟西區墓葬發掘報告," *Kaogu xuebao* 1979.1, 35, 121-46. (According to Yang Xizhang 楊錫璋 [letter of 26 December 1983] the magnetic declination at the site is $-3^{\circ} 38'$ west; thus the deviation from the true cardinal directions would be $+6^{\circ} 22'$, rather than $+10^{\circ}$.) The remarkable consistency of the orientations strongly suggests that the Shang tomb builders, at least in the petty-elite cemetery, had a definite directional scheme in mind. The same ten-degree bias is found at other Shang sites. The human-victim pits at Qiuwan 丘灣 (northwest Jiangsu) were oriented roughly 10 degrees to the right of north-south; so were the dog burials (Nanjing bowuyuan, "Jiangsu Tongshan Qiuwan gu yizhi de fajue 江蘇銅山丘灣古遺址的發掘," *Kaogu* 1973.2, 79). The same bias is revealed by 23 graves of Dasikong III date at Xiaqiyuan 下七垣 (southernmost Hebei) (Hebei sheng wenwu guanlichu, "Cixian Xiaqiyuan yizhi fajue baogao 磁縣下七垣遺址發掘報告," *Kaogu xuebao* 1979.2, 211).

nothing of the wealth and victims consumed in the subsequent ancestral sacrifices, was the early Chinese equivalent of planned obsolescence and conspicuous consumption.⁸¹ The sustained consumption of wealth by the ancestors was designed to bring blessings to the survivors and their dependents. The offering of sacrifices at the site of the royal tombs appears to have formed part of the ancestral cult.⁸²

The construction of royal graves—symbolizing the power of those who were ancestors and those who were about to be—was one of the major enterprises for which the Late Shang state mobilized its labor gangs with such formidable effectiveness. The great care accorded the dead from early Neolithic times onwards had reached its logical conclusion. As status distinctions among the living developed, so did those among the dead; and the highest status could only be symbolized by providing them with the most valued products of the Bronze-Age craftsmen. It is impossible to determine what percentage of the society's wealth was actually buried in this way, but there can be no doubt that it was significant. The jades and bronzes, alone, that were buried with the dead would have required considerable productive effort.⁸³

81 Such consumption cannot have failed to stimulate the productive powers of craftsmen and laborers even as it denied them the material rewards of their labors. This was trickle-down theory, theocratic style. For the economic stimulus arising from the regular burial of grave goods, see Colin Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilization: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium B.C.* (London: Methuen, 1972), 377-78.

82 E.g., Robert Bagley, "[Review of] *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* by Wu Hung," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 58.1 (1998), 240: "... the tombs of the Shang kings at Anyang ... supply clear evidence of large-scale rituals of sacrifice performed at the tomb, both at the time of burial and after. The enormous size, complex structure, and splendid furnishings of these tombs, along with the human sacrifices performed at intervals as they were filled, imply that a royal interment was a protracted ritual, and sacrificial offerings not connected with funerals were made repeatedly at the cemetery." Whether or not the Shang erected temples over particular tombs is in dispute (see n. 94 below).

83 For the labor-intensive and large-scale character of Shang bronze-casting, see Ursula Martius Franklin, "On Bronze and Other Metals in Early China," in *The Origins of Chinese Civilizations*, ed. David N. Keightley (Berkeley: University of

Jade *cong*, however, appear to have played a less significant mortuary role than they had done in Neolithic Liangzhu burials. The small number of jade *cong* found in Shang sites or graves is a little awkward, in fact, for those who believe that the *cong* had served as shamanistic regalia during the Neolithic and that the Shang kings were shamanic leaders. Their attractiveness to grave looters makes it difficult to determine the mortuary role of *cong* in Shang times,⁸⁴ but they do not seem to have functioned as they had done in the Neolithic. Jade *bi*, for example, were not placed on or around the corpse in Shang times, but appear to have been buried in the ramps of the large tombs, objects of sacrifice, perhaps, rather than serving apotropaically or as gender markers.⁸⁵ Of the 755 jades found in the un-rifled tomb M5 at Xiaotun 小屯 (the tomb of Fu Hao 婦好, one of Wu Ding's 武丁 consorts), there were three that can at best be described as *cong*-like and sixteen rather inelegant *bi*.⁸⁶ The other jades were mainly ornaments, beads, hairpins, statuettes of animals and people, and so on—objects, in short, that were not designed for the grave but had originally been enjoyed by the living. No *bi* or *cong* were found in M17 and 18, two other unlooted elite burials nearby.⁸⁷ It would appear that, by Late Shang,

California Press, 1983), 285-86; idem, "The Beginnings of Metallurgy in China: A Comparative Approach," in *The Great Bronze Age of China: A Symposium*, ed. George Kuwayama (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1983), 96-97; K.C. Chang, "The 'Meaning' of Shang Bronze Art," 12.

84 Elizabeth Lyons, "Chinese Jades: The Role of Jade in Ancient China: An Introduction to a Special Exhibition at the University Museum," *Expedition* 20.3 [1978], 20.

85 Shi Zhangru 石璋如, *Xiaotun di yiben: Yizhi de faxian yu fajue. Yibian: Jianzhu yicun* 小屯第一本: 遺址的發現與發掘. 乙編: 建築遺存 (Nangang, Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of History and Philology, 1959), 312. No *bi* or *cong* were found in Xibeigang 西北岡 tombs M1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1217, 1500, 1550, though these, of course, had all been looted.

86 Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Yinxu Fu Hao mu* 殷墟婦好墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1980), 114, 116, 118, Pls. 82-83, 85-88.

87 Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Anyang gongzuodui, "Anyang Xiaotun cun bei de liangzuo Yindai mu 安陽小屯村北的兩座殷代墓," *Kaogu xuebao* 1981.4, 491-518.

the mortuary role of the *cong* was no longer what it had been in the Neolithic.⁸⁸

3.1.1 *Communication with the Ancestral Dead*

The strategic importance of Late Shang divination is well-known. The diviners devoted considerable energy to the preparation and cracking of cattle scapulas and turtle plastrons. Divination validated the offering of the large sacrifices that channelled and consumed much wealth in the form of ale, grain, and animal and human victims. It legitimated the king's leadership and provided a form of ratification for policy choices made.⁸⁹ The institutionalization of divinatory practice greatly influenced the functioning of the Late Shang polity and the legacy it left to the Zhou.⁹⁰

The Shang oracle-bone inscriptions, furthermore, can tell us much about forms of religious mediation at the elite level. It seems likely, as I have indicated (p. 791 above), that the Shang diviners believed that the sound, shape, and speed of the stress cracks that they formed in the bones

88 K.C. Chang ("An Essay on *Cong*," 42) reaches similar conclusions: the "twin functions of communicating between heaven and earth and serving as a symbol of power" of the jade *cong* "had been superseded, if not replaced, by the Shang period, by the bronze vessels...," and its exterior was no longer decorated with animal designs."

89 David N. Keightley, "Legitimation in Shang China" (Conference on Legitimation of Chinese Imperial Regimes, 15-24 June 1975, Asilomar, California); idem, "The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture," *History of Religions* 17 (1978), 211-25; Ji Dewei 吉德煒 (David N. Keightley), "Zhongguo zhengshi zhi yuanyuan: Shang wang zhanbu shifou yiguan zhengchue? 中國正史之淵源: 商王占卜是否一貫正確?," *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 13 (1986), 117-28; idem, "Theology and the Writing of History: Truth and the Ancestors in the Wu Ding Divination Records," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology*, Inaugural issue (1998), in press.

90 Keightley, "The Religious Commitment," 220-24; idem, "Late Shang Divination: The Magico-Religious Legacy," in *Explorations in Early Chinese Cosmology*, ed. Henry Rosemont, Jr., *Journal of the American Academy of Religion Studies* 50.2 (1984), 11-34.

and shells by the application of heat were a message sent by the ancestors.⁹¹ That the ancestors played a role in the theology of Shang divination is indicated by inscriptions, notably those of the Li 歷 group diviners (of Periods I-II),⁹² which record that the cracking took place in the Great Temple (*da zong* 大宗) or in the Small Temple (*xiao zong* 小宗).⁹³ Li-group diviners also practiced their pyromancy in the temple of a ritual unit named after a particular *gan* 干 stem temple-name—*jia* 甲, *yi* 乙, *bing* 丙, *ding* 丁, and so on—as the following sequence of postfaces (in italics) on a scapula indicates (Fig. 3):⁹⁴

91 See also David N. Keightley, “In the Bone: Divination, Theology, and Political Culture in Late Shang China” (unpublished paper, Pre-Modern China Seminar, Fairbank Center, Harvard University, 17 October 1994).

92 For an introduction to the oracle-bone periods, see David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 92-94; Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Recent Approaches to Oracle-Bone Periodization,” *Early China* 8 (1982-83), 1-13. Li Xueqin 李學勤 and Peng Yushang 彭裕商 (*Yinxu jiagu fenqi yanjiu* 殷墟甲骨分期研究 [Shanghai: Guji, 1996]) provide a recent, comprehensive study of oracle-bone periodisation.

93 Guo Moruo 郭沫若, ed., Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, ed.-in-chief, *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 (N.p.: Zhonghua shuju, 1978-82; 13 vols.), no. 34047 (discussed below). I hereafter abbreviate this collection of oracle-bone inscriptions as *Heji*. For a review of this collection, and of *Tunnan* (n. 96 below), see David N. Keightley, “Sources of Shang History: Two Major Oracle-Bone Collections Published in the People’s Republic of China,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110.1 (1990), 39-59.

94 It is not easy to determine archaeologically the degree to which such temples functioned exclusively as religious structures. Shi Zhangru has proposed that the middle and southern group of buildings excavated at Xiaotun North were temples (see, e.g., Kwang-chih Chang, *Shang Civilization* [New Haven: Yale, 1980], 92-95); there is no doubt that sacrifices took place in this area of the site, but they were hardly restricted to it. Distinctions in the functional rôles of the various groups of buildings at Xiaotun probably involved intensity, not exclusiveness, of religious activity, and it was with such an understanding in mind that I proposed that the Late Shang kings lived, ruled, and prayed in what may best be referred to as “temple-palaces” (David N. Keightley, “Religion and the Rise of Urbanism,”

[1A] [甲寅貞: 其大禦王]自上甲用白豕九[下示凡牛:]在大甲宗卜

[On *jiayin*(?) (day 51?) divined: “(We) will perform a Great Exorcism (for the) king (to the ancestors) from Shang Jia (on down); will sacrifice-in-blood-covenant (with the spirits) (?) white male boars, nine of them; [(to the) Lower Ancestors will cut up (and offer the blood of) (?) a cow.]” *Cracked in the temple of Da Jia* (K3).⁹⁵

[1B] [乙]卯貞: 其大禦王自上甲用白豕九下示凡牛. 在祖乙宗卜

On *[yi] mao* (day 52?) divined: “(We) will perform a Great Exorcism for the king (to the ancestors) from Shang Jia (on down); will sacrifice-in-blood-covenant (with the spirits) (?) white male boars, nine of them; (to the) Lower Ancestors will cut up (and offer the blood of) (?) a cow.” *Cracked in the temple of Zu Yi* (K12). (*Tunnan* 2707)⁹⁶

Subsequent charges on this scapula were cracked in the temples of Da Yi (K1) and Father Ding (i.e., Wu Ding [K21]). The inscriptions on this and

Journal of the American Oriental Society 93.4 [1973], 532, n. 19). The view that the Shang had erected a temple over M5, the tomb of Fu Hao (e.g., *Yinxu Fu Hao mu*, 6; Zheng Zhenxiang, “The Royal Consort Fu Hao and Her Tomb,” in *Mysteries of Ancient China*, ed. Jessica Rawson [London: British Museum Press, 1996], 242-43), has been strongly challenged by Yang Baocheng 楊寶成 (“Yinmu xiangtang yixi 殷墓享堂疑析,” *Jiang Han kaogu* 江漢考古 1992.2, 16-23), who also provides a critical review of the claims made about other “tomb temples” at various Shang sites.

95 A notation like K3 indicates that the king in question was, according to the Late Shang ritual schedule recorded in the Period V oracle-bone inscriptions, the third king to succeed after Da Yi 大乙 (K1), the first king. In my translations of oracle-bone inscriptions, parentheses indicate that meaning is supplied; square brackets, in both the Chinese and the English text, indicate that a graph, thought to have been present in the original inscription, has been supplied.

96 *Tunnan* is an abbreviation for Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xiaotun nandi jiagu* 小屯南地甲骨 (Shanghai 1980, 1983, 2 Vols). For a review of this collection, see n. 93 above.

one other Li-group scapula (*Heji* 34047), probably divined over a thirty-day period (between *dinghai* [day 24] [?] and *dingsi* [day 54]), permit a number of observations that bear on the nature of religious communication in the Late Shang.

First, the temple in which the Li-group diviners conducted their pyromantic rituals was evidently determined not by the content of the divination charge but by the day of divination. Thus, one charge ([1A]) was cracked in the temple of Da Jia (K3) on a *jia* day, two charges ([1B] and another not translated here) were cracked in the temples of Zu Yi (K12) and Da Yi (K1) on an *yi* day, and two more were cracked in the temple of Father Ding (K21) on a *ding* day. Other examples of this linkage between the name of the day and the name of the temple can be found.⁹⁷

Second, over the four-day period from *jiayin* to *dingsi*, the unnamed diviner or his staff must have moved the *Tunnan* 2707 scapula three times,⁹⁸ from the temple of Da Jia, to the temple of Zu Yi, to the temple of Da Yi, to the temple of Father Ding; this particular bone would have been moved to the temple of the appropriate *gan* name as the week progressed from *gan*-day to *gan*-day and the diviners addressed one *gan*-named ancestor after another.⁹⁹ These inscriptions bring us particularly

97 E.g., the charges on *Tunnan* 3763 were cracked in a Ding temple on a *ding* day (day 34), in the temple of Da Wu (K7) on a *wu* day (day 35), and in the temple of Da Geng (K5) on a *geng* (day 37) day; *Tunnan* 3764 was cracked in the temple of Zu Ding (K15) on a *ding* day. The scapula fragment *Tunnan* 2742 is particularly instructive; the charge involved cult to Father Ji (Zu Ji 祖己, who did not become king) and Father Geng (Zu Geng, K22), but it was divined on a *ding* day and, evidently, in the Ding temple (Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, “Yinxu buci suo jian Shang wangshi zongmiao zhidu 殷墟卜辭所見商王室宗廟制度,” *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1990.6, 12, 17).

98 No inscription that records divination in a temple records the name of a diviner. The absence of the diviner's name was a characteristic feature of the Li-diviner group inscriptions in general (Lin Yun 林澐, “Jiagu duandai shangque 甲骨斷代商權,” in *Chutu wenxian yanjiu xuji* 出土文獻研究續集, ed. Guojia wenwuju guwenxian yanjiushi [Beijing: Wenwu, 1989], 54).

99 The scapula, *Tunnan* 3763 (paraphrased in n. 97), must have undergone the same kind of movement—between three different temples during a four-day period. Similarly the inscriptions on *Heji* 34047 indicate that that scapula would have been

close to the diviners' working habits over three thousand years ago.¹⁰⁰ Since no inscriptions record that divinations were performed in temples dedicated to ancestresses—an indication, perhaps, that the "divinees" were usually, if not always, male—we cannot extend these theological linkages to the royal consorts.¹⁰¹ Religious communication, in short, appears to have been mainly a male domain—not unexpectedly, given the patriarchal nature of the kinship and political structure.

This theological detail indicates that the liturgists at the royal Shang court had created a highly ordered situation in which sacrifices and announcements to the ancestors were divined according to a strictly controlled schedule and in strictly controlled places. It also suggests that divination and ritual and sacrifice, the major modes of Shang religious mediation for which there is documentation, were intimately related to the royal ancestors, being performed in their temples and according to a schedule determined by their names. There is no evidence that altered states of consciousness were involved. The good order of Shang divination and cult does not necessarily prevent our viewing it as shamanistic;¹⁰² the wilder aspects of Shang mediation may have left no textual or material remains. But if this were shamanism, it would have been, the evidence indicates, a

moved from the Great Temple (*da zong* 大宗) to the Small Temple (*xiao zong* 小宗), possibly over a three-day period (one of the day-dates is incomplete).

100 The movement between temples, synchronized to match the religious names of the days of the week, may even remind us of the king's seasonal movements in the *Mingtang* 明堂, as described in the "Yueling 月令" sections of *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (first twelve chapters), *Liji* 禮記 (chapter 4), and *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (chapter 5).

101 Consort temples did exist, but we have only two uninformative references to them: *Heji* 23372 and 23520, both from Period II.

102 "Ideally, the shaman does not slip in and out of [altered states of consciousness] unpredictably; his 'soul loss' is controlled and ritualized. What was once a spontaneous crisis is now a controlled ecstasy in which he has mastered the techniques and learned the parameters of celestial space" (Peters and Price-Williams, "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism," 405).

special, local form: routinized, scheduled, and bureaucratically organized and recorded.¹⁰³

3.1.2 *The Coming of the Ancestors*

Some evidence may also show that the king and his diviners conceived of the ancestral spirits as travelling to the Late Shang cult center to be “hosted” by the king (p. 808 below).¹⁰⁴ The following Period I inscriptions—whose translations are tentative—appear to indicate the king’s concern about the movements of his ancestors:

[2] 貞: 祖乙來

Divined: “Zu Yi (K12) is coming.”¹⁰⁵ (*Heji* 1647)

103 As Laurel Kendall has pointed out for modern Korea, family ancestors, treated in an orderly manner, were included in domestic shamanistic rituals (*Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits: Women in Korean Ritual Life* [Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985], 6, 20, 21, 144-63). The relevance of such ethnographic analogies to the understanding of Late Shang shamanism, however, is hard to assess, particularly since the ritual rôles of men and women in modern China and Korea are arranged very differently (*ibid.*, 172), and since in the Shang case we are dealing with religious mediation in a Bronze-Age dynastic court, as opposed to religious mediation in a modern Korean household. At best, such modern examples serve only to indicate possibilities; they cannot, in themselves, provide compelling explanatory models for the Shang.

104 For a more comprehensive analysis of the Shang word, *bin* 賓, which usually referred, in my view, to the king’s “hosting” or “entertaining” the spirits, see Keightley, “Royal Shamanism in the Shang,” 16-30.

105 I follow the reading given by Shima, *Inkyo bokui sôrui*, 200.4, for *Yibian* 5181, the original rubbing. For the abbreviations (here converted into pinyin) that I employ in citing collections of oracle-bone rubbings, see Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 229-31.

[3A] 今日來隹父[乙]

“(The one who) comes today will be Father [Yi] (Xiao Yi [K20], Wu Ding’s father).”

[3B] 今日來不隹父乙

“(The one who) comes today will not be Father Yi.” (*Heji* 7427 front)

— — — — —

[4] 隹兄丁來

“It is Elder Brother Ding who comes.”¹⁰⁶ (*Heji* 2895)

These examples provide reasons for thinking that the king did not journey to the ancestral realm, but that the ancestors journeyed to where the king was, thus suggesting some possible affinity with the “Southeast Asian” form of shamanism (p. 772 above) in which the spirits come to the worshipper.¹⁰⁷

It is also likely that at least some of these ritual “hostings” were conducted in the open air. The diviner, at least, was concerned that there be no rain at the time of the ritual:

[5] 乙亥卜何貞:賓唐斲不遘雨

Crack-making on *yihai* (day 12), He divined: “If (we) host Tang (= Da Yi [K1]) and perform the *zai* ritual, (we) will not encounter rain.” (*Heji* 27152)

The king, evidently, did not wish to get drenched during the ritual. The performance of such “hostings” in the open air would at least seem to be at odds with the darkened interior and seance-like trances usually involved in Siberian-style shamanism.¹⁰⁸

106 Elder Brother Ding was a deceased brother (real or classificatory) of Wu Ding; in Period II divinations he was referred to as “Father Ding.”

107 See too Bourguignon’s discussion of possession trance on p. 816 below, which finds that such possession is more likely to occur in societies with (like the Late Shang) higher levels of subsistence economy.

108 See, e.g., Waldemar Bogoras, *The Chukchee Religion* (Leiden: Brill; New York: Stechert), *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History* 11.2 (1907), 413: “The acts of real shamanism ... are for the most part performed in the sleeping-

3.1.3 Healing the Sick

Shamans are frequently thought to have the power to heal the sick; this was one of the skills of the Siberian prototype.¹⁰⁹ Chinese shamans in late traditional and modern times have been deeply involved in the diagnosis and treatment of sickness.¹¹⁰ The Bru shaman of the Vietnamese Highlands divines “in order to find out the reasons of the illness and the ways to ‘correct’ the fault that resulted in the sickness.”¹¹¹ The Hmong shaman is “a roving healer who goes from place to place wherever he is called by patients.”¹¹² Illness, in the world of the contemporary Korean shaman, is a sign of ancestral dissatisfaction and can be cured by appropriate ritual action.¹¹³ There is no need to multiply the examples.

When, in the reign of Wu Ding, Shang elites fell sick, diagnosis and prediction were intimately related to ancestral malevolence and ancestral sacrifice.¹¹⁴ Diagnosis involved a determination of the ancestral etiology. It was first necessary to determine if the ancestors were implicated at all, as in:

room, at night-time and in perfect darkness”; Mihály Hoppál, “Studies on Eurasian Shamanism,” in *Shamans and Cultures*, 276: “the dance of shamans is normally an improvisation invariably performed within an enclosed space, often in a cramped room (yurt).” Basilov (“Chosen by the Spirits,” 11-12, 17) makes similar points.

109 Hultkrantz, “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” 35-37.

See too Kitagawa, quoted on p. 771 above.

110 See, e.g., the scholarship cited by Laurel Kendall, “Supernatural Traffic: East Asian Shamanism,” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 5.2 (1981), 179-83.

111 Gabor Vargyas, “The Structure of Bru Shamanic Ceremonies,” in *Shamans and Cultures*, 126.

112 Jacques Lemoine, “The Diagnosis of Disease as a ‘Shamanic Equation’ among the Hmong of Laos and Thailand,” in *Shamans and Cultures*, 111.

113 Suk-jay Yim, Roger L. Janelli, and Dawn-hee Yim, “Toward a Political Economy of Korean Shamanism,” in *Shamans and Cultures*, 56.

114 See the corpus of divination charges about sick teeth, feet, eyes, noses, ears, and so on at Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan*, 1177.2-84.2.

[6A] 疾齒隹𠩺害

“The sick tooth is due to (ancestral) harm.”

[6B] 疾齒不隹𠩺害

“The sick tooth is not due to (ancestral) harm.” (*Heji* 13647f)

[7] 貞: 婦好𠩺疾隹𠩺害

Divined: “Fu Hao (a consort of Wu Ding) is sick; it means there is (ancestral) harm.” (*Heji* 13714f)

And, once ancestral involvement had been established, the diviners then turned to identifying the ancestor responsible, as in:

[8] 貞: 疾齒不隹父乙害

Divined: “There is a sick tooth; it is not Father Yi (= Xiao Yi 小乙 [K20], Wu Ding’s father) who is harming (it/him).” (*Heji* 13646f)

Once the divination had determined the etiology of the illness, the appropriate ritual remedy could be addressed to the ancestor involved. For example, a scenario recorded on the front and back of a set of five turtle plastrons concerns the king’s toothache. This led him to propose the following divination charges:

[9A] 貞: 𠩺犬于父庚卯羊

Divined: “(We) offer a dog to Father Geng (and) split open a sheep.”

[9B] 貞: 祝以之疾齒鼎龍

“If we pray by means of these (offerings), the sick tooth will certainly be cured.”¹¹⁵ (*Heji* 6482f)

115 On the reading of oracle-bone *long* 龍 as *chong* 獲, “grace, favor,” or *chou* 婴, “recover,” see the discussion at Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 80, n. 89. For the argument that oracle-bone *ding* 鼎 should be read, in such contexts, as *ding* 定, “certainly, surely,” see K. Takashima, “Settling the Cauldron in the Right Place: A Study of *Ting* 鼎 in the Bone Inscriptions,” in *Wang Li xiansheng*

On the back of the same five plastrons in the set, the Shang recorded a series of diagnostic “subcharges” of the form:

[9C] 隹父甲

“(The toothache) is due to Father Jia.”

[9D] [不隹父]甲

“[(The toothache) is not due to Father] Jia.”

[9E] 隹[父庚]

“(The toothache) is due to [Father Geng].”

[9F] 不隹父庚

“(The toothache) is not due to Father Geng.” (*Heji* 6482b)

Several points may be noted. First, the routine and repetitious effort involved in this diagnosis was considerable. The diviner made some seventy pyromantic cracks to discover the ancestor responsible for the toothache (starting with [9C-F]). When, as seems likely, he had identified Father Geng (i.e., Pan Geng 盤庚 [K18], Wu Ding’s uncle) as the source of the dental pain, he devoted some twenty additional crackings to discovering if sacrifice to Father Geng would obtain results ([9AB]).¹¹⁶ Diagnosis and prescription was evidently a fairly time-consuming process and it involved the use of ritualists, like the diviners and the engravers, who acted in the interest of the sick king.

One should also note the way in which the diagnosis was tied to the genealogical order of the ancestors. The four pairs of positive-negative subcharges that specified Father Jia, Father Geng, Father Xin, and Father Yi as the possible source of the toothache, were divined in the order in which the four kings involved—Sima Qian’s Yang Jia 陽甲 (K17; [9CD]),

jinian lunwenji 王力先生紀念論文集 (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1987), 407-08 and *passim*.

¹¹⁶ For a full analysis of the inscriptions on this plastron set (discussed as *Bingbian* 12-21) and the cracks associated with the various charges, see Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 76-90.

Pan Geng 盤庚 (K18; [9EF]), Xiao Xin (K19) 小辛, and Xiao Yi (K20) 小乙—had come to the kingship and the order in which they received cult. Good medical diagnosis, in short, followed ritual order. There was no opportunity for shamanic inspiration here. One may also note that, as in the case of all the Shang kings' divinations, it was evidently important that a permanent record of the ritual be carved into the bone.

Given the important role that curing—and also divination¹¹⁷—play in the activities of shamans, there are elements here that suggest the Shang king, as diagnostician and healer, may indeed have been acting as a shaman. But just as one would use "shaman" of a doctor in a modern Health Maintenance Organization only in the most superficial way, so would the use of the term for the Shang king be unsatisfactory. The well-ordered, bureaucratic nature of the diagnosis and its record do not share the inspirational and generally non-literate activities of shamans in other cultures.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the king—whether divining about his own illness (as was usually the case) or those of others—was able to make his diagnosis *sur place*; he took no voyage to another realm. His diviners cracked the bones, he read the cracks, he offered his sacrifices, all in a process of quasi-bureaucratic divination that took place in his cult center at Xiaotun. This is in striking contrast to the situation among the Hmong in Southeast Asia, where the shaman's function as curer involves a "journey in the Beyond," in order to find the soul that is in trouble and determine the jurisdiction in which it lies.¹¹⁹ As with the *bin*, "hosting," ritual (see n. 104 above and [10A-D], [11A-I] below), the Shang king did not need to travel in this shamanic way. The orderly rituals of divination and sacrifice all obviated the need for such spiritual journeys. Shang curing, in fact, provides excellent support for the observation that one activity does not a shaman make. The nature of the activity, such as curing or divination, has to be considered in detail; and the activity itself has to be situated within the larger cultural context. Various types of religious mediators will embody

117 For the shaman as diviner, see, e.g., Hultkrantz, "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism," 37, 42-43, and the articles he cites at p. 37, n. 45; Vargyas, "The Structure of Bru Shamanic Ceremonies," 123 ("Constant divination is perhaps the most characteristic feature of Bru shamanism").

118 On the tendency of shamans to avoid writing, see n. 167 below.

119 Lemoine, "The Diagnosis of Disease as a 'Shamanic Equation,'" 115.

shamanic characteristics in varying degrees; and there is no doubt that shamans in various cultures engage in mediation with the ancestors.¹²⁰ But it is the nature of the mediation, of the engagement, that has to be examined in each case.

3.1.4 *The Five-Ritual Cycle and the “Hosting” Ritual*

The cycle of five-rituals that comprised the scheduled ancestral cult as it emerged in the divinations of the Chu 出 diviner group (Period II) further reveals the bureaucratic nature of Shang religious mediation.¹²¹ A typical series of inscriptions reads as follows:

120 For shamanic involvement with ancestors, see, e.g., Hultkrantz, “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” 40; Peters and Price-Williams, “Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism,” 404 (for Nepal); Kendall, *Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits*, 6, 20, 144-63; Suk-jay Yim et al., “Toward a Political Economy of Korean Shamanism,” 56, 57.

121 The five rituals of the liturgical cycle, performed in sequence to the individual ancestors, were *yi* 翌 (or *yi ri* 翌日), *ji* 祭, *zai* 獗 (or 壽), *xie* 翳 (or *xie ri* 翳日), and *yong* 彤 (or *yong ri* 彤日). For an introduction to the cycle, see, e.g., Itō Michiharu, “Part One: Religion and Society,” in *Studies in Early Chinese Civilization: Religion, Society, Language, and Palaeography*, eds., Itō Michiharu and Ken-ichi Takashima (Hirakata: Kansai Gaidai University Press, 1996), vol. 1, 92-95, 142. The relevant inscriptions are listed at Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan*, 706.1-2, 1288.2-90.2, 265.1-66.2. See too the discussion of the *yi ri* ritual at Chang Yuzhi 常玉芝, *Shangdai zhouji zhidu* 商代周祭制度 (N.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan, 1987), 20-21. I adopt the order of the rituals given by Xu Jinxiang 許進雄, *Yin buci zhong wuzhong jisi de yanjiu* 殷卜辭中五種祭祀的研究 (Taibei: Guoli Taiwan daxue wenxueyuan, Wenshi congkan zhi ershi liu, 1968) and by Chang Yuzhi.

[10A] 癸酉卜王貞:翌甲戌王其賓大甲齋亡害

Crack-making on *guiyou* (day 10), the king divined: “On the next day, *jiaxu* (day 11), the king will host Da Jia (K3) and perform the *zai* ritual; there will be no (ancestral) harm.”¹²²

[10B] 丁亥卜王貞:翌戊子王其賓大戊齋亡害

Crack-making on *dinghai* (day 24), the king divined: “On the next day, *wuzi* (day 25), the king will host Da Wu (K7) and perform the *zai* ritual; there will be no (ancestral) harm.”

[10C] 甲辰卜王貞:翌乙巳王其賓祖乙齋亡害

Crack-making on *jiachen* (day 41), the king divined: “On the next day, *yisi* (day 42), the king will host Zu Yi (K12) and perform the *zai* ritual; there will be no (ancestral) harm.”

[10D] [庚戌卜]王[貞]:翌辛亥王其賓祖辛齋亡害

[Crack-making on *gengxu* (day 47),] the king [divined]: “On the next day, *xinhai* (day 48), the king will host Zu Xin (K13) and perform the *zai* ritual; there will be no (ancestral) harm.” (*Heji* 22779)

It should be noted that in cases like this, the hosting ritual was initially divined one day in advance, for Da Jia on the preceding *gui* day (as in [10A]), for Da Wu on the preceding *ding* day (as in [10B]), and so on. Once again, there is evidence of a schedule, planned in advance and rigorously adhered to.

The *bin* hosting ritual seen in [10A-D] came to figure prominently in the systematic cult instituted by Zu Jia (K23, Period II; see too n. 148 below). For example, a typical series of inscriptions, zigzagging up a large fragment of plastron, records a sequence of such hostings, from the twelfth moon at the end of one year [11A] to the third moon in the next year [11I], covering a span of nine main-line ancestors (those kings who were both the

122 The *zai* ritual was one of the five major rituals; it is thought to have involved the offering of food; see, e.g., Dong Zuobin 董作賓, *Yinli pu* 殷曆譜 (Lizhuang, Sichuan: Guoli zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhuankan, 1945), I:3, 14b-15b, and other entries cited at Matsumaru and Takashima, *Kōkotsumoji jishaku sōran*, nos. 3904, 3905.

sons and fathers of kings) over eleven generations, starting with Da Yi in [11A] and ending with Father Ding (= Wu Ding) in [11I]:

[11A] 乙巳卜尹貞: 王賓大乙彤亡尤. 在十二月

Crack-making on *yisi* (day 42), Yin divined: “The king will host Da Yi (K1) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no fault.” In the twelfth moon.

[11B] 丁未卜尹貞: 王賓大丁彤亡尤

Crack-making on *dingwei* (day 44), Yin divined: “The king will host Da Ding (K2) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no fault.”

[11C] 甲寅卜尹貞: 王賓大甲彤亡尤

Crack-making on *jiayin* (day 51), Yin divined: “The king will host Da Jia (K3) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no fault.”

[11D] 庚申卜尹貞: 王賓大庚(彤)亡尤

Crack-making on *gengshen* (day 57), Yin divined: “The king will host Da Geng (K5) (and perform the *yong* ritual); there will be no fault.”

[11E] 丁丑卜尹貞: 王賓仲丁彤亡尤

Crack-making on *dingchou* (day 14), Yin divined: “The king will host Zhong Ding (K9) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no fault.”

[11F] 乙酉卜尹貞: 王賓祖乙彤亡[尤]

Crack-making on *yiyou* (day 22), Yin divined: “The king will host Zu Yi (K12) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no [fault].”

[11G] 辛卯卜尹貞: 王賓祖辛彤亡[尤]

Crack-making on *xin]mao* (day 28): Yin [divined]: “The king will host Zu Xin (K13) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no [fault].”

[11H] 丁酉卜尹貞: 王賓祖丁彤亡尤. 在二月

Crack-making on *dingyou* (day 34) Yin divined: “The king will host Zu Ding (K15) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no fault.” In the second moon.

[11I] 丁巳卜尹貞: 王賓父丁彫亡[尤]. 在三月

Divined on *dingsi* (day 54), Yin divined: “The king will host Father Ding (K21) and perform the *yong* ritual; there will be no [fault].” In the third moon. (*Heji* 22723)

These Period II divinations about the hosting ritual took place, together with the cult itself, on the *gan* day of the ancestor with the corresponding temple name. Thus [11A] was divined on an *yi*-day about offering cult to Day Yi, [11B] was divined on a *ding*-day about offering cult to Da Ding, and so on. With few exceptions,¹²³ this orderly “same day” pattern is the standard one that the liturgists observed for the five-ritual “hosting” schedule during the reigns of at least the last two Shang kings, Di Yi 帝乙 (K28) and Di Xin 帝辛 (K29).

Religious time, in fact, had become so firmly structured that the schedule of sacrifices also served as a calendar in more secular records. This is revealed by their use on Late Shang bronze inscriptions, as in the date that ended the inscription on the “Brundage Rhinoceros,” the first part of which records a royal donation of cowries:

[12] ... 隹王來征人方. 隹王十祀又五彫日

... It was when the king returned from marching to regulate the Renfang; it was the king's fifteenth ritual cycle, (the time of) the *yong*-day rituals.¹²⁴ (“Xiao Chen Yu zun 小臣艅尊”)¹²⁵

Once again, one does not sense that such ancestral rituals, able to serve a calendrical function, shared the spontaneous, unscheduled inspiration that

123 For one exception, see *Fuyin* “Di” 66 (= *Xubian* 1.19.1) + *Fuyin* “Di” 174, discussed by Chang Yuzhi, *Shangdai zhouji zhidu*, 46, 49, n.

124 I translate “*yong*-day rituals” in the plural because no ancestral recipient is indicated in the date; I assume, therefore, that the reference was to the entire period of eleven ten-day weeks involved in the cycle of *yong* rituals addressed to the Shang ancestors in their sequence; for the length of the *yong* ritual cycle, see Chang Yuzhi, *Shangdai zhouji zhidu*, 170-75.

125 Shirakawa Shizuka 白川靜, *Kimbun tsūshaku* 金文通釋 (Kobe: Hakatsuru bijutsukan, 1964), vol. 8, 411; Akatsuka Kiyoshi, *Chūgoku kodai no shūkyō to bunka*, 671.

one associates with the shamanistic practices described at the start of this article.

It is also important to note that the king might, on occasion, host a number of ancestors jointly, as in:

[13] 乙酉卜行貞: 王賓歲自祖乙至于父丁亡尤

Crack-making on *yiyou* (day 22), Xing divined: “The king hosts and chops (a victim) to death (for the ancestors) from Zu Yi (K12) down to Father Ding (K22); there will be no fault.” (*Heji* 22899)

In this case, the “hosting” evidently involved the five main-line kings, Zu Yi 祖乙 (K12), Zu Xin 祖辛 (K13), Zu Ding 祖丁 (K15), Xiao Yi 小乙 (K20), and Wu Ding 武丁 (K21). In another, later, case (*Heji* 35803), the king specified another group of five main-line kings whom he would host jointly: Xiao Yi (K20), Wu Ding (K21), Zu Jia 祖甲 (K23), Kang Ding 康丁 (K25), and Wu Yi 武乙 (K26).¹²⁶ It is unlikely that he contemplated being possessed by all five of them at once, more likely that he conceived of offering a joint or sequential ritual hosting, but without any ecstatic communion or commingling within his single body. Such joint “hostings,” accordingly, further suggest that the *bin* “hosting” ritual did not involve any form of spirit possession. That the king never danced or drummed while hosting the ancestors in the five-ritual cycle,¹²⁷ and that alcohol was rarely involved in the offerings,¹²⁸ provides further reasons for thinking that the hosting was non-shamanic, non-ecstatic, in nature.

126 For the identity of the kings recorded on this Period V plastron fragment, see Chang Yuzhi, *Shangdai zhouji zhidu*, 331.

127 See the “dance” and “drum” inscriptions at Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan*, 97.2-100.1, 1073.1-2.

128 Of the ca. 150 charges that recorded the word *chang* 邑 (n. 70 above), only five involved the *bin* “hosting” ritual (four on *Heji* 35355, and one on *Heji* 30572 [fragmentary]). These four instances, furthermore, are late in date, suggesting that offerings of millet ale in the “hostings” were only beginning to be divined towards the end of the dynasty. And even in these cases, it is evident that the offering was scheduled for the right day (to a Ding ancestor on a *ding* day), and that the ale was the last among the offerings listed, as in *Heji* 35355: 丁酉卜貞: 王賓文武丁伐十人卯六牢鬯六卣亡尤, “Crack-making on *dingyou* (day 34), divined: ‘The

In short, I would conclude that there is no reason to view the important “hosting” ritual of the Late Shang kings as shamanistic. It was, I believe, a non-ecstatic, social and familial ritual for receiving guests, entirely congruent with the social and familial emphases we have already observed in the mortuary cult of the Neolithic dead, emphases that we can observe in other areas of early Chinese elite culture. The Shang king was the communicator with the hierarchy of the dead; he attracted them to his cult center, in sequence, with rigorously scheduled sacrifices and hosted them with ordered groups of rituals; he communicated with them through the highly formalized techniques of pyromantic divination; he commissioned inscriptions, carved into the divination bones, that recorded the whole procedure in detail. Orderly divination, the hosting of guests (whether alive or dead), sacrifice—these were the ways of civilized men, of men dealing, not with the wild and the unknown, not with ecstatic inspiration or trance, but, through ritual and schedule, with their own kin.¹²⁹

That the animal victims offered by the Shang kings to their ancestors were mainly domesticated also supports these conclusions.¹³⁰ Since early shamanism is usually found in hunting societies,¹³¹ the lack of sacrificial victims taken in the hunt provides further grounds for thinking that the Shang sacrifices were not closely related to shamanism.

Finally, I would note that the “plain Chinese” in which the divination inscriptions were written, does not suggest the ecstatic possession, the talking in tongues, the loss of consciousness, or the trance voyages that

king hosts Wen Wu Ding (K27), dismembers ten men, splits open six penned sheep, (and offers) six *you*-containers of millet ale; there will be no fault.’”

129 Cf. the judgment of Shirokogoroff (*The Psycho-Mental Complex of the Tungus*, 272): “It should be noted that in some cases the complex of methods may turn into a rigid system of ritual which is not a typical aspect of shamanism, but one of the visible signs of decline.”

130 Magnus Fiskesjö, “The Royal Hunt of the Shang Dynasty: Archaeological and Anthropological Perspectives” (M.A. diss., University of Chicago, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, 1994), 76, 78-85, 150-51.

131 Hultkrantz, “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” 39, 46, 51-52; Roberte N. Hamayon, “Shamanism and Pragmatism in Siberia,” in *Shamans and Cultures*, 201, 204.

anthropologists have generally associated with the shamanic experience.¹³² The Shang kings may have been heirs to Neolithic and early Bronze-Age traditions of religious communication that were less structured and more given to inspiration. By Late Shang, however, the elites had so routinized and ordered their mediations with the Powers that, whatever qualities of shamanic trance and inspiration were still present in their ceremonies, those mediations would have been operating within a structured political and religious context. This does not preclude the existence of shamanism at the Shang court, but it does throw more light on its putative quality and on the constraints within which the shamans, if present, would have had to operate.¹³³

132 See, e.g., Basilov, “Chosen by the Spirits,” 3, 10; see too n. 29 above. That some spirit mediums in early China availed themselves of plain speech is confirmed by Sima Qian’s account of a *wu* who, in 118 B.C., communicated the messages of his or her Spirit Lord (*shenjun* 神君) to Han Wu Di. “There was nothing the least bit extraordinary about the words of the deity, which were the sort of thing that anyone at all could say” (其所語世俗之所知也, 無絕殊者) (Burton Watson, tr., *Records of the Grand Historian of China: Translated from the Shi chi of Ssuma Ch’ien* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1961], vol. 2, 43; Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959-1972], “Fengshan shu 封禪書,” 1388-89).

133 There is no doubt that shamans or spirit mediums served in various dynastic courts throughout Chinese history, but “To the extent *wu* practitioners survived at court, they tended to be involved with the private rather than public life of the emperor and often with the distaff side of the imperial family” (Kenneth J. Dewoskin, *Doctors, Diviners and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1983], 7; he provides references to the *Shiji*, “Fengshan shu,” accounts of *wu* employed at the Han court). For the Zhou or Han, see too von Falkenhausen, “Reflections on the Political Role of Spirit Mediums in Early China.” For the Later Han, “The director of sacrifices (*cisi ling* [祠祀令]), who was a eunuch, was in charge of lesser sacrifices within the palace, and headed a staff which included house-hold shamans (*jiawu* [家巫]).” (Hans Bielenstein, “The Institutions of Later Han,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 1: The Ch’in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.C. 220*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 500 [here converted to pinyin romanization]). For the early Qing court, where the activities

4. Final Considerations

Shamanism, as several scholars have noted, involves a whole complex of related ideas and practices.¹³⁴ A great deal more evidence, accordingly, merits examination: the archaeological evidence for shamanistic regalia; the iconography on the bronzes;¹³⁵ the role of metamorphosis;¹³⁶ the role of drumming and dancing; use of meditation, fasting, drugs, alcohol, or other consciousness-altering methods; the mythological evidence; and the general sociology of shamanism and its applicability to the Shang case.

4.1 The Sociology of Shamanism

This last point deserves further comment. As already noted,

shamanism is deeply anchored in the old hunting cultures with their individualism, animal-spirit beliefs and hunting symbolism. In one or another form the shamanistic practices occur in all recent marginal hunting cultures, and particularly there; shamanism is less well adapted to the cultures of the agricul-

of the shamans were influenced by Buddhist and Taoist practices, see Jiang Xiangshun 姜相順, “Qing chu gongting de saman jisi 清初宮庭的薩滿祭祀,” *Beifang wenwu* 北方文物 1988.2, 72-75. In each case it is necessary to assess the political and social importance of the shamans’ activities.

134 E.g., Hultkrantz, “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” 29. See too n. 34 above.

135 See, e.g., Ladislav Kesner, “The *Taotie* Reconsidered: Meanings and Functions of Shang Theriomorphic Imagery,” in *Artibus Asiae* 51.1-2 (1991), 29-53; the articles by Sarah Allan, Robert Bagley, Li Xueqin, Jessica Rawson, and Wang Tao in *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes*, ed. Roderick Whitfield (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 1993); Wang Zhengshu 王正書, “Jiagu ‘X’ zi bushi”; Paper, *The Spirits are Drunk*, 63-83. See too the last half of n. 168 below.

136 See, e.g., Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, “The Ghost Head Mask and Metamorphic Shang Imagery.”

turalist and cultures with a higher level of technological and social complexity.¹³⁷

The rise of agrarian cultures, accordingly, like that of the Late Shang, has been associated with a reduction of the role played by shamans at the state level, or by its reorientation. Erika Bourguignon, in her study of altered states of consciousness, furthermore, has classified such altered states into two main types: “trance,” which generally involves “sending one’s soul on a spirit voyage or ‘trip,’” and “possession trance,” in which “the spirits come to visit.”¹³⁸ Her studies of the relationship between social and economic complexity, on the one hand, and trance type, on the other, have shown that “the greater the societal complexity and the higher the level of subsistence economy, the more likely the society was to have PT [possession trance] rather than T [trance]”; possession trance—which is generally “induced by drumming, singing, dancing, crowd contagion, or more rarely by drugs”—is “more likely to be found in societies with heavy dependence on agriculture and food production, as opposed to hunting, gathering, and fishing.”¹³⁹ Given the agricultural and hierarchically-ordered nature of Shang society, it would follow that the *bin* “hosting”

137 Hultkrantz, “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” 51-52.

See too p. 46: “shamanism is above all a phenomenon of simpler societies.”

138 See too Kitagawa’s distinction (p. 771 above) between shamans who travel to the otherworld and those who are possessed by gods or spirits, or the distinctions proposed by Peters and Price-Williams between possession trance and magical flight (n. 27 above).

139 Erika Bourguignon, *Psychological Anthropology: An Introduction to Human Nature and Cultural Differences* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), 245, 250-51, 257, 260, 261. The distinction between trance and possession need not be absolute. Hultkrantz (“Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” 47-48), for example, concludes that it is possible to detect the presence of possession among Siberian peoples. And researchers in Korea have concluded that “Practically speaking, possession and trance frequently intermingle in the course of ‘divine disease,’ even though the two phenomena are distinct” (Kim Kwang-iel and Tae-gon Kim, “Deities and Altered States of Consciousness of Korean Shamans,” 48). But such counter-examples merely qualify, without invalidating, the distinction’s analytical usefulness.

ritual (see n. 104 above and [10A-D], [11A-I]), if it had involved an altered state of consciousness at all (for which I see no clear Shang evidence), would have been likely to involve possession trance. Bourguignon's related conclusion, however, that "possession trance appears to be a typically female phenomenon,"¹⁴⁰ suggests—in view of the conclusion (p. 801 above) that Shang religious communication, as recorded in contemporary texts, was primarily conducted through ancestors rather than ancestresses—that the Shang kings, in their role as religious mediators, may not have practiced possession trance at all.

My initial survey of the evidence suggests, in short, that—using the definitions and distinctions surveyed at the start of this article, and aware of the ways in which they may represent ideal types rather than actual realities—the Late Shang kings were not shamans. Or, because—as Hultkrantz has pointed out—there can be varying degrees of trance, from light to deep, and varying degrees of possession, from total to partial¹⁴¹—one could conclude that the Shang kings were, at best, "light" or "small" shamans, whose involvement in the full shamanic experience was much reduced from what it might once have been at an earlier stage of societal development. I see the Shang theocrats as bureaucratic mediators, serving the dynastic community, who had so routinized and disciplined older forms of religious mediation that only the civilized trappings of what may once have been a familialistic shamanism, which had long lost its qualities of

140 Bourguignon, *Psychological Anthropology*, 258. See too Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," 317: "Male practitioners predominate in the traditions to which Eliade assigns the label shamanism," i.e., shamanism defined in terms of "magical flight" rather than "possession"—"whereas women are conspicuously present in traditions relying on possession." Both Bourguignon (pp. 258, 259, 261) and B.C.A. Walraven ("Confucians and Shamans," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 6 [1991-1992], 25) note the degree to which trance possession and shamanism was practiced by women who lacked formal power and who, due to kinship structures and marriage practices were "exposed to the threats of an alien social environment." Kendall (*Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits*, 23-25), on the basis of her studies of domestic, household shamanism in contemporary South Korea, has challenged this thesis, but it may still be valid for the politics of a dynastic state.

141 Hultkrantz, "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism," 41-45. See too n. 28 above.

trance and inspiration, remained, had they indeed ever been present. The Shang kings, to employ the social-anthropological distinction introduced earlier (p. 769) were more likely to have been priest-kings than shaman-kings, or—if one acknowledges that the distinction itself is by no means absolute—would have been more priest-like than shaman-like in their religious mediations.¹⁴² This would have been particularly true where the cult of the ancestors—rigidly scheduled, formalized, and addressed to impersonalized ancestors who had been identified and constrained by their temple names—was concerned. As Victor Turner has written,

Shamanistic rites are “noncalendrical,” or contingent upon occasions of mishap and illness. The priest and priestly cult organization are characteristically found in the more structurally elaborated food-producing—usually agricultural—societies, where the more common ceremonial is a public rite performed for the benefit of a whole village or community. Such rites are often calendrical, or performed at critical points in the ecological cycle.¹⁴³

142 Von Falkenhausen notes that, in the *Zhouli* 周禮, the Spirit Mediums (Wu 巫) were under the direction of the Manager of the Spirit Mediums (Siwu 司巫) in the division of the Invocators (Zhu 祝), and that “The compilers of the *Zhou li* clearly thought that the activities of Spirit Mediums are not easily reconciled with the ordinary business of bureaucratic administration”; he concludes that the mediums and invocators divided their functions, with the invocator-priests being responsible for the administration of the ritual sequence, while the Spirit Mediums were those who “served on behalf of the spirits” in direct communication with the deities (“Reflections on the Political rôle of Spirit Mediums,” 283, 288, 293, 296, 298). Noting that “the basic structure of ritual communication apparently taken for granted by the *Zhou li* authors may have been established long before their time,” he asks: “If Shang ritual was indeed characterized by a division of labor between invocator-priests and the spirit mediums/impersonators similar to what seems to have prevailed in Zhou times, did the rôle of the Shang king more resemble that of the priests or that of the representatives of the spirits in Zhou ritual?” (p. 300). I have little doubt, on the basis of the evidence presented in this article, that the Shang king’s religious activities were primarily priestly rather than mediumistic or shamanic.

143 Turner, “Religious Specialists,” 439.

The Shang kings, in this view, would have been priests rather than shamans. And when, as was evidently the case in Yi dynasty Korea (1392-1910), the *mudang* (shaman) called down the ghost of an ancestor who had died only three or seven days previously, and who then possessed the *mudang* and used her as a medium, that qualifies as shamanism.¹⁴⁴ It was personal, impromptu. But when the religious practitioner, as was done in the Shang, hosted the spirit of a long dead ancestor, offering five different kinds of cult according to a strict ritual schedule, month after month, year after year, planning the rituals in advance, he was not a shaman. He was a priest.

Because the nature of the Shang ancestors is central to the nature of Shang religious mediation, it is necessary at this point to distinguish between a cult of the dead and a cult of the ancestors. Meyer Fortes has made the point that the ancient Greeks "appear to have had elaborate cults concerned with beliefs about ghosts and shades, but no true ancestor cult." Ancestor worship, in his view, should be regarded as "a representation or extension of the authority component in the jural relations of successive generations; it is not a duplication, in a supernatural idiom, of the total complex" of kin or other relationships.¹⁴⁵

Ancestor worship, in this view, does not merely involve belief in the dead; it involves belief about the dead who are conceived in a certain way. It does not involve the perceptual commemoration of the total personality of the deceased; it involves an appeal to certain powers that the deceased is conceived as possessing."¹⁴⁶

The argument is not that shamans do not mediate between the living and what one might call "the spontaneous dead;" there is much evidence from

144 Walraven ("Confucians and Shamans," 21-22).

145 Meyer Fortes, "Some Reflections on Ancestor Worship in Africa," in *African Systems of Thought*, eds, M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 125, 133.

146 David N. Keightley, "Clean Hands and Shining Helmets: Heroic Action in Early Chinese and Greek Culture," in *Religion and Authority*, ed. Tobin Siebers (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 43.

many cultures that they do.¹⁴⁷ The argument, rather, is that shamans in emerging Bronze-Age states do not mediate between the living and the ordered dead who have been transformed into the kind of ancestors—impersonalized, hierarchical, assigned to jurisdictions—that the Shang had created for themselves.

There is little doubt that the Shang king and his diviners shared many of the individual assumptions and concerns that have frequently been attributed to shamans in general, such as a belief in the existence of Powers and spirits, in the efficacy of propitiation and entreaty addressed to the dead, in the power of ritual to influence the weather and to effect cures, in the existence of lucky and unlucky days, in the ability to foretell the future, and so on. It is entirely plausible that the more regularized ritual practices—introduced during the reign of Zu Jia (Period IIb) and accepted as standard by the end of the dynasty—which are referred to by modern scholars, starting with Dong Zuobin 董作賓, as the reforms of the “New School” ritualists,¹⁴⁸ represent a rejection or elite systematization of the older, more ad hoc practices of the “Old School” ritualists and their precursors. Those older practices, exemplifying the link between trance and social structure proposed by Bourguignon, may well have derived from shamanistic practices that had flourished at an earlier, pre-agrarian, hunter-gatherer stage of social development.¹⁴⁹ I believe that,

147 E.g., Basilov, “Chosen By the Spirits,” 10, 14.

148 For an introduction to these changes in ritual practice, see, e.g., Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 122, 177-82; Keightley, “Shang Divination and Metaphysics,” *Philosophy East and West* 38.4 (1988), 379-83. See too the discussion of “The Five-Ritual Cycle” on p. 808 above. For the firm links that these “reforms” established between the ancestor’s temple-name and the day upon which the ancestor received cult, see, e.g., [10A-D], [11A-I], above.

149 Walraven (“Confucians and Shamans,” 21-44) provides an excellent account of the way in which the more austere, disciplined, and hierarchical Confucian rituals of Yi dynasty Korea came to displace the more flamboyant, irregular, and “improper” practices of shamans, even though both Confucians and shamans shared many assumptions about religious action. I believe that a similar displacement took place during the Late Shang, and had probably been taking place ever since the founding of the dynasty. The issue was not simply what the mediator did; it was how he did it.

where the Shang were concerned, I.M. Lewis was correct in concluding that “the more strongly-based and entrenched religious authority becomes, the more hostile it is toward haphazard inspiration.”¹⁵⁰

4.2 Later Evidence

Scholars who have argued for the importance of shamanism in early China have set great store on myths that deal with the “severance of heaven-earth communication.” They cite, in particular, a passage in the “Chu yu, xia 楚語, 下” section of *Guoyu 國語*, which was probably compiled in the 5th or 4th centuries B.C.¹⁵¹ In Derk Bodde’s paraphrase the passage reads as follows:

Anciently, men and spirits did not intermingle. At that time there were certain persons who were so perspicacious, single-minded, and reverential that their understanding enabled them to make meaningful collation of what lies above and below, and their insight to illumine what is distant and profound. Therefore the spirits would descend into them. The possessors of such powers were, if men, called *xi* [覩] (shamans), and, if women, *wu* [巫] (shamanesses). It is they who supervised the positions of the spirits at the ceremonies, sacrificed to them, and otherwise handled religious matters. As a consequence, the spheres of the divine and the profane were kept distinct. The spirits sent down blessings on the people, and accepted from them their offerings. There were no natural calamities.

150 I.M. Lewis, “What is a Shaman?,” *Folk* 23 (1981), 34 (cited by Atkinson, “Shamanisms Today,” 315). As Atkinson concludes, “With increasing social complexity and the emergence of the state with monarchies and priestly hierarchies, shamans were ‘pushed ever further from the stage of social existence into the dark corners of daily life’” (she is quoting Basilov, “Chosen by the Spirits,” 34).

151 An abbreviated version of the passage, with large sections of the earlier text deleted, can also be found at the start of the *Hanshu* monograph on sacrifices, “Jiaosi zhi 郊祀志” (*Hanshu* [Beijing: Zhonghua] 1973], 25A, 1189-90); for discussion of this passage, see Jean Lévi, *Les fonctionnaires divins: Politique, despotisme et mystique en Chine ancienne* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), 220-23.

In the degenerate time of Shao Hao (trad. xxvi cent. B.C.), however, the Nine Li (a troublesome tribe like the Miao) threw virtue into disorder. Men and spirits became intermingled, with each household indiscriminately performing for itself the religious observances which had hitherto been conducted by the shamans. As a consequence, men lost their reverence for the spirits, the spirits violated the rules of men, and natural calamities arose. Hence the successor of Shao Hao, Zhuan Xu, charged Chong, Governor of the South, to handle the affairs of Heaven in order to determine the proper place of the spirits, and Li, Governor of Fire, to handle the affairs of Earth in order to determine the proper places of men. And such is what is meant by ‘cutting the communication between Heaven and Earth.’¹⁵²

The degree to which a text that was composed some eight centuries or more after the periods surveyed above can throw useful light on the Neolithic or Shang situation is, of course, problematic. Kwang-chih Chang, however, has referred to this passage as “the most important textual reference to shamanism in ancient China” that

provides the crucial clue to understanding the central role of shamanism in ancient Chinese politics. Heaven is where all the wisdom of human affairs lies.... Access to that wisdom was, of course, requisite for political authority. In the past, *everybody* had had that access through the shamans. Since heaven had been severed from earth, only those who controlled that access had the wisdom—hence the authority—to rule. Shamans, therefore, were a crucial part of every state court; in fact, scholars of ancient China agree that the king himself was actually head shaman.¹⁵³

My own understanding of this passage leads to conclusions rather different from K.C. Chang’s.¹⁵⁴ I believe that the speech is essentially about main-

152 Derk Bodde, “Myths of Ancient China,” in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, ed. Samuel N. Kramer (Garden City, N.Y., 1961), 390-91 (here converted to pinyin romanization).

153 K.C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual*, 44-45.

154 For my initial study and translation of the text, see David N. Keightley, “Shamanism in *Guoyu*? A Tale of *xi* 犧 and *wu* 巫” (Regional Seminar, Center for Chinese Studies, Berkeley, 7 April 1989), 34-38.

taining good moral order and avoiding confusion in matters of religion. It is about the way in which the early Chinese state *maintained* its control of religious intercession. Jean Lévi's assessment is similar: "Far from creating an opposition between officials and sorcerers [*wu*]," the text "is bent on nothing but placing the latter under the control of the bureaucrats."¹⁵⁵ And David Pankenier has likewise concluded that the:

passage, rather than providing a clue to the central role of shamanism in ancient Chinese politics, actually is intended to account for the cooptation and subsequent decline of shamanistic practices among the ruling elite as a consequence of the development of a new kind of esoteric and highly specialized knowledge of heaven perhaps more commensurate with centralized state formation....¹⁵⁶

The *Guoyu* passage by no means supports the conclusion that shamanism played a central role in the ancient Chinese state. In this connection, von Falkenhausen has observed that

The ancestral cult of the Zhou dynasty, whatever its possible roots in earlier shamanistic practice, had become highly formalized by Western Zhou times. Rites such as the one described in Ode 209, constitute a mechanical, *do-ut-des*-type exchange of food-tribute for supernatural protection, accompanied by an exchange of almost identical, standardized messages that were couched in a highly artificial language.¹⁵⁷

Such an understanding may, I believe, generally be applied to the Late Shang situation too. Particularly to the point is von Falkenhausen's observation that in such Western Zhou rituals, "the formulation of the spirits' answer virtually echoes the wishes expressed earlier on by the worshippers."¹⁵⁸ In the practice of Late Shang divination, the wording of the

155 Lévi, *Les fonctionnaires divins*, 223.

156 David W. Pankenier, "The Cosmo-Political Background of Heaven's Mandate," *Early China* 20 (1995), 151.

157 Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies: A Review Article," *Early China* 18 (1993), 150. On the *do-ut-des* nature of the Shang kings' relationship to their ancestors, see Keightley, "The Religious Commitment," 214-15.

158 Von Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 149.

prognostications had echoed the wording of the charges in precisely the same way; there had been no place for shamanistic inspiration or incomprehensible utterance:

Divination was not just a matter of determining what the spirits wanted; it was a way of telling the spirits what man wanted....

The habit of not asking questions but of proposing answers..., served... to limit the kinds of answers that could be obtained. The answer, i.e., the charge that would be found auspicious, was known in advance.¹⁵⁹

Late Shang religious mediation seems to have been generically different from the situation in modern Korean shamanism, in which “destined shamans burst forth with spontaneous oracles from the spirits.”¹⁶⁰

4.3 Were-Animal Figures

Let me, however, introduce one piece of Late Shang evidence that I believe other scholars have not yet noted, which does suggest—in my own flirtation with ethnographic analogy and Rorschach tests—the presence of shamans at the Shang court. A few marble statues, which depict tigers in a kneeling, human posture, have been found at Xiaotun, as in the royal tomb Xibeigang M1001 (which may have been the tomb of the powerful king, Wu Ding).¹⁶¹ I propose that such sculptures (Fig. 4) may be regarded as

159 Keightley, “Late Shang Divination: The Magico-Religious Legacy,” 22, 23.

160 Laurel Kendall, “Chini’s Ambiguous Initiation,” in *Shamans and Cultures*, 22. As one Korean spirit mother put it, “The visions take shape in their eye, and then even without their realizing it, they’re shouting out ‘I’m so-and-so, I’m such-and-such,’ even though they have no idea who the Spirit Warrior is, or the Generals, or Princess Hogu, or the Special Messenger....” (loc. cit.). There is nothing comparable to this in the Shang divination record.

161 For the view that Wu Ding was buried in M1001, see Alexander C. Soper, “Early, Middle, and Late Shang: A Note,” *Artibus Asiae* 28 (1966), 26. See Liang Si-yong 梁思永 and Gao Quxun 高去尋, *Houjia zhuang 1001-hao damu* 侯家莊 1001-號大墓 (Taibei: Zhongyuan yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1962), 77, pls. 71, 72, for the kneeling tiger (R1757); Liang Siyong and Gao Quxun, *Houjia*

representations of a “were-tiger” or other were-animals, that is, as representations of a shaman figure who has transformed into an animal. On the assumption that animals do not squat in this way and that humans do, it is plausible to assume that the Shang were portraying a human in animal form, or an animal acting like a human.

But on what grounds can I claim that this figure was shamanistic? First, I would appeal to later Chinese accounts in which tigers were involved in shamanistic transformations.¹⁶² Second, I would appeal to were-jaguar figures, sculpted in stone or serpentine, found in the Olmec culture (ca. 800 B.C.) that flourished in Central America, thousands of miles away across the Pacific Ocean from the Shang, but not so distant in time. (Olmec culture flourished from ca. 1200 to 500 B.C.) F. Kent Reilly provides a series of striking photographs showing the transformation from kneeling human figure to were-jaguar, to shaman-jaguar (Fig. 5), concluding that “The ruler needed to transform into a magical creature to overcome the dangers on his journey to the otherworld....”¹⁶³ Whether one can associate

zhuang 1550-hao damu 侯家莊 1550-號大墓 (Taibei: Zhongyuan yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1977), 27-29, pls. 21-23, for the kneeling tiger (R22128); Kwang-chih Chang, *Shang Civilization*, 115; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan Kaogu yanjiusuo, *Yinxu de faxian yu yanjiu* 殷墟的發現與研究 (Beijing: Kexue, 1994), 376-77.

162 See Charles E. Hammond, “Sacred Metamorphosis: The Weretiger and the Shaman,” *Acta Orientalia* 46.2-3 (1992-93), 235-55. The belief that humans could transform, or be transformed, into tigers was common in traditional China, with the transformation frequently effected by the donning of a tiger skin. As Hammond notes, “Several legends depict exorcisms conducted by shamans who dress as tigers or even become tigers” (p. 248). The fourth century A.D. *Soushen ji* 搜神記 records a story about a man turning into a tiger and back again (Kenneth DeWoskin and Kenneth and J.I. Crump, Jr., trs., *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995], 148. A passage in the *Daozang* 道藏 starts out, “To summon the tiger helper....” (quoted by K.C. Chang, “An Essay on *Cong*,” 39).

163 F. Kent Reilly, III, “The Shaman in Transformation Pose: A Study of the Theme of Rulership in Olmec Art,” *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 48.2 (1989), 4-21, espec. Fig. 15a-c.

the Shang were-tigers with the ruler in this way, I cannot tell. But these Shang sculptures of were-animals, not squatting on their haunches, but kneeling in human posture and found in a royal tomb, testify to the richness and complexity of the evidence and the need for further research to explore the nature of religious mediation in early China.¹⁶⁴

4.4 Conclusions

The generalization that “shamanism is present as a symbolic all-embracing system only in non-centralized societies, whereas in centralized, state societies, shamanism is present only in the form of isolated, marginalized phenomena carried out by more or less marginal individuals,”¹⁶⁵ encourages the view that shamanism did not play a central role at the Late Shang court. I would suspect that a tension existed between the “shaman-transformers” (represented by the were-tiger figure; Fig. 4), on the one hand, who still harked back to what may have been older religious traditions of travel and trance, and the “good-order statists,” on the other hand, represented by the ancestral cult and the oracle-bone inscriptions, who believed in order, discipline, and clear speaking as they organized and recorded the emerging bureaucracy of the state that was validated in turn by the ordered hierarchy of the royal ancestors and their liturgy. It is possible that the reading of the pyromantic cracks involved some shallow form of ecstatic inspiration, but even if that were true, it is quite evident that, whatever divinatory seances may have been involved, the processes of Shang divination and religious mediation were increasingly dominated by routine, bureaucratic procedures.

164 Garry Tee (“Evidence of the Chinese Origin of the Jaguar Motif in Chavin Art,” *Asian Perspectives* 21.1 [1978], 27-29), dealing with tiger-shaped bronze vessels of early Western Zhou and the Chavin jaguars made of stone, has proposed, in fact, that, given the identical posture of the felines in the two cultures, the Chinese and Peruvian artists were working from closely-related models.

165 Hamayon, “Shamanism and Pragmatism in Siberia,” 200. Basilov (“Chosen by the Spirits,” 33) makes a similar point: “The appearance of the state, which took on itself the management of society, was the decisive stage in the process of suppression of shamanism.”

The insight that the Spirit Mediums' lack of prestige in Zhou times helps to explain the little space devoted to their activities in the transmitted texts,¹⁶⁶ may also throw light on the Shang situation. If Shang shamans, who relied on some degree of ecstasy or possession, were also illiterate, one can well see that the priestly diviners, who might well have regarded them as rivals, would have felt no compulsion to record the shamans' activities in the divination inscriptions.¹⁶⁷ I believe, in any event, that the statist were dominant, that the ancestors prevailed, that the shamans did not. Good political order and good religious order—which I conceive of as basically non-shamanistic—were inseparably related.¹⁶⁸ There are, to con-

166 Von Falkenhausen, "Reflections on the Political Role of Spirit Mediums," 299.

167 It may be recalled that literate and non-ecstatic shamans are thought to operate in contemporary Korea (see n. 28 above), but it generally seems to be the case that "shamanistic societies, and marginalized shamans in non-shamanistic societies, reject the use of writing for strictly shamanic matters. And this rejection of writing goes together with the absence of a church or a clergy" (Hamayon, "Shamanism and Pragmatism in Siberia," 204-05). This is not to deny that a tradition of divination through spirit-writing had developed in China by Song times and still flourishes, for example, in Taiwan (David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986], 39 and passim.); but this was a relatively late development that has little bearing on the Shang situation.

168 Rosemary Joyce (personal communication, 4 September 1996) has pointed out to me that the Olmec statuettes referred to above lack provenance. She suspected they were not from the central states, but were from those communities where would-be state-builders, "aggrandizers," were emerging. She felt that shamanism was too irregular and undisciplined to play a central rôle in states; it was for that reason that shamanistic phenomena were only found in sites at earlier stages of development. Joyce's understanding of the Olmec situation accords with my view of shamanism's diminishing rôle in the Late Shang. It is worth noting, in this connection, with regard to the iconography of the Shang bronzes, that it was in the southern foundries that the man-tiger combination "was treated as though it had great significance, most memorably in a pair of vessels in the Sumitomo [see n. 37 above] and Cernuschi collections, at least one of which is known to come from Hunan"; "the man and tiger... interact in ways unknown to the motifs of Anyang bronzes" (Robert W. Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler*

clude, shamans and shamans,¹⁶⁹ and, given the variability of the modern definitions, one man's shaman may well be another man's priest. Whatever kind of shamanism may still have been present at the Late Shang court, it would, in my view, have been relegated to a role of secondary importance as the priest-kings devoted their primary energies to, and placed their trust in, the regular mediations upon which the strength of the dynasty depended. And it would have represented shamanism "with a Shang face," whose mediations formed part of the non-ecstatic, ordered, and statist operations of the king and his court.

Collections (Washington, D.C. and Cambridge, Mass.: Arthur M. Sackler Foundation and Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 1987), 35, 56, n. 109). The priestly mediation and iconography of the northern dynasts at Anyang had presumably progressed beyond what may have been the more shamanistic mediations and motifs of the "would-be state-builders," the "aggrandizers," to the south.

169 Kanda Yoriko, in fact, on the basis of fieldwork down in Japan and Korea, provided a table of five types of shamanism: Priest type (public rite, individual rite), Diviner type, Medium type, Healer type, and Artist type ("Area Studies and Shamanism," in *Shamans and Cultures*, 69).

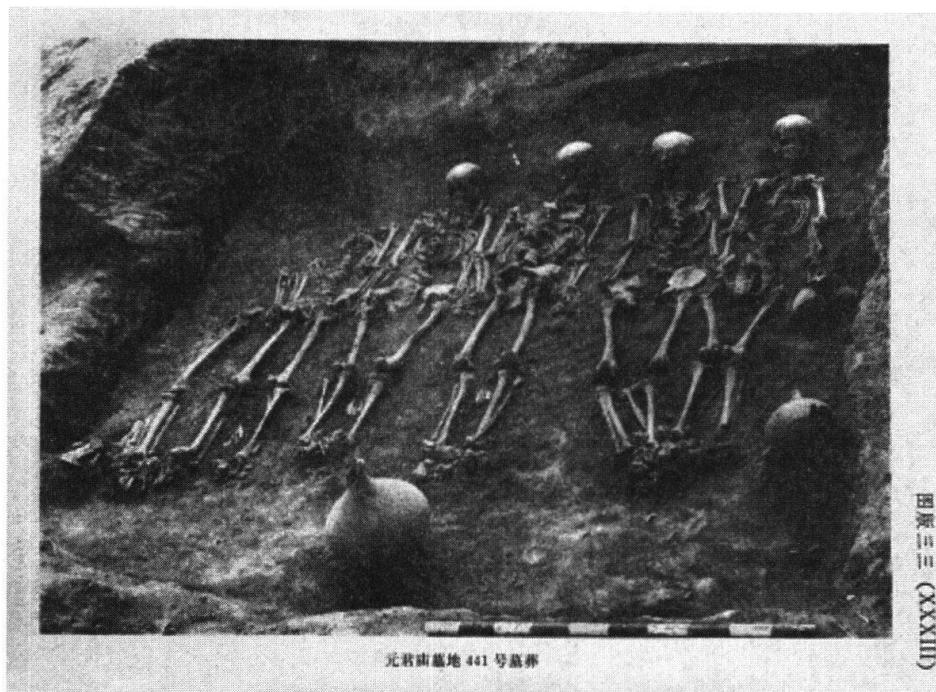


Fig. 1. Secondary burials in grave M441 at Yuanjunmiao, Shaanxi. (*Yuanjunmiao Yangshao mudi*, Pl. 33.)

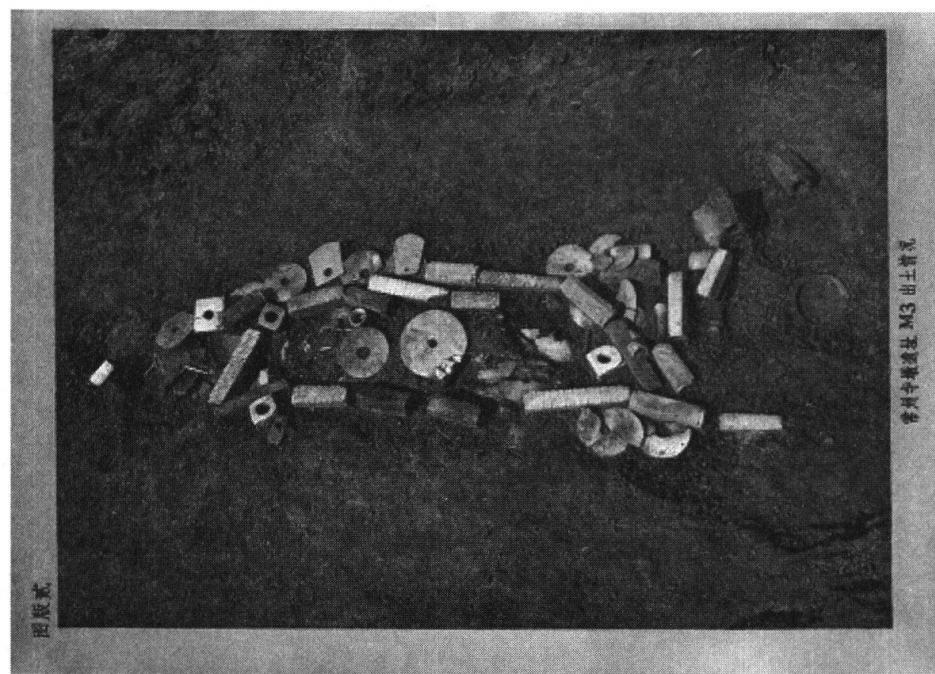


Fig. 2. Grave M3 at Sidun, Jiangsu, showing the placement of the jade *cong*-tubes and *bi*-disks. (*Kaogu* 1984.2, Pl. 2.)

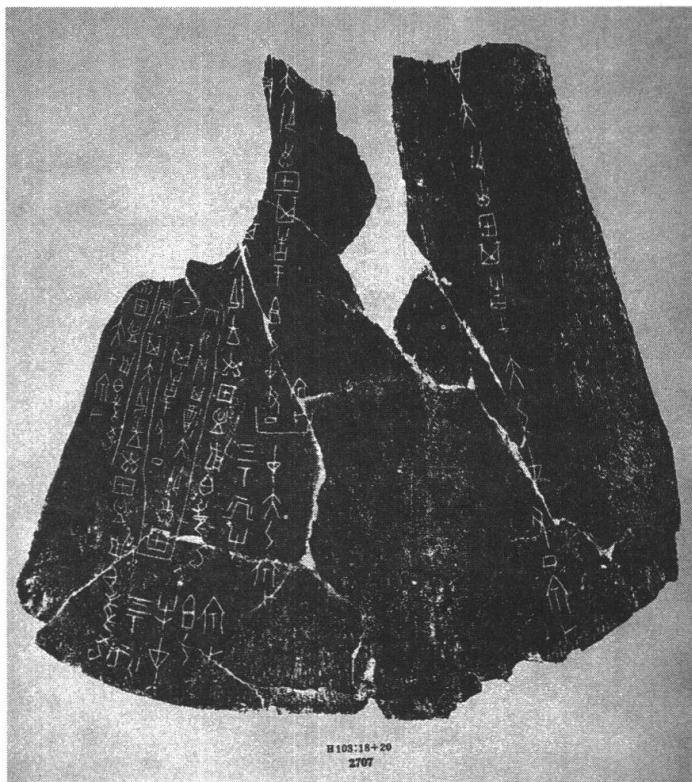


Fig. 3 Li-group divination inscriptions (rubbing) on a large scapula (Tunnan 2707). The postfaces record, from left to right, that the divinations were performed in the temples of Da Jia (K3) (inscription [1A]), Zu Yi (K12) ([1B]), Father Ding (K21), Da Yi (K1), and Da Yi. Fragment length 23 cm.



Fig. 4. Stone sculpture (R22128) of a tiger kneeling in human posture from the Late Shang tomb M1550 at Houjia zhuang; height 44 cm. (*Houjia zhuang 1550-hao damu*, Pl. 23.)



Fig. 5. Olmec stone sculpture of a shaman in transformation pose; height 17.5 cm. (The Art Museum, Princeton University. Gift of Mrs. Gerard B. Lambert, by exchange.)

