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# THE WRITING OF A LATE WESTERN ZHOU BRONZE INSCRIPTION

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#### Abstract

In January, 2003, a cache of twenty-seven inscribed bronze vessels was discovered at Yangjiacun, Meixian, Shaanxi. The vessels belonged to a single family, the Shan family, and most of them probably to a single individual, named Qiu, who held the official title of Warden. The vessels include three very long inscriptions, one on a *pan* with 373 characters, which provides a sketch narrative history of the Western Zhou dynasty, and two on *ding* with 281 and 316 characters, the latter two dated to the forty-second and forty-third years of a reign that is certainly that of Zhou Xuan Wang (r. 827–782 B.C.). The inscriptions provide evidence concerning numerous issues in late Western Zhou history. However, this paper focuses on how the inscriptions were composed. They were stimulated first by a "command document" (*ming shu*) written on bamboo strips in advance of a court investiture ceremony and issued therein by the king to the investee, in this case Qiu. The investee then quoted and/or paraphrased this command document in preparing the inscription to be cast into the bronze vessel, adding to it a dedicatory prayer. In the case of the lengthy *Qiu pan* inscription, he may also have referred to a saga or sagas of the Zhou kings and also textual materials in his own ancestral temple. By examining evidence of the compositional process, we can deduce something about the sorts of literary sources available at the time.

On the evening of January 19, 2003, five peasants collecting soil at Yangjiacun 楊家村, Meixian 眉縣 county, Shaanxi, unearthed a cache containing twenty-seven Western Zhou bronze vessels, all of them bearing inscriptions. This was immediately hailed as one of the great archaeological discoveries of the new century. Its significance is multi-faceted: the intrinsic interest of the inscrip-

Shortly after the discovery of the cache, the vessels were sent to Beijing for a special exhibition at the Chinese Century Altar Museum (Zhonghua Shiji tan yishuguan 中華世紀 壇藝術館), which issued a catalog: Sheng shi jijin: Shaanxi Baoji Meixian qingtongqi jiaocang 盛世吉金: 陝西寶鷄眉縣青銅器窖藏, ed. Shaanxi sheng wenwuju and Zhonghua Shiji tan yishuguan (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2003). For initial reports of the discovery in the scholarly press, see Shaanxi sheng Kaogu yanjiusuo, Baoji shi kaogu gongzuodui and Meixian wehuaguan, "Shaanxi Meixian Yangjia cun Xi Zhou qingtongqi jiaocang fajue jianbao" 陝西眉縣楊家村西周青銅器窖藏發掘簡報, Wenwu 2003.6: 4–42; Liu Huaijun 劉懷君 and Liu Junshe 劉君社, "Shaanxi Meixian Yangjia cun Xi Zhou qingtongqi jiao-

tions, including one, on the *Yu Qiu pan* 虞逑盤,² 373 characters long, which provides a sketch history of almost the entire Western Zhou period much like the famous inscription on the *Shi Qiang pan* 史墻盤, discovered three decades earlier in the neighboring Zhou Yuan 周原 or Plain of Zhou,³ and two others, the *42<sup>nd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding* 虞逑鼎 and *43<sup>rd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding*, also very long (281 characters and 316 characters), which provide important information on military and legal matters near the end of the Western Zhou; the full-date notations in the two *Yu Qiu ding* inscriptions, which require a radical rethinking of late-Western Zhou chronology;⁴ the cache's relationship with three previous discoveries of

cang" 陝西眉縣楊家村西周青銅器窖藏, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2003.3: 3–12. Also of interest are "Shaanxi Meixian chutu jiaocang tongqi bitan" 陝西眉縣出土窖藏銅器筆談, *Wenwu* 2003.6: 43–65, and "Baoji Meixian Yangjiacun jiaocang Shan shi jiazu qingtongqi qun zuotan jiyao" 實鷄眉縣楊家村窖藏單氏家族青銅器群座談紀要, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 2003.3: 13–16.

A Chinese version of the present paper, entitled "Shi lun Xi Zhou tongqi mingwen de xiezuo guocheng: Yi Meixian Shan shi jiazu tongqi wei li" 試論西周銅器銘文的寫作過程: 以眉縣單氏家族銅器爲例, was presented to the conference Xin chutu wenxian yu xian Qin sixiang chonggou guoji xueshu yantaohui 新出土文獻與先秦思想重構國際學術研討會, Taiwan daxue, 25 May 2005. An English version was prepared for the conference "Chinese Paleography: Theory and Practice," The University of Chicago, 29 May 2005.

- 2 The initial publications transcribed the name of the patron of the vessel as Lai 速 (read as "Mai" in Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies: A Review Article," Early China 18 [1993]: 158–9). Other transcriptions have been suggested as well: Qiu 速, for which see Chen Jian 陳劍, "Ju Guodian jian shi du Xi Zhou jinwen yi li" 據郭店簡釋 讀西周金文一例, Beijing daxue Guwenxian yanjiu zhongxin jikan 北京大學古文獻研究中心集刊 2 (2001): 378–96, and Dong Shan 董珊, "Lüe lun Xi Zhou Shan shi jiazu jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen" 略論西周單氏家族窖藏青銅器銘文, Zhongguo lishi wenwu中國歷史文物 2003.4: 42; Zuo 佐, for which see Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Meixian Yangjia cun xin chu qingtongqi yanjiu" 眉縣楊家村新出青銅器研究, Wenwu 文物 2003.6: 66–73, and Tang Yuhui 湯余惠, "Du jinwen suoji (ba pian)" 讀金文瑣記(八篇), Chutu wenxian yanjiu 出土文獻研究 3 (1998): 60–61; Bi 孝, for which see Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, "He zun mingwen jieshi buyi" 何尊銘文解釋補遺, Wenwu 1976.1: 66; and Su 速, for which see Noel Barnard, in association with Cheung Kwong-yue, The Shan-fu Liang Ch'i Kuei and Associated Inscribed Vessels (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1996), p. 336–41.
- For the *Shi Qiang pan* inscription, see *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成, ed. Zhongguo Shehui kexueyuan Kaogu yanjiusuo, 18 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984–1994), vol. 16 #10175; hereafter all references to bronze inscriptions will be to this collection, in the form *Jicheng* 16.10175.
- 4 There have been several studies of the dates of the inscriptions and of their implications for late Western Zhou chronology; see, for instance, Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Meixian Yangjiacun qi ming liri de nanti" 眉縣楊家村器銘曆日的難題, *Baoji wenli xueyuan xuebao* 寶鷄文理學院學報 2003.5: 1–3, 9; Chang Jincang 常金倉, "Meixian qingtongqi he Xi Zhou nian-

Western Zhou bronze vessels in the same area that allow the makers' family—the Shan 單 family—to be mapped both historically and geographically; and for the rewarding and public lionizing of the peasants who discovered the cache, which it is to be hoped may help to turn the tide on the tomb robbing that has plagued China for the last decade or more. As the scholarship mentioned in the notes above attests, these topics have already stimulated a great deal of discussion and will certainly repay attention for years to come. However, in the present paper I propose to examine the Shan family bronzes for a different purpose—for the evidence they shed on the writing of a Western Zhou bronze inscription.

# The Two Yu Qiu Ding Inscriptions

As mentioned above, the  $42^{nd}$  and  $43^{rd}$  Year Yu Qiu ding inscriptions both have considerable historical significance, the  $42^{nd}$  Year inscription providing information about a campaign against the Xianyun 獫狁, and the  $43^{rd}$  Year inscription narrating a command to Qiu to be in charge of the people of Li 歷, including broad judicial responsibilities. Structurally, both of these inscriptions are typical of late Western Zhou court-audience inscriptions, with a three-part structure: prefatory remarks setting the time, place and participants in the audience; the king's address; and the donor's dedication of the vessel. What is of particular

dai xue yanjiu de silu tiaozheng" 眉縣青銅器和西周年代學研究的思路調整, *Baoji wenli xueyuan xuebao* 2003.5: 4–9; and several of the contributions to "Shaanxi Meixian chutu jiaocang tongqi bitan" (see above n. 1). For my own contribution to this effort, see Xia Hanyi 夏含夷, "42 nian 43 nian liangge *Yu Lai ding* de niandai" 42 年 43 年兩個吳逨鼎的年代, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物2003.5: 49–52; "You 42 nian 43 nian Qiu ding tan Zhou Xuan Wang zai wei niandai, tongqi mingwen yuexiang dingyi he *Xia Shang Zhou duandai gongcheng* zhu wenti" "由42年,43年《逑鼎》談周宣王在位年代,銅器銘文月相定義和《夏商周斷代工程》諸問題," paper presented to the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Chinese Paleography Association, Guangzhou, China, 13 November 2006.

For this I have benefited from reading "What's in a Name? Appellations of the Living and the Dead in the Inscriptions of the Shan Lineage," Chapter Two of David Sena's doctoral dissertation "Reproducing Society: Kinship and Social Organization in Western Zhou China" (University of Chicago, 2005). Just as the present paper was going to press, I received Lothar von Falkenhausen, "The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun: New Evidence on Social Structure and Historical Consciousness in Late Wester Zhou China (c. 800 BC)," Proceedings of the British Academy 139 (2006): 239–295, which presents a highly imaginative interpretation of this evidence.

interest for my purposes here is that both of the inscriptions explicitly mention that the king had the text of his address written on bamboo or wooden strips, which were presented to Qiu at the end of his audiences. This feature, seen previously on the *Song ding* 頌鼎 and *Shanfu Shan ding* 膳夫山鼎 inscriptions, both also late Western Zhou vessels, is an important key to understanding the process by which bronze inscriptions were written. It seems desirable to begin with complete translations of both the 42<sup>nd</sup> Year and 43<sup>rd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding inscriptions. For clarity of presentation, I will break the translations into constituent parts. Since the purpose of this essay is not strictly paleographical, I will forego detailed notes substantiating each transcription and translation.

# 42<sup>nd</sup> Year Yu Qiu Ding 四十二年虞逑鼎

住卌又二年五月既生霸乙卯,王才周康穆宫.旦王各大室即立. 罰工 椒石吳逑入門立中廷北卿.尹氏受王釐書.**王乎史減冊釐逑**.

It was the forty-second year, fifth month, after the growing brightness, yimao (day 52); the king was in the Mu Hall of the Kang (Hall) in Zhou. At dawn, the king entered the Great Chamber and took position. Supervisor of Works San at the right of Warden Qiu entered the gate and stood in the center of the courtyard, facing north. Yinshi gave the king the award document. The king called out to Scribe Huo to make the award to Qiu in writing.

王若曰: 逑. 不顯文武 雁 受大令, 匍有三方, 鼎 繇 隹乃先聖且考夾醫 先王, 爵堇大令, 奠周邦. 余弗叚 聖人孫子, 余隹閘乃先且考有爵于 周邦. 隸余乍□沙訇. 余肈建長父庆于蒙, 余令女奠長父休. 女克奠于 氒自, 女隹克井乃先且考閱嚴[執]. 出 蕺 于井阿于曆 厰. 女不斁戎. 女虎(屬)長父 吕追博戎. 乃即宕伐于弓谷, 女 執 嗾 獲 聝 俘器 車馬. 女 海 于戎工, 弗逆朕亲令. 釐女醬 鬯一卣, 田于鄞 卅田, 于 阴 廿田.

The king approved of saying: "Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then it was because of your prior wise ancestors and deceased-father's assisting the prior kings to have merit and care with the great mandate and stabilized the Zhou state, I have not forgotten the wise men's grandson, and it is that I remember your

6 For the *Song ding* (there are also similar inscriptions on the *Song gui* and *Song hu*), see *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成, ed. Zhongguo Shehui kexueyuan Kaogu yanjiusuo, 18 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984–94), vol. 5 #2827–29; for the *Shanfu Shan ding*, see vol. 5.2825.

prior ancestors' and deceased-fathers' having merits in the Zhou state, and so I made [...] court interview. When I initially established Changfu to be lord in Yang, I commanded you to stabilize Changfu's benefices. That you were able to bring stability among his troops is because you were able to take as model your prior ancestors' and deceased-fathers' stopping the Xianyun, and went out to defeat (them) at Jing'a and at Liyan. You were not wearied by the warfare, and you accompanied Changfu to pursue and hit the belligerents. Then engaging and broadly attacking (them) at Bow Valley, you manacled prisoners-to-be-interrogated and caught chiefs, and captured weapons, chariots and horses. You have been diligent in military work and have not transgressed my personal command. I award you one *you*-bucket of black-millet wine and (the following) fields: at Hui thirty fields, and at Yi twenty fields."

逑 軒 韻 首, 受冊 儹 吕出. 逑 敢 對 天子不顯魯休 點, 用乍□彝, 用 盲 孝于 寿文人. 其嚴才上, 選才下. 穆秉 關德. 豐 豐 豪 豪. 降余康 薨 屯 又 通 录 永 令 覺 蒼 繛 綰. 毗 臣 天子. 逑 其 萬 年 無 彊, 子 ₌ 孫 ₌ 永 寶 用 亯.

Qiu saluted and touched his head to the ground, received the written award and went out. Qiu dares in response to the Son of Heaven's illustriously fine beneficence to extol (it), herewith making this ritual vessel to use to offer filial piety to the past cultured men; may they be stern on high and respected below, beautifully holding to bright virtue and abundantly sending down on me peaceful harmony and pure blessings, penetrating wealth and an eternal mandate, and long life everlasting to serve the Son of Heaven. May Qiu for ten-thousand years without bound have sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons eternally to treasure and use (it) to make offerings.

# 43<sup>rd</sup> Year Yu Qiu Ding 四十三年虞逑鼎

惟卌又三年六月既生霸丁亥. 王才周康宫穆宫. 旦. 王各周廟. 即立. 罰馬蓋右吳逑入門. 立中廷. 北卿. **史減受王令書. 王乎尹氏冊令逑.** It was the forty-third year, sixth month, after the growing brightness, *dinghai* (day 24); the king was in the Mu Palace of the Zhou Kang Palace. At dawn, the king went to the Zhou Temple and assumed position. Supervisor of Horse Shou at the right of Warden Qiu entered the gate and stood in the center of the court facing north. *Scribe Huo gave the king the command document. The king called out to Yinshi to command Qiu in writing*. 王若曰: 述. 不顯文武雁受大令. 匍有三方. 鼎縣 隹乃先聖夾醫先王. 爵堇大令. 奠周邦. 隸余弗賠聖人孫子. 昔余既令女疋焚兌. 縣 罰三方吳். 用宫御. 余隹至乃先且考. 又爵于周邦. 醽豪乃令=, 女官罰歷人. 毋敢妄寧. 虔州夕叀饋我邦小大猷. 雩乃尃政事. 毋敢不妻不井. 雩乃蜍 庶又答. 毋敢不中不井. 毋弊=橐=隹又宥從。廼敄侮鯊寡. 用乍余一人咎. 不雀死.

The king approved of saying: "Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then it was because of your prior wise deceased-father's assisting the prior kings to have merit and care with the great mandate and stabilized the Zhou state, and so I have not forgotten the wise men's grandson. Formerly, I had already commanded you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply. Now it is that I recall your prior ancestors and deceased-father's having had merit in the Zhou state and extend and increase your command, commanding you to officiate over and supervise the people of Li. Do not dare to be negligently complacent, but diligently morning and evening help and support our country's small and great plans. In the government affairs in which you assist, do not dare not to be square or a model. In your questioning of the commoners and neighbors, do not dare not to be centered and a model. Do not enrich yourself; if you enrich yourself, it will only be because there are bribes and indulgences, and then you take advantage of widows and widowers, and therewith make resentment for me the one man; those not good will die."

The king said: "Qiu, (I) award you one *you*-bucket of black-millet wine, a black hemmed jacket, red slippers, and a colt chariot (with) an ornamented siderail, a crimson leather-covered frontrail, a tiger-skin canopy with a smoky-black lining, painted yoke-bar bindings and axle couplings, and bronze jingle-bells, and four horses with bits and bridles. Be respectful morning and night and do not neglect my command."

述 解 首. 受冊佩 吕出. 反入 堇 圭.

Qiu saluted and touched his head to the ground, *receiving the strips and* suspending them in his sash to go out. In return he entered and presented a jade tablet.

述敢對 天子不顯魯休職. 用乍朕皇考龏弔冀彝. 皇考其嚴才上. 廙才下. 穆秉明德. 豐 章 .. 降康薨屯右通录永令. 豐壽繛. 毗臣天子. 逑萬年無彊. 子 孫 永寶用亯.

Qiu dares in response to the Son of Heaven's illustriously fine beneficence to extol (it), herewith making for my august deceased-father Gong Shu this ritual vessel. May (my) august deceased-father be stern on high and respected below, beautifully upholding bright virtue and abundantly (sending down upon) me peaceful harmony and pure blessings, penetrating wealth and an eternal mandate everlasting to serve the Son of Heaven. May Qiu for ten-thousand years without bound have sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons eternally to treasure and use (it) to make offerings.

It would seem that what I have demarcated as the first two paragraphs of the  $42^{nd}$ Year and the first three paragraphs of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Year inscription are more or less verbatim quotations of the award documents presented to Qiu upon his departures from the court audiences. 7 Certainly the text of the king's commands must be as he had them read in the audiences, and there is at least one feature that suggests different authorship for these paragraphs (the descriptions of the time, place and participants in the court audiences; the king's commands to Qiu, and the king's awards of gifts to him) as opposed to the last paragraphs of the inscriptions (the dedicatory prayer): whereas the first paragraphs refer to the king simply as wang 王, the last paragraph in each inscription calls him *tianzi* 天子, "Son of Heaven." This distinction, which became common in these portions of late Western Zhou inscriptions,8 seems to reflect a neutral archival impulse in the use of wang, as opposed to the deliberately honorific tianzi. Presumably the patron of the vessel, Qiu, used the text on the strips given to him as the basis for the composition of the text to be cast into the bronze vessel, making use also of standard formulas to add his own personal dedication as a conclusion. When we turn next to examine the much more elaborate Yu Qiu pan inscription, it will be well to keep this compositional process in mind.

- To my knowledge, the first person to have discussed the importance of this transfer of the king's address from the royal scribe to the guest at audience, and subsequently from the strips to the bronze vessel, is Herrlee Glessner Creel, "Bronze Inscriptions of the Western Chou Dynasty as Historical Documents," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 56.3 (1936): 342. Creel cited as evidence the inscription of the *Song ding* as well as a description of court audiences in the *Yi li* 儀禮 (*Yi li zhushu* 儀禮注疏 [Sibu beiyao ed.], 27.3a–b).
- 8 For a discussion of the differing usage of wang and tianzi in just the dedicatory prayer portion of inscriptions, see Musha Akira 武者章, "Sei Shū satsu mei kinbun bunrui no kokoromi" 西周冊命金文分類試み, in Sei Shū seidōki to sono kokka 西周青銅器とその國家, ed. Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄 (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1980), pp. 293–300.

## The Yu Qiu Pan Inscription

As mentioned above, the Yu Qiu pan inscription resembles that on the famous Shi Qiang pan in juxtaposing a sketch history of the Zhou kings down to the time of the patron, Warden (yu 虞) Qiu, with laudatory comments about corresponding generations of his own ancestors. It differs from the Shi Qiang pan inscription in that, whereas that inscription segregated the two histories, first narrating the generations of the kings and then following it with those of Qiang's ancestors, the Yu Qiu ding inscription combines the two narratives into discrete textual units, first mentioning Qiu's own ancestor and how he was able to serve a particular Zhou king or two, and then, in most cases, continuing with a comment about the accomplishments of that king or kings. I will try to illustrate this structure in the presentation below, placing the transcription of the inscription and its translation side by side and making systematic use of indentations.

## 虞逑盤

述曰: 不顯朕皇高且 單公:

> 起 - 克明 医 季德, 夾醫 文王武王

> > 達殷雁 受天魯令, 匍有三方, 並宅氒堇彊土, 用配上帝.

零朕皇高且公叔: 克逑匹成王

> 成受大令. 方狄 不亯, 用奠亖或 萬邦.

雩朕皇高且新室中:

克幽明氒心, 頓遠能對. 會醫康王,

## Yu Qiu Pan

Qiu said: "Illustrious was my august high ancestor Shan Gong:

So radiant, capable of making bright and wise his virtue, he accompanied and assisted Wen Wang and Wu Wang,

who pierced the Yin, received Heaven's fine mandate, extended it to the four quarters, and widely inhabited the lands that they opened and bounded, therewith serving as mates to God on High.

With my august high ancestor Gongshu: he was capable of joining and aiding Cheng Wang,

who successfully received the great mandate; when the regional enemies were not obedient, he therewith settled the four regions and the ten-thousand countries.

With my august high ancestor Zhong of the New Chamber:

capable of making both somber and bright his heart, he was gentle with the distant and enabling 方褱不延.

等朕皇高且惠中盠父: 盭龢于政,又成于 猷,用會邵王穆王,

> 盗政三方, 厮伐 楚荊.

零朕皇高且零白: 粦明厥心,不蒙□ 服,用辟龔王,懿 王.

等朕皇亞且懿中對: 諫=克匍保氒辟考 王猴王

又成于周邦.

雩朕皇考冀叔:

穆<sub>=</sub>趩<sub>=</sub>, 龢訇于政, 明陵于德, 亯辟刺 王.

述肇尽朕皇且考服, 虔夙夕敬朕死事.

> 肆天子多易逑 休. 天子其萬年 無彊耆黃耇, 保 奠周邦, 諫辥三 方.

## 王若曰:

述,不顯文武雁受 大令,匍有三方. 鼎繇 隹乃先聖且 考夾醫先王,爵堇 大令. with the near, and met with and assisted Kang Wang,

who just embraced the unsubmitted (i.e., the enemy states).

With my august high ancestor Huizhong Lifu: bringing harmony in government and also being successful in his plans, he therewith met and assisted Zhao Wang and Mu Wang,

who extended government to the four quarters, and struck and attacked Chu and Jing.

With my august high ancestor Ling Bo: clear and bright his heart, he did not fail in his ... duties, and therewith served Gong Wang and Yih Wang.

With my august secondary ancestor Yih Zhong X, so remonstrating, he was capable of advising and protecting his rulers Xiao Wang and Yi Wang, who again succeeded in the Zhou country.

With my august deceased-father Gong Shu: so beautiful and so respectful, harmonious and compliant in government, bright and equable in virtue, he obeyed and assisted Li Wang.

Qiu has begun by continuing my august ancestors' and deceased-father's duties, diligently morning and evening respecting my sworn service.

And so the Son of Heaven has much awarded Qiu benefices. May the Son of Heaven for ten-thousand years without bound enjoy a yellowing longevity, protect and settle the Zhou country, and rule the four quarters.

The king approved of saying:

"Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then because it was your past wise ancestors' and deceased-father who accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate, 今余隹巠乃先聖且 考醽豪乃令<sub>=</sub>女疋 焚兌點罰三方吳 醬,用宮御.

易女赤市幽黄攸勒.

速敢對天子丕顯魯休 腸,用乍朕皇且考寶 障盤,用追亯孝于前= 文=人=嚴才上,廙才 [下],豐=豪=降逑魯多 福豐耆繛綰.受余康曼 屯又通彔永令需冬,逑 毗臣天子=孫=永寶用 亯. now it is that I recall your past wise ancestors and deceased-father and extend and increase your command, commanding you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply.

I award you red kneepads, a black belt, and a bit and bridle."

Qiu dares in response to the Son of Heaven's illustriously fine beneficence to extol it, herewith making for my august ancestors and deceased-father this treasured offertory *pan*-basin, with which to send offerings of filial piety to the past cultured men. May the past cultured men be stern on high and respected below, abundantly sending down on Qiu fine and many blessings and long life everlasting, giving me peaceful harmony, pure aid, penetrating wealth, an eternal mandate and a numinous end, so that Qiu may serve the Son of Heaven. May sons and grandsons' grandsons eternally treasure and use it to make offerings.

9 For a translation of the *Li fangyi/fangzun* inscription, together with a discussion presenting this analysis, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 325.

# A Possible Saga of the Zhou Kings

While the historical narratives of the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription command the greatest attention, I propose to focus first on the relatively brief quotation of the king's remarks to Qiu that follows them. This quotation is introduced by the phrase "the king approved of saying" (*wang ruo yue* 王若曰):

Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then because it was your past wise ancestors' and deceased-father who accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate, now it is that I recall your past wise ancestors and deceased-father and extend and increase your command, commanding you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply. I award you red kneepads, a black belt, and a bit and bridle.

Bearing in mind the examples of the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding inscriptions, in which the texts of the king's address, written on bamboo or wooden strips, formed the basis for the composition of the bronze inscriptions, we might surmise that in this case too the king's address was instrumental in the writing of this inscription. Note that the king began by extolling the dynastic founders Wen Wang (r. 1099/57–1050 B.C.) and Wu Wang (r. 949/45–943 B.C.) and their receipt of "the great mandate" (da ming 大命), and then immediately gave credit also to Qiu's "prior wise ancestors and deceased-father" (xian sheng zu kao 先聖且考), who, he said, "accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate." I would suggest that Qiu's decision to juxtapose the accomplishments of his ancestors with those of the Zhou kings was validated, at least in part, by these remarks of the king. Indeed, much of the wording of the encomium for Qiu's high ancestor Shan Gong 單公 can be seen to have been inspired by those remarks (here putting the encomium on the left and the opening of the king's command on the right).

[單公]夾醫文王武王達殷雁受天 魯令,匍有三方,竝宅氒堇彊土,用 配上帝.

[Shan Gong] accompanied and assisted Wen Wang and Wu Wang, who pierced the Yin, received Heaven's fine mandate, extended it to the four quarters, and widely inhabited the lands that they opened and bounded, therewith serving as mates to God on High.

不顯文武雁受大令, 匍有三方. 鼎 繇 隹乃先聖且考夾醫先王, 爵 堇大令.

Illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then because it was your past wise ancestors' and deceased-father who accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate,

Qiu effectively quoted the king in saying that his high ancestor Shan Gong "accompanied and assisted" (*jia shao* 夾醫) Wen Wang and Wu Wang to "receive" (*yingshou* 雁 受) the "mandate" (*ming* 令) and then "extend it to the four quarters" (*fu you si fang* 匍有三方). It is perhaps notable that the phrases he has added to the king's own wording, "pierced the Yin" (*da* Yin 達殷), "inhabited the lands that they opened and bounded" (*zhai jue jin jiang tu* 宅氒堇彊土), and "therewith served as mates to God on High" (*yong pei* Shang Di 用配上帝), have precedents in only three other inscriptions: the *Shi Qiang pan*, and the *Hu zhong* 默鐘 (also known as *Zongzhou zhong* 宗周鐘; *Jicheng* 1.0260) and *Hu gui* 默簋 (*Jicheng* 8.4317), the latter two of which were both made for Zhou Li Wang (r. 857/53–842/28) and thus are exceptional for representing in their entirety the wording of a Zhou king.

史墻盤: 翿圉武王: 遹征三方, 達殷.

Shi Qiang pan: Capturing and controlling was Wu Wang: He proceeded and campaigned through the four quarters, piercing the Yin.

*Hu zhong*: The king for the first time proceeded through and examined the lands that Wen and Wu had opened and bounded.

Hu gui: The king said: "Although I am but the little son, I have no leisure day or night, but always recall and support the past kings, therewith serving as a mate to august Heaven."

Although the third of these precedents, that of the *Hu gui*, mentions serving as a mate to "August Heaven" (*huang tian* 皇天) rather than Shang Di, it is note-

worthy that, with but two exceptions, the *Hu gui*, *Hu zhong* and *Shi Qiang pan*, are the only inscriptions in the entire inventory of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that mention Shang Di specifically (as opposed to unmodified mentions of *di* 帝 alone). <sup>10</sup> Perhaps this suggests that a cult dedicated to Shang Di was reserved exclusively to the Zhou kings, as opposed to a more wide-spread cult of Heaven. Whatever the merit of this suggestion, that the wording of this encomium to Wen Wang is found only in inscriptions composed by or for Zhou kings perhaps points to a common derivation for them: a saga of the Zhou kings, from which they all quoted. An early version of such a saga might be seen in the "Zhou Song" 周頌 poem "Capturing and Competitive" ("Zhi jing" 執意; Mao 274):

執競武王	Capturing and competitive was Wu Wang,		
無競維烈	Incomparable was his valor!		
不顯成康	Illustrious were Cheng and Kang,		
上帝是皇	The Lord on High exalts them.		
自彼成康	Since the time of those Cheng and Kang,		
奄有四方	(We) have covered and had all the four quarters.		

A more elaborate version might be seen in the "Da Ya" 大雅 poem "King Wen" ("Wen Wang" 文王; Mao 235). For reasons of space, I will quote just the first stanza, though the entire poem furnishes numerous parallels with the wording and sense of the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription.

文王在上,	Wen Wang is on high,		
於昭于天.	Oh, radiant in heaven.		
周雖舊邦,	Although Zhou is an old country,		
其命維新.	Its mandate is new.		
有周不顯,	He who has Zhou is illustrious,		
帝命不時.	Di's mandate is greatly timely.		
文王陟降,	Wen Wang ascends and descends,		
在帝左右.	At Di's left and right.		

It is possible that there existed a more developed saga or sagas of all of the Zhou kings from which all of these poems and inscriptions drew, however sketchily.

Other inscriptions that mention Shang Di are that on the possibly pre-conquest *Tian Wang gui* 天亡簋 (*Jicheng* 8.4261), and that of the *Xing zhong* 瘼鐘 (*Jicheng* 1.0247–56), the latter of which however derives in very large measure from the *Shi Qiang pan* inscription, Xing probably having been the son of Qiang.

As is the case with so much traditional literature from the Western Zhou, the *Shi jing* has preserved only that portion dealing with the founding fathers, especially Wen Wang and Wu Wang. With the *Shi Qiang pan* and now the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription, the saga of the following kings is finally coming into focus. The following comparison of their narratives of the Zhou kings might give some idea as to what such a saga was originally like (the inscription of the *Yu Qiu pan* is to the left, that of the *Shi Qiang pan* to the right).

#### 虞逑盤

文王武王: 達(撻)殷雁 受天魯令, 匍有三方, 竝宅氒堇彊土, 用配上帝.

Wen Wang and Wu Wang: who pierced the Yin, received Heaven's fine mandate, extended it to the four quarters, and widely inhabited the lands that they opened and bounded, therewith serving as mates to God on High.

成王: 成受大令. 方狄不亯, 用奠三或萬邦.

Cheng Wang: who successfully received the great mandate; when the regional enemies were not obedient, he therewith settled the four regions and the ten-thousand countries.

#### 史墻盤

曰古文王: 初穀龢于政. 蒂(上帝) 降整德大轉. 匍有三(上下). 迨受 萬邦.

Accordant with antiquity was Wen Wang: He first brought harmony to government. The Lord on High sent down fine virtue and great security. Extending to the high and low, he joined the ten-thousand states.

Capturing and controlling was Wu Wang: He proceeded and campaigned through the four quarters, piercing Yin and governing its people. Eternally unfearful of the Di, oh, he attacked the Yi minions.

需 聖成王: 广右穀 骸剛縣. 用貸敷 周邦.

Model and sagely was Cheng Wang: To the left and right he cast and gathered his net and line, therewith opening and integrating the Zhou state. 康王: 方褱不延.

Kang Wang: who just embraced the unsubmitted (i.e., the enemy states).

邵王穆王: 盜政三方, 斷伐楚荊. Zhao Wang and Mu Wang: who extended government to the four quarters, and struck and attacked Chu and Jing.

龔王、懿王.

Gong Wang and Yih Wang.

考王徲王: 又成于周邦. Xiao Wang and Yi Wang: who again succeeded in the Zhou country. 刺王. Li Wang. **矿**慙康王: 分尹善彊.

Deep and wise was Kang Wang: he divided command and pacified the borders.

或魯即王. 廣敞 楚刑. 隹寏南行. Vast and substantial was Zhao Wang: he broadly tamed Chu and Jing; it was to connect the southern route. 串 粮王: 井帥字誨.

Reverent and illustrious was Mu Wang: he patterned himself on and followed the great counsels.

쮍寍天子: 天子團層文武長剌. 天子寶 無匄쬻邒亖(上下). 亟狱逗慕.

Continuing and tranquil is the Son of Heaven: the Son of Heaven strives to carry on the long valor of Wen and Wu; the Son of Heaven is diligent and without flaw, faithfully making offerings above and below, and reverently glorifying the great plans.

While isolating the praises of the various Zhou kings in this way reveals most clearly the quasi-historical nature of the *Yu Qiu pan* and *Shi Qiang pan* inscriptions, the comparison also reveals that the two inscriptions share primarily the tone of their language and style of phrasing; the historical information *per se* is sketchy at best. The only direct correlation between the praises of individual kings is in the mention of Zhao Wang's campaign against Chu 楚 and Jing 莉. As I have mentioned elsewhere, 11 the bare mention of this campaign, without

Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History, Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1991), p. 181.

any explicit resolution, seems to be an oblique reference to the disastrous defeat inflicted on Zhou forces, as if the historian felt obliged to mention the event but could not bring himself to spell out the defeat.

Elsewhere in the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription, there are two more explicit absences that seem to me to be even more significant. Eight of the eleven kings mentioned are supplied with some sort of praise, whether individually or in pairs. However, in two cases—the joint mention of Gong Wang (r. 917–15–900 B.C.) and Yih Wang (r. 899/97–873 B.C.), and the single mention of Li Wang—the kings' names are left without any elaboration. In the case of Li Wang, it is perhaps not hard to see why he would be left without praise. Condemned in the traditional historical record as a paradigmatically bad king, he is said to have been driven into exile by the Zhou people, an event that seems to be reflected as well in the contemporary bronze inscriptional record. The case of Gong Wang and Yih Wang may derive from a similar context. The *Shi ji* 史記 states that the decline of the Western Zhou began during the reign of Yih Wang:

懿王之時, 王室遂衰, 詩人作刺.

During the time of Yih Wang, the royal house thereupon declined and poets composed satires.  $^{13}$ 

The Zhushu jinian 竹書紀年 records also external incursions in the seventh and thirteenth years of his reign, and follows this with a terse mention of the king leaving the Zhou capital at Zongzhou 宗周 and moving some fifty kilometers west to Huaili 槐里.

十五年, 王自宗周遷于槐里. Fifteenth year, the king moved from Zongzhou to Huaili.<sup>14</sup>

- In addition to bronze inscriptions, such as that on the *Shi X gui* 師顯簋 (*Jicheng* 8.4312), that seem to show Gong Bo He 共伯和 in charge of the Zhou government, thus confirming the tradition of a Gonghe interregnum during Li Wang's exile, the inscription of the *Ran xu* 壁 盨 (*Jicheng* #4469), apparently datable to the following reign of Xuan Wang, mentions that the "men of the country, men of the offices, and men of the legions" (*bang ren zheng ren shishi ren* 邦人正人師氏人) had "rebelled and driven off their ruler" (*nüe zhu jue jun* 虐逐厥君).
- 13 Shi ji (Zhonghua shuju ed.), 4.140.
- 14 Zhushu jinian (Sibu congkan ed.), 2.11a. The Shi ben 世本 also mentions this removal, stating that Yih Wang "xi 徒" to Quanqiu 犬邱 (another name for Huaili). While xi is synonymous with the qian 遷 used by the Zhushu jinian, it seems to carry the nuance of a forced removal; thus, the Guangya 廣雅 defines it as "bi 避" "to flee."

Traditional histories also state that at this time there was a break in the regular succession of Zhou kings: Yih Wang was followed not by his son, the eventual Yi Wang (r. 865–858 B.C.), but rather by his uncle, Bifang 辟方, who reigned as Xiao Wang (r. 872?–866 B.C.). Finally, the chronology of the period during which Yih Wang and Xiao Wang reigned is particularly confused, with fully-dated bronze inscriptions showing several different and mutually incompatible regnal calendars. All of this has led David Nivison to suggest that Xiao Wang's interregnum may have begun even before Yih Wang's death, and that Yih Wang, like Li Wang after him, had been forced into exile.¹⁵ While this remains but an interesting hypothesis, the absence of any praise for Yih Wang in the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription would seem to be yet further indication that something went very wrong in the course of his reign.¹⁶

## The Shan Family as Seen in the Yu Qiu Pan Inscription

The importance of the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription is doubtless greater for the information it provides regarding Qiu's own Shan family than it is for the historical information it provides concerning the Zhou kings. It provides a narrative of seven ancestors, beginning with the high ancestor Shan Gong 單公 and continuing generation by generation until Qiu's own deceased father Gong Shu 襲 As mentioned above, at least one of these ancestors, Li 盞, here given the apparently posthumous appellation Huizhong Lifu 惠中盞父, was already known from a previous discovery of inscribed bronze vessels. Although it does not seem possible to identify any of the other ancestors with other bronzes made for members of the Shan family, and so this family cannot serve as a yardstick for the development of Zhou bronze styles in the way that the Wei 微 family of the *Shi Qiang pan* does, the manner in which the ancestors are described in the inscription may still reveal some features of the Zhou lineage structure. Isolating

- David S. Nivison, "Western Chou History Reconstructed from Bronze Inscriptions," in *The Great Bronze Age of China: A Symposium*, ed. George Kuwayama (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1983), pp. 49–50.
- The Yu Qiu pan inscription's praise for Xiao Wang and Yi Wang may also support this hypothesis: "you cheng yu Zhou bang 又成于周邦." It is certainly possible to interpret you 又 as you 有 "to have," as have all published studies that I have seen, and to read this phrase as an innocuous statement that these kings "had success in the Zhou state." However, with the historical context outlined above, it also seems possible to read you as "again," with the statement meaning something like the kings "again succeeded in the Zhou state."

this time just the portions of the inscription describing Qiu's ancestors, and here taking the liberty of arranging the individual descriptions in two separate columns by alternating generations, I believe that at least a couple of different patterns reveal themselves.

不顯朕皇高且單公: 起 = 克明您 季德, 夾醫 文王武王.

Illustrious was my august high ancestor Shan Gong:

So radiant, capable of making bright and wise his virtue, he accompanied and assisted Wen Wang and Wu Wang.

> 零朕皇高且公叔: 克逑匹成王. With my august high ancestor Gongshu: he was capable of joining and aiding Cheng Wang.

零朕皇高且新室中: 克幽明氒心, 顧遠能對. 會醫康王.

With my august high ancestor Zhong of the New Chamber: capable of making both somber and bright his heart, he was gentle with the

distant and enabling with the near, and met with and assisted Kang Wang.

零朕皇高且惠中盠父: 盭龢于政, 又成于猷, 用會邵王穆王.

With my august high ancestor Huizhong Lifu:

bringing harmony in government and also being successful in his plans, he therewith met and assisted Zhao Wang and Mu Wang.

零朕皇高且零白: 粦明厥心, 不家□服, 用辟襲王, 懿王.

With my august high ancestor Ling Bo:

clear and bright his heart, he did not fail in his [...] duties, and therewith served Gong Wang and Yih Wang.

> 零朕皇亞且懿中數:諫₌克匍保氒 辟考王猴王.

> With my august secondary ancestor Yih Zhong X, so remonstrating, he was capable of advising and protecting his rulers Xiao Wang and Yi Wang.

雩朕皇考龔叔:穆<sub>-</sub>趩<sub>-</sub>,龢訇于政,明 陵于德, 宫辟刺王.

With my august deceased-father Gong Shu:

so beautiful and so respectful, harmonious and compliant in government, bright and helpful in virtue, he offered service to Li Wang.

All of the ancestors are described as assisting past kings, the various verbs used all being synonymous: *jiashao* 夾醫 "to accompany and assist," *qiupi* 速匹 "to join and aid," *huizhao* 會邵 "to meet with and assist" (used two times), *bi* 辟 "to serve," *fubao* 匍保 "to advise and protect," and *xiangbi* 享辟 "to offer service." It would seem that there is little to differentiate these terms. However, in the phrasing before these descriptions of service to past kings, that is, in the portion of the description dedicated just to the virtue of the ancestor himself, at least two patterns emerge from this division of the epithets by alternating generations. First, ancestors in the first, third, and fifth generations (i.e., the first three ancestors on the left-hand side of the display above) are all described as being able to make "bright" (*ming* 明) their "virtue" (*de* 德) or "heart" (*xin* 心):

單公: 超=克明您氒德.

Shan Gong: So radiant, capable of making bright and wise his virtue.

新室中: 克幽明氒心.

Zhong of the New Chamber: capable of making both somber and bright his heart.

零白: 粦明氒心.

Ling Bo: clear and bright his heart.

In the case of the other ancestor on the left-hand side of the display, Qiu's deceased-father Gong Shu 冀叔, although the description in this inscription does not share this pattern, it may be notable that in the inscription on the *Qiu zhong* 逑鐘, a set of bells also cast for Qiu (and which, I will show below, were cast at the same time as the *Yu Qiu pan*), we find him described in the same way:

不顯朕皇考: 克粦明氒心.

Illustrious was my august deceased-father: capable of making clear and bright his heart.

One of the three ancestors in the even generations (that is, those on the right-hand side of the display above), Gong Shu 公叔 of the second generation (not to be confused with Qiu's deceased-father Gong Shu 冀叔), is lacking any personal description at all, while another is described as simply being "so remonstrating" (*jian jian* 諫』). Even the redoubtable Huizhong Lifu 惠中鏊父 of the fourth generation, who as mentioned above was made commander in chief of all Zhou armies by Mu Wang, is praised for his successful governance and planning, but not for his personal virtues:

惠中盠父: 盭龢于政, 又成于猷.

With my august high ancestor Huizhong Lifu: bringing harmony in government and also being successful in his plans.

On the other hand, as we see here in the case of Huizhong Lifu, in which "Li" 盏 is the ancestor's personal name, it is only with ancestors in even generations for whom personal names are mentioned; another case is in the ancestor of the sixth generation, Yizhong Kuang 懿中堂. Perhaps this usage of personal names indicates a degree of closeness since this latter ancestor was Qiu's grandfather, with whom he would have been most closely identified in the Zhou ritual system.<sup>17</sup>

I would like to suggest that these sorts of similarities between ancestors of alternating generations may have something to do with the composition of the Zhou ancestral temple. Ritual texts describe the Zhou kinship system as having been organized according to alternating generations, the so-called *zhao* 昭—*mu* 穆 system. This system was manifested in the ancestral temple by ancestors of the *zhao* generations being arrayed on the left hand side of the temple, and those

17 I here adapt an insight first made in Sena, "Reproducing Society: Lineage and Kinship in Western Zhou China," pp. 95–98.

of the *mu* generations on the right hand side.<sup>18</sup> If this observation has any validity, perhaps the shared phrasing about the ancestors in the odd-numbered generations being capable of making bright their virtue or heart derives from the personal epithets written on their spirit tablets in the temple.

## The Royal Command

Having considered how the beginning of the king's command to Qiu may have inspired in part the composition of the historical survey that opens the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription, it is now time to examine again the royal command in its entirety. Comparisons between it and the other vessels cast for Qiu will show, I believe, that this was the initial command given to Qiu at the royal court. The command of the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription reads:

王若曰: 逑, 不顯文武確 受大令, 匍有三方. 鼎縣 隹乃先聖且考夾醫先王, 爵堇大令. 今余隹巠乃先聖且考醽豪乃令=女疋燮兌點罰三方吳榃, 用宫御. 易女赤市幽黄攸勒.

The king approved of saying: "Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then because it was your past wise ancestors' and deceased-father who accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate, now it is that I recall your past wise ancestors and deceased-father and extend and increase your command, commanding you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply. I award you red kneepads, a black belt, and a bit and bridle."

The first part of the king's address to Qiu is a recounting of his ancestors' assistance to kings Wen and Wu, which has already been examined above. This serves as the immediate context for the command proper, which is an extension (shen 8) of Qiu's hereditary position as assistant to Rong Dui 变兑, simultaneously increasing his responsibilities to include also supervising the provisioning of the royal palace (gong yu 宮御) with the game and forests of the four quarters (si fang yu lin  $\equiv$ 方吳醬). As tokens of these responsibilities, he was awarded three insignia.

This description needs to be qualified in that the high ancestor of a family or lineage is said to have occupied a central position between the *zhao* and *mu* ancestors. In the case of the Shan lineage, the high ancestor would be Shan Gong.

Let us now compare this command to the other commands that Qiu received or recorded in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding, 43<sup>rd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding and the Qiu zhong inscriptions. I will give only the first portions of the commands in the two ding inscriptions, the final portions not being directly comparable.

虞逑盤

42年虞逑鼎

43年虞逑鼎

逑鐘

王若曰: 逑, 不顯 文武雁受大令, 匍有三方. 鼎繇 隹乃先聖且考 夾醫先王, 爵堇 大令.

王若曰: 逑, 不 顯文武 雁 受大 令, 匍有三方, 鼎談 隹乃先聖 且考夾醫先王, 爵堇大令, 奠周 邦. 王若曰: 逑, 不顯 文武雁受大令, 匍有三方, 鼎繇 隹乃先聖考夾醫 先王, 爵堇大令, 奠周邦.

The king approved of saying: "Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then because it was your prior wise ancestors' and deceased-father who accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate,

The king approved of saying: "Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then it was because of your prior wise ancestors and deceasedfather's assisting the prior kings to have merit and care with the great mandate and stabilized the Zhou state, 余弗叚駐聖人

The king approved of saying: "Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then it was because of your prior wise deceased-father's assisting the prior kings to have merit and care with the great mandate and stabilized the Zhou state,

今余隹巠乃先聖 且考, 醽豪乃令。 女疋焚兌, 黖 罰三方吳榃, 用宮御.

課余弗監聖人孫 子. 昔余既令女 疋焚兌, 縣 罰三 方吳்書, 用宮御. 今余住坙乃先且 考, 又爵于周邦, 醽豪乃令₌女官 罰歴人.

天子巠朕先且服, 多易逑休. 令點 酮三方吳醬.

now it is that I recall your prior wise ancestors and I have not forgotten the wise men's grandson, and it is

孫子. 余隹閘乃

先且考有爵于

周邦. 肄余乍口

沙訇. 余肈建長

令女奠長父. 休

女克奠于氒自.

父医于桑.余

The Son of Heaven recalled my prior ancestors' service,

deceased-father and extend and increase your command, commanding you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply.

that I remember your prior ancestors' and deceased-fathers' having merits in the Zhou state, and so I made [...] court interview. When I initially established Changfu to be lord in Yang, I commanded you to stabilize Changfu's benefices.

Formerly, I had already commanded you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply. Now it is that I recall your prior ancestors and deceased-father's having had merit in the Zhou state and extend and increase your command, commanding you to officiate over and supervise the people of Li.

and greatly awarded Qiu benefices, and commanding concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests.

In the 43<sup>rd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding inscription, the king's command to Qiu includes a verbatim quotation of his command recorded in the Yu Qiu pan inscription:

昔余既令女疋燮兌, 黖罰三方吳薔, 用宫御.

Formerly, I had already commanded you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply.

This shows beyond question that both of these court audiences took place during the same reign, and that the audience commemorated by the *pan* inscription took place before the forty-third year of this *ding* inscription. Since the historical narrative of the *pan* inscription shows that it was composed during the reign of Xuan Wang, with mention of the reigning *tianzi* or "Son of Heaven" coming after the reign of Li Wang, there can be no doubt that this forty-third year refers to the reign of Xuan Wang. This of course has crucial implications for the chronology of the late Western Zhou, as many scholars have already noted. <sup>19</sup> It also has important implications for the question concerning us here—the process by which inscriptions were written—since it shows beyond question that the king could make reference to commands that he had previously issued. This

corroborates previous evidence that the royal secretariat maintained archives of royal commands.<sup>20</sup>

The comparison above also shows, I believe, that the inscription on the *zhong* refers to the same command as that on the *pan*, implying therefore that the two inscriptions were composed at the same time. Although the *zhong* inscription is much attenuated, it does contain the crucial information that Qiu was "simultaneously to supervise the game and forests of the four quarters" seen already in the *pan* inscription. When we now go on to examine the entirety of the *zhong* inscription, I believe we will find considerable other evidence relating the two inscriptions. Moreover, a comparison of the two inscriptions will go still further to illustrate the process by which bronze inscriptions were composed.

## The Qiu Zhong Inscription

In August, 1985, sixteen bronze bells were found by brickworkers in Yangjiacun, Meixian county, the same village in which the *Yu Qiu pan* and other vessels were discovered in 2003. Like the *Yu Qiu pan* and the twenty-six vessels with which it was discovered, these bells had been placed into a storage pit, presumably at the same time, the two pits being less than sixty meters apart. Unfortunately, after discovery some of the bells were subsequently stolen and smuggled to Hong Kong, there being sold on the antiques market; only thirteen bells now remain in the Meixian County Cultural Relics Control Station (*Wenwu guanlisuo* 文物管理所).<sup>21</sup> Three of the bells there have identical inscriptions of 117 characters, while one other has just the final 23 characters of the complete inscription.<sup>22</sup> At the time of their discovery, these bells did not attract a great

- For a similar case in which a king refers to a previous command issued to the same individual, see the *First* and *Third Year Shi Dui gui* 師兌簋 inscriptions (*Jicheng* 8.4275 and 8.4318); for partial translations of the inscriptions, see Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, pp. 281–2, and for a suggestion regarding royal archives, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Confucian Classics* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1997), p. 4.
- Two other bells have made their way into American collections, one in the Cleveland Gallery of Art, and one in the collection of George Fan of Ossining, New York. For a detailed study of these bells, see Barnard, *The Shan-fu Liang Ch'i* Kuei, pp. 324–56.
- The bell in the Cleveland Gallery of Art also bears the same 117-character inscription, while the bell in the Fan collection contains 20 characters of the dedicatory portion of the complete inscription. There is some overlap between this portion and the 23-character inscription.

deal of attention, since even the complete 117-character inscription had seemed quite formulaic, and before the discovery of the *Yu Qiu pan*, there was no way to discern the identity or family background of the patron Qiu.<sup>23</sup> With the 2003 discovery of Qiu's second cache, however, numerous studies have pointed out its connection with this earlier cache, and shown that the two derive from the same individual. I would like to go further to show not only that the inscription of the bells was composed at the same time as that of the *pan*, but also that a comparison of the two inscriptions can show still further the process of their composition. Let us begin with a translation of the bells inscription.

## Qiu zhong 逑鐘

述曰:不顯朕皇考克்舊明明**戶心**, 帥用戶先且考政德, 亯辟先王. 逑御于戶辟, 不敢家, 虔夙夕敬戶死事. 天子至朕**先且服**, **多易**逑休, 令點 罰三方吳் . 逑敢對 天子不顯魯休陽, 用乍朕皇考龏弔龢鐘, 鎗 . 悤 . , ӊ . 釒。, 用追孝即各喜侃前 . 文 . 人 . 嚴才上, 赀 . 梟 . 降余多福康薨屯右永令. 逑甘萬年豐 蒼 毗臣天子 . 孫 . 永竁.

Qiu said: "Illustrious my august deceased-father, capable of making his heart clear and bright, he followed and used his prior ancestors' and deceased-father's governance and virtue to offer service to the prior king. Qiu makes supplies to his ruler, not daring to fail, assiduously morning and evening respecting his sworn responsibility. The Son of Heaven recalls my prior ancestors' duties, greatly awarding Qiu benefices, commanding simultaneously to supervise the game and forests of the four quarters. Oiu dares to respond to the Son of Heaven's illustriously fine beneficence and to extol it, herewith making for my august deceased-father Gongshu these harmonic bells. Cangcang congcong, yangyang yongyong, herewith sending filial piety to, summoning to approach, and gladdening the past cultured men. (May) the past cultured men, stern on high, abundantly send down on me many blessings, peaceful harmony, pure aid, and an eternal mandate, and may Qiu for ten-thousand years have longevity to serve the Son of Heaven, and have sons and grandsons's grandsons eternally to treasure them."

tion on the bell in the Meixian County Cultural Relics Control Station, but they are not exactly the same.

<sup>23</sup> Indeed, as noted above, n. 2, the graph of his name was variously transcribed as Lai or Mai 逨, or Su 速.

Lothar von Falkenhausen presciently selected this inscription to illustrate what he termed the "subjective mode" of inscriptions, which he describes as taking "the form of a proclamation from the donor's mouth, which sometimes paraphrases the contents of investiture records without quoting them directly."<sup>24</sup> The opening of this inscription, which quotes the patron as "saying" (Qiu *yue* 速日) the contents of the inscription, is one feature of this mode. It occurs in only about ten mid to late Western Zhou inscriptions, and it is noteworthy that half of these are on bells.<sup>25</sup> It may be that the aural nature of the bells led to a focus on orality in the inscriptions on them. On the other hand, their inscriptions were, of course, very much written, and in the case of the *Qiu zhong* it is possible to demonstrate direct precedents for virtually all of its phrases in the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription. Some of these phrases were more or less transformed as they were adapted for the *zhong* inscription, and it is especially in these transformations that we can see the scribe at work.

On the basis of a comparison of the inscription on the *Qiu zhong* with that on the *Liang Qi zhong* 梁其鐘, another late Western Zhou set of bells, Noel Barnard made the interesting suggestion that some places in it "possibly stem from textual attenuation."<sup>26</sup> The discovery now of the *Yu Qiu pan* allows us to

- 24 Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 158.
- Among other types of vessels, inscriptions that begin by quoting the patron include (in rough chronological order) the *Dong fangding* 或方鼎 (*Jicheng* 5.2824), *Meng gui* 孟簋 (*Jicheng* 8.4162), *Xing gui* 輿簋 (*Jicheng* 8.4170–4177), *Yu ding* 禹鼎 (5.2834), and *Da Ke ding* 大克鼎 (*Jicheng* 5.2836), as well, of course, as the *Yu Qiu pan*. Western Zhou bell inscriptions that begin similarly include the *Jingren Ren Ning zhong* 井人人女=鐘 (*Jicheng* 1.0109–10, 0111), *Xing zhong* 輿鐘 (*Jicheng* 1.0247–0250), *Guoshu Lü zhong* 號叔旅鐘 (*Jicheng* 1.0238–0244), *Liang Qi zhong* 梁其鐘 (*Jicheng* 1.0187–0192), and the *Shanbo Yi Sheng zhong* 單白昊生鐘 (*Jicheng* 1.0082). This last vessel doubtless derives from Shan family of which Qiu was also a member, and the wording is so similar as to suggest some cross influence between them:

單白昊生曰:不顯皇且刺考逑匹先王. 爵堇大命. 余字肈帥井朕皇且考敳德. 用保奠.

Shanbo Yi Sheng said: "Illustrious august ancestors and valorous deceased-father joined and aided the prior kings, having merit and taking care with the great mandate. I the young son have begun to follow the example of my august ancestors' and deceased-father's fine virtue, herewith protecting and stabilizing it.

Barnard, *The Shan-fu Liang Ch'i Kuei*, pp. 346–7. Barnard goes on to attribute this "textual attenuation," "effected by the artisan/scribe," to "certain technical problems." In a lengthy note to this idea, he discusses the process of an inscription's composition, but concludes that a number of questions "constitute the unknowns which limit our powers of assessment." It is not clear, to me at least, who he thinks was responsible for composing the inscription (as

demonstrate far more precisely just how this textual attenuation was produced. The inscription of the *Qiu zhong* can be divided into some seven discrete sentences, as in the following table. In the table, I provide also relevant parallels in the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription.

## 虞逑盤

零朕皇考龔叔:穆<sub>=</sub>趩<sub>=</sub>. 龢訇于政,明 陵于德, 亯辟剌王.

With my august deceased-father Gong Shu: so beautiful and so respectful, harmonious and compliant in government, bright and equable in virtue, he obeyed and assisted Li Wang.

逑肇尽朕皇且考服,虔夙夕敬朕死 事.

Qiu has begun by continuing my august ancestors' and deceased-father's responsibilities, diligently morning and evening respecting my sworn service. 肆天子多易逑休.[...] 王若曰:[...] 今余隹巠乃先聖且考, 쮍豪乃令=女 疋焚兌, 點 罰三方吳醬, 用宮御. And so the Son of Heaven has much awarded Qiu benefices. [...] The king approved of saying: [...] now it is that I recall your past wise ancestors and deceased-father and extend and increase your command, commanding you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply.

## 逑鐘

速曰: 不顯朕皇考克்醬明 野心, 即用 季先且考政德, 喜辟先王. Qiu said: "Illustrious my august deceased-father, capable of making his heart clear and bright, he followed and used his prior ancestors' and deceased-father's governance and virtue to offer service to the prior king. 述御于 季辟, 不敢家, 虔夙夕敬季 死事.

Qiu makes supplies to his ruler, not daring to fail, assiduously morning and evening respecting his sworn service.

天子巠朕先且服,多易逑休,令點 酮三方吳醬.

The Son of Heaven recalls my prior ancestors' duties, greatly awarding Qiu benefices, commanding simultaneously to supervise the game and forests of the four quarters.

opposed to engraving it [in the clay model]), the term "artisan/scribe" allowing a considerable range of possibilities.

述敢對天子丕顯魯休陽,用乍朕皇且 考寳障盤.

Qiu dares in response to the Son of Heaven's illustriously fine beneficence to extol it, herewith making for my august ancestors and deceased-father this treasured offertory *pan*-basin, 用追言于前=文=人=.

with which to send offerings of filial piety to the past cultured men.

(前文人)嚴才上, 廙才[下], 數 章 章 降逑魯多福覽 蒼 繛綰. 受余康受屯 又通彔永令需冬,

May the past cultured men be stern on high and respected below, and abundantly send down on Qiu fine and many blessings and long life everlasting, giving me peaceful harmony, pure aid, penetrating wealth, an eternal mandate and a numinous end, 这晚臣天子=孫=永寶用亯.

so that Qiu may serve the Son of Heaven. May sons and grandsons' grandsons eternally treasure and use it to make offerings. 速敢對 天子不顯魯休陽, 用乍朕 皇考龏弔龢鐘.

Qiu dares to respond to the Son of Heaven's illustriously fine beneficence and to extol it, herewith making for my august deceased-father Gongshu these harmonic bells. 鎗 悤 " 姓 錐 , 用追孝卲各侃于前 文 一人 。

Cangcang congcong, yangyang yongyong, herewith sending filial piety to, summoning to approach, and gladdening the past cultured men.

(前文人)嚴才上, 數 章 降余多福康競屯右永令.

(May) the past cultured men, stern on high, abundantly send down on me many blessings, peaceful harmony, pure aid, and an eternal mandate.

述甘萬年豐 蓋 毗 臣天子=孫=永 鎬.

May Qiu for ten-thousand years have longevity to serve the Son of Heaven, and have sons and grandsons's grandsons eternally to treasure them.

There is no need to point out the numerous similarities between these two inscriptions; reading across the rows of this display should leave no doubt as to the relationship between them. More interesting, perhaps, are the divergences between the two inscriptions.

The most obvious difference between the two inscriptions, viewed as wholes, is in their length: the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription has 373 characters while

the various *Qiu zhong* inscriptions have only 117 characters. To some extent, this can be attributed to the differences in the bronzes that carry the inscriptions.<sup>27</sup> The *Yu Qiu pan* is a round basin affording a flat writing surface with a diameter of fifty-three centimeters. The three *Qiu zhong* with the 117-character inscription stored at the Meixian County Cultural Relics Control Station are larger (reported heights of the entire bells are 65.5, 65 and 61 cm), but the surface area available to carry the inscription is much more limited. It would seem that space alone was responsible for some decisions about what could be included in this inscription. Thus, the long historical narrative of the *pan* inscription could not possibly fit on a single bell. In its place, we find an opening sentence praising just Qiu's father Gongshu, some of the language being identical with language in the *Yu Qiu pan* inscription.<sup>28</sup>

One other sentence reveals a subtle rewriting. Qiu praises his father for having followed and used his prior ancestors' and deceased-father's "zheng de 政德." Although this compound is perfectly understandable as an adjective-noun construction meaning "governing virtue," a comparison with the Yu Qiu pan's praise of Gongshu suggests that it should be read instead as an abbreviation of the epithet applied to him there: he jun yu zheng, ming qi yu de 龢訇于政, 明 读于德 "harmonious and compliant in government, bright and equable in virtue."

Another abbreviation can be seen in Qiu's prayer for blessings from the "past cultured men" (qian wen ren 前文人). Whereas the prayer in the pan inscription includes thirty-two characters, the zhong inscription makes do with only eighteen characters. This sort of abbreviation may have been impromptu; since the zhong inscription fills all available space on all three of the bells that

- Olivier Venture, "Étude d'un emploi rituel de l'écrit dans la Chine archaique (XIIIe–VIIIe siècle avant notre ère): Réflexion sur les matériaux épigraphiques des Shang et des Zhou occidentaux" (Ph.D. diss.: Université Paris 7, 2002), pp. 99, 101, 134, makes observations on how inscriptions were influenced by their visibility.
- As noted above, p. 864, Qiu's description of his deceased-father as "capable of making clear and bright his heart" is found in the *pan* inscription attributed not to Gongshu, but rather to Gongshu's own grandfather Lingbo 零怕. However, as discussed there, since Gongshu and Lingbo would have been arrayed on the same side of the Shan family ancestral temple, it is possible that they shared this sort of epithet.
  - It is also worth noting that whereas the *pan* inscription is dedicated generically to "my august ancestors and deceased-father" (*zhen huang zu kao* 朕皇祖考), which is appropriate given the lengthy narrative extolling the seven generations of ancestors that begins the inscription, the *zhong* inscription is dedicated only to "my august deceased-father Gongshu" (*zhen huang zu kao* Gongshu 朕皇祖考龔叔).

carry it, it may have been determined at the last minute that some portions of the prayer simply would not fit. On the other hand, it is also likely that the choice of what to delete—from the past cultured men being "respected below" (*yi zai xia* 廙才下),<sup>29</sup> to the desire for "penetrating wealth" (*tong lu* 通录) or a "numinous end" (*ling zhong* 霝冬)—indicates some scale of priorities.

It is in the presentation of the king's address to Qiu that we find the *zhong*'s scribe taking the greatest liberties. Whereas in the *pan* inscription, the entire address is quoted, presumably from the bamboo strips presented to Qiu at the end of his audience, the *zhong* inscription provides a highly attenuated paraphrase, quoting verbatim only the new command "simultaneously to supervise the game and forests of the four quarters." In paraphrasing the preamble of the king's address, the scribe begins by changing the person of the speech: in the verbatim quotation in the *pan* inscription, the "king" (*wang*) speaks in the first person "I" ( $yu \, \hat{x}$ ) and refers to Qiu's ancestors as "your" ( $nai \, \mathcal{P}_I$ ); in the *zhong* inscription, the king is referred to honorifically as "Son of Heaven" (*tianzi*) and Qiu's ancestors become "my" (*zhen*  $\mathbb{K}$ ). Despite the personal touch here, the following clause awkwardly reverts to referring to Qiu by name rather than by a transformation of the pronoun that the king used: "you" ( $ru \, \hat{x}$ ).

More important, two other transformations in this clause introduce grammatical ambiguity. Whereas in the *pan* inscription, the king "recalls" (*jing* 至) Qiu's "prior wise ancestors and deceased-father" (*xian sheng zu kao* 先聖祖考), the *zhong* inscription changes this to the Son of Heaven's recalling his "prior ancestors' duties" (*xian zu fu* 先祖服). Although this is perfectly grammatical in English, and may also have been grammatical in the language of the Western Zhou, I suspect that the *fu* 服 "duties" marks contamination from a previous sentence in the *pan* inscription: Qiu's characterization of his own accomplishments seen in the second row of the diagram above: Qiu *zhao zan zhen huang zu kao fu* 遂肇尽朕皇且考服, "Qiu has begun by continuing my august ancestors' and deceased-father's duties."

It is perhaps worthy of note that in the *pan* inscription, the character *xia* 下 "below" apparently failed to register in the bronze, though there is a space for it. This might lead one to imagine that the person responsible for preparing the text of the *zhong* inscription, what Barnard calls the "artisan/scribe," had the actual *pan* inscription before him as he was writing the *zhong* inscription, and was confused by the failure of the graph to register, and thus deleted this phrase *yi zai xia* 廙才下. However, such a scenario seems entirely improbable to me. I suspect instead that that a scribe wrote the text of the inscription on bamboo or wooden strips, and it was via this medium in which it was conducted to the artisan responsible for carving the inscription block.

The following five characters are also ambiguous: *duo ci Qiu xiu ling* 多易 速休令. Should the object of *ci* 易 "to award" be *xiu* 休 "beneficence" or *ling* 令 "command"? Although either reading is possible,  $^{30}$  and *xiu ling* 休令 "beneficent command" is common in mid and late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions,  $^{31}$  such a reading here would leave the following direct quotation of the king's new command to Qiu without a verb. Unless we posit the inadvertent omission of a duplication mark after *ling* 令 "command," the reading I have given in the translation, awkward though it may be, seems to be obligatory.

- It is interesting to note that the two published English translations of this inscription diverge on this point, Falkenhausen offering "many times bestowed his munificence on me. He charged me [...] ("Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 159), while Barnard gives "Su [has been] favoured with [royal] commands [=appointments]" (*The Shan-fu Liang Ch'i* Kuei, p. 346).
- 31 However, this would be the only case where *xiu ling* would be the object of the verb *ci* "to award"; all other cases involve the patron extolling (*yang* 揚) the Son of Heaven's "beneficent command."
- For a study of inexpert editing of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, see Li Feng, "Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders: Evidence from the Bronze Inscriptions of the Western Zhou Period (1045–771 B.C.), *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002): 210–42.

## Conclusions

In this study, I have examined four bronze inscriptions written for a single individual named Qiu, who lived during the last years of the Western Zhou dynasty. Given the location where these bronze vessels and bells were found, Yangjiacun of Meixian county, Shaanxi, and given Qiu's office of game and forest warden, it seems reasonable to assume that he lived about one hundred kilometers outside of the Zhou capital, though evidence in the inscriptions shows that he was also temporarily posted to other locations and other duties. On at least three occasions, he was received at royal audiences in the capital, and the awards he was given at these audiences served as the occasion for his casting of the commemorative bronzes.

Two of these inscriptions, those on the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Year Yu Qiu ding, describe these audiences in some detail: Qiu was ushered into the king's presence; the head of the royal secretariat handed the king the prepared text of Qiu's award, written on bamboo or wooden strips; the king called on another scribe to read the text on the bamboo strips to Qiu; and then Qiu was given these strips as he exited the court. This coincides with descriptions of royal audiences in other late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, and was probably the norm for all audiences, even those described in abbreviated fashion. The award documents given to Oiu then served as the basis for the inscriptions cast into the vessels commemorating these audiences and their awards. In the case of the  $42^{nd}$ Year Yu Qiu ding inscription, the award document is quoted verbatim and comprises the great bulk of the inscription, more than 200 of its total 281 characters. The remaining portion, added by Qiu or by a scribe in his employ, is a formulaic dedication of the vessel to Qiu's ancestors and a prayer for blessings for himself and his descendants. Differences in wording, especially in the mode of reference to the king, reveal the different authorial hands in these two portions of this one lengthy but structurally simple inscription.

The inscription on the Yu Qiu pan is far more sophisticated; indeed, there is only one other precedent for it in the entire inventory of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, the famous Shi Qiang pan. I have suggested that this vessel commemorated Qiu's initial appointment at court, in which he was commanded to "continue" his "august ancestors' and deceased-father's duties." In making this command to Qiu, the king recalled how Qiu's ancestors had aided the Zhou kings Wen and Wu in establishing the dynasty and caring for the great mandate. In this inscription, Qiu again quoted the royal appointment verbatim, the text of which must also have been given to him on bamboo or wooden strips. However,

in the case of this inscription, the text of the royal appointment constitutes only a minor portion of the entire inscription, just about 65 out of 373 characters, even if it can be presumed to have inspired and legitimated the rest of the inscription. The great bulk of the inscription is comprised of a historical narrative relating—generation by generation—how Qiu's ancestors had aided the Zhou kings; this narrative runs about 240 characters, or two-thirds of the entire inscription. I have suggested that Qiu, or his scribe, may have drawn on a variety of sources in composing this narrative. He certainly drew in the first instance on the text of the royal appointment that had been given to him; he may also have had reference to a saga or sagas of the Zhou kings and their exploits that would have been widely known, either in written or oral form, at the Zhou court; and to this he probably added epithets and encomia found on the spirit tablets of the ancestors in his own ancestral temple. He closed the inscription with the obligatory dedication to these ancestors, and the prayer for their blessings on him and his descendants.

At the same time that he cast this *pan* basin and its lengthy inscription, he also had cast a set of bells. Several of these bells carry an inscription obviously related to that on the *pan*-basin, but quite abbreviated, with just 117 characters as opposed to 383. Much of the abbreviation was achieved by simply deleting the historical narrative of the *pan* inscription, but other changes required different juxtapositions of phrases taken over from the longer inscription. In at least a few cases, these transformations produced an awkward effect, apparently the result of the cut-and-paste nature of their production.

It is only due to the unique circumstances that two separate caches of vessels and bells, almost all made by a single individual, have been discovered that we can compare and contrast the inscriptions, and in their similarities and differences begin to see something of the process by which the inscriptions were written. Although this is but a single example, it is almost certainly representative of the writing that was taking place throughout late Western Zhou society, and thus is an important key to the development of the Chinese literary tradition.