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## Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China: Narratives of Lineage History in the “Scribe Qiang” and “Qiu” Bronzes

Rituals of ancestral sacrifice were a key institution by which the ruling elite of ancient China staked their claims of social and political legitimacy. Organized into aristocratic lineages linked through kinship and quasi-kinship to the dynastic line of kings, the socio-political elite of ancient China defined themselves by virtue of their descent from glorious ancestors worshipped in ancestral sacrifices and celebrated in narratives of lineage history used during ritual performance. The institutions of ancestor worship have been used by scholars to study the social structure of ancient China and especially to support the assertion that the lineages defined by ancestral sacrifice represent corporate descent groups that served as the basic units of early Chinese society. While such kin groups are well documented throughout the imperial period, our view of such institutions during the pre-Qin period is much more hazy and indirect. Part of the problem is that we have been forced to reconcile two very different bodies of sources: transmitted ritual texts canonized only later, at the beginning of the imperial period, that purport to systematically describe the mourning rituals and ancestral temples of the early Zhou period, and the contemporaneous textual and material artifacts of religious practice in the form of inscriptions on bronze vessels manufactured during the Western Zhou (1045–771 BCE). Without denying the importance of the canonical texts for the study of early Chinese society, these two bodies of sources do not always relate to each other straightforwardly. Most importantly, using

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the first-mentioned sources, the ritual texts, as an interpretive framework to understand the latter – the bronze inscriptions – may in fact obscure substantial changes in Zhou social institutions that were taking place during the Warring States and early-imperial periods, when much of the ritual canon achieved its current form. With the corpus of Zhou inscriptional texts expanding rapidly over the last forty years, we are fortunate now to have enough evidence to reconsider many questions about the mechanics of early Zhou society on the basis of truly contemporaneous evidence.

Towards this end, the present paper examines two Western Zhou inscriptional texts on vessels excavated from sites in the Wei River valley of Shaanxi Province. The Shi Qiang *pan* (Scribe Qiang basin)<sup>1</sup> was discovered near the beginning of the explosion of archeological work that began in the 1970's, while the Qiu *pan* 遯 (Qiu basin) has been above ground for less than a decade.<sup>2</sup> Both texts are well known and have been subjected to comparative study in the scholarship that has emerged since the more recent discovery. Perhaps the most striking similarity between the two is the inclusion in each text of a poetical narrative that juxtaposes a list of ancestors with the lineage of Western Zhou kings.<sup>3</sup> These ancestor lists have been used by scholars to reconstruct the lineages of the sponsors and indeed the mechanics of the Zhou lineage system. While the ancestor lists of these two inscriptions clearly represent lineages in a certain sense, I will argue in this paper that such “textual lineages” must be read within the context of ancestral sacrifice, where they function primarily to establish an appropriate pedigree for the individual worshipper seeking to position himself within the social networks defined by kinship, religious

<sup>1</sup> Zhongguo kexueyuan, kaogu yanjiusuo (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Archaeology), *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1984–95), no. 10175. When applicable, initial references to bronze inscriptions are followed by their index number in this work, hereafter cited as *Jicheng*.

<sup>2</sup> Note that in much of the previous scholarship, the Qiu *pan* is referred to as the Lai *pan*, following the transcription of the sponsor's name that was used in the initial reports of the discovery. The transcription 遯 follows the suggestion of Qiu Xigui (“Du Lai qi mingwen zhaji san ze” *Wenwu* 2003, 6: 74).

<sup>3</sup> Both inscriptions have garnered a great deal of attention because they would appear to corroborate the chronology of Zhou kings provided in the *Shiji* (Records of the Historian), compiled in the early first century BCE; see for example Li Xueqin's preface to Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo et al., eds., *Shengshi jijin: Shaanxi Baoji Meixian qingtongqi jiaocang* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2003), 4–5. Attributing rather less significance to this correspondence, Lothar von Falkenhäuser argues that it indicates only that the standardized historical account of Zhou dynastic succession had become fixed already by the late Western Zhou (“The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun: New Evidence on Social Structure and Historical Consciousness in Late Western Zhou China (c. 800 BC),” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 139 [2006]: 268–70).

practice, and political alliance. While these ancestor lists provide us a view of aristocratic lineages in Western Zhou society, we must realize this view comes with a particular perspective, that of the individual sponsor of the object and the text inscribed on its surface. Before we can use these texts to study actual lineages or the lineage system of the Western Zhou, we must understand how the perspectives of the sponsors may have influenced the presentations of lineage as conveyed through these inscriptions.

In this paper the term lineage refers to the named, aristocratic lineages that dotted the Zhou political and geographic landscape. Archaeological discoveries over the last four decades have yielded an abundance of material related to one or another lineage, including several lineage cemeteries and numerous bronze inscriptions.<sup>4</sup> The corpus of bronze inscriptions contains hundreds of references to members of such lineages engaged in offering sacrifices to deceased ancestors, leading military expeditions, entering into marriage relations, or being appointed to office by the Zhou king. Indeed such individuals can be considered a primary class of actors within the corpus of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions.<sup>5</sup> References to lineages in inscriptions are almost always made through the inclusion of a lineage name (*shi* 氏) in the appellations of both living and deceased individuals.<sup>6</sup> As a working

<sup>4</sup> For attempts to incorporate recent archaeological and paleographic discoveries into synthetic studies of Zhou lineages, see Zhu Fenghan 朱凤瀚, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu* (Tianjin: Tianjin guji, 1990; rev. edn. 2004); Xu Shaohua 徐绍华, *Zhoudai nantu lishi dili yu wenhua* (Wuchang: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1994); Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Toward a Social Geography of the Zhouyuan during the Western Zhou Dynasty: The Jing and Zhong Lineages of Fufeng County," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries and Human Geographies in Chinese History* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 16–34; Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou Hoards and Family Histories in the Zhouyuan," in *Chinese Archaeology: New Perspectives on China's Past in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Xiaoneng Yang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 1: 255–67; David M. Sena, "Reproducing Society: Lineage and Kinship in Western Zhou China," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2005); and Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> On the question of whether such individuals were in fact the authors of texts inscribed on bronze vessels said to have been made by them, see Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11–13; and Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society*, 55.

<sup>6</sup> There are certainly far more references to lineage members than is apparent, because individuals are often referred to by virtue of official title and/or personal name without necessarily including the lineage name. Omission of a lineage name does not indicate that a certain individual did not belong to an aristocratic lineage. Given the examples of a single individual being referred to by different appellations – two are considered below – it seems certain that naming conventions were to a certain extent situation specific; i.e., how one referred to oneself or another depended on the particular social context. Much work on such naming conventions in Zhou bronze inscriptions remains to be done. Within the corpus of Western Zhou bronze

definition, lineage is in essence an extrapolation from the lineage name and refers collectively to the living individuals and deceased ancestors bearing a particular lineage name. While a lineage name bears some resemblance to a “family name” in that it was inherited along the line of male descent from one generation to the next, lineage names differ in that in at least some cases they were conferred on an individual by the Zhou king as part of a political act involving a bestowal of land, people, and political authority. Such conferrals would have resulted in the adoption of a new lineage name that differed from that of one’s own ancestors, even one’s own father. Such a name change, for example, is represented in the inscription of the Yi Hou Ze *gui* (Ze, Lord of Yu) to the Zhou court to receive a royal command to move ( *qian*) from Yu to Yi . Following a ceremony conferring ritual ale, special bows and arrows, settlements, and groups of people, the sponsor refers to himself using his new name Yi Hou Ze , but dedicates the vessel to his father, Yu Gong Fu Ding , to whom he refers by virtue of the old lineage name.<sup>7</sup> Proceeding in the opposite direction, it is also unclear whether or not all of one’s descendants were entitled to inherit the lineage name. This question differentiates my usage of the term lineage from that term’s typical usage in anthropology and kinship studies, in which lineage designates a corporate kin group comprising all individuals who are related by virtue of *demonstrable* descent from a common ancestor.<sup>8</sup> Indeed the correspondence between the aristocratic lineages of the Western Zhou and the type of corporate kin groups often supposed to be the basic units of early Chinese society is one of the driving questions behind my study of Zhou lineages.<sup>9</sup>

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inscriptions, references to aristocratic lineages as abstract or collective entities is decidedly less common than such references to individual lineage members.

<sup>7</sup> See *Jicheng* 4320. The inscription of the Yi Hou Ze *gui* concerns one of the lords (*hou* ) of a regional state located beyond the Wei River valley. Although important differences pertained between the states of the east and the estates of the Wei River valley, both entities were presided over by aristocratic lineages that by-and-large adopted the name of the territory as the lineage name. On the differences between the regional states of the east and the aristocratic lineages of the royal domain in the west, see Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 43–49.

<sup>8</sup> Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective* (1967; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 49–50; Roger Keesing, *Kin Groups and Social Structure* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 31. As a corporate group, lineages – in the anthropological sense – are comprised of members who “act as a legal individual in terms of collective rights to property, a common group name, collective responsibility, and so on” (idem, 148).

<sup>9</sup> On the assumption that segmentary lineages served as the basic units of early Chinese society see K. C. Chang, “The Lineage System of the Shang and Chou Chinese and Its Political Implications,” in *Early Chinese Civilization: Anthropological Perspectives*, Harvard-Yenching

The Scribe Qiang (or, Shi Qiang) bronze basin was discovered among the items in the famous Zhuangbai (Fufeng, Shaanxi) cache discovered in 1976. The discovery occurred in the old Zhou homeland at the foot of Mount Qi, an area known today as the Zhouyuan (or, Zhou Plain).<sup>10</sup> Buried sometime during the ninth or eighth century BCE, the Zhuangbai cache contained bronze ritual implements created over a period of at least four generations of the Wei lineage, beginning two generations before the sponsor of the Scribe Qiang basin itself, and ending a generation or perhaps two following. Best represented in the cache is Scribe Qiang's son, Wei Bo Xing (癸, sponsor of forty-three vessels).<sup>11</sup> The seniority marker *bo* ("eldest") in Wei Bo Xing's name is significant, because it indicates not only that he was the eldest member of his generation but also the head of the Wei lineage in his generation, a status that he would have inherited from his father, Scribe Qiang.<sup>12</sup> In succeeding to the role of lineage head, Wei Bo Xing and Scribe Qiang before him were inheriting the ritually senior position among living members of the lineage.<sup>13</sup> Among the various responsibilities that this role may have entailed, maintenance of the ancestral rituals would have been paramount to the legitimacy of the lineage head as well as that of the Wei lineage itself within the Western Zhou social context. As I will argue below, these concerns are evident in the text of the Scribe Qiang basin.

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Institute Monograph Series, vol. 23 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 72–92; and Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> The discovery was initially reported in Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui, "Shaanxi Fufeng Zhuangbai yihao Xi Zhou qingtongqi jiaocang fajue jianbao" (Shaanxi Fufeng Zhuangbai Yihao Xi Zhou Qingtongqi Jiaocang Fajue Jianbao), *Wenwu* 1978, 3: 1–18. Early studies are collected in Yin Shengping, *Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazhu qingtongqi qun yanjiu* (Beijing: Wenwu, 1992). See also Cao Wei, ed., *Zhouyuan chutu qingtongqi* (Chengdu: Ba Shu, 2005), 522–967.

<sup>11</sup> Wei Bo Xing is referred to by a variety of different appellations in different inscriptions. Many of the inscriptions refer to him using only the personal name, Xing 癸. The relationship between Wei Bo Xing and Scribe Qiang can be reconstructed by cross referencing the ancestral names in the various Zhuangbai inscriptions.

<sup>12</sup> Such seniority markers, known as *paihang* in Chinese scholarship, are related to a system of primogeniture and were apparently conferred on individuals at the age of one's majority in the following order: *bo*, meaning eldest; *zhong*, meaning middle; *shu*, meaning younger; and *ji*, meaning youngest. The *Yili* implies that such markers were conferred as part of a capping ceremony; *Yili zhushu*, in *Shisan jing zhushu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980; reprint 1982), 1: 3.957. Though the use of seniority markers is abundant in the inscriptional corpus, there is no epigraphic evidence regarding when or how such markers were conferred. Over time, seniority markers came to indicate not only seniority within a generation but also among the lines descended from different sons. For a comprehensive discussion of this issue, see Robert Gassmann, *Verwandschaft und Gesellschaft im alten China: Begriffe, Strukturen und Prozesse* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 198–206.

<sup>13</sup> On the nature of a lineage head, see Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 44–49. In the east-

Because it is one of the most well-known and well-studied of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, I will limit my discussion to those features of the inscription that are salient to my comparison with the Qiu basin that follows.<sup>14</sup> Scribe Qiang's account begins not with his own ancestors, but with the lineage of the Zhou kings starting with the dynastic founder, King Wen (r. 1099–1050),<sup>15</sup> who lived roughly a century and a half before Scribe Qiang. Following this, generation by generation, the text characterizes the heroic qualities and accomplishments of the next five Zhou kings. We can see in the account a sort of standard narrative of dynastic history taking shape: King Wen's reception of a divine mandate,<sup>16</sup> and King Wu's (r. 1049/45–1043)

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ern lands conquered by the Zhou in the early years of the dynasty, the head of an aristocratic lineage was the ruler (*hou*) of a regional state that included one or more settlements, attached fields, and people of varying degrees of dependence. As Li Feng has shown, a rather different set of institutions and nomenclature pertained in the Wei River valley that was the Zhou homeland, traditionally referred to as the royal domain. There lineage heads are typically denoted simply by the seniority marker *bo* that indicated their status as the eldest of their generation. What precisely was the difference between a lineage estate in the west and a state in the east? An important difference may well have been one of scope, judging from the concentration of lineage remains in the Wei River valley. Since many of the eastern states began more as outposts in newly conquered territory, there tended to be larger expanses of rural areas surrounding the settlements of the regional states, areas which were gradually integrated into a more complex hierarchy of settlements as the eastern states evolved, eventually, following the fall of the Western Zhou, into the bounded, centralized states that would emerge in the Warring States period. Estates in the Wei River valley would have had far less room to grow, with complicated patterns of landholding and exchange that were occasionally disputed in legal settlements preserved in the inscriptions of Western Zhou bronzes. Key questions remain, particularly the degree of political authority wielded by a lineage head within his estate as well as the role of the royal administration there.

<sup>14</sup> Among the important studies and translations of the Scribe Qiang basin are: Yin, *Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazhu*, which collects previously published studies and transcriptions by several leading paleographers, including, most importantly, Tang Lan, “Luelun Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazhu jiaocang tongqun de zhongyao yiyi: Shaanxi Fufeng xin chu Qiang pan mingwen jieshi”

, *Wenwu* 1978, 3: 19–24; Qiu Xigui, “Shi Qiang pan ming jieshi”, *Wenwu* 1978, 3: 25–32; and Li Xueqin, “Lun Shi Qiang pan ji qi yiyi”, *Kaogu xuebao* 1978, 2: 149–58 (citations below reflect the pagination in Yin, *Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazhu*). See also Shirakawa Shizuka, *Kinbun hoshaku* (1978–83): 50.15: 335–97; Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 183–92; Chen Bingxin, “Qiang pan mingwen jishi”, *Wenwu yanjiu* 8 (1993): 157–67; Ulrich Lau, *Quellenstudien zur Landvergabe und Bodenübertragung in der westlichen Zhou-Dynastie (1045?–771 v. Chr.)*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 41 (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1999), 184–204; and Li Ling, “Chongdu Shi Qiang pan”, in *Jijin zhuguo shi: Zhouyuan chutu Xi Zhou qingtongqi jingcui* : (Beijing: Wenwu, 2002), 42–57.

<sup>15</sup> Reign dates in this paper follow those proposed in Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, xix. Unless otherwise mentioned, all dates in this paper are BCE.

<sup>16</sup> Although the term *tianming* is not used in the inscription, the statement here clearly echoes the sentiment in the “Duo shi” chapter of the *Shangshu* in stating that King Wen, having received the favor of Shangdi, the high god of Shang, assembled a coalition of states that would eventually overthrow the Shang dynasty.

conquest of the Shang dynasty. Even King Zhao's (r. 977–957) military campaigns against two southern enemies, known from other historical sources to have ended in failure, are celebrated as the main accomplishment of that reign. The idealized and poetical account of the Zhou kings runs through seven generations, ending with the reigning Son of Heaven, who is praised for following the model of his aforementioned ancestors and for extending the ruling mandate bestowed on the royal lineage by Heaven.<sup>17</sup>

The second half of the text, roughly corresponding to the block of inscriptional text on the left-hand side of the basin, concerns Scribe Qiang's own lineage. As with the account of the royal Zhou lineage, the passage begins with remote history – perhaps prehistory – and the high ancestor of the Wei lineage, who evidently lived before the Zhou conquest of the Shang and may well have been attached to the Shang court.<sup>18</sup> The conquest is remembered as a pivotal moment for the lineage. An unnamed Wei ancestor is said to have given allegiance to the Zhou conqueror, who has the lineage resettled in the old Zhou homeland, where this cache was discovered some three thousand years later. In the inscription, we see that the Zhou king serves as the origin of the beneficent command to the Wei lineage in much the same way that Shang Di conferred its favor on the royal lineage in the first half of the inscription.

While these remote ancestors are referred to generically, as “high ancestor” (*gaozu* 高祖) or “shining ancestor” (*liezu* 烈祖), the references become more specific beginning with an ancestor who lived probably three generations before Scribe Qiang.

Compassionate and kind is the Yi Ancestor. He was a counterpart for his sovereign. Far-reaching in his plans and steadfastly true,...<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> By convention the reigning king is not mentioned by name. The Scribe Qiang basin is typically dated to the reign of King Gong (r. 917–900) based on the fact that King Mu (r. 956–918) is the last deceased king mentioned in the inscription. For an argument against this consensus, see Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society*, 56–64.

<sup>18</sup> Huang Shengzhang 黄圣章, “Xi Zhou Wei jiazou jiaocang tongqiqun chubu yanjiu,” *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 1978, 3; reprinted in Yin, *Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazou*, 156–59.

<sup>19</sup> The interpretation of the final two graphs of this line has defied consensus. Tang (“Luelun Xi Zhou Wei shi jiazou,” 125) reads the phrase as *zi na* 子纳, meaning “...this he brought.” Qiu (“Shi Qiang pan ming jieshi,” 274–75) reads the phrase as *ziji* 孜孜, meaning “diligent.” Li (“Lun Shi Qiang pan,” 241–42) reads the phrase as *zi ce* 子则, meaning “able to accompany.” Shaughnessy (*Sources of Western Zhou History*, 189) reads the phrase as *zi na* 子纳 and translates as “son’s acceptance,” which he takes as the object of *you* 有 “to plan.”

<sup>20</sup> Transcriptions of bronze inscriptions in this paper adopt standardized graphs to reflect the underlying word without attempting to reproduce the form of the original graph used to

Clear and bright is secondary Ancestor Xin. He propagated and nurtured sons and grandsons, [bringing] abundant fortune and many blessings. Even-horned and gleaming, suitable were his sacrificial offerings.

Long-lived and reposeful was my cultured father Yi Gong. Strong and bright, he obtained purity. Not obstructing planting and sowing, the yearly harvest was thrust open.

Beginning with the Yi Ancestor 懿, three generations of lineage ancestors are praised for their merit in the propagation of the lineage by fulfilling ritual obligations, by raising sons and grandsons, and by fostering a rich harvest on lands attached to the lineage. Although service to the royal court is implied in the statement about the Yi Ancestor, no such duties are mentioned for Ancestor Xin 辛 and Yi Gong 公, whose achievements relate specifically to their role as lineage head.

The account leads inexorably to the sponsor of the vessel and living descendant of the Wei lineage, Scribe Qiang. As the head of an aristocratic lineage, Scribe Qiang inherits a set of obligations to his own ancestors, the most important of which would be the fulfillment of ancestral sacrifices on a regular and timely basis. An essential precondition of this duty is Scribe Qiang's ability to live up to the example set by his ancestors. The inscriptional text makes this claim by characterizing Scribe Qiang as filial, congenial, and diligent.

Filial and congenial is Scribe Qiang. Day and night he is not lax. May he daily be praised for his merit. I, Qiang, not daring to be hindered, in response extol the Son of Heaven's greatly illustrious beneficent command. [Qiang] hereby makes [this] precious sacrificial vessel. May [my] illustrious ancestors and cultured father show favor and give Qiang flourishing resplendence, fortunate peace, blessed wealth, august old age, and long life, [thereby] enabling him to serve his sovereign. May [this vessel] be treasured and used for ten thousand years.

黼虎

In presenting himself, Scribe Qiang emphasizes his diligence in maintaining the endeavor of his ancestors and in earning recognition for

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indicate that word. Orthographic loans are generally left unannotated, except in a few cases in which the nature of the loan is obscure.



those efforts. Although the inscription mentions a command from the Son of Heaven, this is not clearly related to any royal charge directed specifically at Qiang. Instead, this mandate may refer more generally to that bestowed on the Wei lineage by the early Zhou kings, a bond that was renewed in each generation. As for the relationship between Qiang and his ancestors, it is reciprocatory. The sacrificial vessel and the offerings it was meant to contain are dedicated in the hope of a return in the form of blessings from the ancestors and the associated benefits: peace, wealth, and longevity. Yet these are not the only things bequeathed to Scribe Qiang by his ancestors, for it is through the ancestors that the mandate of the Zhou king, originally conferred on the lineage by the first Zhou king, is transmitted from one generation to the next. Like the Zhou King, Scribe Qiang inherits this mandate only through succession. It is by virtue of his *succession* to a long line of meritorious ancestors that Scribe Qiang assumes his position in the Zhou social and political order. Thus the foregoing narrative account of those ancestors serves not only to solicit blessings by singing their praises, but also to establish a pedigree for Scribe Qiang that links him directly to the origin of the lineage's mandate.

Roughly a century after Scribe Qiang commissioned his basin, the son of a different aristocratic lineage, by the name of Shan 申, commissioned a set of vessels to be used in sacrifice to his own ancestors. Discovered only in 2003 at Yangjia 杨家村, Meixian 梅县 county, Shaanxi,<sup>21</sup> this cache of bronze vessels quickly commanded great scholarly attention because of another basin that contained a long inscription similar in certain respects to that of the Scribe Qiang basin. The so-called Qiu basin contained a long narrative of lineage history that included a genealogy of Zhou kings that stretched over ten generations, mentioning by name all but the final two Western Zhou kings. This unique feature immediately called to mind the inscription of the Scribe Qiang basin, which over the course of the intervening three decades had be-

<sup>21</sup> The discovery was first published in Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 陕西省考古研究所, Baoji shi kaogu gongzuodui 宝鸡市考古工作队, Meixian wenhuaguan 梅县文化局 and Yangjia cun lianhe kaogudui 杨家村联合考古队, "Shaanxi Meixian Yangjiacun Xi Zhou qingtongqi jiaocang" 陕西梅县杨家村西周青铜器窖藏, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 2003, 3: 3-12. Photographs, rubbings and transcriptions of the vessels were published in Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 陕西省考古研究所 et al., eds., *Shengshi jijin: Shaanxi Baoji Meixian qingtongqi jiaocang* 盛世吉金: 陕西宝鸡梅县青铜器窖藏 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2003). The excavation report is available in Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, Baoji shi kaogu gongzuodui and Meixian wenhuaguan, "Shaanxi Meixian Yangjiacun Xi Zhou qingtongqi jiaocang fajue jianbao" 陕西梅县杨家村西周青铜器窖藏发掘简报, *Wenwu* 2003, 6: 4-42. For a comprehensive English-language study of the discovery and translations of all the inscriptions, see Falkenhausen, "Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun," 239-95.

come one of the most important and thoroughly-studied inscriptions in the corpus. Because of these similarities, interpretations of the Qiu basin have been conditioned by the Scribe Qiang inscription, obscuring subtle but informative differences in the claims made by these two extraordinary texts.

The primary sponsor of the vessels contained in the Yangjia cache is a figure named Shan Shu Wufu Qiu 遯, though within various inscriptions he is referred to by four distinct appellations that include only selected elements of his full name: the lineage name Shan 山, the seniority marker *shu* 舒, the style name (*zi* 子) Wufu 无夫, and the birth name (*ming* 名) Qiu 遯.<sup>22</sup> The composition of the cache, which reflects a regulated assemblage, and uniformity of surface decor demonstrate the identity of the sponsor of twenty-six of the twenty-seven vessels found. Although I generally refer to this figure as Qiu in this paper, the appellation Shan Shu 山舒, used in the inscription on a set of nine *li* tripods is significant because it identifies Qiu as a younger member of the Shan lineage.

In spite of the apparent similarity of the inscriptions on the Scribe Qiang and Qiu basins, the two texts are configured quite differently. Rather than providing distinct narrative accounts of the royal lineage followed by the aristocratic lineage, the inscription on the Qiu basin intertwines these accounts in a generation-by-generation narrative of each ancestor's service to the Zhou king, as well as the major accomplishments of the reign.

Qiu said: "My greatly illustrious high ancestor Shan Gong was valiantly able to make clear and wise his virtue and to support and assist King Wen and King Wu, who, beating the Yin,<sup>23</sup> received Heaven's fine mandate, extended [it] to encompass the four quarters,<sup>24</sup> and completely settled the territory that they had toiled for, thereby becoming a mate for the Lord on High. 遯

<sup>22</sup> These elements are combined in various ways to form the appellations Qiu, Shan Shu, Shan Wufu, and Shu Wufu used in the inscriptions of this cache. For a fuller discussion of these elements and the use of dual personal names within the Yangjia cache, see Sena, "Reproducing Society," 117–20. For a broader discussion of personal names, see Gassmann, *Verwandschaft und Gesellschaft im alten China*, 487–533.

<sup>23</sup> The expression *ta Yin* 伐纣 also appears in the Scribe Qiang basin.

<sup>24</sup> The phrase *pu you si fang* 普佑四方 appears also in the inscription of the Scribe Qiang basin in the description of King Wen's accomplishments. The same phrase appears in the inscription of the Xing *zhong* 夙 (Jicheng 251), also discovered in Zhuangbai, as well as the Da Yu *ding* (Jicheng 2837).

<sup>25</sup> The transcription and translation rely on the following studies: Dong Shan 董山, "Lue

Ah! My august high ancestor Gong Shu! He was able to be a match for King Cheng, who successfully received the great mandate. When those who were distant did not present offerings, he there-with settled the ten thousand states of the four regions.

Ah! My august high ancestor Xin Shi Zhong!<sup>26</sup> He was able to make his heart tranquil and bright. He conciliated the distant and enabled the near. He joined together with and assisted King Kang, who brought in those who did not come to court.

Ah! My august high ancestor Hui Zhong Lifu!<sup>27</sup> Stabilizing and harmonizing in his governing and successful in [his] plans,<sup>28</sup> he thereby joined together with King Zhao and King Mu, who ex-tended their governing to the four quarters and cut down and at-tacked the Chu and Jing.

廛

Ah! My august high ancestor Ling Bo!<sup>29</sup> He made his heart clear and bright and did not fail in... his service. He was thereby able to serve King Gong and King Yih as sovereigns.<sup>30</sup>

<..>

lun Xi Zhou Shan shi jiazou jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen”  
*Zhongguo lishi yanjiu* 2003, 4: 40-50; Li Ling , “Du Yangjiacun chutu de  
 Yu Qiu zhu qi” , *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 2003, 3: 16-  
 27; Li Xueqin , “Meixian Yangjiacun xinchu qingtongqi yanjiu”  
 , *Wenwu* 2003, 6: 66-73; Qiu, “Du Lai qi mingwen zhaji san ze,” 74-77; Falkenhaus-  
 en, “Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun,” 278-79. Philological apparatus is generally omitted  
 below; see Sena, “Reproducing Society,” 81-86, for fuller discussion.

<sup>26</sup> The epithet used for this ancestor is not a standard temple name such as those used in this inscription for the Zhou kings and most of the other Shan ancestors. The phrase *xin shi* means “new chamber,” possibly a reference to a shrine or some other subdivision within the Shan ancestral temple. Lothar von Falkenhausen has interpreted this epithet as an indication that this ancestor had been the founder of a new branch lineage (“Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun,” 259).

<sup>27</sup> The ancestor Hui Zhong Lifu can be identified with the sponsor of five bronze vessels (*Jicheng* 6011-13, 9899-9900) discovered in the same Meixian County in 1955. Referred to simply as Li in those inscriptions, prior to the excavation of the 2003 cache there had been absolutely no way to discern Li’s affiliation with the Shan lineage.

<sup>28</sup> Note that the phrase *li he yu zheng* is also used within the inscription of the Scribe Qiang basin to describe King Wen.

<sup>29</sup> Note that the graph used to indicate the temple name is *ling* , which I here read as a loan for the common temple name *ling* .

<sup>30</sup> The graph between and is not legible. The graph “his” is a likely possibility given the grammar. In this inscription appears several times as a verb with the king as its object. That verb is understood here in the putative sense of the noun “ruler, sovereign,” i.e. “to treat as sovereign” > “to serve (the sovereign).”

Ah! My august grandfather Yi Zhong Kuang!<sup>31</sup> He was remonstrating and able to broadly protect his sovereigns, King Xiao and King Yi, who once again became established in the Zhou state.<sup>32</sup>

敷

Ah! My august father Gong Shu! Solemn and respectful, he was harmonizing and fair in his governance, bright and orderly in his virtue. He devoted [himself to] and served King Li as sovereign.

In each case, an ancestor of the Shan lineage is characterized in terms of the positive qualities that allowed each one to support, serve, or ally with one or more of the Zhou kings. Although each statement begins with a Shan ancestor as the topic, most statements pivot on the mention of the Zhou king, which is followed by a statement of the king's accomplishments, given in highly formulaic terms that demonstrate a great deal of intertextuality with the Scribe Qiang basin and other inscriptions that contain statements about the former Zhou kings.<sup>33</sup> The intertwining of the two lineages is significant, because it serves to highlight the relationship of service that pertained between members of the Shan lineage and the Zhou kings, a relationship that is said to have persisted for ten generations, from the conquest through the tenth Zhou king. As a pedigree for the vessel sponsor, Qiu, it sets up a precedent of faithful servants to the Zhou royal house.

The long narrative culminates with the living descendant and worshipper, who pledges to succeed to the tradition of service set by his ancestors.

[I,] Qiu, undertake to succeed my august ancestors' service. Reverent day and night, I respect my sworn duty. Accordingly, the Son of Heaven greatly awarded blessings to Qiu. May the Son of Heaven for ten-thousand years without end, [until he is] elderly and ven-

<sup>31</sup> Li, "Meixian Yangjiacun xinchu qingtongqi yanjiu," 67, understands the graph 敷 not as part of Yi Zhong's name but as part of the predicate.

<sup>32</sup> This statement perhaps refers to the reestablishment of the old Zhou capital after repeated invasions into Hao during the preceding reign of King Yih (r. 899–873). The *Zhushu jintian* records that King Yih moved the capital from Zongzhou to Huaili in his 15th year, as discussed in Li Feng, *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 BC* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), 99. An alternative interpretation reads 敷 as *yōu*, with the result that the phrase *you cheng yu Zhou bang* would mean something like "had achievement in the state of Zhou."

<sup>33</sup> Note that in two cases the statement ends abruptly with mention of the king's name. No accomplishments are listed for Kings Gong, Yih, and Li (r. 857–842). One might speculate as to whether or not such omissions are meaningful, intending to express judgment with regard to the irregularities of dynastic succession following the reigns of Yih, who was succeeded by his uncle, and Li, who was forced into exile during the Gong He interregnum (841–828).

erably aged, protect and settle the Zhou state and admonish and rule over the four quarters. 遼

遼

Parallel to the format of the preceding entries, Qiu expresses his commitment to serve the ruler and his wish that the reigning sovereign continue the precedent set by the royal ancestors, the former Zhou kings, in exercising a stable and vigorous rule. That is, the intertwining strands of each narrative end together in the present generation, cementing the relationship of service that pertains between the royal and aristocratic lineage.

The long narrative of lineage history is prelude to the final two sections of the inscription, in which a command from the Zhou king and a response by Qiu serve to recreate a ritual exchange by which Qiu was invested with specific duties to be exercised in service to the Zhou court. Like the previous section, this exchange highlights the interrelation of the royal and aristocratic lineages.

The king said to this effect: “Qiu! Greatly illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate, extending [it] to encompass the four quarters. Then it was because your sagely ancestors supported and assisted the prior kings that they [could] honor and respect the great mandate. Now, continuing the line of your ancestors, I augment and extend your command and order you to assist Rong Dui and to conjointly administer the game-parks and forests of the four quarters with which to supply the official halls. I award you red knee-pads, a black belt, and a bit and bridle.”

遼

黠

The command to Qiu is contained in a direct quote by the Zhou king that provides a compacted version of the intertwined narrative in the first part of the inscription, mentioning the merits of the Zhou kings and the support of the Shan lineage. If the command recorded in the inscription is indeed a quote of a command text uttered in a ritual ceremony, we might understand the preceding narrative of lineage history as an elaboration of the short, summary statement contained in the royal command. The command itself charges Qiu to continue his ancestors’ tradition of service, ordering Qiu to assist in the administration of the royal hunting grounds and forest reserves on behalf of the Zhou king. The royal command is then consummated by an act of



pertained between Qiu's ancestors and the line of Zhou kings.<sup>34</sup> Third, the inclusion of the king's command, which charges Qiu to continue the tradition set by his ancestors and which contains a specific assignment of royal duties, shows that Qiu's merit – and perhaps his identity within the lineage – is intimately connected with his role of service to the royal court. What might account for these differences?

The solution to this question lies in the differential status between Scribe Qiang and Qiu within their own lineages. Unlike Qiang, the sponsor of the Qiu basin was not the most senior member of his generation and therefore unlikely to have been head of his lineage. This is strongly indicated by Qiu's full name, Shan Shu Wufu Qiu, which can be reconstructed from other bronze inscriptions in the cache. The element *shu* in Qiu's full name indicates that there were at least two members of the lineage more senior than himself. As a younger member of his lineage, Qiu would have had a different set of prerogatives and obligations than the lineage head with regard to ritual performance as well as service to the Zhou court.<sup>35</sup> Such ties of service would have served not only the individual, but of course the entire lineage. The service of lineage sons in the Zhou court, like marriage, was one of the principal means by which the Zhou aristocratic lineages renewed their bonds to the Zhou royal lineage.<sup>36</sup>

In the case of the Qiu basin, not only is the vessel sponsor a younger member of his lineage, but so too are many of the ancestors

<sup>34</sup> Falkenhausen ("Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun," 270–71) also notes the rhetorical force of such an arrangement, though he assesses it in terms of the lineage as an undifferentiated whole rather than a reflection of the sponsor's own position within the lineage, as argued below.

<sup>35</sup> This does not imply that lineage heads did not also serve regularly in the Zhou government. Indeed evidence from Zhuangbai alone suggests that the lineage narrated in the Scribe Qiang basin regularly served in official positions within the Zhou court, as indicated by the official title Scribe (*shi* 史) used by Qiang, and Document Maker (*zuoc* 作册), which was used in an inscriptional text appearing on several vessels sponsored by Zhe 折, Qiang's ancestor in the second generation ascending. That inscription, as well as another sponsored by Feng, Qiang's ancestor of the first generation ascending, portrays the sponsor as accepting commands from the Zhou king at court. Several Zhuangbai inscriptions record Scribe Qiang's descendant Xing receiving gifts at the Zhou court, but none record appointment to a specific office; see the inscriptions of the Xing *xu* (*Jicheng* 4462–63), 3rd-year Xing *hu* (*Jicheng* 9726–27), and the 13th-year Xing *hu* (*Jicheng* 9723–24), as well as the discussion in Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Ritual Music in Bronze Age China: An Archaeological Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988), 2: 994–99.

<sup>36</sup> For an example of this phenomenon within the Jing 景 lineage, see Sena, "Reproducing Society," 256–89. Though the Jing lineage was likely based in the upper Qian River valley, younger sons of the lineage seem to have occupied residences in some of the major administrative centers of the royal government. On the relationship between the aristocratic lineages and the Zhou royal cities, see Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 154–56.

mentioned in the lineage narrative. Of the seven ancestors mentioned, only a single one is indicated as the eldest member of his generation. This observation has tremendous consequences for the interpretation of the ancestor list in the Qiu basin. For one, we must recognize that the ancestor list on the Qiu basin does not delineate the line of Shan lineage heads; such a reading is incompatible with the principle of primogeniture, which is well supported in the traditional literature as well as in the inscriptional evidence.<sup>37</sup> In general it is the eldest male of the generation who assumes the role of lineage head. Of course even within a system of primogeniture, contingencies intervene. Should the eldest male pre-decease the father or otherwise be unable or unsuitable to take on the role of lineage head, we might expect that status to fall on a younger sibling. Nonetheless, with only a single *bo* among the seven ancestors listed, contingencies of the sort mentioned above would seem a highly improbable explanation for such a pattern of succession.

A further consequence of this observation is that it calls into question the genealogical relationships indicated by the ancestor list. By and large scholars have assumed that the ancestor list indicates a line of father-son relationships from the lineage founder all the way down to the vessel sponsor.<sup>38</sup> Such a reading would imply that as the younger son of a younger son of a second son, etc., Qiu was so far removed from the main line that his designation as Shan Shu would be utterly meaningless in that it could be carried by such a large number of distant descendants.<sup>39</sup> Based on the usage of lineage names and seniority markers in the inscriptional corpus, I believe that a designation such as Shan Shu indicates a much more exclusive position within the lineage. That is, Qiu is clearly part of a core group of males in his generation that defined the lineage by virtue of their nearness to the main line of descent defined by the succession of the most senior male in each generation. But if we rule out direct father-son relationships, how then are we to interpret the relationships among the different individuals mentioned in the ancestor list?

An answer to this question is suggested by the differential roles played by younger sons of the lineage. As a younger son of his genera-

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>38</sup> Li, “Meixian Yangjiacun xin chu qingtongqi yanjiu,” 68. Dong (“Lue lun Xi Zhou Shan shi jiazou jiaocang qingtongqi mingwen”) is a notable exception, proposing that the ancestors mentioned in the inscription are simply a collection of illustrious ancestors of the lineage, an interpretation I ascribe to, as indicated below.

<sup>39</sup> This seems to be the position advocated by Falkenhausen, who also doubts that the ancestor list of the Qiu basin reflects direct, father-son relationships (“Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun,” 266–67, 272–73).



tion, Qiu does not succeed to the social, religious, and political roles of the lineage head. Those roles would have been reserved for his elder sibling. Qiu's true predecessors are the younger sons of each generation, his uncles, great-uncles, etc., by whose service the Shan lineage maintained its connection to the Zhou court. These are the ancestors whose service is recalled in the narrative of lineage history provided by Qiu. Thus we can see the ancestor list of the Qiu basin not as a genealogy, but rather as a pedigree that supported Qiu's succession in his particular roles both within the lineage and within the broader socio-political context. We might imagine that in constructing such a pedigree, Qiu would have had choices, highlighting particular ancestors, omitting others.<sup>40</sup> Thus the "lineage" provided in the inscription is not simply a reflection of kinship relations, but a creation of the text designed to bolster the political and social claims of its sponsor.

Does this conclusion imply that the ancestor list of the Qiu basin is somehow fictitious? I do not believe so. That individuals such as Qiu would have had leave to invent a genealogy out of whole cloth, representing that fiction not only to the living members of one's family but also to the very ancestors that are the object of one's prayers seems improbable to say the very least. My claim, rather, is that we misinterpret the ancestor list of the Qiu basin by presupposing that it represents a genealogy, by presupposing that ancestors arrayed in succession must refer to direct relationships. Such a claim is not made in the text itself.<sup>41</sup>

Rather, we best understand both inscriptions by considering them within the context of ancestor worship and in light of the worshipper's need to portray himself as a worthy successor to a long line of virtuous and accomplished ancestors. The bronze object and the inscription serve not only to demonstrate one's worthiness to the ancestors, but also to position oneself within the political and social hierarchies of Zhou aristocratic society by calling attention both to one's achievement and also to one's pedigree. The narratives of lineage in these and perhaps other inscriptions serve to array that pedigree within the sanctity of the ancestral temple and the sacrificial cult.

<sup>40</sup> As suggested in *ibid.*, 274.

<sup>41</sup> This interpretation must lead us to question also the meaning of terms like *zu* 祖 and *kao* 考 in the inscription. Translation in terms of living relationships, e.g. "grandfather" and "father," obscures the specialized nature of these terms as ancestral designations. The relevant relationship is one of ancestor-descendant rather than grandparent-grandchild or parent-child. For further discussion of this issue, see Sena, "Reproducing Society," 87–89.

Having drawn these conclusions about the textual “lineages” in these inscriptions, what if anything can we then say about the nature of actual aristocratic lineages such as Wei and Shan? First, the inscriptions of the Scribe Qiang and Qiu basins, as well as many others, demonstrate quite clearly that the relationship to the Zhou royal lineage was vital to the identity of an aristocratic lineage. That relationship may have begun with a singular act of creation or recognition on the part of a Zhou king, but it was constantly celebrated and renewed in the religious texts of ancestor worship. Second, aristocratic lineages included both elder and younger members of each generation, clearly differentiated by the seniority markers *bo*, *zhong*, *shu*, and *ji*. Third, while particular privileges and obligations might be reserved for the lineage head, younger sons clearly played a crucial role in the maintenance of that vital relationship with the Zhou court through service in the Zhou administration. The effect of these institutions was to set up in the various localities and regional polities of the Zhou realm a structure of political authority that was parallel to the royal lineage, with a clearly differentiated priority of succession based on seniority. Like a dynastic structure, the political authority of aristocratic lineages could be transmitted over generations, but there was a key difference in that the legitimacy of the aristocratic lineage depended not only on descent from illustrious ancestors, but also on maintaining the relationship with the Zhou king. Because of this, younger sons of aristocratic lineages played crucial roles that were differentiated from that of the lineage head.

What can we say with regard to the question of whether Zhou aristocratic lineages represent corporate descent groups? Within the bronze inscriptional corpus, there is little evidence that definitively points to the corporate nature of aristocratic lineages. References to lineages are almost exclusively through the names of specific individuals rather than groups. More fundamentally, lineage structures served to ensure the vertical continuity of political authority by restricting lineage name to a core group of descendants defined by closeness to the main line of patrilineal descent. Contrast this to the types of corporate kin groups that would eventually become well established in Chinese society, especially after ca. 1000 CE, in which lineages served to forge group solidarity and pool resources across a broad and expanding social group represented by all those descended from a common ancestor.<sup>42</sup> While

<sup>42</sup> On the distinction between pedigree and lineage in the anthropological sense, see James L. Watson, “Chinese Kinship Reconsidered: Anthropological Perspectives on Historical Re-

this lack of evidence does not preclude the existence of corporate descent groups in Zhou society, we must seek the evidence for corporate social and religious institutions in archaeological remains and written records that provide a broader view of early Chinese society. To claim that segmental lineages are the basic units of society based only on evidence relating to an institution that was intimately related to the Zhou political system and restricted to the most elite strata of that society would seem to go well beyond our current evidence.

Returning again to the issue of historical sources, this suggests that we must also be cautious about reading the later descriptions of ancestral temples and mourning rituals contained in canonical texts onto the early Zhou period. As an idealized and systematized presentation of antiquity, neither can such materials be used as a corpus of ethnographic data of the sort anthropologists use to typologize the kinship systems of different societies. The truth of the matter is that we lack such descriptive observation of ancestor worship and kinship during the early Zhou period. Instead, the inscriptional corpus provides us a valuable archive of textual artifacts related to practices of ancestor worship. This is not to say that bronze inscriptions are informative only within the realm of that religious practice, for it would seem abundantly clear that ancestor worship was intertwined with many of the social and political processes that pertained among the aristocratic elite of the early Zhou period. But the underlying context of ancestor worship does provide us with another clue to help us use these sources with greater sensitivity to the unique perspectives, motives, and agendas of the particular human actors involved in their production.

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*Jicheng*      *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng*

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search," *The China Quarterly* 92 (1982): 593–95; 616–17. On the transformation of kin groups during the Song period, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organization," in *Women and the Family in Chinese History, Critical Asian Scholarship* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 107–10, originally published in *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000–1940*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and James L. Watson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).