MARITAL ALLIANCES AND AFFINAL RELATIVES (SHENG AND HUNGOU) IN THE SOCIETY AND POLITICS OF ZHOU CHINA IN THE LIGHT OF BRONZE INSCRIPTIONS

Maria Khayutina

Early China / FirstView Article / October 2014, pp 1 - 61
DOI: 10.1017/eac.2014.7, Published online: 02 October 2014

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0362502814000078

How to cite this article:

Request Permissions : Click here
MARITAL ALLIANCES AND AFFINAL RELATIVES (SHENG 甥 AND HUNGOU 婚購) IN THE SOCIETY AND POLITICS OF ZHOU CHINA IN THE LIGHT OF BRONZE INSCRIPTIONS

Maria Khayutina*

Abstract

Several hundred inscribed bronze objects dating from Western and Eastern Zhou periods were commissioned for or by married women. Several dozen inscriptions are known whose commissioners called themselves sheng 生 (甥) of a number of lineages. In pre-Qin Chinese, the term sheng 甥 designated several categories of affinal relatives: paternal aunts’ sons, maternal uncles’ sons, wives’ brothers, sisters’ husbands, and sons of sisters or daughters. The wide geographical and chronological spread of female- or sheng-related vessels, as well as dedications to “many affinal relatives” (hungou 婚購) in bronze inscriptions point to the importance of marital ties in early Chinese society and politics.

Focusing on the inscriptions commissioned by sheng, the present article suggests that even when concluded at a considerable distance, marriages produced long-term mutual obligations for male members of the participating lineages or principalities. Affinal relationships represented social and political capital that could be converted in terms of individuals’ careers and prestige or benefits for their whole lineages/states. In sum, starting from the early Western Zhou period, marital alliances represented a substantial integrative factor in early Chinese politics. On the one hand, marital alliances helped to consolidate the radial network of Zhou states centered on the Zhou king. On the other hand, they facilitated the construction of decentralized regional and interregional inter-state networks. The latter guaranteed the stability of the Zhou political system even

* Maria Khayutina, 夏玉婷, University of Munich; email: mkhayutina@sinsits.com.

This article has been written under the auspices of the Graduiertenkolleg “Formen von Prestige in Kulturen des Altertums” at the University of Munich where I participated as post-doctoral fellow in 2007–2009. I wish to thank Hans van Ess, Thomas Höllmann, Edward Shaughnessy, Chen Zhaorong, Katheryn Linduff and Armin Selbitschka, as well as the anonymous readers for Early China for their remarks and suggestions at different stages of this research. All errors are my own responsibility.

when it had a weak center. As a result, the Zhou networks did not fall apart following crises in the Zhou royal house, but continued to expand by the inclusion of new members.

Several hundred inscribed ritual bronze vessels dating to the Western Zhou (1045–771 B.C.E.) and Spring and Autumn periods (770–403 B.C.E.) known up to today were made on the occasion of concluding marriage, and were usually commissioned by men for their daughters, sisters, or spouses. Besides, several dozen vessels are known that were commissioned by or mentioned persons whose designations include the word sheng 生 (甥) that identified several kinds of male relatives by marriage.1 A smaller number of bronze vessels bear dedications to relatives by marriage (hungou 婚媾) in general. The wide geographical spread of vessels made on the occasion of marriage, or referring to existing marital relationships indicates the high relevance of marital alliances between aristocratic lineages2 and principalities3 in Zhou

1. The kinship term sheng has no direct English equivalent and, therefore, will be rendered in transliteration in the following. Other kinship terms or titles making parts of persons’ designations will be transliterated and translated at their first appearance. Transliterated kinship terms and titles will be emphasized by italic type in order to distinguish them from lineage or personal names.

2. The term “lineage” as used here corresponds to the Chinese zongzu 宗族, a “consanguineal kin group comprising persons who trace their common relationship through patrilineal links to a known ancestor” (Paul Chao, The Chinese Kinship (London: Kegan Paul International, 1983), 19). Robert Gassmann renders zu as German “Sippe,” i.e. lineage, and zong as “Stamm,” i.e. a higher-level lineage including several zu (see Robert Gassmann, Verwandtschaft und Gesellschaft im alten China. Begriffe, Strukturen und Prozesse (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 63, 173). Lineages had surnames xing 姓 which they retraced to divinized ancestors who allegedly lived centuries ago and were surrounded by legends. Associations of lineages sharing the same surname are often referred to as “clans” (see e.g. Edwin G. Pulleyblank, “Ji and Jiang: The Role of Exogamic Clans in the Organization of the Zhou Polity,” Early China 25 (2000), 1–27; Lothar von Falkenhausen, The Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC). The Archaeological Evidence (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of Los Angeles, 2006), 23, 118, 169–203; Gassmann, above, 37). David Sena argues that “clans in the Western Zhou did not exist as social groups of people who ever convened or practiced any form of collective behavior” (David Sena, Reproducing Society: Lineage and Kinship in Western Zhou China (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 2005), 8). Although this extreme view may be challenged, this is not the objective of the present research and, for instance, I agree in not using the term “clan” but follow Robert Gassmann in assessing lineages of the same surname as “surname communities” (“Namensgemeinschaft,” see Gassmann, above, 37–45).

3. It is difficult to define various agents of the political interaction during the Western Zhou period. Li Feng suggests distinguishing between metropolitan lineages
China. The present article is based on the analysis of marriage-related inscriptions and offers some observations with regard to particular forms and geographical extension of marital alliances, as well as to their significance for the understanding of the socio-political organization of Zhou China.

The first section shows how marital alliances between Zhou and non-Zhou lineages or principalities are reflected in inscriptions dedicated to, made for, or made by females. The second section, based on the analysis of thirty-seven cases of sheng mentioned in bronze inscriptions included in the *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成, discusses how early Chinese elites instrumentalized their affinal relationships for enhancing their status, gaining prestige, concluding new marital alliances, communicating with third parties, or making war. The third and fourth sections are based on more recently discovered inscriptions and consider in detail individual cases of Diao sheng 瑢生 and

who lived in territories under the direct control of the Zhou king and “regional states” (see Li Feng, *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045-771 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 121–40). Li Feng recognizes that “regional states” were self-sufficient, but their rulers acted as “agents” of the Western Zhou state and the subordinates of the Zhou king (see Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. 270). I am not yet convinced that all geopolitical units in Early China, especially those that were not founded as colonies but either were in place already before the Zhou conquest or emerged in various places during the Western Zhou period, were subordinated to the Zhou king to the same degree and participated in the Western Zhou “state” in the same way. Notwithstanding possible differences in their relationships with the Zhou royal house, many units had similar authority structures: they were ruled by lineages whose heads were positioned as “princes” whose status was much elevated over every other member of the local society (this is particularly visible in the architecture and equipment of their tombs). Hence, such units will be defined in the following as “principalities.”

4. Under “non-Zhou” I understand socio- and geopolitical entities retaining their cultural specifics and existing outside of the Zhou political network centered on the Zhou king. From the Chinese perspective, they were perceived as “aliens,” often rated to Rong 戎, Di 狄, Man 蠻, and Yi 夷 groups of peoples, or called by individual names.

5. Zhongguo kexue yanjiuyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學研究院考古研究所, *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成 (hereafter *jicheng*), 18 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1984–94); see also *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng shiwen* 殷周金文集成釋文, 6 vols. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2001); Zhang Yachu 張亞初, *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng yinde* 殷周金文集成引得 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2001); Chinese Ancient Texts Database CHANT powered by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (www.chant.org) and Digital Archives of Bronze Images and Inscriptions powered by the Academia Sinica, Taiwan (www.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/~bronze/). The *jicheng* includes more than 12,000 rubbings of Shang and Zhou inscriptions published before 1980, of which 7,499 items are dated to Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods.
Rong sheng, shedding light on intra- and interlineage relationships, as well as on some of the political effects of marital alliances. The final section argues that marital alliances should be acknowledged as a major factor of political cooperation in Early China, starting from the early Western Zhou and during the Spring and Autumn periods.

**Marital Alliances in the Light of Female-Related Inscriptions**

Several hundred inscriptions listed in the *Jicheng* identify ritual bronze vessels as dedicated to, made for, or made by women. They include presents given to women as dowry by their parents or other relatives, wedding presents given to wives by husbands, vessels dedicated by sons to their (usually deceased) mothers, vessels made by women for themselves, for their ancestors, for their parents-in-law, or for other women (daughters, sisters, or other female relatives). Such inscriptions often, but not necessarily, identify a woman’s surname (*xing*) that did not change after marriage. Among the inscriptions of the early Western Zhou period included in the *Jicheng*, 15 are commissioned for or by Ji姬-surnamed, 15 by Si姒-surnamed, 11 by Jiang姜-surnamed, and 7 by Ji姞-surnamed women. There are also many inscriptions dedicated to women whose surname is not indicated. The number of female-related inscriptions increased with the passage of time, following the wider access to bronze-casting technology and the spread of literacy.

There was no single format for recording lineage names (*shi*) of married women. They could be identified either by their husband’s lineage, or by their native lineage depending on who was the speaker and whom he or she was addressing. Female-related inscriptions testify that during the Western Zhou period, the rule of surname exogamy was generally observed. The cases of its violation are attested

---

6. The Western Zhou period is conventionally subdivided into three subperiods: Early (King Wu to King Zhao, 1045–957 B.C.E), Middle (King Mu to King Yi, 956–858 B.C.E), and Late (King Li to King You, 857 to 771 B.C.E). The Spring and Autumn period is similarly subdivided in Early (c. eighth–mid-seventh centuries B.C.E), Middle (c. mid-seventh–mid-sixth centuries B.C.E) and late (c. mid-sixth–fifth centuries B.C.E).


very seldom. The requirement to marry outside of even distant patri-
kin and quasi-kin created the basic precondition for alliance-building
across geographic space.

Most principalities established after the Zhou conquest of the Shang
c. 1045 B.C.E) were ruled by lineages of the Ji and Jiang surnames.
During pre-kingly times, the Ji and the Jiang possibly represented
two exogamic moieties that intermarried with each other endogami-
cally. Inscriptions of the Western Zhou period testify to the existence
of the preferential marital partnership between Ji-and Jiang 姜-surnamed
lineages. Most striking is that Jiang-surnamed women seem to
be married exclusively to Ji-surnamed men. Several queens or concu-
bines of Zhou kings were Jiang-surnamed women, including King’s
伯姜, and King’s Spouse, the Elder [Daughter] of Ji, [Lady] Jiang 王婦
(紀)孟姜. Also rulers of Ji-surnamed principalities Wei 衛, Xing 邢,
Guo 蠡 and Jin 晉 had Jiang-surnamed consorts. At the same
time, Zhou kings took spouses of various other surnames including

---

9. For violations during the Western Zhou period see Sena, Reproducing Society,
206 and 299–300; during Spring and Autumn period, see Melvin P. Thatcher,
“Marriages of the Ruling Elite in the Spring and Autumn Period,” in Marriage and
Inequality in Chinese Society, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley
10. See Krijukov, Formy social’noj organizacii, 151; E. G. Pulleyblank, “The Chinese
and Their Neighbors in Prehistoric and Early Historic Times,” in The Origins of the
Chinese Civilization, ed. David N. Keightley (Berkeley: University of California Press,
11. In all Western Zhou cases listed in the jicheng where the lineage of Jiang
women’s husbands is recorded, it can be verified that the latter were members of
the Ji surname community. Some inscriptions do not specify the men’s principality
or lineage, and therefore the possibility that some of them were non-Ji cannot be
ruled out completely.
12. See Zuoce Ze Ling gui 作冊夨令簋 (jicheng 4301, Mangshan Mapo 邙山馬坡,
Luoyang 洛陽市, Henan, Early Western Zhou; mentions King’s Jiang); Qi ding 旗鼎
(jicheng 2704, Yangjiacun 楊家村, Meixian 麟縣, Shaanxi, Early Western Zhou;
mentions King’s Jiang); Wang bo Jiang ding 王伯姜鼎 (jicheng 2560, Wujiazhuan 吳家莊,
Bei Guo 北郭, Qishan 崤山, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou; mentions King’s Jiang); Wang zuo Zhong Jiang
ding 王作仲姜鼎 (jicheng 2191, Meixian, Shaanxi, Middle Western Zhou); Wang zuo
Jiang shi gui 王作季簋 (jicheng 3570, Zhouzhi 益屨 County, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou);
Wang fu Ji meng Jiang yi 王妃孟姜彝 (jicheng 10240, Late Western Zhou).
13. Wei Wen-jun furen li 衛文君夫人叔姜鬲 (jicheng 595, Junxian Xin cun 濟縣辛村,
Henan, Tomb M5, Late Western Zhou); Xing Jiang dazai Si gui 邢姜大宰巳簋 (jicheng
3896, Late Western Zhou); Guo Jiang ding 郭姜鼎 (jicheng 2742, Late Western Zhou);
Jin Jiang ding 晉姜鼎 (jicheng 2826, Hancheng 韓城, Shaanxi, Early Spring and Autumn).
Ren 妲 (任), Ji 妲 (己), Ji 姝, or Gui 妳. Heads of various branches of the Guo 姝 lineage were married to women of Ji, Ji, Ying 燕, and Yin 殷 surnames. It is noteworthy that women of the same surname could originate from different lineages.

Inscriptions permit us to estimate the geographical extent of marital bonds (cf. Map 1). For instance, the occupant of the late Western Zhou Tomb 63 in the Jin cemetery at Tianma-Qucun 天馬——曲村, Houma 侯馬, Shanxi, identified by excavators as the spouse of a ruler of Jin, was a Ji-surnamed lady from Yang 楊 princess. Yang was located in Hongdong 洪洞 County of present-day Shanxi province, roughly 100 km to the north of the Jin capital. The early Spring and Autumn period's Tomb 1753 in the cemetery of Guo at Shangcunling, Sanmenxia, Henan, has yielded a tripod dedicated to the Daughter of Su 蘇子. Su was a Ji-surnamed principality in Wen 溫 County, Henan, roughly 200 km from Guo.

Other inscribed bronzes provide testimonies to alliances concluded over a much greater distance. An early Western Zhou vessel discovered in the area of the royal center Zongzhou 宗周, was commissioned by Qi Jiang 齊姜, i.e. a woman of the Jiang-surnamed ruling lineage of Qi 齊 principality located in Shandong province.

14. See Wang Ren zuo gui 王姓作簋 (jicheng 3344, Luoyang, Henan, Early Western Zhou); Wang zuo Feng Ren Shan he 王作豐妊單盉 (jicheng 9438, Lintong 臨潼 County, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou); Su gong gong gui 蘇公簋 (jicheng 3739, Late Western Zhou; dedicated to King’s Ji 王姬); Chen hou gui 陳侯簋 (jicheng 3815, Lintong 臨潼, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou; dedicated to King’s Gui 王姬).


16. See Qian shu Ji-fu xu 邊叔吉父簠 (jicheng 4416, Middle Western Zhou; dowry for Guo wang Ji 虢王姬) and Shou shu Mian-fu xu 蘇 Modelo (jicheng 6202, Late Western Zhou) from the cemetery of Guo in Shangcunling identified as dowry for The Elder [Lady] Ji 孟姬 (see Henan sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, Beijing daxue kaoguxue xi, 天馬——曲村遺址北趙晉侯墓地第四次發掘, Wenhui 1995.1, 4–31). These women belonged to Qian and Shou lineages respectively.


18. See Shu zuo Su-zi ding 叔作蘇子鼎 (jicheng 1926, Shangcunling 上村嶺, Sanmenxia, Henan, Tomb M1753, Early Spring and Autumn); for further evidence see Su He dou 蘇盉豆 (jicheng 4659, Shangcunling, Sanmenxia, Henan, Tomb M1820, Early Spring and Autumn); Su Zhi Ren pan 蘇晉مناقش (jicheng 10118, Early Spring and Autumn; dedicated by Lady Ren of Su to her daughter Lady Ji of Guo). For the localization of Su, see Chen Pan, Chunqiu dashibiao lieguo, 264–98.

19. See Qi Jiang ding 齐姜鼎 (jicheng 2148, Fengxi 濮西, Zhangjiapo 張家坡, Chang’an, Shaanxi, Early Western Zhou).
Map 1. Early China (c. ninth century B.C.E.)
Zhou tripod found in the royal metropolitan center Zhou-under-Qi was dedicated to Ji Mother, i.e. a woman from Ji (紀), another Jiang-surnamed principality located in Shandong, but even farther to the east. Ji provided also at least one late Western Zhou queen or a royal concubine, Elder [Daughter] of Ji, [Lady] Jiang (紀姜). These women from Shandong travelled a distance of 1,200 and more kilometers from their native places in order to join their bridegrooms in lineages in metropolitan Zhou areas in Shaanxi. A lady from the Gui-surnamed Chen (陳), located in Huai River valley near Huaiyang in Henan, also had to overcome a distance of more than 900 kilometers in order to join another Zhou king during the late Western Zhou period. Not only the royal house, but also ruling houses of other principalities took wives from far-away places. According to transmitted sources, Lord Mu of Jin 晉穆侯 (r. 811–785) married Lady Jiang from Qi (齊姜), the travel distance to which along ancient roads would constitute about 800 km.

During the Western Zhou period, the Zhou faced a variety of lineages that retained their autonomy and stayed outside of the Zhou political hierarchy. Some of them reached the same level of complexity as Zhou units conventionally defined as “principalities” in the present article. Their leaders identified themselves as 王 (“king”), gong (公), and wang (王). The oldest royal residence, regularly used by the Zhou kings during the Western Zhou period, was located on the Zhou Plain in present-day Qishan and Fufeng Counties of Shaanxi Province. It was referred to in bronze inscriptions as Zhou and in received texts as Qi Zhou 西周 (Zhou [under the Mount] Qi), Qixia 西下 ([Zhou] under [the Mount] Qi), or Qiyi 西邑 (Settlement [under the Mount] Qi). In order to distinguish the name of the residence from the name of the dynasty, I call it “Zhou-under-Qi.” For the discussion of royal residences and for further references see Maria Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity (1046/5–771 BC),” T'oung Pao 96.1–3 (2010), 1–73.

20. The oldest royal residence, regularly used by the Zhou kings during the Western Zhou period, was located on the Zhou Plain in present-day Qishan and Fufeng Counties of Shaanxi Province. It was referred to in bronze inscriptions as Zhou and in received texts as Qi Zhou (Zhou [under the Mount] Qi), Qixia 西下 ([Zhou] under [the Mount] Qi), or Qiyi 西邑 (Settlement [under the Mount] Qi). In order to distinguish the name of the residence from the name of the dynasty, I call it “Zhou-under-Qi.” For the discussion of royal residences and for further references see Maria Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity (1046/5–771 BC),” T‘oung Pao 96.1–3 (2010), 1–73.

21. See Ji mu ding 罡母鼎 (Jicheng 2146, Huangdui 黄堆, Fufeng, Shaanxi, Early Western Zhou).

22. Ji was originally located in Shouguang in eastern Shandong (see Li, Landscape and Power, 308; 315–16 with further references).

23. See Wang fu Ji meng Jiang yi 王婦紀孟姜彝 (Jicheng 10240, Late Western Zhou).

24. See Chen hou gui 陳侯簋 (Jicheng 3815). According to the Chinese tradition, Duke Hu of Chen 陳胡公 was the son-in-law of King Wu of Zhou (see Ban Gu 班固, Han shu 漢書 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983], 28.1653 (“Di li zhi” 地理志)).


26. For evidence of the usage of the royal title by non-Zhou rulers, see Ze wang fang ding 矢王方鼎 (Jicheng 2149, Early Western Zhou); Rong X wang you 戎□王卣 (Jicheng 5324, Fendong 淇東 Doumenzhen 斗門鎮, Chang’an, Shaanxi, Early Western Zhou); Feng wang fu 豐王斧 (Jicheng 11774, Yixian 易縣, Hebei, Early Western Zhou); Sui
公 ("duke" or "patriarch"), or bo 伯 ("first-born" or "eldest").

The usage of the title "king" by the ruler of Ze identifies Ze as an autonomous political unit, since in the Zhou hierarchy there could be but one king. However, the significance of titles should not be overemphasized. Otherwise, principalities whose rulers did not claim kingship and who used Chinese titles or birth ranks to identify themselves can easily be confused with regular members of the Zhou network, which is contraproductive for revealing the political complexity of

27. The terms bo 伯, zhong 仲, shu 叔, ji 季 are usually understood as seniority ranks distinguishing siblings in a family according to their birth sequence. They can be translated as "First-born," "Second-born," "Third-born," and "Junior," respectively. A family with more than four sons could include several zhong or shu. E.g., Zhou King Wen had several shu sons (see Sima Qian 司馬遷, Shi ji 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 4.126 ("Zhou ben ji 周本記"). This system of birth ranks was referred to as paihang 排行 ("arranging the rows") in later literature. Within a lineage structure, branches could be also referred to as zhong, shu, or ji depending on the birth rank of their founders (see Gassmann, Verwandtschaft und Gesellschaft, 198–206).

28. See Ze wang fang ding 夬王方鼎 (Jicheng 2149, Early Western Zhou); Chu gong Ni zhong 楚公逆鐘 (Jicheng 106, Wuchang 武昌, Hubei, Late Western Zhou); Yu bo li 魚伯鬲 (Jicheng 507, Rujiazhuang 茹家莊, Baoji 寶雞, Shaanxi, Middle Western Zhou).

29. The political autonomy was not necessarily coupled with cultural or ethnic foreignness. There are indications that Ze in bronze inscriptions corresponds to Yu 虞 in transmitted texts (see Ch'en Chao-jung, "On the Possibility That the Two Western Zhou States Yu and Rui Were Originally Located in the Qian River Valley," in Imprints of Kinship: Studies of Recently Discovered Bronze Inscriptions from Ancient China, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, forthcoming)). Yu was founded by King Wen's uncle, who was his father's elder brother. The usage of the royal title by the rulers of Ze/Yu is plausibly related to their elevated status in the hierarchy of Ji-surnamed lineages (see Maria Khayutina, "King Wen, a Settler of Disputes or Judge? The "Yu-Rui case" in Sima Qian's Historical Records and Its Historical Background," forthcoming). In one bronze inscription the ruler of Guo was referred to as "king of Guo" (see Qian shu Ji-fu xu 遣叔父父匜 (Jicheng 4416, dedicated to Guo wang Ji 虢王姞, Middle Western Zhou). This may also be related to the fact that the Guo lineage was founded by King Wen's brother. However, this inscription was commissioned not by the ruler of Guo, but by Guo's marital partner. Hence, it is not clear whether Guo's rulers openly used the royal title within their domain. On the other hand, there is much evidence that members of the Guo lineage subordinated themselves to Zhou kings.
Early China. For example, the First-born of Yu could mistakenly be identified as the head of a regular Zhou lineage. But non-Zhou features in the archaeological complex of Yu discovered near Baoji, Shaanxi, and the splendor of its funerary equipment of the tombs of Yu’s rulers suggest that it was a culturally idiosyncratic entity with considerable resources and competing for prestige with neighboring influential Zhou lineages. At the same time, evidence of Yu’s subordination to the Zhou royal house is lacking. The location in a strategically favorable place and connections to other non-Zhou units in the west allowed Yu to retain autonomy during several generations of its rulers. Hence, Yu can be assessed as a non-Zhou principality. During the last decade, cemeteries of other geopolitical entities presumably

30. Unlike wang (“king”) and hou 侯 (“lord”), which were specific political terms, the terms gong and bo, often translated as “duke” and “earl,” were embedded in the system of patrilineal kinship relationships. The position of a bo, the First-born, defined a person’s hereditary rights to represent his lineage as a political body. As far as non-Zhou rulers succeeded to power by hereditary descent, they naturally also used the Chinese term “First-born” to refer to themselves. Many commissioners of bronzes calling themselves bo dedicated inscriptions to their deceased fathers whom they addressed as gong. Li Feng suggests that heads of lineages referred to as bo controlled territorial units bang 邦 subordinated to the Zhou king and not qualifying as more autonomous guo 國, i.e. “regional states,” or principalities, ruled by hou (see Li, Landscape and Power, 47–48). However, I doubt that the Zhou political terminology was that systematic (for a similar view see Leonard Sergeeviç Vasil’ev, Dreívni Kitaj. Tom I. Predystorija, Shan-in, Zapadnoe Čzou (do VIII v. do n. e.) [Ancient China. Vol. I. Prehistory, Shang-Yin, Western Zhou (up to the eighth century B.C.E)] (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 1995). The term bang was applied both to Zhou and non-Zhou political units with various degrees of autonomy (for references see Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution,” 29, fn. 67). In some cases, heads of one lineage could be referred to alternatively as bo and gong, or as hou and gong and bo (cf. Rui bo hu 芮伯壶, Jicheng 9585, Middle Western Zhou; Rui gong hu 芮公壶, Jicheng 9586, Late Western Zhou; Ying gong ding 應公鼎, Jicheng 2553, Early Western Zhou; Ying hou gui 應侯簋, Jicheng 3860, Middle Western Zhou; Ying bo xu 應伯簠, Pingdingshan M95, Late Western Zhou, in Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo, “Pingdingshan Ying guo mudi jiushiwu hao mu de fajue” 平頂山應國墓地九五號墓的發掘, Huaxia kaogu 1992-3, 92–103). In these cases the titles bo, hou and gong most plausibly identified various roles of the heads of ruling lineages within and outside their principalities.

established by non-Zhou peoples have been discovered, including the Kui-surnamed Peng 倬, residing near to Hengshui 橫水 in the Yuncheng 遼城 region in south-eastern Shanxi and Ba of unknown surname near Yicheng 翼城 in central Shanxi. These cemeteries focused on the large and splendidly equipped tombs of their leaders who also identified themselves as “First-borns.” Judging by the funerary equipment of these tombs, rulers of Peng and Ba attempted to compete in size and wealth against the neighboring Ji-surnamed Jin during a certain period of time. Possibly, other non-Zhou groups such as Ji-surnamed E 畢 in northern Hubei, or Yín-surnamed Xú 徐 located on the edge of present-day Henan, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Shandong provinces also represented lineage-based principalities.

Members of the Zhou political hierarchy from the bottom to the very top could engage in marital alliances with non-Zhou principalities. They included Zhou kings, rulers of Zhou principalities and heads of aristocratic lineages not qualifying as a principality, as well as other members of their lineages. In particular, one queen of the early Western Zhou period was a woman of Yun 員 surname from an unknown principality, whereas during the late Western Zhou, Zhou


34. According to various transmitted sources, during the Western Zhou period Xú was ruled by a king and was able to threaten the Zhou (see Fan Ye, Hou Han shu, 2808; Wang Guowei, Jin ben Zhushu jinian shu zheng, 278). Archaeological corroboration for the early history of Xu is still lacking.

35. See Gong shu gui 叔簋 (Jicheng 3950, 3951, Fengdong 濁東, Chang’an, Shaanxi, Middle Western Zhou).
kings were allied with women from Ji-surnamed E and Ji-surnamed Fan located near Xinyang in southern Henan. It is not clear whether Zhou kings also married out their daughters to non-Zhou rulers. On lower levels, brides were exchanged in both directions. For example, a woman from the Ji-surnamed Jing lineage was married to the First-born of Yu, whereas the Third-born of Jing was married to a woman from Man-surnamed Deng in Dan River Valley. The Second-born of Peng married his daughter to the Ji-surnamed Bi lineage residing near Xi’an in Shaanxi, whereas Bi provided the spouse for the First-born of Peng.

Zhou and non-Zhou concluded both short- and long-distance marital alliances. Kings of Ze and the rulers of Yu exchanged brides with lineages from the Zhou royal centers Zhou-under-Qi and Zongzhou, i.e. within reach by a journey of several days. On the other hand, Jing lineage’s marital partner Deng resided more than 200 kilometers to the south on the other side of the Qinling Mountains. Deng, in its turn, intermarried with the Ji-surnamed principality Ying located at Pingdingshan, Henan, 270 km to the north-east along the modern road. The royal house of Zhou’s marital partner Fan was located more than 700 kilometers away, in Huai River Valley. Fan, in its turn, was involved in a marital alliance with another branch of the royal Ji community, the ruling lineage of Lu principality located 600 km to the east in Qufu, Shandong. Ji-surnamed Yan, located near present-day Beijing, intermarried with

36. See *E hou gui* 畿侯簋 (*Jicheng* 3928, Late Western Zhou; dedicated to King’s [Spouse Lady] Ji 王姞).
37. See *Wang li* 王鬲 (*Jicheng* 645, Late Western Zhou; dedicated by the king to Fan Ji 畿妃). The character 妃 in the woman’s name should be read not as fei (“concubine”), but Ji 己, where the graph “woman” identified the gender of the recipient.
39. See *Deng zhong xizun* 鄧仲犧尊 (*Jicheng* 5852, Fengxi, Zhangjiapo, Chang’an, Shaanxi, Middle Western Zhou).
40. See *Peng zhong ding* 蘆仲鼎 (*Jicheng* 2462, Middle Western Zhou; dowry present for Bi Kui 畿婦). For bronzes commissioned for Bi Ji 畿姬 (late Middle Western Zhou) see Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, “Shanxi sheng kaogu xian Hengshui Xi Zhou mu fajue jianbao,” 4–18.
41. See *Ze wang gui* 夬王簋 (*Jicheng* 3871, Early Western Zhou; dedicated to Zheng Jiang 鄭姜) and *San bo gui* 散伯簋 (*Jicheng* 3778, Late Western Zhou; dedicated to Ze Ji 夬姬).
42. See *Deng gong gui* 鄧公簋 (*Jicheng* 3775, Pingdingshan, Henan, Late Western Zhou; dowry present for Ying Man 應嫚).
43. See *Lu hou li* 魯侯鬲 (*Jicheng* 545, Late Western Zhou; dedicated to Ji Fan 姬番).
Ba, to which a c. 900-km-long road led across the Taihang Mountains in Shanxi. Thus, the Zhou not only accepted the “aliens” with whom they lived side by side, but also purposely selected partners, even if they lived at a greater distance.

Various rationales can be suggested behind the institution of interstate marriages. Most obviously, marriages across the borders of a principality guaranteed the highest possible level of nobility to the offspring resulting from them, and thus supported the prestige of ruling lineages. Short-distance alliances enhanced security, preventing, for instance, territorial disputes with neighbors. Long-distance alliances could prevent competition among potential marital partners from neighboring principalities for the right of establishing the “first lady” and their interference in internal politics. Both short- and long-distance marital alliances allowed large principalities to extend their sphere of influence effectively or symbolically. To small principalities, they promised the support of marital partners in critical situations. As the following recently published inscription illustrates, these alliances were of substantial assistance in the organization of defense:

唯十月初吉壬申。驭戎大出于楷。害搏戎，执讯，获馘。楷候釐害馬四匹，臣一家，貝五朋。害揚楷候休，用作楷中好(子)寶。

It was the tenth month, first auspicious day ren-shen. The Rong driving chariots came out in Kai in great [numbers]. Hai fought the Rong, captured and interrogated [them] and collected the ears [cut off from the heads of dead enemies]. The Lord of Kai made to Hai a gift of four horses, one family of servants, and five strings of cowries. Hai responded to the beneficence of the Lord of Kai, and used this opportunity to make a treasure for Second-born Lady Zi of Kai.

The inscription suggests that Lady Zi of Kai was Hai’s wife or mother. Hence, Hai was an affinal relative of the Zi-surnamed Kai lineage, which he came to rescue at a time of danger.

44. One bronze vessel discovered in the cemetery of Ba was commissioned by Lord Zhi of Yan 燕侯旨 and dedicated to his “aunt and sister” 姑妹 (see Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo Dahekou mudi lianhe kaogudui, “Shanxi Yicheng xian dahekou Xi Zhou mudi,” 12).
45. Constance Cook has suggested regarding women transferred in the result of marriage as “inalienable goods,” which, among others, contributed to prestige of the recipients (see Constance C. Cook, “Wealth and the Western Zhou,” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 60.2 (1997), 253–94, esp. 256).
46. Hai gui 害簋, Middle Western Zhou, in Liu Yu, Jin chu Yin Zhou jinwen jilu er bian, Nr. 425.
Some non-Zhou principalities involved in marital relationships with the Zhou had previously participated in wars against them. E headed a coalition of the Yi of Huai River in their joint campaign against the Zhou. This war plausibly took place during the reign of King Li 厉 (857–842/828 B.C.E.). Two bronze tureens are known that were made by the Lord of E for King Li’s Lady Ji. Judging from their appearance, they date to the late Western Zhou period and, therefore, most probably were made after this war. In this case marriage could serve to appease the former enemies. Transmitted sources support the view that marriage was conceivable as a means of concluding peace. For instance, the marriage of Zhou King You 幽 (r. 781–771 B.C.E.) and Lady Si 姜 of Bao 褒 located in the upper course of Han River in the south of Shaanxi was concluded immediately after a war. Bao Si’s case demonstrates that women given in marriage to winners enjoyed high status and their sons could even become pretenders to the throne (which, however, resulted in the rebellion organized by the king’s father-in-law and was sharply disapproved of in subsequent historical memory). In this case, a marital alliance between the former rivals signified the establishment of partnership and not just subjugation of the vanquished, which would have been accompanied by women’s servitude. Hence, marital alliances with former enemies helped to maintain peace in Zhou China.

Sheng and hungou in Bronze Inscriptions

Inscriptions commissioned by or mentioning sheng 生 date from early Western Zhou to the late Spring and Autumn period (see Table 1).

footnote continued on next page
Table 1. Sheng in Bronze Inscriptions from Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Designation, Jicheng number, date</th>
<th>Location and context (Tomb/T; Hoard/H; unclear (U))</th>
<th>Lineage(s) specified in the designation</th>
<th>Inscription’s content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Xiaozi sheng</em> 小子生 6001, EWZ.</td>
<td>n/a (possibly a relative of the Zhou royal house).</td>
<td>Was commanded by Zhou king to control the affairs of an unspecified ducal lineage 公宗.</td>
<td>Dedication to elder brothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Peng sheng</em> 彭生 2483, EWZ.</td>
<td>Peng 彭, possibly, Jiang-surnamed, near Xuzhou 徐州, Jiangsu.</td>
<td>Was commanded by Shao bo 召白 to go on a mission in Chu 楚. Dedicated vessels to grandfather Ri Ding 日丁 and Ri Wu 日戊.</td>
<td>“Started to exchange generosities with many Ying” (貯休多贏). Dedication to ancestors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Sheng Secretary</em> 生史 4100, 4101, MWZ.</td>
<td>Huangdui 黃堆, Fufeng 扶風, Shaanxi (T).</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Dedication to deceased father Gui gong 癸公.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Qi sheng</em> 齊生魯 9896, MWZ.</td>
<td>Liulongzui 流龍嘴, Qishan, Shaanxi (U).</td>
<td>1) Qi 齊, Jiang-surnamed, Shandong; 2) possibly, Lu 魯, Ji-surnamed, Qufu, Shandong.</td>
<td>“Started to exchange generosities with many Ying” (貯休多贏). Dedication to ancestors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continued*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Designation, Jicheng number, date</th>
<th>Location and context (Tomb/T; Hoard/H; unclear (U))</th>
<th>Lineage(s) specified in the designation</th>
<th>Inscription’s content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yi sheng 伊生 3631, MWZ.</td>
<td>Yi 伊, surname unknown, in Shangluo 上洛, Henan (cf. 4323).</td>
<td>Dedication to Gong nü 公女 (either father and mother, or father- and mother-in-law).</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cheng Guo Qian sheng 城虢遣生 3866, M-LWZ.</td>
<td>1) Guo 虢, Ji-surnamed, in Sanmenxia 三門峽, Henan; 2) Qian 遣, Ji-surnamed, in Yinyangluo 陰陽洛, southwestern Henan (cf. 10322; 4323).</td>
<td>Was mentioned as an assistant at a royal reception ceremony in Zhou-under-Qi (supposedly, reign of King Xuan, 825 BC).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Secretary Guo sheng 史虢生 4324, LWZ.</td>
<td>Guo, as in Nr. 7.</td>
<td>Commanded by the Zhou king “to administer the ducal lineage(s), ministers and secretaries” 司公族、卿事、大史寮.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fan Ju sheng 番叔生 9705, LWZ.</td>
<td>1) Fan, as in Nr. 9; 2) Ju 叔, surname unknown.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Liao sheng 蒺生</td>
<td>Huyang, Nanyang, Henan</td>
<td>Followed the king in a campaign against southern Huai Yi. Commissioned a tureen together with Great [Lady] Yun 大嬪.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Zhou Ji sheng 周棘生</td>
<td>1) Zhou royal house, Ji-surnamed; 2) Ji 棘 lineage, possibly, in southern Henan.</td>
<td>Made a dowry present for [Lady] Yun of Kai 楷嬪.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Han Fei sheng 函弗生</td>
<td>Xianyang, Shaanxi (U).</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Diao sheng 球生</td>
<td>Fufeng, Shaanxi (U); two other vessels recently found in a hoard (H).</td>
<td>Negotiated rights to land property with the head of Shao lineage; made a dedication for the Duke of Shao 召公.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Zhou sheng 周生</td>
<td>Gaoquan 高泉, Baoji, Shaanxi (T).</td>
<td>Made a vessel for sacrifices in ancestral temple (zong shi 宗室).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Zhou sheng 周生</td>
<td>Gaoquan 高泉, Baoji, Shaanxi (T).</td>
<td>Made a vessel for sacrifices in ancestral temple (zong shi 宗室).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continued*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Designation, Jicheng number, date</th>
<th>Location and context (Tomb/T; Hoard/H; unclear (U))</th>
<th>Lineage(s) specified in the designation</th>
<th>Inscription’s content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Peng sheng 倬生 6511, MWZ.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peng, as in Nr. 17.</td>
<td>The vessel was made by Second-born of Ji 紀仲 (cf. Nr. 20:2) for Peng sheng. Longevity prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>X Cai sheng Y □蔡生□ 2518, LWZ.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cai 蔡, Ji-surnamed, in Shangcai 上蔡, Henan.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Shan bo Yi sheng 單伯翟生 82, LWZ.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Shan 單, possibly, Ji-surnamed, Meixian 眉縣, Shaanxi; 2) Yi 翟 (?), possibly, Ji-surnamed (cf. 4352), Shaanxi.</td>
<td>Claimed that his ancestors joined former Zhou kings and he started following their example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Shan Yi sheng 單翟生 4672, LWZ.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Made a vessel for offerings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Lineage</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Yi sheng</td>
<td>Chang'an, Shaanxi</td>
<td>Yi, as in Nr. 22-23.</td>
<td>Received an appointment from the Zhou king. Dedicated the bells to his ancestor Mu gong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>X sheng Y □□生□</td>
<td>Unknown lineage.</td>
<td>Unknown lineage.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Zhong shengfu 仲生父 729,</td>
<td>Xiangyueyu 湘樂玉, Ningxian 寧縣, Gansu</td>
<td>Lineage not specified.</td>
<td>Dedication to [Lady] Elder Jì of Jing [井孟姬].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Chen sheng Y 陳生□   2468,</td>
<td>Chen 陳, Gui 姬-surnamed, in Huaiyang 淮陽, Henan.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Lü zhong sheng Y 呂仲生□ 10243,</td>
<td>Lü呂, Jiang-surnamed, in Nanyang 南陽, Henan.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>You bo jun Jin sheng 有伯君堇生 10262,</td>
<td>1) You 有, near to Lu 魯; 2) Jin 堇, possibly, in the same area (cf. 2156, 2774).</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Yang Shi sheng 陽飤(食)生 3984, 10227,</td>
<td>Wangcheng 王城, Ziyang 栖陽, Hubei (U).</td>
<td>1) Yang 陽 lineage, location and surname unclear; 2) Shi or Si lineage (cf. 4427), location unknown.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Shi sheng zouma Gu 食生走馬谷 4095,</td>
<td>Shi, as in Nr. 31.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Designation, Jicheng number, date</th>
<th>Location and context (Tomb/T; Hoard/H; unclear (U))</th>
<th>Lineage(s) specified in the designation</th>
<th>Inscription’s content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Gongwu ji sheng 攻敔季生 10212 LSA.</td>
<td>Jiupu 舊舖, Xuchi 盱眙, Jiangsu (U).</td>
<td>1) Wu 吳 (Gongwu 工敔), Ji 姬-surnamed, in Jiangsu.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Xu Duo Lu sheng 許 duro生 2605, SA.</td>
<td>1) Xü 許, Jiang-surnamed, in Xuchang 許昌, Henan; 2) Lu 魯, Ji-surnamed, Qufu 曲阜, Shandong.</td>
<td>Made a dowry present for Shou Mu 壽母 (daughter or spouse).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Lu nei xiaochen Wei sheng 魯內小臣庭生 2354, LWZ-ESA.</td>
<td>1) Lu, as in Nr. 31; 2) Wei (?), unknown.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Jiang xiao zhong mu sheng 江小仲母生 2391, SA.</td>
<td>Jiang 江, Ying 贏-surnamed, in Queshan 確山 or Zhengyang 正陽 Counties in Henan.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Wu sheng X 武生□ 2522, LWZ-ESA.</td>
<td>Unknown lineage.</td>
<td>Statement of making a vessel; dedication to descendants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Names of the royal Zhou house and major principalities of Ji surname (Guo, Lu, Cai, Cheng, Gongwu, i.e. Wu, and Ji surname (Qi, Ji, Lü, Xü) can be seen among their designations. Other sheng designations include the names of smaller principalities or lineages of Gui surname (Chen), Ji surname (Fan and Liao), Kui surname (Peng), or whose surnames are hypothetical or unclear (Han, Diao, Qian). The number of identifiable cases is sufficient to demonstrate that sheng was not just a popular personal name, but a specific term indicating the relationship between the designated individual and socio-political entities—lineages or principalities. Scholars agree that in the epigraphic texts of the Shang and Zhou periods the word sheng stands for the kinship term written with the determinative nan ("male") as sheng 甥 and used in persons’ designations with names of lineages or principalities in the Shi jing, Chunqiu, Zuo zhuan, and other pre-Qin literary texts.

Personal names of the sheng were indicated very seldom. In this respect, sheng designations were similar to designations of women indicating the lineages of their fathers or husbands, but not their personal names. Some sheng designations include the names of two lineages. Inscriptions of Shan bo Yi sheng 單伯翬生 (T1:22), Cheng bo Ji sheng 郕伯夾生 (T1:20), or You bo jun Jin sheng 有伯君堇生 (T1:30) were commissioned by First-borns, i.e. effective or designated heads of the lineages identified as on the first position. After their birth rank bo, the name of the second lineage is indicated. Other designations, e.g. Han Fei sheng 函弗/費生 (T1:13) or Fan Ju sheng 番匊生 (T1:10), do not identify the persons’ positions in their lineages, but give the

as ESA, MSA, and LSA. If the estimate date is on the edge of the two periods, it is designated as, e.g., M-LWZ. If the date within the Spring and Autumn epoch is uncertain, it is referred to as SA.

name of the second lineage straight after the name of the first one. Their birth rank could be other than bo, although it is also possible that designations Shan bo Yi sheng 單伯眾生 (T1:22) and Shan Yi sheng 單伯眾生 (T1:23) referred to the same person, but in the second case the birth rank was omitted. The reference to a second lineage in the designation of an individual suggests a permanent bond between them, which, in these cases, was clearly different from the patrilineal kinship.

Many designations, such as Chen sheng 陳生 (T1:28), Fan sheng 番生 (T1:9), or Zhou sheng 周生 (T1:15, 16), include the name of only one lineage. Many scholars assume that these should be their mother’s lineages. They rely on the interpretation of sheng 甥 in the “Shi qinshu” (“Explaining kinship categories” 釋親屬) section of the Shi ming (“Explaining names” 釋名) glossary composed by Liu Xi 劉熙 in the second century C.E. Accordingly, “jiu (here: maternal uncle—M. Kh.) calls a son of his elder or younger sisters sheng” (舅謂姊妹之子曰甥). However, the interpretation of sheng in the Shi ming as meaning exclusively sororal nephew (ZS) is relatively late. The early Chinese terminology of kinship went through many changes between the Zhou and the Han periods, reflecting substantial changes in the social organization. Therefore, earlier reference materials should be given priority over later ones when interpreting the terms used during the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods. The Er ya 繹雅 glossary composed around the third century B.C.E, demonstrates that in the pre-Qin terminology of kinship, the term sheng was polyvalent. In the “Shi qin” (“Explaining relatives” 釋親) section sheng is glossed twice—once under the “Qi dang” (“Wife’s group” 妻黨) and once under “Hun yin” (“Affinal relatives” 婚姻) sections. The “Qi dang” section states the following:

姑之子·為甥·舅之子·為甥·妻之異弟·為甥·姊妹之夫·為甥．


54. Abbreviated definitions of kinship relationships in brackets are given according to the standard European system of kinship terms used in anthropological scholarship: F = father, M = mother, B = brother, Z = sister, H = husband, W = wife, S = son, D = daughter, P = parent, G = sibling, E = spouse, C = child.

55. See Krjukov, Sistema rodstva kitajcev, 136–244, English summary 301–4.

56. For the dating of the core glosses of the Er ya, see W. South Coblin, “Erh ya,” in Early Chinese Texts, 94–99. The received text possibly contains interpolations from later periods. According to Krjukov, the kinship terminology explained in the “Shi qin” chapter was current during the eighth–fifth centuries B.C.E. (see Krjukov, Sistema rodstva kitajcev, 73 with further references).
“A child of one’s paternal aunt is [called] sheng. A child of one’s maternal uncle is [called] sheng. Elder and younger brothers of one’s wife are [called] sheng. A husband of one’s elder or younger sister is [called] sheng.”

The “Hun yin” section adds:

謂我舅者，吾謂之甥也

“If one calls me jiu, I call him sheng.”

The Er ya thus identifies as sheng several kinds of male relatives, including an Ego’s own and one descending generation, including cross-cousin (FZS, MBS), brother-in-law (WB, ZH), and sororal nephew (ZS). In terms of biological kinship, it was applied to both consanguine and affinal relatives. This should be no surprise, since in the early Chinese kinship terminology terms jiu 叔 (“uncle”) and gu 姑 (“aunt”) also designated both consanguine and affinal relatives. According to Mikhail Krjukov, “a kinship system of Yin-Zhou type could emerge only under conditions when two exogamous kinship groups were related to each other by bonds of the obligatory cross-cousin marriage.” As has been noted above in the present article, the Ji and the Jiang plausibly originally represented such groups, and therefore the emergence of the polyvalent term sheng in Zhou China is explainable.

The Er ya does not fully reflect the state of the Chinese kinship system during the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods. Both bronze inscriptions and transmitted literature further attest the meaning of sheng including an Ego’s daughter’s son, i.e. a relative in the second generation.

---

57. See Xu Chaohua 徐朝華 (comm.), Er ya jin zhu 尔雅今注 (Shanghai: Guji, 1987), 155–65 (“Shi qin” 釋親).
58. In anthropological investigations of the world’s systems of kinship, the technical term “Ego” designates an individual serving as a reference point for genealogical reckoning (for the first usage see Morgan, Henry Lewis, Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1871), 4).
60. Krjukov, Sistema rodstva kitajcev, 158.
61. Krjukov, Sistema rodstva kitajcev, 162. See also Feng Han-yi, “The Chinese Kinship System,” 185.
descending generation. Moreover, one case reflected in the Shi jing indicates that during the Western Zhou period, sheng could be applied also to females. Up to the time of the Er ya’s compilation this, originally even more general, term had already dropped some of its connotations.

The definition of sheng in the “Hun yin” gloss seems to be equal to that in the Shi ming, i.e. sororal nephew (ZS). However, this similarity is superficial. In the context of the “Hun yin,” explaining terminology applied to relatives by marriage, the term jiu referred not to maternal uncles of males (MB), but to fathers-in-law of females (HF). A male Ego’s father-in-law (WF) was distinguished as wai 外, “external,” jiu. Thus, in the context of “Hun yin” sheng should be understood as daughter’s husband (DH). In sum, in all cases considered above, all sheng fall into the affinal category in terms of socially defined, patrilineal kinship. It designated various categories of affinal relatives of an Ego in his own generation, as well as in the first and the second descending generations. Similarly to the designations of females, designations reflecting relationships established via females could be constructed in different ways depending on the speaker’s perspective on the person referred to (even if these overlapped) and on the persons to whom the message was addressed. It is likely that a speaker would identify himself as a member of his patrilineal lineage and an affinal relative of the second lineage when addressing an external audience, especially in official contexts. Addressing his patrilineal relatives or those who were well informed about his origin, he would omit the name of his patrilineal lineage and identify himself as the sheng of the second, external lineage. On the other hand, addressing members of the lineage of his mother, wife, or brother-in-law, he would omit the name of their lineage and identify only his patrilineal lineage. Because of the specific features of Chinese language, a sheng “of” a lineage cannot be distinguished from a sheng “from” a lineage.

63. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu 春秋左傳注 (Xinhua shudian, 1981), 1590 (Ding: 13). See also the dedication to “the children of my lineage and one hundred sheng” 我宗子于百生（甥）in Shan ding 善鼎 (Jicheng 2820, Middle Western Zhou).

64. In the “Han yi” ode of the Shi jing, a woman was referred to as “sheng of the King of Fen, child of Jue-fu” 汾王之甥 · 揖父之子 (see “Han yi,” Mao 261; Krjukov, Sistema rodstva kitajcev, 150–53; Li, Landscape and Power, 139). The Er ya leaves open the possibility that sheng could designate females, because the term zi “child” could be applied to persons of both sexes.

The participants of the communication in which such designations were used knew who was related to whom and in which way, but we have to accept that it is hardly possible to clarify more precisely in what kind of relationships individual *sheng* were involved.

*Sheng* was not necessarily a stable component of a person’s designation. Indeed, each male person could be related as a *sheng* to one or several lineages. The fact that *sheng* designations occur relatively seldom suggests that this status was explicitly emphasized in certain specific contexts, in other words, when affinal connections were especially significant for the social and political standing of particular individuals or relevant to the success of some particular projects. The analysis of the anthroponymy and contents of *sheng*-related inscriptions sheds some light on such situations.

Inscriptions of the *sheng* usually are very short and only include statements connected with the making of the vessel and dedications to ancestors. However, their significance for those who commissioned them should be not underestimated. In most (unfortunately, yet very rare) cases in which the archaeological context of the finds of the *sheng*’s vessels with such short inscriptions is known, they belonged to inventories of tombs. Moreover, they were often the only objects bearing inscriptions in the tomb. As such, they were intimately related to the person of the deceased, serving his “calling card” on the threshold of the afterlife and facing the world of ancestors. This also points to the fact that being the *sheng* of a certain lineage was also especially important for this person during his lifetime.

Both the anthroponymy reflected by inscriptions on vessels of unknown provenance of certain *sheng* and their exquisite quality, including some real masterpieces, indicate that persons who designated themselves as *sheng* often belonged to the highest elites. Archaeological finds corroborate this estimation. For instance, a person who was identified as *sheng* Secretary by inscriptions on two * gui* vessels was buried in a large tomb of the middle Western Zhou period in the Huangdui 黃堆 cemetery on the Zhou plain (cf. T1:3). Although the tomb was looted, its location, size, architecture and other remaining burial items, such as parts of a dismembered chariot, one bronze *ding* tripod, and one bell point to the fact that the occupant was a member of the top-level nobility closely related to the Zhou royal house. Although other bronzes in the tomb were finely made, they do not bear any inscriptions. Hence,

only the official position as a secretary and his status as a *sheng* identified the deceased. The inscription further stated that the First-born of Shao 召伯, the head of the powerful metropolitan Shao lineage and a high royal official, sent him on a mission to Chu 楚. The name of the lineage to which he was related as a *sheng* was not specified. This could be due to the fact that this was either the royal house or the Shao lineage. Being a *sheng* could be relevant to his appointment, wealth and prestige.

Other inscriptions show that several persons referred to as *sheng* rotated around the Zhou royal court at various times. An early Western Zhou inscription states that “during the King’s southern campaign, the king commanded to a *sheng* to allocate duties to young men of the duke’s lineage (or ducal lineages)” (王令生辨事于公宗小子). During the late mid-Western Zhou, Fan *sheng* 番生 was appointed by the Zhou king “to administer ducal lineages, ministerial officials and officials of the Great Secretariat” (司公族、卿事、大史寮). Li Feng regards this not as “a specific administrative duty, but … the authority over the entire Zhou government.” It should be remembered that, as noted above, Fan once provided a royal spouse. Therefore, it is worth considering the possibility that Fan *sheng* could somehow be related to the Fan lady married to the Zhou king. Her son who was not a royal heir could be identified as a *sheng* of Fan lineage. He could also be a son of her sister married to another member of the royal house. The close kin relationship with the king and the personal influence of the Fan lady at the court might be among the reasons why Fan *sheng* was entrusted with such comprehensive responsibilities. Also *sheng* of influential metropolitan lineages, such as Secretary Guo *sheng* 史虢生, an affinal relative of Guo lineage, active during the reign of King Xuan 宣 (827/25–782 B.C.E), held offices at the Zhou court.

Archaeology further testifies to the high relevance of affinal relationships on the level of ruling elites of principalities. In the recently excavated late Western-Zhou-period tomb Nr. 1016 in the cemetery of Peng, supposedly occupied by one generation’s ruler, an inscribed vessel identified the latter as Bo Jin *sheng* 伯晉生, i.e. the *sheng* of the ruling lineage of Jin principality. Jin was the closest neighbor of Peng and the most important political force in the present-day Shanxi province during this epoch. This inscription points to the fact that the marital alliance with Jin was very significant for Peng politically, and, besides, was possibly a matter of prestige for the whole ruling lineage and its ruler personally.

---

68. Sun, “Material Culture and Social Identities,” 68.
Considerations of prestige could stand behind the choice of bronze objects for the burial equipment of an early Spring-and-Autumn-period tomb at Xigaoquan 西高泉 in the vicinity of Baoji in Shaanxi. During the early seventh century B.C.E, one of several consequent capitals of Qin 秦 principality was located in this area. The tomb, occupied by a member of the Qin nobility, contained a dou-basin on a tall ring foot with a design of roundels and scales. It bears the inscription “sheng of Zhou made [this] reverent dou for using it for offerings in the ancestral chamber” (周生乍作尊豆用享于宗, T1:15). Besides, in the tomb there was also a bronze hu flask without inscription. Excavators suppose that both bronzes may date from the Western Zhou period. If so, it is not clear how they came into the possession of the tomb’s occupant. It is worth considering that the same area yielded the set of bronze bells made in the classical Western Zhou manner and commissioned by Duke Wu of Qin 秦武公 (697–678 B.C.E) and his spouse Lady Ji of Zhou. The inscription on the bells demonstrates that this Qin ruler was proud of being a marital relative of the royal house, even if he did not go so far as to identify himself as a “sheng of Zhou.” His bells closely imitated bells cast in royal workshops before 771 B.C.E. By analogy, it is understandable that another Qin noble would boast of being a “sheng of Zhou” through maternal descent, marriage, or just by virtue of having in his possession an inscribed vessel, and thus falsifying an affinal relationship that possibly did not exist. Amazingly, another dou with a fully identical inscription was found elsewhere (cf. T1:16). Unfortunately, its current whereabouts are not known, but the rubbing still exists. A comparison shows that


70. Zhou sheng dou 周生豆 (Jicheng 4682, Late Western Zhou–Early Spring and Autumn, Xigaoquan 西高泉, Yangjiaagou 杨家溝, Baoji, Shaanxi).

71. The argumentation is however based on the assumption that Zhou sheng was the same person as Diao sheng whose inscriptions will be discussed in the third section of the present article. This is unfounded. Nevertheless, Zhou sheng dou may be a remnant from the Western Zhou period.

72. See Baoji shi bowuguan, Lu Liangcheng 卢连成 et al., “Shaanxi Baoji xian Taigongmiao cun faxian Qin gong zhong, Qin gong bo” 陜西寶雞縣太公廟村發現秦公鐘, 秦公.getSystemService.797811, 1–5; Qin gong zhong 秦公鐘, Jicheng 262, Taigongmiao 太公廟, Yangjiaagou 杨家溝, Baoji, Shaanxi, Early Spring and Autumn).

73. The shapes of the three splendid bo-bells with cast openwork decorations can be compared with bells of royal official Shanfu Ke who was active during the reign of King Xuan (see Maria Khayutina, “Povar ili ministr: dragocennye trenožniki Dobrogo Muža Ke” [Cook or Minister: the Good-Man Ke’s Treasured Tripods], in Kasus 2004 (Moscow), 15–98, esp. 40.

74. Zhou sheng dou 周生豆 (Jicheng 4683, Late Western Zhou).
the calligraphy of the Xigaoquan inscription is less clear and some characters are written differently or even with errors. Obviously, different craftsmen prepared clay models for the inscriptions, and, possibly, the Xigaoquan dou was a Qin copy of a Zhou original. In the absence of the second vessel it cannot be verified whether only the inscription was copied, or also the shape. One cannot avoid questioning whether such vessels with inscriptions testifying to the standing of some persons as sheng of Zhou might not have been produced by the Zhou royal house in a larger number as presents for various affinal relatives.

Already existing affinal connections were relevant when concluding new marriages. This is supported by several inscriptions on dowry and wedding presents for women whose commissioners identified themselves as sheng (cf. Liao sheng xu 蓼生壷 (T1:11), Fan Ju sheng hu 番狻生壷 (T1:10), Zhou Ji sheng pan 周棘生盤 (T1:12), Peng X sheng ding 釱□生鼎 (T1:19), Ji X sheng gui 及□生簋 (T1:28)).

Common affinal connections with third lineages could facilitate communication between lineages/principalities not necessarily already involved in a marital alliance themselves. In particular, Peng X sheng (T1:19) from the Kui-surnamed Peng principality in southern Shanxi gave a dowry present to his daughter Lady Kui, married to a member of the Ji-surnamed Cheng in western Shandong. Amazingly enough, this bronze was found near Qixia 棲霞 city in the east of Shandong, i.e. more than 500 km from Cheng. This surprising find can be explained, because Cheng was, in its turn, related by marital alliance to the Jiang-surnamed Ji in eastern Shandong, as is displayed in the name of Cheng bo Ji sheng 成伯㝢生 (T1:20). Whereas Cheng was a member of the Ji community, both Peng and Ji were related to it as affinal relatives. It is not clear whether Peng and Ji principalities had a marital alliance between themselves. In any case, they were aware of and communicated with each other, as is suggested by an inscription on a present given by the Second-born of Ji to Peng sheng (T1:18).

Sheng-related inscriptions provide additional information about the geographical dimension of marital alliances (cf. Map 1). The Ji-surnamed Shan 單, a prominent lineage closely related to the Zhou court, resided c. 50 km to the south from the royal center Zhou-under-Qi in Meixian 眉縣 in Shaanxi.75 It intermarried with Yi 睨,
of unknown surname, possibly residing in the vicinity of the royal residence Zongzhou in Shaanxi, i.e. c. 130 km from Shan (cf. T1:22, 23). Zhou kings and their officials regularly commuted between Zhou-under-Qi and Zongzhou for administrative purposes. Intermarriages between lineages residing near these two royal centers facilitated solidarity between metropolitan elites. Sheng-related inscriptions witness cooperation between neighboring principalities by means of marital alliances. Peng and Jin were located c. 40 km from one another in southwestern Shanxi. Han and Fei, whose alliance is documented by the inscription of Han Fei sheng 函弗/費生 (T1:13) were located c. 50 km from one another in central Henan. Sheng-related inscriptions also document several long-distance marital alliances. The inscription of Xū Duo Lu sheng 許奓魯生 (T1:34) witnesses an alliance between Xū in southeastern Henan and Lu in western Shandong, removed from one another by about 400 km. Cheng and Jī, located in western and eastern Shandong respectively were separated from one another by c. 500 km. These cases demonstrate that both short- and long-distance alliances could be converted into benefits by their participants, either in their own native lineages/principalities or externally.

It is noteworthy that many sheng designations were associated with persons from central and southern Henan and further east (cf. Map 1). Principalities to which these sheng were related included a non-Jī-surnamed Kang 康 in Ying 應 River Valley near Yuzhou 禹州 in central Henan (cf. T1:5); Han 函/函, supposedly Yun 倪 (妘)-surnamed, in central Henan (cf. T1:13); Jī-surnamed Qian in the upper course of the Luo River in western Henan or southern Shaanxi (cf. T1:7); Yi 伊, of unknown surname, possibly, located in the Yi 伊

76. The location of Yi is suggested by the inscription on the Yi sheng zhong (T1:24) discovered in Chang’an. It records the Zhou king’s command in which the king addresses the commissioner as Yi sheng. He could be a sheng of the royal house married to a royal sister, cousin, or daughter and residing in the area of the royal residence Zongzhou.

77. For the location of Han see below in the present article, for the location of Fei see Shao Bingjun 邵炳軍, “Chunqiu Hua guo xingmie ji diwang kao—Chunqiu Jin guo shi ge chuanzuo lishi wenhua beijing yanjiu zhi si—Chunqiu滑國興滅暨地望考——春秋晉國詩歌創作歷史文化背景研究之四, Henan shifan daxue xuebao, 2002.2, 59–63, esp. 62.


79. For the location of Qian see Liu Shegang 劉社剛, Wang Yanmin 王延敏, “Qian, Qian shi yu Guo shi guanxi kao” 遣, 遣氏与虢氏關係考, Wenbo 2008.1, 32–35.
River Valley (cf. T1:6);80 Jiang-surnamed Lü was near Nanyang 南陽; Ji-surnamed Liao (cf. T1:11) and Fan (cf. T1:9) were located near Huyang 湖陽 and Xinyang 信陽 in southwestern Henan respectively;81 Ji 棘 of an unknown surname was possibly in southern Henan (cf. T1:12);82 Ji-surnamed Cai 蔡 was in Shangcai 上蔡 in southern Henan (cf. T1:21);83 Ying 赢-surnamed Jiang 江 was either in Queshan 确山 or Zhengyang 正陽 in southern Henan (cf. T1:36);84 Gui-surnamed Chen was near Huaiyang 淮陽 in southeastern Henan (cf. T1:52);85 You 有 of unknown surname was located somewhere in southwestern Shandong (T1:30),86 and Peng 彭, possibly, Jiang-surnamed, was near Xuzhou 徐州 in Jiangsu (cf. T1:4).87 In these areas interaction between the Zhou and various non-Zhou peoples was especially intensive and often hostile. The local population residing in the mountainous or marshy regions were able to defend their autonomy and endanger Zhou colonists starting to settle there from the beginning of the Western Zhou period. Cooperation among the lineages of Zhou colonists themselves, as well as with friendly non-Zhou neighbors, represented an indispensable factor for maintaining peace. The sheng-related inscriptions signal that this cooperation was facilitated by intermarriages.

Some sheng-related inscriptions show that this cooperation sometimes took the form of joint military action. Liao sheng 萌 followed the Zhou king in a campaign against southern Huai Yi 南淮夷. Liao, in a similar way to that of Fan, was a Ji-surnamed Yi 夷 principality in Huyang, Henan. Liao sheng 萌, similarly to Fan sheng 范, could be the son of a Liao woman married to a member of the Zhou ruling house and

80. For the location of Shangluo see Yu Wei 于薇, “Huai Han zhengzhì quyu de xingcheng yu Huai he zuo wei nan bei zhengzhì fenjie xian de qiyuan” 淮河政治区域的形成与淮河作為南北政治分界線的起源, Gudai wenming, 2010.4/1, 38-52, esp. 49.
81. For the location of Liao see Chen Pan, Chunqiu dashibiao lieguo, p. 242. For localization of Fan see Falkenhausen, “The Waning of the Bronze Age,” 505-6 with further references.
82. The Zuo zhuan mentions toponyms including Shang Ji 上棘, Hanging Ji 垂棘, Great Ji 大棘, and Red Ji 赤棘. They were located in the belt stretching from southern Henan to Shandong.
83. For the location of Cai see Li, Landscape and Power, 74 with further references.
84. For the location of Jiang see Chen Pan, Chunqiu dashibiao lieguo, 286-87.
85. For the location of Chen see Ma Yilong 马义龙, “Chen guo de guodu yu mudiao kao” 陳國的國都與墓地考, Zhoukou shizhuan xuebao, 1996.6, 52-54.
86. For the location of You see Chen Peifen 陳佩芬, Xia Shang Zhou qingtongqi yanjiu 夏商周青銅器研究 (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), Vol. 4, 562-63.
87. For the location of Peng see Zhu Cunming 朱存明; Huang Hui 黄晖, “Huai Hai diqu de gudai fangguo kaolüe” 淮海地區古代方國考略, Xuzhou shifan daxue xuebao 3 (2001), 118-22.
raised at the royal court. Or, vice versa, he could be a member of the Liao lineage, whose aunt or sister was married to a member of the Zhou royal house. In both cases, as affinal relatives of the Zhou king, the Liao lineage had reason to support him in a war. The inscription of Rong sheng discussed below in the present article provides another example of military cooperation between marital relatives.

Considering that marital relations could bring diverse benefits, it is natural that Zhou elites demonstrated respect to their in-laws on various occasions as this is reflected in the following passage of the Zuo zhuan:

凡君即位，好舅甥，修婚姻，娶元妃以奉粢盛，孝也

When a ruler ascends to the throne, he expresses his love to his elder and younger male affinal relatives (jiu and sheng), arranges [new] marriages, and takes his principal wife to make offerings in grain vessels [in his ancestral temple], thus implementing his filial piety.88

Inscriptions confirm that, during the late Western Zhou period at the latest, relationships of both females and males with regard to their parents-in-law were defined in terms of filial piety (xiao 孝).89 Women participated in sacrificial ceremonies dedicated to their husbands’ ancestors and continued performing sacrifices to the ancestors of their own lineages.90 This explains in turn why so many sacrificial bronze objects were made for or made by women. Religious practice whereby married women were assigned their own substantial roles helped to strengthen interlineage ties.

Affinal relatives were referred to in inscriptions collectively as hungou 婚媾. This term consists of the words hun 婚, “to marry, to take a wife, marriage” and gou 娼, “to wed.”91 Dedications to hungou occasionally

88. See Zuo zhuan, 526–27 (Wen: 2). In this context, jiu referred to affinal relatives of the elder generation, sheng to relatives of the Ego’s generation and lower, while hunying were relatives-to-be.

89. In an inscription on the Hu shu Hu Ji gui 鬼叔賀姬簋, a dowry present, parents required their daughter to exercise filial piety (xiao) towards her parents-in-law (Jicheng 4066, Renbei 任北, Sufang 蘇坊, Wugong 武功, Shaanxi, Middle to Late Western Zhou). A certain Xi-fu 遼父 married Lady Jiang of Qi and commissioned several bronzes in order to “feast and to exercise filial piety (xiao) to his mother- and father-in-law” (Xi xü 遼簋, Jicheng 4436, Late Western Zhou; Xi-fu zhong 遼父鐘, Jicheng 103, Late Western Zhou).


91. Gou is attested in the sense “to request wedding” in Man ding 螽鼎 (Jicheng 2765, Jinyicun 晉義村, Changzi 長子, Shaxi, Middle Western Zhou). The term hungou partly parallels the term hun yin as it is used in certain odes of the Shi jing where it signifies “affinal relatives” (see Shi jing, “Wo xing qi ye 我行其野, Mao
occur in inscriptions starting from the middle Western Zhou period. For instance, X ji liangfu commissioned a flask with the following inscription:

□季良父乍□(絞)始尊壺。用盛旨酒。用享孝于兄弟、婚媾、者老。…

X ji liangfu made this sacrificial flask for [Lady] Si of Jiao. May it be used for containing sweet beer! May it be used to feast and to [to express] filial piety to elder and younger brothers, relatives by marriage, and all the elders! …

Interestingly, the word hun 婚 in this and some other inscriptions is spelled with an additional graph er 耳, “ear,” as [髈女] or 髈。In some inscriptions, the same character stands for the word wen 聞, “to hear,” with a derivative meaning “fame.” For example, an early Spring and Autumn inscription on the bell commissioned by a prince of Xu reads:

徐王子誨擇其吉金。自乍龢鐘。以敬明祀。以樂嘉賓。儁友。者臣。兼以父兄。庶士。以宴以喜。中隂且[音易]。元鳴孔皇。其音攸攸。[髈女](聞)于四方。…

Zhan, the son of the King of Xu, chose his auspicious metal, and made [this] harmonious bell for himself in order to reverently bring clear [ancestral] offerings, in order to enjoy luck-bringing guests, friends, all officials, together with fathers and elder brothers, and all [noble] men; to feast, to please! Accurate, vast and gentle, [its] superb voice [is] grand and magnificent, its sound is you-you [and it is] heard in the four quarters of the world….94

In archaic Chinese, hun 婚 and wen 剃 sounded closely to each other.95 The substitution could be just a phonetical loan. Nevertheless, it is worth

---

188; “Zheng yue” 正月, Mao 192; “Jiao gong” 角弓, Mao 223. In the Er ya, the term hun yin designates affinal relatives in general. At the same time, hun and yin are applied differentially to kin relatives of a female or male marital partner respectively. With respect to a male, such kin categories as SWP, WP, and WG were defined as hun; with respect to a female DHP, HP, and HG were designated as yin (see Er ya, 161–65 (“Shi qin)). There is no evidence indicating that by analogy, terms hun and gou were applied separately in the same way.

92. See Peng you 壟卣 (Jicheng 5401, Mengzhou 孟州, Henan, Early to Middle Western Zhou); Guai bo gui 乖伯簋 (Jicheng 4331, Late Western Zhou), Shanfu Ke xu 膳夫克簋 (Jicheng 4465, Renjia 任家, Fufeng, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou).

93. See X ji liang-fu hu 季良父壺 (Jicheng 9713, Late Western Zhou).

94. See Xu wang zi Zhan hu 徐王子鈕 (Jicheng 182, Late Spring and Autumn).

95. 婚 xuan/hua^n → 韻 mjwan/mqn (see Axel Schuessler, A Dictionary of Early Zhou Chinese (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987) and Axel Schuessler, Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese: A Companion to Grammata Serica Recens (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press 2009)).
considering the possibility that the resulting wordplay could be intentional. In a sense, “being heard” increased the chance to “get married” to women from the four quarters, whereas brilliant marital alliances contributed to one’s fame. Other inscriptions’ commissioners boasted of having “one hundred hungou” or “one hundred sheng,” thus supporting the notion that having many affinal relatives was both a factor of political strength and of prestige.

On this point, it should be noted that some inscriptions explicitly express a wish to have both male and female descendants. Such statements make one reconsider whether the ubiquitous address to zi zi sun 子子孙孙 in bronze inscriptions is correctly understood as referring exclusively to male “sons and grandsons,” but not to children of both sexes. Evidently, without having enough daughters, a lineage had less potential for constructing social and political networks. Therefore, valuing only sons and neglecting daughters would signify only political blindness. Wishes of abundant progeny, especially when placed on dowry presents commissioned by a bride’s father or brother, very likely concerned the offspring of both sexes, since the female children could potentially “return” to their mother’s native lineage.

In sum, even if the concrete type of affinal relationship of particular sheng to the lineages referred to in their designations cannot be revealed, these inscriptions represent a valuable historical source. They demonstrate that being a sheng of a certain, even distantly located lineage represented a permanent, status-relevant relationship that was recognized and respected in the aristocratic society of the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods. They indicate that not only married women personally acted as agents between the lineages of their fathers and husbands, but also that men recognized their obligations to their affinal relatives, from which both lineages could mutually benefit. They document marital alliances between particular lineages/principalities on both regional and interregional levels,

96. For similar expressions see, e.g., Ju shu zhi zhong zi Ping zhong 笈叔之仲子平鐘 (Jicheng 172, Junan Dadian 菏南大店, Shandong, Late Spring and Autumn); Zhu Jian zhong 趙靖鐘 (Jicheng 197, Jiangsu, Spring and Autumn).
97. See Xi you 売卣 (Jicheng 5401, Mengzhou 孟州, Henan, Early Western Zhou); Guai bo gui 乖伯簋 (Jicheng 4331, Late Western Zhou).
98. See Shan ding 善鼎 (Jicheng 2820, Middle Western Zhou).
99. Cf. wishes for “one hundred sons, one hundred daughters, one thousand grandchildren” 百子百女千孫 in Liao sheng gui (Jicheng 4459, Late Western Zhou), or “male and female [offspring] without termination” 男女無期 (Qi hou dun, pan 齊侯敦, 盤, Jicheng 4645, 10159, Yizhou 易州, Hebei, Late Spring and Autumn; Qing shu yi 慶叔匜, Jicheng 10280, Spring and Autumn).
thus expanding the pool of data constituted by female-related inscriptions. In combination with the sheng-related inscriptions, general dedications to hungou or dedications to individual affinal relatives testify to the importance of marital bonds between lineages and principalities in Zhou China. In these processes, connections established via mothers, wives, or sisters represented a “capital” that could be converted into wealth, standing, and prestige of particular persons and their whole lineages, or into solidarity and cooperation between lineages and principalities that could have consequences on the scale of the whole Zhou world.

The cases of Diao sheng and Rong sheng discussed in the next two sections in detail give a deeper insight into relationships within patrilineal lineages and between them and their marital relatives during the late Western Zhou and early Spring and Autumn periods.

The Case of Diao sheng

Inscriptions commissioned by a person identifying himself as Diao sheng include four texts. Two tureens with lengthy, informative inscriptions, the fifth-year Diao sheng gui and the sixth-year Diao sheng gui, are kept in the Hobart and Edward Small Moore Memorial Collection in the Yale University Art Gallery and in the Chinese Historical Museum in Beijing respectively. Their provenance is unclear. A li-tripod with a short, undated dedication by Diao sheng to his deceased father was found several decades ago in Fufeng County of Shaanxi province, but the precise place of discovery is unclear. In 2006, two very unusual, massive large-mouthed zun 尊 vessels commissioned by Diao sheng and dated to the fifth year have been discovered in a hoard in Wujun 五郡, Fufeng, Shaanxi. The dates indicated in Diao sheng’s inscriptions correspond to the fifth and sixth years of King Li (853 and 852) respectively. Another inscription commissioned by someone else informs us that during the reign of King Li, Diao sheng held the office of the royal superintendent zai 宰. All three lengthy texts of Diao sheng are concerned with the negotiation of property rights between Diao sheng and Shao bo Hu 召伯虎.

---

100. Diao sheng gui are often erroneously referred to as “Shao bo gui” (see Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Liang Zhou jinwen ci daxi 兩周金文辞大系 [1932] (Beijing, 1957), Vol. 7, 142–45; “Shao bo Hu gui” in the Jicheng 4292, 4293).


102. See Shi Li gui 師利簋 (jicheng 4324, Late Western Zhou) dated to the eleventh year of King Li, 847 B.C.E. (see Shaughnessy, Sources of Western Zhou History, 283).
Shao was a prominent Ji-surnamed lineage intimately associated with the royal house. During the Zhou conquest of the Shang in the mid-eleventh century B.C.E., Duke Great Protector Shao Shi 太保召公奭 was one of the closest assistants of King Wu. Shi’s elder son Ke 克 was enfeoffed in Yan 燕 near present-day Beijing. The main branch of the Shao lineage remained in the metropolitan area. Duke Kang of Shao 召康公 held the office of Superintendent zai during the reign of King Cheng 成 (r. 1042/35–1006 B.C.E.). Duke Kang’s late descendant, Duke Mu of Shao 召穆公, was a counselor of King Li. After the insurrection raised by the metropolitan elites against the king in 841 B.C.E., Duke Mu raised the royal heir Jing 靖 in his house. In 827 B.C.E., Duke Mu of Shao together with Duke Ding of Zhou 周定公 installed him as King Xuan on the Zhou throne. While the king was still young, both dukes assisted him in the affairs of government. At the beginning of King Xuan’s reign, Duke Mu led a military campaign against the Yi of Huai River 淮夷, for which he was praised in the “Jiang Han” 江漢 ode of the Shi jing 史記 (Mao 262). This text reveals his personal name Hu 虎. Most scholars agree that the First-born Hu of Shao referred to in the inscriptions of Diao sheng 琥生 was Duke Mu of Shao.

Unlike Shao, Diao was never mentioned in transmitted sources. Other inscriptions indicate that the Diao resided in the area of the royal center Zhou-under-Qi. A very rich find of bronze vessels, 

104. See Zhushu jinian, 285–87 (Li: 12, 26, Xuan: 1).
105. See also Zhushu jinian, 288 (Xuan: 6).
107. The character diao (“to carve”, “carved”) consists of the phonetic element zhou 稱 and determinative yu 玉, jade (see Shuowen jiezi, 8; cf. also homonyms with identical meaning “to carve” include diao 彥 and diao 雕). In archaic Chinese diao 琥 (Pulleyblank tεw, Schuessler *tiaw) and zhou 周 (Pulleyblank ηwaw, Schuessler *tjaw) were very close to each other phonetically. The lineage’s name Diao can be related to carving stone or wood as a professional occupation. Other Western Zhou inscriptions indicate that at times artisans residing in Zhou-under-Qi, such as the fur-maker Qiu Wei 裘衛, could accumulate considerable wealth, including landed property, and enjoyed many favors from Zhou kings (see Constance A. Cook, “Scribes, Cooks, and Artisans: Breaking Zhou Tradition,” Early China 20 (1995), 241–77). By analogy, a renowned court jeweler or wood carver enhancing royal palaces could have a noble rank bestowed on him by the king, a lineage name deriving from his professional occupation, and a piece of land on which to construct his residence and ancestral temple. That Diao sheng used many jade objects as gifts to various persons can also be related to the fact that he belonged to a family of jewelers.

108. Three tureens commissioned by Diao Fa-fu 琇伐父 were discovered in a hoard in 1963 in Qijia 齊家, Fufeng, Shaanxi (see Diao Fa-fu gui 琇伐父簋 (Jicheng 4048–50, Qijia, Fufeng, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou)). Another hoard discovered in Qijia in
including eleven ding-tripods, eight gui-tureens, two lei and two hu flasks commissioned by August Father of Han 函(函)皇父 for Lady Yun of Diao 瑚嬪 was found in Kangjia 康家, Fufeng, Shaanxi. By the number of sacrificial vessels, the dowry of this woman overshadows most representative sets of ritual utensils commissioned by high royal officials. This signals the ability of her father and husband to compete openly with the local aristocracy in prestige, which suggests that the position of the Diao lineage at the court about the second half of the ninth century B.C.E. was secure.

The three lengthy texts of Diao sheng are arranged here in chronological order:

1960 contained bronzes commissioned by individuals whose designations included no lineage names but only birth ranks: Bo Bang Fu 伯邦父, Zhong You Fu 仲友父, Zhong Wo Fu 仲我父, Zhong Yi Fu 仲義父, Zhong Fa-fu 仲伐父, and Shu X Fu 叔□父. Possibly, Zhong Fa-fu corresponded to Diao Fa-fu, and all the persons who donated bronze vessels to the hoard were siblings of the Diao family. Zhong Fa-fu 仲伐父 dedicated a vessel to Ji Shang mu 姬尚母, his spouse or mother (see Zhong Fa-fu yan 仲伐父甗). These bronzes were found in Kangjia, Fufeng, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou. This conforms to the information that Diao was a non-Ji-surnamed lineage that intermarried with the Ji.

109. E.g. Han Huangfu ding 女皇父鼎 (Jicheng 2548 and 2745, Kangjia, Fufeng, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou). Some scholars identify Han huangfu with “Minister Huangfu” 皇父卿士 and “Great Commander Huangfu” 太師皇父, mentioned in the “Shi yue zhi jiao 十月之交” and “Chang wu 常武” odes in the Shijing (Mao 193 and 263; see also Zhu Fenghan, Shang Zhou jiazu xingtai yanjiu (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1957), 347–48; Li, Landscape and Power, 203–12). However, other inscriptions show that huangfu, or “August Father,” could be used as self-designation by a head of a lineage or a lineage’s branch, whereas his wife could be referred to as “August Mother” huangmu 皇母 (see Xin shu huangfu gui 辛叔皇父簋 (Jicheng 3859, Late Western Zhou; Xin zhong Ji huangmu ding 辛仲姬皇母鼎, 2582, Late Western Zhou). The burial site of Han (Han liing 函陵) was known during the Spring and Autumn period near to the capital of Zheng 郑 principality in present-day Xinzhou 新鄭 in Henan province (Zuo zhuan, 479 (Xi: 30)). Zheng was established during the reign of King Xuan on the place of the Yun-surnamed Kuai 槐. Besides the vessels commissioned by Han huangfu for Lady Yun of Diao, the Kangjia hoard included a ding-tureen commissioned by Lady Yun of Kuai 槐(槐)簋 (Kuai Yun ding 槐簋 (Jicheng 2516, Kangjia, Fufeng, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou). This reveals that Han and Kuai, both belonging to the Yun surname community, were related to each other. Han may correspond to the Yun-surnamed Han 寒 lineage mentioned in the Shi ben 世本 (see Song Zhong 宋衷, Shi ben ba zhong 世本八種 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1957), “Shi xing pian” 氏姓篇, 22–24).

1. The fifth-year *Diaosheng gui*:

It was the fifth year, the regulated month, day *ji-chou*. Diaosheng had a matter [with Shao]. Shao came to settle the matter.

I made a donation to [the Shao *bo’s*] spouse with the *hu*-flasks. [I] announced, saying:

“[Let it be] according to [her] Lordship’s command!”

[The command] sounded:

“I have investigated this. There are many disputes concerning the Duke’s servants and commoners, lands and fields.111  [Let] the First-borns to arrive at a regulation:

If the Duke’s [share] will be set as three [parts], your [share] will be set as two [parts];

If the Duke’s [share] will be set as two [parts], your [share] will be set as one [part].”

I, [Diaosheng], offer a large jade scepter to [her] Lordship. I respond to the [Shao *bo’s*] spouse with bundled silk [and] a jade pendant.

Shao *bo* Hu said: “I already interrogated. According to the command of my deceased father and my mother, I do not dare to cause disorder. I will obey the command of my deceased father and my mother to the utmost.”

Diaosheng then [responded to this by] a ceremonial jade scepter.112

---


111. Some scholars interpret this collocation as *fuyong* 附庸, “attached settlements.” However, *Diaosheng zuoqi* inscription (see below) rather supports the reading 仆庸 “servants and commoners” (see Xin Yihua and Liu Dong, “Wu nian Diaosheng zuoqi kaoshi,” 77). Skosey interprets *yong* as a category of servants, see Skosey, *The Legal System*, 402.

112. *Diaosheng gui* 琪生簋 (*Jicheng* 4292, Late Western Zhou).
2. Diao sheng zun:

It was the fifth year, the ninth month, the first auspicious day. Lady Jiang of Shao, [upon receipt] of five [designation of an object and a counting word] [and] a pair of hu-flasks, by the command of [her] Lordship, pronounced: “I have investigated this. There were many disputes concerning the Duke’s servants and commoners, lands and fields. Let it be regulated, so as not to cause [the people] to scatter and disappear:

‘I will occupy three, you will occupy two [parts of the lands].

The elder brother regulates, the younger brother follows.’

I, [Diao sheng, respond to this] beneficence by a great jade scepter. I respond to the spouse [of Shao bo] with bundled silk [and] one jade pendant. The office-holders [receive] many water [vessels] and two jade discs.

[I], Diao sheng, extol in response the mercy of my lineage’s Lordship. [I] use [this occasion] to make these sacrificial jian-vases for the Duke of Shao. [I will] use them in order to pray for thorough prosperity, sincerity and immaculacy, [and] divine [transformation at the] end.

May my children and grandchildren use these [vessels] for offerings.

If they dare to change this command, [I] say: “You serve the men of Shao. [Otherwise] the Duke will detect and kill you.”

3. The sixth-year Diao sheng gui:

It was the sixth year, the fourth month, day jia-zi, the King was in Pang.\textsuperscript{114} Shao bo Hu made an announcement, saying:

“I announce a rejoicing matter!” [He] said: “The Duke has already received the cowry-shells [and] used them to settle the lawsuit with the bo. This is righteous, this is accomplished, [and] also according to the command of my deceased father You bo [and my mother] You Jiang.

I announce a rejoicing matter! In all the settlements, I interrogated office-holders. I certify in writing: ‘do not dare to [change (?)] the markers of the boundaries!’ Today, I finished interrogating.”

The office-holder said: “According to the command, I already made a record today.”

[He] offered [it to Diao sheng].

The First-born [i.e. Diao sheng] therefore responded with a jade disc.

[I], Diao sheng, extol in response the beneficence of my lineage’s Lordship. [I] use this occasion to make a gui-tureen for feasting my illustrious ancestor the Duke of Shao. Let it be ten thousand years! May the children and grandchildren use it for offerings in the ancestral temple!\textsuperscript{115}

In the last inscription, Diao sheng explicitly called the Duke of Shao his ancestor and dedicated to him his sacrificial tureen. This makes clear that he was a member of Shao and an affinal relative of Diao lineage. The relationships in the Shao lineage can be reconstructed as follows.

Diao sheng’s grandfather was a certain Duke of Shao, the head of the Shao lineage. His first-born son (posthumously entitled You bo 幽伯, Gloomy First-born) became his heir. You bo married Lady Jiang, who gave birth to Shao bo Hu. The Duke of Shao’s second-born son (posthumously entitled X zhong 仲, Guo) founded a new branch of Shao.\textsuperscript{116} Shao bo Hu and Diao sheng were first-born sons

\textsuperscript{114}. The reference to the king’s location represents a part of the dating formula and does not mean that the king was involved in the case (see Maria Khayutina, “The Royal Year-count of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1045–771 BC) and Its Use(s): a Sociological Perspective,” in Time and Ritual in Early China, ed. Xiaobing Wang-Riese and Thomas Höllemann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 127–54).

\textsuperscript{115}. Diao sheng gui 瑉生簋 (Jicheng 4293, Late Western Zhou).

\textsuperscript{116}. Diao sheng li 瑉生鬲 (Jicheng 744, found on the edge of Fufeng, Linyou 麟游, and Yongshou 永寿 Counties, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou). This posthumous title

footnote continued on next page
of You bo and X zhong respectively, and therefore both of them were referred to as a bo, “the First-born.” They were related to each other as parallel cousins.

By the will of You bo, some parts of the lineage’s property were allocated to X zhong. Later on, they could be inherited by his first-born son and legitimate heir, i.e. Diao sheng. However, after the death of his father, Diao sheng’s rights to this property were put into question by some of his patrilineal relatives, which resulted in the “disputes concerning the servants and commoners, lands and fields.” At this point, Diao sheng’s relationships with the Diao lineage became relevant enough to be explicitly pointed to in negotiations.

Lin Yun and Zhang Yachu both suggest that Diao sheng was the son of a woman from the Diao lineage. Although this is only one of several possible options, it seems the most plausible in this case, considering that Diao sheng’s membership in the Shao lineage is evident. In the internal hierarchy of a lineage, especially under the conditions of polygamy, males were distinguished not only by their birth seniority, but also by the status of their mothers. The latter could be relevant in questions of inheritance. Possibly, Diao sheng’s father X zhong married several women simultaneously or successively. By referring to the name of his mother, Diao sheng pointed to his rights resulting from her status in the hierarchy of spouses of his father, or even of all spouses of the lineage.

Diao sheng’s inscriptions also show that Shao represented a classical Jı-surnamed lineage with Jiang-surnamed spouses by the side of the lineage’s heads. During 853–852 B.C.E. the First-born Hu, whose greatest military achievements took place during 820s B.C.E., would have been relatively young and have only recently become head of the Shao lineage. After his father, referred to as Gloomy First-born, passed away, Lady Jiang, the Dowager Duchess of Shao, referred to, after consisting of the graphs gong “palace” and jiu “9,” is often seen in bronze inscriptions. Possibly, it had something to do with the foundation of a new palace by the head of a new branch of a lineage. The expression “the elder brother the Duke, and the younger brother” 其兄公，其弟乃 in the inscription on the zun-vases refers to the fathers of Shao bo and Diao sheng. The fact that Diao sheng dedicated the sixth-year’s gui-tureen to the Duke of Shao over the head of Shao bo, who, as the current lineage’s elder, was entitled to sacrifice for elder ancestors, implies the autonomy of Diao sheng’s sublineage.

117. By analogy with the naming practice in Guo lineage, Diao sheng could otherwise be identified as Shao zhong bo 召仲伯. The absence of a distinct name for this sublineage could result from the fact that its splitting off was regulated privately, whereas, as transmitted sources acclaim, lineage names were granted by the king.
the posthumous title of her husband, as Gloomy Jiang and “her Lordship” jun shi 君氏, retained control over the lineage’s affairs.\textsuperscript{118} This was possibly not least due to the fact that as spouse and widow, she was backed by a network of Jiang-surnamed relatives who, in their turn, were affinal relatives of the Zhou royal house. Similarly, the currently elevated standing of the Diao lineage among the local elites could be relevant for the decision concerning Diao sheng’s share in Shao’s property. The second woman referred to in the inscription as fu shi 婦氏,\textsuperscript{119} “the Spouse,” also played an active role in the decision-making process. Probably, she was Shao bo’s wife. Her surname and lineage affiliation cannot be revealed. It is also noteworthy that, during late Western Zhou periods, although Zhou kings already established officials responsible for resolving private lawsuits, this case was not brought before an external judge, but was regulated within the lineage.\textsuperscript{120} This demonstrates that even in the Zhou metropolitan region, lineages of the highest aristocracy that did not qualify as principalities on the level of external politics represented internally “states within the state.” Involved in marital alliances, they wove a tight tissue of social connections that shaped the life of the inhabitants of metropolitan Zhou.

**The Case of Rong sheng**

The set of eight bells commissioned by Rong sheng was purchased by the Beijing Poli Museum in the late 1990s in Hong Kong. Each bell bears part of a continuous inscription with a total length of 153 characters, executed in bold, clearly legible characters.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{118} Widows of deceased rulers in principalities of the Spring and Autumn period also retained authority over their sons (see Gassmann, *Verwandtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 476).

\textsuperscript{119} I accept Li Xueqin’s suggestion that fu shi referred to Shao bo’s spouse (see Li Xueqin, “Diao sheng zhu qi,” 73). Several other scholars suggest that designations fu shi and jun shi were applied to the same person (Wang Zhankui, “Diao sheng san qi mingwen kaoshi,” 108; Xin Yihua and Liu Dong, “Wu nian Diao sheng zun kaoshi” 77; Wang Jinfeng, “Xin chu ‘Wu nian Diao sheng zun’” 88).

\textsuperscript{120} For an overview of the Western Zhou administration of law and a remark about private jurisdiction in Diao-sheng’s case see Scosey, *The Legal System*, 162–74.

\textsuperscript{121} For the first publication, transcriptions, and investigations of the inscriptions see “Rong sheng bianzhong” 戎生編鐘 in He Ping 賀平 ed., *Baoli cangjin* 暴利藏金 (Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu, 1999), 117–28; Ma Chengyuan 马承源, “Rong sheng zong mingwen de tantao” 戎生鐘銘文的探討, in *Baoli cang jin*, 361–64; Qu Xigui 裘錫圭, “Rong sheng bianzhong mingwen kaoshi” 戎生編鐘銘文考釋, in *Baoli cangjin*, 365–74; Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Rong sheng bianzhong lun shi,” 戎生編鐘論釋, in *Baoli cang jin*, 375–78.
It was the 11th month, day yi-hai. Rong sheng said: “Blessed was my august ancestor Duke Xian! Martial and reverent, [he] opened up his enlightened heart. Far-reaching and thorough were his plans. [He] greatly relied on the surpassing (?) blessing122 of the Son of Heaven Mu in order to establish [his state] in this external land, to administer Man [and] Rong and to deal with the countries that do not [come to] court. It came [to the time of] my august deceased father Zhao bo. Dexterous [and] reverent, admirably ... [and] not going beyond what is proper, [my father] glorified and accompanied my Lord of Jin in order to make [everybody] abide by the king’s orders.123 Now I do not neglectedly dissipate his illustrious shine [and] respond to his great blessing! [I have been] luckily granted salt gathering. [I] captured and punished Fantang, took their auspicious metal [and] used [it] to make this treasured chime of bells. Their sounds are yong-yong, cang-cang, cong-cong, ai-ai, zhu-zhu, very harmonious and fine! I use them to welcome [and to] express piety to [my] august ancestors [and my] august father, [and] to pray for great longevity. May Rong sheng last ten thousand years without limit [until] yellow-skinned old age and older, [and] long be protected [by ancestors]. May [my] sons and grandsons eternally use and treasure [these bells].

Rong sheng’s inscription partly overlaps with the inscription on the Jin Jiang ding 昌鎬鼎 discovered in Hancheng 韓城, Shaanxi, and reproduced in Lü Dalin’s 呂大臨 (1044–1091) Kaogu tu 考古圖:

122. Expression “using [a superior’s] ling in order to [achieve something]” occurs in many speeches in the Zuo zhuan (e.g. Zuo zhuan, 740 (Xuan: 12)). Yang Bojun glosses ling 娅 (originally, “spirit,” “divine power”) as hu 禪 (“blessing”).

123. The word gong 龜 in combination with the word “king” is often misunderstood as the posthumous title of King Gong 共 (917/15–900), which often results in erroneous dating of inscriptions. As Ulrich Unger pointed out, in such clauses as “用龜王+object” it represented a verb and should be read as gong 恭 “to respect” / “to make one respect” (see Ulrich Unger, “Zur Person des shan-fu K’êh” (Part 3), in Hao-ku. Sinologische Rundbriefe (Münster) No. 9 (1982), 54–55). The expression gong ming, “to respect the command” or “to obey by the order” often occurs in the Shang shu, e.g. 恭承民命 “to obey by the command to take the responsibility for the people” (see Sun Xingyan 孫星衍, Shang shu jin gu wen zhu shu 尚書今古文注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1936, repr. 1986), 6.240 (“Pan Geng” 盤庚)).
In the ninth month of the King, day yi-hai, [Lady] Jiang of Jin said: “I succeeded my former aunt as the Lordess of the Principality of Jin. I do not stay in leisure and reckless tranquility. I adjusted and harmonized my illustrious virtue, and propagated ... my plans in order to glorify and to accompany my lord. Every [day I] promote his glorious merits. [I am] pious [and] do not retreat. [I] wisely (?) hold the Capital Garrison [and] rule over our ten thousand peoples.

[I] have been luckily granted salt gathering [in the amount of] one thousand liang.124 [I did] not neglect Lord Wen’s shiny mandate. [I] went through [and] greatly punished the Yun of Fantang. [I took] their auspicious metal [and] used it to make [this] treasured sacrificial tripod. [I will] use it to [make] peace: gently receive and take care of [various] lords far away and nearby.

[Lady] Jiang of Jin [will] use [it] to pray for everlasting longevity, to multiply until the extreme. Ten thousand years without limit! Use to sacrifice, use to [manifest] virtue! Long protect my grandchildren and children! The three ages of longevity are beneficial!125

The Jin Jiang ding tripod’s shape and decorations are similar to these of tripods discovered in late Western Zhou to early Spring and Autumn period tombs of Jin rulers and their spouses.126 Lady Jiang referred to her husband by his posthumous name, Lord Wen of Jin 晉文侯 (r. 780–746 B.C.E.). This makes clear that the Jin Jiang ding was made

124. The liang ("a pair") unit of the Western Zhou period is unknown. Some authors suppose that this may be a measure word for carts on which salt could be transported (i.e. a pair of wheels).
after 746 B.C.E., most likely, during the reign of Lord Zhao of Jin 晉昭侯 (r. 745–739 B.C.E.).\textsuperscript{127}

Lady Jiang and Rong \textit{sheng} mentioned in their inscriptions the same circumstances, including the grant of salt and a war against Fantang. Both texts use some similar expressions that, on the other hand, do not belong to the typical repertory of formulas used in bronze inscriptions.\textsuperscript{128} The characters display common orthography and calligraphy.\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Rong sheng bianzhong}'s shape and decorations are similar to those of bells excavated from the tombs of Jin rulers of the late Western Zhou to early Spring and Autumn periods.\textsuperscript{130} Considering that Rong \textit{sheng} mentioned his service to the Lord of Jin, Rong \textit{sheng}'s bells were most plausibly made in Jin about the same time as the \textit{Jin Jiang ding}.\textsuperscript{131} But how was Rong \textit{sheng} related to the ruling house of Jin and what do \textit{sheng} and “Rong” signify in his case?

Li Xueqin suggests that Rong \textit{sheng} was a son of a woman who belonged to the Rong group of non-Zhou peoples and was married to a Jin official.\textsuperscript{132} Ma Chengyuan argued that he was a member of the Rong group of peoples, possibly a leader of a Rong polity.\textsuperscript{133} In view of the polyvalent meaning of the kinship term \textit{sheng}, Rong could represent his mother’s, father’s or even spouse’s group. Several factors indicate that Rong \textit{sheng} was a child of a leader of an autonomous polity and a marital relative of the ruling house of Jin.

\textsuperscript{127} See Li Xueqin, “Rong sheng bianzhong lun shi,” in \textit{Baoli cang jin}, 377.

\textsuperscript{128} Compare “luckily granted salt gathering” 嘉遣滷積 with “luckily granted salt gathering [in the amount of] one thousand liang” 嘉遣我易（賜）鹵責千兩, or “do not neglectedly dissipate his illustrious shine” 弗假厥顯光 with “do not neglect Lord Wen’s illustrious mandate” 勿廢文侯顯命. Both inscriptions use the possessive personal pronoun \textit{ci 辝}, “my,” in place of the common \textit{zhen 聿} or \textit{wo 我}.

\textsuperscript{129} I discussed the language and paleography of the inscriptions and the artistic features of the bronzes in my conference paper “Localizing the Recently Discovered Bells of Rong \textit{sheng} in Space and Time,” \textit{Third Tomb Texts Workshop} of the European Association for the Study of Chinese Manuscripts, 26–29 June 2008, Zurich.


\textsuperscript{131} Li Xueqin argues that the dates “ninth month, day yi-hai 乙亥” in the \textit{Jin Jiang ding} and “eleventh month, day yi-hai 乙亥” in the \textit{Rong sheng bianzhong} very likely occurred during the same year and argues that this should be 740 B.C.E, the sixth and the last year of Lord Zhao of Jin (Li Xueqin, “Rong sheng bianzhong lun shi,” in \textit{Baoli cang jin}, 377).

\textsuperscript{132} See Li Xueqin, “Rong sheng bianzhong lun shi,” 376.

\textsuperscript{133} See Ma Chengyuan, “Rong sheng zhong de tiantao,” 363.
It is remarkable that Rong sheng owned a set of bells consisting of eight pieces. As with the number of tripods and tureens, the number of bells in chimes owned by individuals served as identifier of their status. In cemeteries of principalities of the early Spring and Autumn period, including Jin, Guo, Qin, and Rui, sets of eight bells have been found exclusively in tombs of rulers. Therefore, Rong sheng’s status was comparable with that of the rulers of principalities’ rulers. Since his bells were very likely cast in a Jin foundry, Rong sheng’s status was recognized in Jin. Information about his ancestors in the inscription makes clear that he was not a member of the Jin ruling house. Rong sheng’s father was referred to in the inscription under his temple name Zhao bo, or Zhao the First-born. As has been noted above, the title First-born was often used by leaders of non-Zhou polities. Rong sheng’s more remote ancestor Xian gong was said to “to establish [the state] in this external land” (jian yu zi wai tu建于茲外土). This also supports the view that Rong sheng’s family ruled an autonomous principality that cooperated first with the royal house of Zhou and, second, with the ruling house of Jin.

According to the inscription, Zhao bo “glorified” (shao 紹/ zhaozhao 昭) and “accompanied” (pi 匹/ pei 配) the ruler of Jin in order to “make [everybody] abide by the king’s orders.” That Rong sheng calls this ruler of Jin “my Lord of Jin” suggests that he and his father both dealt with the same ruler of Jin, i.e. Lord Wen, who was on the throne for thirty-four years. Lady Jiang states in her inscription that she also “glorified and accompanied” the Lord of Jin. The word pi 匹, used in both inscriptions as a verb and translated as “to accompany,” signifies “pair,” “companion,” “equal,” “mate,” “sexual partner” as a noun. Pi possibly corresponds to pei 配, “to pair,” “to accompany,” “to marry,” “to match,” “to be equal,” “to assist.” In Lady Jiang’s case, pi/pei very likely pointed to her position as the spouse of Lord Wen of Jin. In the other case, pi/pei could refer just to a political alliance but, because of its sexual connotations, it could also refer to a marital alliance between Jin and Zhao bo’s polity. If Zhao bo gave his sister as a spouse to Lord Wen of Jin, or if he married the latter’s sister, his son would be related to the current ruler of Jin, Lord Zhao, as a...

134. See Falkenhausen, Suspended Music, 98.
sheng. Lord Wen and Zhao bo could arrange a marriage between their children. As Lord Zhao’s sister’s husband, Zhao bo’s son would also be defined as Lord Zhao’s sheng.

Comparing the cases of Rong sheng and Diao sheng, some similarities can be noted. In both cases, the inscriptions are unusually long and detailed. In Diao sheng’s case the main subject of the inscriptions are clearly rights on the landed property of the Shao lineage. In Rong sheng’s case the negotiations of property rights stay in the background, but can be revealed through the comparison with Lady Jiang’s inscription. Rong sheng was “luckily granted salt gathering” jia qian lu ji 嘉遣滷積. Lady Jiang of Jin was also “luckily granted salt gathering” in the amount of one thousand liang. Spring salt (lu 滷) had been collected since the Neolithic period in the Salt Lake area of the Yuncheng basin in southwestern Shanxi near to the Great Bend of the Yellow River. According to the inscriptions, either Lord Wen or Lord Zhao of Jin granted rights of gathering salt (which was indeed a great source of wealth) to his affinal relative Rong sheng. At the same time, he granted Lady Jiang the right to gather a certain limited amount of salt. Both commissioners of bronze vessels documented these grants in their inscriptions in order to guarantee their rights.

In both cases the events referred to in the inscription took place shortly after the death of the former head of the lineage or principality. During this time, the position of the newly established head was as yet instable, or possibly he was restraining himself from certain activities while fulfilling his obligations of filial piety towards his deceased father, whereas the former head’s widow enjoyed maximal power. In both cases we see a widow of the former head who continued managing the affairs of her husband’s family and principality. At the same time, the new head’s wives and their relatives found themselves on the way towards greater privileges and prosperity. It is understandable that during such transitional periods property rights and standings of persons within lineages and principalities could be negotiated and redefined. Persons whose rights and standings were modified or confirmed as the result of negotiations commissioned lengthy, detailed inscriptions in which they made clear their relationships with the lineage in question, either as a member of a lineage’s branch as in the case of Diao sheng, or as a marital relative as in the case of Rong sheng, and claimed their rights.

The Rong sheng bianzhong inscription not only provides information about property rights of spouses and affinal relatives of patrilineal
lineages’ heads, but also sheds light on cooperation between Zhou principalities and non-Zhou peoples during the eighth century B.C.E., the period of early Chinese history on which least light has been cast.

The designation Rong, making part of Rong sheng’s designation, is best known as a label in the four-part scheme in which foreign peoples residing in the four cardinal directions were referred to as Rong (West), Di 狄 (North), Yi 夷 (East) and Man (South). This cosmological scheme became established during the Warring States period (403–221 B.C.E.), but these four designations were already in use long before. Li Feng argues that during the Western Zhou period “the term ‘Rong’ meant something like ‘warlike foreigners’ and the term “Yi” came very close to “foreign conquerable,” whereas the distinction between them was “more political than cultural or ethnic.” This suggests that Rong and Yi were etic terms used by the Zhou to classify their neighbors, perhaps even according to the current state of political affairs. However, the situation is more complicated. Zhou principalities often were seriously threatened by and suffered losses from the Yi, so that the Yi were also “warlike” and not really “conquerable.” On the other hand, the Zhou not only led wars but also cast alliances with the Rong. In the Rong sheng bianzhong the word “Rong” appears both as a part of the commissioner’s self-designation and as a term referring to a non-Zhou people’s group. Rong sheng’s ancestor Xian gong 憲公 was entrusted by King Mu of Zhou to control Man and Rong. In bronze inscriptions of the Western Zhou and early Spring and Autumn periods, the term Man 蠻 was often used as a general designation for foreign peoples (e.g. in the expression “hundred Man” (bai man 百蠻) or was applied to individual groups of foreign peoples. The Duke of Qin, who commissioned the Qin gong gui 秦公簋 tureen during the mid-Spring and Autumn period, claimed that his ancestors received the Heavenly Mandate “to rule
over the Man [and] the Xia. The Xia, i.e. the Chinese, were the group to which the Duke of Qin counted himself as belonging. By analogy, in the expression “to administer the Man and the Rong,” Rong would be Xian gong’s own group and the Man would be other foreign peoples. King Mu’s policies of making friends with the Rong, or of approximating non-Zhou rulers in order to keep the others calm, are reflected in later transmitted sources. Xian gong might be one such foreign ally. Hence, in Rong sheng’s inscription the term “Rong” was used twice emically by a person who belonged to this group.

As has been pointed out above, Zhou elites intermarried with various neighboring peoples. The ruling house of Jin was no exception. Finds of bronze or ceramic vessels in tombs of Jin-rulers’ spouses dating from the early to late Western Zhou point to the non-Zhou origin of these women. As mentioned above, the ruling house of Jin intermarried with the ruling house of Peng, a neighboring polity of non-Zhou origin. Later on, Duke Xian of Jin 夏獻公 (r. 676–651 B.C.E.) married four women from two different Rong groups. Hence, it is plausible that Lord Wen or Lord Zhao of Jin also took a wife from a Rong peoples’ group.

It is worth considering the possibility that Rong sheng could be a kin relative of Lady Jiang of Jin. Transmitted sources inform us that some groups of the Rong adopted Chinese surnames. Some Jiang-surnamed Rong defeated royal troops during the reign of King Xuan. Thereupon these Rong were driven back by Lord Mu of Jin.

140. See Qin gong gui 秦公簋 (Jicheng 4315, Xichui 西垂, Lixian 禮縣, Gansu 省, Middle Spring and Autumn).
141. During the reign of King Mu, the King of Xu 徐 led a joint army of several polities of Huai Yi peoples in a war against the Zhou. In order to split the enemies, King Mu recognized the ruler of Xu as the “chief” (zhū 主) or the “elder” (bo 伯) over the rest of them (see Wang Guowei, Jin ben Zhushu jinian shu zheng, 278; Fan Ye, Hou Han shu, 2808).
142. Another case of an emic usage of “Rong” as a definition of the speaker’s group is reflected in Zuo zhuang, 1007 (Xiang: 14).
146. See Xu Yuan 徐元 et al., Guo yu ji jie 國語集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 15 (“Xuan wang ji wei, bu ji qian mu” 宣王及位，不籍千畝).
Another or, perhaps, even the same Jiang-surnamed Rong group was displaced by the forces of the Qin principality and moved to the mountainous region in the south of Jin during the mid-seventh century B.C.E. It is not clear where both these groups of the Rong resided. Considering various historical-geographical factors, a possible place of residence could be somewhere to the west or southwest of the Great Bend of the Yellow River on the edge of the present-day Shaanxi and Henan provinces. Starting from the reign of Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636–628 B.C.E.), the latter group of the Jiang-surnamed Rong continuously acted as Jin allies in various military campaigns at least until the mid-6th century B.C.E. Although the Zuo zhuan informs us about their relationships only during the seventh to sixth centuries B.C.E., this alliance could well be much older. If it was held together by intermarriages, this could also be the reason why the Jin principality offered protection and asylum to the Jiang-surnamed Rong.

Unfortunately, the native lineage of Lady Jiang is unknown and this hypothesis cannot be verified. Besides Qi, where the spouse of Lord Mu of Jin came from, Ji and Xiang 向 in Shandong, Shen and Xu in Henan, and some other smaller Zhou principalities all belonged to the Jiang surname community. Rong sheng’s lineage could be connected to the ruling house of Jin through another spouse, a sister, or a daughter of Lord Wen of Jin. In any case, affinal relationships between Jin and his polity represented an important political factor.

Lord Wen of Jin was mainly responsible for the restoration of the Zhou dynasty with King Ping (r. 770–720 B.C.E.) in the eastern capital Luoyang in 770 B.C.E. Jin was supported by several other principalities, including Shen 申, Lu, Xū, Zheng, and Qin. That Rong sheng’s father

---

147. See Sima Qian, Shi ji, 1637 ("Jin shijia" 晉世家), 1780 ("Zhao shijia" 趙世家).
148. According to the Guo yu, King Xuan and the Rong had a battle on the "field of one thousand acres" (qian mu 千畝). Some authors try to localize the toponym Qianmu, but this is not convincing. The Zuo zhuan states that the Jiang Rong resided in Guazhou 瓜州, or "pumpkin region." Many centuries later, the toponym Guazhou was applied to an area in Gansu province near Dunhuang. Localizing the Jiang Rong in Gansu is not realistic in view of c. 2000 km distance between these places.
149. Various non-Zhou groups resided in Shaanxi province. As Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659–621 B.C.E.) started to expand towards the Yellow River, some of such groups could have been displaced and sought the protection of the neighboring Jin.
150. See Zuo zhuan, 1007 (Xiang: 14).
151. See Shang shu juin gu wen zhu shu, 28.543–548 (‘Wen hou zhi ming’ 文侯之命); Jin ben zhushu jinian, 262–83 (You: 11 and Ping: 1); Li Xueqin 李學勤 et al. (eds.), Xi nian 系年, in Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (貳) (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi, 2010), Vol. 2, 2.138.
Zhao bo “glorified and accompanied the Lord of Jin in order to make everyone abide by the king’s orders” most probably means that he was involved in these events on behalf of his polity too. Indeed, the Rong (specifically, the Hound-Rong, Quanrong 犬戎) are often blamed for the murder of the last Western Zhou king, You. It should be remembered that the Quanrong were drawn into the succession quarrel within the Zhou royal family by Kin You’s father-in-law, Jiang-surnamed ruler of Shen. That other groups of the Rong joined the rulers of Zhou principalities so as to restore order, sheds a new light on the intercultural relationships in Early China.

Later on, Zhao bo’s son Rong sheng was appointed, together with Lord Wen’s spouse (or already widow) Lady Jiang of Jin, to be in charge of the campaign against Fantang, a non-Zhou polity, possibly located near Xuchang 許昌 in Ying River Valley. This joint appointment was most likely related to the fact that they were both close marital relatives of the ruling house of Jin and enjoyed great trust. Their abilities to mobilize their own native lineages, and perhaps also their connections to other, external lineages could be relevant for the success of this undertaking.

Discussion: Marital Alliances as a Factor of Integration in the Western Zhou Network

The Western Zhou political system was laid out as a network of colonies stretching from Shaanxi to Hebei and Shandong provinces. Besides the Ji-surnamed royal lineage, allied non-Ji lineages, especially those connected with the Ji by marital ties (such as the Jiang-surnamed Qi), also founded new colonies. The Zhou kings directly controlled their metropolitan areas in Shaanxi and central Henan province. The colonies in more distant places were ruled by hereditary princes,

152. See Shi ji, 4.147–49; Jin ben zhu shu ji nian, 262 (You: 11).
153. For the reconstruction of the historical-geographical background of the cooperation between Shen principality and Quanrong see Li, Landscape and Power, 227–32.
155. Pulleyblank reasonably underlines that the strength of the founder of Qi was due to the fact that he was “an important blood relative on the female side, the senior member of the Jiang clan, with which the royal Ji clan had regularly intermarried in the past and with which it continued to intermarry thereafter” (Pulleyblank, “Ji and Jiang”, 8).
maria khayutina 51

zhuhou 諸侯, who were subordinated to the Zhou king. In the space between and around Zhou principalities resided old lineages that were already extant during the Shang time.156 Chinese historians traditionally maintain that, from the time of its foundation and throughout the Zhou period, relationships between the royal house and Ji-surname named principalities were regulated by the so-called “lineage order” (zong fa 宗法).157 Considering that this organizing principle could be effective only within patrilineal kinship structures, some authors argue that, complementing the zong fa, principalities ruled by lineages of other surnames were included in the Zhou geopolitical structure by means of marital alliances.158 However, these assumptions are usually supported by examples in the Chunqiu and Zuo zhuan. These texts provide abundant evidence corroborating that during the Spring and Autumn period marital alliances were regularly concluded between ruling lineages of principalities and represented an important political factor.159 Although transmitted texts contain very little

156. See Krjukov, Formy social’noj organizacii, 60–69 with further references, also Creel, The Origins of Statecraft, 303.

157. In Early China, patrilineal lineages represented conical structures, with the line of direct descendants of the lineage’s founder as the “trunk” and the lines founded by the founder’s brothers or by other lineage members in the next generations as “branches.” The head of the “trunk” acted as the chief sacrificer in rituals dedicated to their oldest common ancestors on behalf of the whole structure. Accordingly, in terms of ritual, the “branches” were subordinated to the “trunk.” This principle of the regulation of hierarchical relationships within lineages is referred to as zong fa. The ritual authority of the lineage’s head legitimated his political authority. Thus, lineages/principalities taking their source in the Zhou royal house were subordinated to the king as the head of their “trunk” both ritually and politically.


159. For investigations into political marriage during the Spring and Autumn period Marcel Granet, La polygynie sororale et le sororat dans la Chine féodale. Étude sur les formes anciennes de la polygynie chinoise (Paris: Leroux, 1920); Thatcher, “Marriages of the Ruling Elite”; Vogelsang, “Mit den Waffen der Frauen”; Xu

footnote continued on next page
information about marital alliances during the Western Zhou period, the situation in the Spring and Autumn period is often simply projected onto the past. Considering this methodological flaw, Western publications manifest more reserved attitudes to kinship and marriage as constituents of the Western Zhou political system. Especially, Herrlee G. Creel explicitly warned against transferring the Spring and Autumn example to the Western Zhou period, for which, in his view, there is not enough evidence of the importance of the “extended family,” zong fa, and of intermarriages between ruling houses of princedomilies. Instead, Creel supported the feudal interpretation of Zhou China, which long remained dominant in Western scholarship. According to the “feudalist” model, the rulers, including both members and non-members of the Jī surname community, accepted the terms of subordination to the king in the course of investiture ceremonies, and entered into a kind of personal contract with the king, similar to the oath of fealty in medieval Europe. Other scholars suggest that in Zhou China, feudalism was not an alternative to, but incorporated the zong fa. As Hsu and Linduff have argued, “the combination of contractual and personal bonds through family ties between the zong fa units was peculiar to the Zhou version” of feudalism. However, ceremonies reflected in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, regarded by earlier scholars as investitures of feudal lords, in most cases have been later recognized as appointments of officials in the Zhou metropolitan areas, whereas inscriptions testifying about appointments of princedomilies’ rulers are extremely scarce. The


163. See Hsu and Linduff, Western Chou Civilization, 185.

latter were commissioned by Ji-surnamed zhuhou, which speaks for the existence of the zong fa, but is not sufficient to corroborate “feudalism.” As Li Feng rightly notes, these inscriptions do not document anything comparable to the oath of fielty, and, therefore, a “feudo-vassalic institution” was lacking in Early China.\footnote{165} Sharply rejecting the “feudal” interpretation of Zhou China,\footnote{166} Li Feng acknowledges kinship, the ancestral cult, and the zong fa order as organizing principles in Zhou society, and suggests understanding the Western Zhou political organization as a “delegatory kin-ordered settlement state.”\footnote{167}

Acknowledging patrilineal kinship, ancestral worship, and zong fa as main factors of integration leaves open the question as to how the Zhou kings regulated their relationships with members of their network that did not belong to their patrilineal kin.\footnote{168}

Both “feudalists” and their critics believe that the ability of the Zhou king to apply violence guaranteed the integrity of the Zhou network. Many scholars regard the fourteen shi 師 mentioned in a number of inscriptions as royal “standing armies.” Some authors assume that the shi, located in the royal metropolitan areas in Shaanxi and Henan provinces, represented a major force that protected principalities from external threats.\footnote{169} Others suppose that the shi were capable of suppressing any disobedience of the network’s members.\footnote{170} However, it is doubtful whether or not, in the absence of a system of regular taxation, large standing armies could be properly supported. The designation shi 師氏, “captains’ lineages,” appearing in many inscriptions, indicates that the shi were in fact lineages entrusted with defence of the Zhou

\footnote{165. Ulrich Lau has suggested avoiding the term “feudalism” because of its haziness and ambiguity, at the same time recognizing the existence of “Lehen” (fief, or feud) as a form of land transfer (see Ulrich Lau, Quellenstudien zur Landvergabe und Bodenübertragung in der westlichen Zhou-Dynastie (1047–771 v. Chr.), Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 41 (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica, 1999), 42–43). For other arguments against “feudalism” see Cook, “Wealth and the Western Zhou,” 282–90.}

\footnote{166. Li Feng, “‘Feudalism’ and Western Zhou China: A Criticism,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 63 (2003), 115–44, esp. 122–24 and 142.}

\footnote{167. See Li, Bureaucracy and the State, 294–98.}

\footnote{168. Li Feng has agreed that mutual visits and marriage relationships “were above all significant probably as a strategy adopted by the Zhou court to reassert influence over peripheral regions” (see Li, Landscape and Power, 111–13, 138). Unfortunately, no particular evidence in support of the abovementioned arguments has been discussed in this book. In his next book, Li does not discuss interstate marital alliances as a means of political regulation (see Li, Bureaucracy and the State).}

\footnote{169. See Vasil’ev, Dreinij Kitaj. Tom I., 264.}

\footnote{170. See Creel, The Origins of Statecraft, 101, 301, 305–10; Li, “‘Feudalism’ and Western Zhou China,” 136–39.}
metropolitan areas. The size and the might of the shi represent hypothetical values and are possibly overestimated. Even if the metropolitan shi, controlled by the king, sometimes participated in campaigns in distant regions, Zhou principalities recruited their own warriors. They supported the king in military campaigns or, as the example in the Hai gui quoted above demonstrates, led such campaigns on their own. Zhou kings relied heavily on the cooperation of principalities’ rulers, and would have hardly been able to quash any ruler’s rebellion by setting forth the royal shi without support from other principalities.

If the king’s own forces were limited, the network of patrilineally related Ji-principalities could, theoretically, jointly exercise pressure on non-Ji members of the Zhou network. It is noteworthy that Jiang-surnamed Qi, Ji, Xu, and Shen, Zi-surname Song, and Gui-sur-named Chen neighbored Ji-surname principalities Lu, Cheng, Ying,

173. See Krijukov, Formy social’noj organizacii, 73–74; Lau, Quellenstudien, 161; Lewis, Sanctioned Violence, 35; Li, Bureaucracy and the State, 264–68.
174. Edward Shaughnessy and Li Feng regard the Shi Shi gui 師史簋 (Jicheng 4218, Zhangjiapo, Fengxi, Shaanxi, Middle to Late Western Zhou) as evidence of a punitive campaign launched by a Zhou king (supposedly King Yi) into the territory of a Qi principality (see Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 329; Li, Landscape and Power, 98–99). This inscription records a king’s command to Shi Shi “to pursue in Qi” (追于齊), but not to “attack Qi.” The construction zhui yu, “to pursue in” suggests that Qi is a place name, but not the object of pursuit, which would be introduced by the verb zhui without a preposition (compare with 公追戎于濟西 in the Chun qiu). Similar constructions appear in bronze inscriptions (e.g. 王令我羞追于西, “the king commanded us to humiliate [the enemies] and to pursue [them] in the west”). In the latter example, a previous sentence makes clear that the action was directed against the Xianyun 縣狁 who attacked Western Yu 西俞, whereas the object of pursuit in the Shi Shi gui remains unclear (which is not untypical for bronze inscriptions that often suggest the readers’ context awareness). Possibly, it is related to the Shi Yuan gui 師袁簋 (Jicheng 4313, Middle to Late Western Zhou), according to which Yi of Huai River attacked eastern principalities (dong guo 東國). The king commanded Shi Yuan to lead the royal huchen 虎臣 warriors with whom he had to reinforce the defence of Qi garrison (Qi shi 齊師), as well as of Ji and of three other Shandong principalities. Possibly, Shi Shi had to join the same party. In any case, the evidence for the king’s attack on Qi is too thin. In another case, recorded in the Bamboo Annals, King Yi boiled alive Lord Ai of Qi 齊哀侯 for an unknown reason. However, this happened as the king gathered the rulers of principalities (王致諸侯, see Jin ben zhu shu ji nian, Yi: 3, p. 254). This example demonstrates that the king was able to apply violence against another ruler, but it appears that the king acted on his own territory and, most likely, given the agreement of other rulers.
and Cai respectively. Still, the Jì did not necessarily always dictate conditions to the rulers of Jiang-surnamed principalities. If the zong fa was an organizing principle not only within the Ji, but also in other surname communities, Jiang-surnamed principalities located at a close distance from one another in Shandong and in Henan could cooperate in order to defend their common interests. In cases of tenseness, peripheral non-Jì principalities could forge a friendship with non-Zhou peoples and rebel against the Zhou, as actually happened in 771 B.C.E., when the ruler of Shen rebelled and borrowed support from the Quanrong, who finally crushed the Western Zhou dynasty. This demonstrates how fragile the stability of Zhou peace was. Coercion could not suffice to keep non-Jì-surnamed principalities within the Zhou political network. Rather, the latter remained with the Jì not because of fear of punishment, but because of benefits from cooperation.

As an alternative to coercion, gift-giving, especially donations of prestige objects by the Zhou king, is sometimes regarded as a significant factor in integration in Western Zhou society and politics. Indeed, inscriptions commemorate royal gifts more often than the military achievements of their commissioners. Attempting a general theory of the development of “archaic states,” political anthropologist Stephan Breuer classifies Western Zhou together with a number of other ancient political systems under the category of “prestige-goods” states, which he regards as an evolutionary stage between “conical clan” and “urban territorial” states. According to Breuer, in “conical clan states” members of one kinship group monopolized power; in “prestige goods states,” the privileged lineage opened the way for political participation to non-kin associates by the use of gifts, including insignia and luxury items, as a kind of “political currency” that could be converted into status, alliances, and loyalty. Breuer’s concept of the “prestige goods state” is applicable to the territories in Shaanxi and

175. The Shi Yuan gui reflects a case of military cooperation between Qi and Ji (jicheng 4313, Middle to Late Western Zhou). The Chunqiu records a number of meetings organized by Qi in which Xu participated. Possibly, cooperation between Qi, Ji, and Xu was based on their membership in the Jiang zong fa structure.


central Henan under the direct rule of the Zhou king, but not for the Western Zhou political network as a whole.

Elsewhere I have suggested analytically distinguishing between the royal metropolitan territories as the “smaller Zhou kingdom,” on one hand, and the “larger Zhou polity” including principalities, on the other hand (cf. Map 1).178 The former was gradually consolidating territorially, politically and administratively, thus heading towards a centralized state (although this process was not accomplished until the crisis of 771 B.C.E.). I’m not yet convinced whether the latter was even conceived as a centralized state, as most evidence supporting the existence of such a concept at the beginning of the Western Zhou period is based either on post-Western Zhou transmitted literature, or on interpretations of the rhetoric of some of the bronze inscriptions. Not qualifying as a “state,” the “larger Zhou polity,” or, better put, political network, nevertheless existed as a political agglomeration centered on the Zhou king. Within the “smaller kingdom,” the power of the king was strong and he was recognized as the sovereign. There, royal officials gathered power in their hands, and royal gifts were used as practical instruments for recruiting people into service, rewarding them for their loyalty, and encouraging competition for closer access to the king.

Inscriptions from principalities confirm that on the local level, dominated by local rulers, the situation was similar.180 However, only very few inscriptions commissioned by rulers of principalities commemorate royal gifts, and, just as in the case of “investiture” inscriptions, their commissioners belonged to the Ji surname community.181 Even if some inscribed vessels made by rulers of major non-Ji-surnamed principalities, such as Qi and Ji, have been found, they do not...

178. These territories were referred to in traditional historiography as the “royal domain” wang ji 王畿. For the discussion see Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution,” 37–38.


180. This is manifested in inscriptions commemorating gifts donated by local rulers to their subordinates, e.g. in Xing (Mai yi 麦彝, Jicheng 9893, Early Western Zhou), or Ji (Ji hou di ding 纪侯弟鼎, Jicheng 2638, Late Western Zhou).

181. See e.g. Mai zun 麦尊 (Jicheng 6015, Early Western Zhou); Ying hou Shigong zhong 应侯视工鐘 (Jicheng 107; Late Western Zhou); Guo ji Zibo pan 纪季子白盤 (Jicheng 10173, Guochuan 麟川, Baoji, Shaanxi, Late Western Zhou). The standard example of the investiture of a regional lord accompanied by gifts, the Ode “Han yi” 韓奕 in the Shi jing, also reflects the relationship between the Zhou king and a Ji-surnamed regional lord (see Shi jing quan shi, “Han yi,” 537–40).
mention royal gifts. Marcel Granet, who emphasized prestige as “the principle of feudal cohesion” in his study of “Chinese feudalism,” warned that there was no universal standard with which “prestige goods” could be evaluated, but only local and temporary ones. He underlined that the value of things depended on the virtue of their donor or owner, and that things changed their value as a result of the transfer.\textsuperscript{182} The absence of commemorations of royal gifts in inscriptions of non-Jī-surnamed rulers indicates that they did not volunteer to adjust their own prestige on the scale established by the king. Therefore, royal gifts were not universally valid as a “political currency” in the frame of the Western Zhou political network, and Breuer’s interpretation of the latter as a “prestige-goods state” does not hold.

Both models regarding coercion or distribution of prestige goods as factors of integration in the Western Zhou network presume that as long as the Zhou royal house was strong, it functioned as a node to which all members of its geopolitical network were radially connected. Later on, the weakness of the central power, unable to dispatch armies or to bestow gifts, caused the disintegration of this radial network. The new situation called forth the intensification of both violence and diplomatic exchange among individual principalities, which now organized themselves in decentralized, concurrent networks. However, the loss of military strength by the king in 771 B.C.E. did not cause the collapse of the whole political system, and it was quickly restored with a new Zhou king at its center. Also, the limitation on the king’s ability to distribute gifts after the loss of his material base in Shannxi did not change much in his relationships with rulers of principalities. These facts signal that the Zhou kings’ ability to apply coercion or to distribute gifts were not the main integrative factors in the Western Zhou political network, and, moreover, that the strength of the royal house was not alone responsible for holding together the Zhou political system. Therefore, it is necessary to look more closely at other factors of integration in the Zhou geopolitical network. As both inscriptive evidence discussed in this article and archaeological investigations of several past decades demonstrate, marital alliances between ruling elites of principalities played a greater role than previously acknowledged in Western scholarship and represented an important integrative factor in Zhou China.

Excavations of tombs in cemeteries of principalities attest to the privileged status of rulers’ spouses as “tokens of interlineage association”

\textsuperscript{182} See Granet, \textit{La féodalité chinoise}, 11, 105.
starting from the early Western Zhou period. Most inscriptions on bronze vessels commissioned by rulers of principalities either identified themselves as rulers, or were made for their wives or daughters, and, therefore, also served to strengthen interlineage associations. The cases of Diao sheng and Rong sheng demonstrate that spouses of lineage heads or principality rulers, possibly backed by their patrilineal relatives, could actively interfere in the affairs of their husbands’ houses. The cases of Liao sheng, Hai, and Rong sheng show that affinal relatives provided military or political assistance to each other. In general, the numerous female- and sheng-related inscriptions in the jicheng corroborate that, starting from the early Western Zhou period, marital alliances represented a substantial form of cooperation between the Zhou royal house and Zhou principalities, between principalities among themselves, and between the Zhou and various non-Zhou groups. Marital ties bound together the Western Zhou political network much more smoothly and effectively than the strength of arms or the splendor of royal gifts.

Inscriptions demonstrate that Zhou kings married outside of the smaller Zhou kingdom to women from other Zhou and non-Zhou principalities. This practice certainly had political effects. Successful marital policies allowed Zhou kings to secure their status as leaders in the Jī community and in their political network constructed across the borders of surname communities. By taking wives from such distant principalities as Qi, Jī, or Chen, they inhibited the “drifting-away” of principalities, once defined as parts of the “larger Zhou polity” through conquest and colonization, but not bound to the center by administration or economy. Marrying women from “alien,” non-Zhou principalities was, possibly, the most reliable means of securing peace on the Zhou borders. Attracting women from Zhou and non-Zhou principalities, Zhou kings constructed the king-centered network of marital relationships. Married to members of the royal house and other aristocratic lineages in the western metropolitan area, women from distant and “alien” principalities embodied by their presence the coherence of the Zhou political network and harmony in its relationships with its environment. The organization of a betrothal, the passage of the bridal convoy through the territories of other principalities lying along its itinerary, the marriage ceremony in the royal palace and, possibly, subsequent visits by spouses to their native families offered many

184. For “drifting-away” of “regional states” see Li, Landscape and Power, 116–19.
185. For a graphic model of the king-centered network see Hsu and Linduff, Western Chou Civilization, 159.
opportunities for displaying royal authority and prestige and for con-
trolling the fidelity of both Jī and non-Jī subordinates. To some
extent, marital alliances between the Zhou royal house and the non-
Zhou anticipated the institution of he qin 和親, “harmonious affinal rela-
tionships” of later epochs, adopted, in particular, by the Han 漢 Empire
(202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) in order to achieve peaceful coexistence with the
Xiongnu 匈奴.186

It is often assumed that rulers of principalities intermarried mostly
with local elites within principalities, thus contributing to the political
and cultural unity within the latter.187 Inscriptions demonstrate that
already during the Western Zhou period, marital alliances were estab-
lished across the borders between the ruling lineages of individual
Zhou principalities, and between the latter and various non-Zhou prin-
cipalities without mediation of the king. As a result, various decentra-
lized networks of affinal relationships were created. The king-centered
and the decentralized marital networks complemented each other over
a long period of time. The fact that the Zhou commonwealth did not fall
apart after the crisis experienced by the Zhou royal house in 771 B.C.E.
points to the substantial significance of decentralized networks con-
structed, among others, by means of interstate marriages for the stabil-
ity of the Zhou political system. During the Spring and Autumn period,
ruling houses of principalities did not need to invent a new strategy to
withstand the political collapse resulting from the weakening of the
royal house, but maintained the already long established policy.

Re-acknowledgment of the significance of interstate, trans-regional
marital alliances in early Chinese geopolitical processes also invites
us to reconsider the significance of affinal relationships between
lineages below the level of principalities. Although the organization
of Chinese lineages was based on the principles of patrilineality and
patriarchy, the explicit designations of members of high elites as
shēng show that benefitting from affinal relationships received social
approval. Each new marriage signified not only the recruitment of
women as sexual partners, mothers, educators of children, labor
force, assistants in the ancestral cult, etc., but also the establishment
of durable interlineage relationships where men connected through
women could engage in various common enterprises. Shifting the
focus from the lineage to a network of lineages connected to each
other by affinal ties and mutually reproducing, or connected through

186. On the he qin policies, see Yang Mingzhu 閻明恕, Zhongguo gudai he qin shi
中國古代和親史 (Guizhou: Guizhou minzu, 2003).
187. See Hsu and Linduff, Western Chou Civilization, 159; Vasil’ev, Dreivniy Kitaj,
Tom I., 265, 270–71.
each other to third parties may be productive for studying interactions in early Chinese society. For instance, horizontal ties between metropolitan lineages in the small Zhou kingdom, strengthened by intermarriages, facilitated cooperation within the local aristocracy, but also split it into different factions and allowed some groups to place themselves in opposition to the royal power. Not by chance, in 841 B.C.E., only ten years after the events referred to in Diao sheng’s inscriptions, the metropolitan nobility was able to unite and to expel King Li. Similar processes also took place in principalities during the Spring and Autumn period.

As inscriptions commissioned by sheng demonstrate, being an affinal relative of the royal Zhou, large principalities, or of strong metropolitan lineages was associated with considerable prestige, especially for members of weaker or peripheral principalities and lineages. Vice versa, for the aristocracy from the metropolitan areas or Zhou principalities, having marital connections with distant and exotic non-Zhou aliens was also a matter of prestige. This means that the standing of individuals or their lineages was not fixed by patrilineal descent alone, but could be negotiated and modified through, among other ways, marital relationships with other lineages. It is important to recognize that there was neither a single source (e.g. Zhou king) nor a single standard of prestige. Various representations of prestige were possibly behind different marital policies practiced by lineages or principalities. In particular, bronze inscriptions show that the Zhou royal house and other Ji-surnamed lineages favored diversity and constructed wide, inclusive affinal networks. In contrast, Jiang-surnamed lineages maintained preferential partnership with the Ji, probably seeking to preserve the aristocratic purity of their line and hoping for better marriage chances for their daughters. With the passage of time, the choice of marital policy, possibly, decided whose kinship network would achieve political domination. The exclusive policy of the Jiang brought them expected results in Shandong, where the ruling house of Qi was able to regularly establish principal wives in Lu and, finally, achieved domination over Lu and other Ji-surnamed neighbors during the Spring and Autumn period. The same policy was less

successful in other places where Ji lineages had a greater number of neighbors with different surnames, and where the Jiang were not continuously able to place their daughters as principal wives. Avoiding giving their daughters to non-Ji-surnamed lineages, the Jiang had fewer opportunities to recruit new allies from other surname communities, and, therefore, they cemented their secondary role in the Zhou network.

金文所見婚姻聯盟與婚戚(甥與婚購)及其在周代社會政治中之地位

夏玉婷

摘要

兩周數百件帶銘文的青銅器是為或被婦女訂鑄的。此外，數十件銘文的鑄造者自稱某族的“生”(“甥”)。先秦文獻中的“甥”字表銘以下數種姻親關係：姑之子、舅之子、妻之兄（弟）、姊妹之夫、姊妹之子或女兒之子等。與婦女或某甥有關銘文的出現時間甚長，其地理的分布甚廣，可見婚姻聯繫在中國古代社會和政治中具有重要性。專為“婚購”而鑄造的銅器銘文也指出此事實。

本文以與某甥有關的銘文為中心，建議婚姻關係可以激發雙方氏族或邦國間男性成員間的相互義務。因此姻戚關係成為社會與政治的資本，可用以提高個人事業成就及聲譽，並可增進其氏族邦國之福利。總之，筆者認爲邦國之間的聯盟制度為古代中國政治系統中的基本因素之一。自西周初起，婚姻聯盟一方面有助於鞏固以周王為中心的“星形政治網絡”，另一方面也有利于“分散政治網絡”的建設。後者可以——儘管中心的虛弱——保證全系統的穩定性，使得周朝可以通過許多危機，而周系政治網絡不但未崩潰、反而繼續擴張。

Keywords: Zhou China, marital alliances, political networks, bronze inscriptions