Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity*

Maria Khayutina
(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

Abstract

The present article examines how political communication and administration were effected in the Western Zhou polity (1046/5-771 BC) and investigates the significance of the royal residences as political and administrative centers. Bronze inscriptions referring to royal receptions that were offered to Zhou regional rulers, rulers of non-Zhou polities, royal officers and other subjects provide the basis for this study. It is argued that the form of “royal hospitality” described in these inscriptions was a political and, partially, administrative institution of the Zhou kings, and that its territorial localization both reflected and defined the geopolitical constitution of the polity. The article concludes by arguing that in the “larger Zhou polity” embracing the regional states of the zhuhou, political communication was decentralized, and that none of the royal residences held the status as political “capital” throughout the entire period. It is further found that a process of territorial centralization was underway in the territories under the direct control of the king, and that the oldest royal residence Zhou-under-Qi was gradually established as political and administrative capital.

Résumé

Cet article s’intéresse à la façon dont opéraient la communication politique et l’administration dans le régime des Zhou Occidentaux (1046/5-771 av. J.-C.) et cherche à...
évaluer l’importance des résidences royales et des centres administratifs. Il se fonde sur les inscriptions sur bronze se référant aux réceptions offertes par le roi aux souverains régionaux Zhou, à ceux des régimes extérieurs aux Zhou, aux officiers royaux des Zhou et à d’autres de leurs sujets. L’argument est que la forme d’”hospitalité royale” décrite dans ces inscriptions constituait une des institutions politiques et, pour partie, administratives des rois Zhou, et que leur localisation territoriale reflétait et en même temps définissait la constitution géopolitique du régime. L’article conclut que dans l”’entité politique étendue des Zhou”, incluant les États régionaux des zhuhou, la communication politique fonctionnait de façon décentralisée et qu’aucune des résidences royales n’a conservé le statut de “capitale” politique pendant la totalité de la période. On constate en outre qu’un processus de centralisation territoriale était à l’œuvre dans les territoires directement contrôlés par le roi, et que la résidence royale la plus ancienne, “Zhou au pied du mont Qi”, est progressivement devenue la capitale politique et administrative.

**Keywords**

Western Zhou, capitals, hospitality, receptions, politics, communication, mobility

In most scholarly accounts, the Western Zhou (1046/5-771 BC) is represented as a state territorially organized around its capital Feng-Hao (near present-day Xi’an, Shaanxi), while Luoyi (at present-day Luoyang, Henan) is regarded as its eastern, secondary capital. Archaeological discoveries of the last century have revealed that Zhou under Mount Qi on the boundary between present-day Fufeng and Qishan counties (Shaanxi), previously regarded as an old and abandoned residence of the Zhou kings, was another place of major significance during the entire Western Zhou period. However, few scholars recognize it as equal to the two “capitals” Zongzhou and Chengzhou. Although these sites are usually assessed as “capitals,” the territorial organization of the Western Zhou polity and the functions of the capitals are unclear. Whilst Paul Wheatley, referring to both Shang (ca. 1600-1046 BC) and Zhou China, identified the royal capital as the “point of absolute reality about which the world revolved, intimately connected with the welfare of the kingdom,”1 Mark Edward Lewis has recently remarked that “the Western Zhou inherited and

---

extended the model of the state as a league of cities bound together by the power of the ruling house” where the royal capital was not particularly significant. In another recent study, dedicated specifically to the territorial organization of the Western Zhou state, Li Feng has argued that contemporary bronze inscriptions mentioning “the capital Hao, more often called Zongzhou, … demonstrate its paramount importance as the Zhou political center where the state ritual and receptions for the regional rulers were frequently held.” The present article considers the latter statement as an appeal to look more closely at what Western Zhou bronze inscriptions on royal receptions of various kinds of persons suggest about the geopolitical constitution of the Western Zhou polity.

About three hundred Western Zhou inscriptions on ritual bronze objects mention Zhou kings. Most of them report on receptions that kings offered to the commissioners of the bronzes, or, if the latter were of a more modest standing, to their overlords. During receptions, Zhou kings made appointments of persons to various offices, charged them with particular tasks, bestowed on them power insignia, or merely handed down gifts. Many inscriptions referring to royal receptions have already been studied with regard to the nature of the Zhou state, the structure of the royal administration, and the social hierarchy and communication in the Zhou society. These analyses suggest to understand royal “hospitality” as a political and, to some extent, administrative

---

4) Most of the inscriptions consulted for this study are listed in 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 shuju, 1984-1994), Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng shiwen 殷周金文集成釋文, 6 vols. (Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. Press, 2001); Zhang Yachu 張亞初, Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng yinde 殷周金文集成引得 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001); and the Chinese Ancient Texts Database CHANT at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (www.chant.org). All inscriptions are noted with their jicheng numbers; recently (post-1980) discovered inscriptions not included in the jicheng are referred to separately in the footnotes.
5) To refer to royal receptions as instances of “hospitality” might sound unusual, as one customarily relates this concept to informal communication and the particular cordiality
institution of significant impact on the coherence of the Zhou polity. However, more attention must be paid to the territorial localization of the royal receptions to clarify how politics and administration were realized in the physical geographical space of early China. The present study takes off from the assumption that the practices of royal hospitality dialectically reflected and affected both the operation and constitution of the Western Zhou political system on the sociopolitical as well as the geopolitical level. Demonstrating first the significance offered by a host to his guests, whereas in some cases in our consideration the kings acting as hosts inspired awe rather than radiated generosity. Nevertheless, both less and more formal royal receptions did represent a form of hospitality which, at a formal level, can be defined as a form of interaction and communication between a “host” and a “guest.” This simple scheme of hospitality underlies a great variety of social practices and institutions, from maintaining friendly relations between individuals or families to establishing hospitals, accommodating refugees, and the tourist industry. For references to works dedicated to various forms of hospitality, see Maria Khayutina, “Host-Guest Opposition as a Model of Geopolitical Relations in Pre-Imperial China,” Oriens Extremus 43 (2002): 77, n. 2. I have investigated various aspects of hospitality in early China elsewhere, including in “Instituty ‘druzei’ i ‘gostei’ v drevnom Kitae. Evolyuciya social’nyh i politicheskikh yavlenii i sootvetstvuyushchei Terminologii v periody Zapadnogo Zhou, Chunqiu i Zhanguo” [Institutions of “friends” and “guests” in Ancient China: Evolution of the social and politcal phenomena and of the appropriate terminology during the Western Zhou, Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods] (Diss., Moscow: Institut Vostokovedeniya RAN, 1999); “Welcoming Guests—Constructing Corporate Privacy? An Attempt at a Socio-Anthropological Interpretation of Ancestral Rituals Evolution in Ancient China (ca. XI-V cc. BC),” Berliner China-Hefte 24 (2003): 35-50; “Die Geschichte der Irrfahrt des Prinzen Chonger und ihre Botschaft,” in Kritik im alten und modernen China, ed. Heiner Roetz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 20-47. For further bibliography, see my website www.sinits.com.


The distinction between the operative and constitutive functions in a state goes back to Jeremy Bentham’s political theory developed in the late 1770s and early 1780s: “In a political state, all power is either operative, or constitutive: operative is that, by the immediate exercise of which, obsequiousness and obedience are called for at the hands of individuals: constitutive … is that, by the exercise of which, operative power is created and conferred,” in The Works of Jeremy Bentham, Published under the Superintendence of his Executor, John Bowring (London: Simkin, Marshall, & Co., 1843), 9: 127.

Some constitutive socio- and geopolitical effects of imperial hospitality rituals in the Qing Empire have been identified in James Hevia, Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793 (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1995); Hevia, “Rulership and Tibetan Buddhism in Eighteenth Century China: Qing Emperors, Lamas
of the royal receptions for constructing relationships between the Zhou king and rulers of Zhou regional states, non-Zhou rulers, officers of the Zhou royal administration, and other Zhou subjects, I will further suggest that we interpret the territorial arrangement of these meetings as both an indicator of, and a factor in, the geopolitical constitution of the Zhou polity. From the inscriptive data on the contents and places of receptions, this study aims to evaluate to what extent political communication and administration in the Western Zhou polity were territorially centralized and which, if any, of the royal residences was the “capital of the Western Zhou state.” Finally, I shall discuss how the epigraphic data may correlate with representations of royal reception practices in some received texts from the early period.

Place references in bronze inscriptions

The identification of place was typical for reporting events in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Place references became regular already during the early period of this epoch, when inscriptions usually contained minimal details and before the date notations became widely adopted as another medium of documentation. Diagram I, based on the


I thank Prof. Thomas Höllmann for his advice to assess seats of the Western Zhou kings as “residences” (or Germ. “Residenzen”) instead of “capitals” (personal communication, January 2006).

Western Zhou history is conventionally divided into three periods: early (King Wu to King Zhao, 1045-957 BC), middle (King Mu to King Yi, 956-858 BC), and late (King Li to King You, 857 to 771 BC).

Although the exact dating of vessels to particular reigns is only rarely possible, their approximate classification under these periods allows for a diachronic analysis of the inscriptions. In the following, identical texts reproduced on several bronze objects will be considered one text. Among the inscriptions listed in Jicheng and referring in some way to Zhou kings, dates were indicated in only one sixth of the inscriptions of the early period. During the middle period, their number already exceeded one third, whereas during the late period, it included two thirds; see Khayutina, “The Royal Year-Count of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1045-771 BC) and its Use(r)s: a Sociological Perspective,” in Time and Ritual in Early China, ed. Xiaobing Wang-Riese and Thomas O. Höllmann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 125-51, esp. 139-42. For time references and studies of the “fully-dated inscriptions” published in Western languages, see David S. Nivison, “Dates of Western Zhou,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 43 (1983): 481-580; David
analysis of inscriptions in the *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* that specify locations of kings (including those not necessarily related with receptions), shows that Zhou kings frequently moved around their realm and engaged in various activities in the main royal residences of Zhou (Zhou-under-Qi), Zongzhou, and Chengzhou, as well as


The long list of papers in Chinese dedicated to the localization of the royal residences of Western Zhou kings cannot be presented here in full. Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*, reflects the by now widely accepted views on the identification of Western Zhou place names and may hence be used for reference. According to Li, the place name Zhou in bronze inscriptions corresponds to Qi Zhou or Qixia in received texts. It was located on the Zhou Plain, dominated by Mount Qi (Qishan, 1651 m); see Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*, 46-48. I designate the settlement of Zhou as “Zhou-under-Qi” to distinguish it from the name of the dynasty.

For one recent review of various opinions on localizations of Zongzhou, cf. Shao Ying “Zongzhou, Haojing yu Pangjing” *Kaogu yu wenwu* 2006.2: 41-45. Most scholars identify the place name Zongzhou with Feng-Hao mentioned in received texts and located in the Feng River valley near present-day Xi’an, Shaanxi (Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*, 30). However, some scholars suppose that the name Zongzhou, i.e., “Clan’s Zhou,” or “Ancestral Zhou,” referred to the place where most ancestral temples of deceased kings were located, i.e., Zhou-under-Qi; see Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, “Xi Zhou tongqi duandai” in *jinwen lunwen xuan* 金文論文選, ed. Wang Mengdan 王夢旦 (Hong Kong: Zhuda shudian, 1968), 53-126, esp. 113-15; Chang Kwang-chih 張光直, “Xia Shang Zhou sandai duzhi yu sandai wenhua yitong” *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan xuekan* 55.1 (1984): 51-71, esp. 59; Kim V. Vassil’ev, *Istoki kitaiskoi tsivilizatsii* [Sources of Chinese civilization] (Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 1988), 121; Leonard S. Vassil’ev, *Istoriya Vostoka* [The History of the East] (Moscow: Vyschaya shkola, 1993), vol. 1, 186; Drevnii Kitai, Tom I: *Period Zapadnogo Zhou* [Ancient China, vol. 1: Western Zhou Period] (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 1995), 225. I previously also adhered to this conception, see Khayutina, “Povar ili ministr: dragozennye trenozhniki dobrego muzha Ke” [Cook or Minister: the Good-Man Ke’s Treasure T ripods], in *Kasus: Individual’noe i unikal’noe v istorii*, ed. Mikhail Boytsov and Igor Danilevskiy (Moscow: OGI, 2004), 15-98, esp. 17-20. I now concur with the majority view that Zongzhou could be applied to Hao. However, as I have pointed out elsewhere, it should be noted that the toponym Zongzhou became mixed up with Chengzhou during the Eastern Zhou period; see Khayutina, “Western ‘Capitals’ of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046/5-771 BC): Historical Reality and Its Reflections until the Time of Sima Qian,” *Oriens Extremus* 47 (2009): 25-65, esp. 42, 46. It cannot be excluded that this toponym also shifted between places during the Western Zhou period.

Chengzhou, referred to in received sources as Luoyi, was situated in the Luo River valley in present-day Henan; see Hsu Cho-yun and Katheryn M. Linduff, *Western Chou Civilization* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988), 123-26; Li Feng, *Landscape and Power*,...
as in some secondary residences, including Pangjing and Zheng. Moreover, it shows how often the kings stayed in places other than residences, sometimes on the way to or from a military campaign, sometimes in connection with religious activities, but sometimes without any other clear objective beyond meeting their subjects. Place references were provided in seventy-five to eighty per cent of inscriptions concerned specifically with royal receptions. This high rate suggests that the identification of place was the norm in recording royal receptions in bronze inscriptions, and that these data are representative of the spatial arrangement of Western Zhou royal hospitality.

To move from statistics to particular examples, it is instructive to consider the inscriptions of Xing, the Elder of Wei, a high royal officer residing near present-day Zhuangbai village in Fufeng county near the royal residence Zhou-under-Qi. Xing regularly

---

63-65. Some authors distinguish between Chengzhou and Wangcheng 王城, “king’s city,” regarding them as two different sites.


17) Place references were included in about three-fourths of the early and middle period inscriptions. During the late period, their number decreased to three-fifths, probably in connection with the growing importance of the royal year-count as a means of documenting events.

18) For the quantitative analysis of date and place references, see Khayutina, “The Royal Year-Count,” 140.

19) For character variants commonly seen in inscriptions (e.g., 彼 for 在), I use the standard orthography without indicating the epigraphic form. I have also changed some personal names accordingly but have left most place names in the transcription provided by CHANT. The Jicheng numbers allow the reader to verify the original characters.
accompanied his king or two successive kings on journeys during the mid-ninth century BC.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{20} For the first publication of the Zhuangbai hoard, see Zhouyuan kaogudui, “Shaanxi Fufeng Zhuangbai yi hao qingtongqi yaocang fajue jianbao” 陝西扶風莊白一號青銅器窖藏發掘簡報, 

Diagram I: Locations of kings’ stays during the three periods of the Western Zhou
1) It was the third year, the fourth month, day gengwu. The king was in Feng. The king ordered Guoshu to call Xing. He bestowed on him a pair of stallions [...] (Xing ding 繁鼎, Jicheng # 2742)

2) It was the third year, the ninth month, day ding-zi (?). The king was in Zheng. He gave a feast [and] offered sweet wine. The king ordered Guoshu to call Xing. He granted him one receptacle of lamb meat. On the day yichou the king was in Gouling. He gave a feast [and] offered wine. He ordered Captain Shou to call Xing. He bestowed on him one receptacle of pork [...] (Third year-Xing hu 兇壺, Jicheng # 9726)

3) It was the fourth year, second month, after the nascent brightness, on the day wuxu. The king was in the Palace of Captain Lu in Zhou. He entered the Great Chamber and took his place. Sima Gong entered, accompanying Xing on the...
right. The king ordered Secretary Nian to [announce] the written [bestowal] to Xing […] (Xing xu 哗囀, Jicheng # 4462)
4) 唯十又三年九月初吉戊寅。王在成周司土廟宮。格大室。即位。瘫父右瘫。王呼乍冊尹冊賜瘫 […]
It was the thirteenth year, ninth month, first auspicious day wuyin. The king was in Chengzhou, at the Palace of the Administrator of Lands Hu. He entered the Great Chamber and took his place. Yifu accompanied Xing on the right. The king ordered the Chief Maker of Documents to [announce] the written bestowal to Xing […] (Thirteenth year-Xing hu 篃壺, Jicheng # 9723)

As Xing’s inscriptions demonstrate, this single person was offered more or less formal receptions in the royal residences of Feng and Zheng, as well as in other places such as Goulin in the vicinity of Zheng, the residence of Captain Lu on the Zhou plain, and the residence of the Administrator of Lands Hu near Chengzhou. Being a royal courtier accompanying the king on his travels, Xing was in an exceptional position, as he was offered receptions more often and in a greater variety of places than most of the other Zhou subjects. At all these receptions, he was not the only and not necessarily the main guest of the king. Inscriptions commissioned by Xing’s contemporaries witness that during the king’s stays, or series of stays, in the same places, he received various kinds of people for different purposes. For example, in the Palace of the Administrator of Lands Hu, where Xing was given gifts of ceremonial garment, and probably on the same day, the king made a donation of bronze to a certain Xian 鮮, possibly another member of the king’s retinue of a more modest status. In the Palace of Captain Lu, possibly the head of one of the six garrisons stationed

22) As Martin Kern has shown, the verb ce 册 did not signify “to write down [on bamboo slips],” but “to announce” (Kern, “The Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China,” in The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign, ed. Sergio La Porta and David Shulman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 109-76, esp. 156. Usually, it was a written charge, ming 命, or a written bestowal, ci 賜, that was announced, ce 册.
23) The Xian zhong 鮮鐘 (Jicheng # 143), was discovered somewhere in Shaanxi. Xian’s relatively modest status is suggested by the fact that the king gave him bronze, which was not donated to high-ranked persons. The date in the Xian zhong inscription lacks the number of the year, and the number of the month and the first part of the ganzhi day designation are obliterated. The second part of the ganzhi notation is the character yin, which is the same as in the date on the Thirteenth year Xing hu (Jicheng # 9723). The Administrator of Lands Hu was mentioned in all the other inscriptions except for the Xing hu and the Xian zhong. Therefore, it is quite possible that the Zhou king stayed at his place only once and that Xing and Xian were received by him on the same day.
on the Zhou plain, the king formally received high-ranked military and civil officers on a regular basis: as of today, inscriptions about appointments of four other persons in this place have already come to light.\(^\text{24}\)

Considering how frequently the Zhou kings traveled, it remains to explain the absence of place references in the remaining twenty to twenty-five per cent of inscriptions about royal receptions. In some cases their commissioners did not specify the place if the locations of the reception and of their own residence overlapped;\(^\text{25}\) it seems that royal guests were more likely to specify the location if they were summoned elsewhere. Due to the unclear provenance of most vessels collected before the mid-twentieth century, it cannot be verified whether or not this was an actual rule. Theoretically, place references might also be omitted if one place functioned as a center where all receptions or receptions of some particular kind were held regularly. The following analysis aims to clarify whether some rules existed regarding the spatial localization of receptions with particular purposes, or offered to particular categories of visitors, and whether any place was ever established as the central reception place for one category of visitors.

Receptions of Zhou regional rulers: purposes and places

The larger Western Zhou polity embracing the territories of the regional states never represented an integral economic entity, and regional rulers (“all the lords,” zhuhou 諸侯) were administratively autonomous within their domains. Yet politically, the larger Zhou realm was

---

\(^{24}\) These are Shi Chen ding 師晨鼎 (Jicheng # 2817), and Shi Yu gui 師餘簋 (Jicheng # 4277), both dated to the third year, third month, first auspiciousness, day jiaxu; Jian gui 謹簋 (Jicheng # 4285) dated to the fifth year, third month, first auspiciousness, day gengyin; and the recently discovered Zai Shou gui 宰受簋 dated to the sixth year, second month, first auspiciousness, day jiaxu, see Luo Xizhang 羅西章, “Zai Shou gui ming luekao” 宰受簋銘略考, Wenwu 1998.8: 83-87.

\(^{25}\) A late period Shi Ke xu 師克匜 (Jicheng # 4467) recited a royal command to Captain Ke 師克 without identifying its place. This vessel was found in Fufeng county. Captain Ke most probably was the same person as Provisioner Ke 善夫克, who commissioned a large number of other vessels that were also discovered in Fufeng county (see Khayutina “Povar ili ministr,” 29-58). As Ke’s residence was in Fufeng, i.e., in the royal center Zhou-under-Qi where Zhou kings held many receptions, it is understandable that he did not provide a reference for a reception in the place of his own residence. Notably, in other inscriptions Ke identified places of receptions that occurred elsewhere, e.g., in Zongzhou (Shanfu Ke ding 善夫克鼎, Jicheng # 2836).
considered a whole, and regional rulers continued nominally to accept the terms of hierarchical subordination to the Zhou king long after the royal house had lost the ability to enforce obedience. As political integrity was realized mostly on the level of communication between the Zhou king and the regional rulers, it is important to consider how, when, and where this communication took place.

The purposes of the receptions offered to the regional lords could be investiture, revision of loyalty, and issue of a particular command.

The purposes of the receptions offered to the regional lords could be investiture, revision of loyalty, and issue of a particular command.

Most of the Zhou regional states were established during the early Western Zhou period. In the course of the investiture ceremonies, revision of loyalty, and issue of a particular command.

26) Qi Sihe 齊思和 regarded the Zhou royal procedure of the “announcement of the command” (ce ming 册命) as analogous to the European feudal investiture ceremony (cf. Qi Sihe, “Zhou dai ximing li kao” 隨代冊命禮考, Yanjing xuebao 32 (1947): 197-226, cit. after Qi Sihe, Zhongguo shi tanyan 中國史探研 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 50-66. His interpretation was adopted by some other scholars; see Chen Hanping 陳漢平, Xi Zhou ceming zhudu yanjiu 西周冊命制度研究 (Shanghai: Xuelin shuju, 1986); Yeung Ching-kong/Yang Jinggang 甯朮/楊靜剛, “Did the Royal Investiture Ceremony Exist in Early Western Zhou?” in Ancient Chinese and Southeast Asian Bronze Age Cultures: The Proceedings of a Conference held at the Edith and Joy London Foundation Property, Kioloa, NSW, 8-12 February, 1988, ed. David F. Bulbeck (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1996-97), 469-86. However, it is not appropriate to regard all the different kinds of ce ming ceremonies as “investitures.” Virginia Kane has suggested distinguishing between “investiture,” implying the establishment of feudal land-owning relationships, and “appointment” as an assignment of an official duty (Kane, “Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions,” 16). In fact, even in the European context, investiture was not necessarily bound up with the transfer of land rights but could involve appointment to an office, or nomination to a certain status. The term derives from Latin vestis (“robe,” “garment”) and thus emphasizes not the character of the newly established relationships but the transfer of certain material objects, comparable to insignia, that visually represented the new status of the recipient; see “Investir” in D. Johann Georg Krünitz, Oeconomische Encyklopädie, oder allgemeines System der Staats-, Städts-, Haus- und Landwirtschaft in alphabetischer Ordnung (Berlin: Pauli, 1773-1858), Bd. 30 (1784), 539-40. From this perspective, the appointment of regional lords and the appointment of royal officers both represented investitures, since they were both accompanied by the transfer of such objects, notably ceremonial garments. Nevertheless, in the present article I follow the convention in modern Western Zhou studies and apply the term “investiture” when referring to the ceremonies entitling regional rulers to govern their domains, while the term “appointment” refers to the assignment of duties to royal officers. For further studies of the ce ming ritual, see also Chen Mengjia, “Xi Zhou tong qi duandai,” Jinwen lunwen xuan 言文論文選, 184-98; Herrlee Glessner Creel, The Origins of Statecraft in China, vol. 1: The Western Chou Empire (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970), 125-27, 366-73; Vassili M. Kryukov, Rituchnaya kommunikacija v drevnem Kitae [Ritual communication in ancient China] (Moscow-Šiašiai: Institut Vosto- kovedeniya RAN, 1997), 122-36; Li Feng, “‘Feudalism’ and Western Zhou China: A Criticism,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 63 (2003): 115-44.

the king pronounced a command entitling a person to be the ruler of a domain or acknowledged the right of a deceased ruler’s heir to replace him in his position. Only few inscriptions witnessing investitures of regional lords are available. They indicate that this significant act of power delegation did not have to be performed in a royal residence.

Several inscriptions are related to investitures of regional lords that occurred during the reigns of Kings Cheng 成 (1042/35-1006 BC) and Kang 康 (1005/03-978 BC). One of them refers to the investiture of Kangshu Feng 康叔封, the younger brother of King Wu 武 (1049/45-1043) and King Cheng’s uncle in Wei 衛 (in present-day Henan), and commissioned by Yi, Administrator of Lands in Mei 濮司土疑:

Supposedly, the king’s campaign against the Shang cities was King Cheng’s response to the rebellion of the Shang scion Wugeng 武庚 and King Wu’s younger brothers.29 The inscription suggests that King Cheng established the ruler of Wei on his way to the war, possibly while passing through the territory of this domain.

Another initial investiture of a regional ruler is documented by two identical inscriptions on the Ke lei and Ke he discovered in 1985 in the cemetery of the state of Yan 燕 (燕) at Liulihe 琉璃河, ca. 40 km from present-day Beijing: 30

Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 292-351, esp. 311-13; Li Feng, Landscape and Power, 49-82.

28) The interpretation of *bi* 矢 as 邊, a “border town,” is according to Wolfgang Behr, “Placed into the Right Position—Etymological Notes On Tú 图 And Congeners,” in The Power of Tu: Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China, ed. Francesca Bray, Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtman, Georges Metaillé (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 109-34, esp. 116. Behr, however, suggests that in the discussed inscription, *bi* is used as a verb. I rather propose reading *hou* 候 as a verb 候, “to watch,” and *bi* as a noun.


30) See Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan kaogu yanjiusuo, Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo, Liulihe kaogu dui 中國社會科學院考古研究所, 北京市文物研究所, 琉璃河考古隊,
The king said: “Great Protector! You brought your clear offerings and the offerings of millet wine to your sovereign. I greatly respond to your offerings. [I] order to [your son] Ke to be on guard (or to be hou, Lord) in Yan. Shall he employ Qiang [and] Ma [and] marshal [them] to Yu [and] Wei (or “Shall he use Qiang horses to direct himself by chariot to Wei”). Ke moved (?). On account of this, together with...”

31) The last sentence is much debated by palaeographers. The character interpreted as shi 衕/秒 in fact consists of only the upper part of the latter and is therefore uncertain. The following six words are often interpreted as names of peoples or lineages that had to follow Ke to Yan, or otherwise as place names. It is true that Qiang, Ma and Wei can be found among the designations of peoples of the Shang period. However, the word ma 马, “horse,” can be also read in its literal sense. Qiang occasionally delivered horses to the Shang, and the Shang called some groups of the Qiang “Horse-Qiang.” The definition “Qiang horse” could point at the superior quality of these animals obtained by the Zhou from the Qiang. The character 駙 represents an earlier form of cu 鼓 listed in the Shuo wen jie zi 説文解字 dictionary with the meaning “to go to.” Corresponds to yu 宇 and is interpreted by some authors as the preposition “in” or “to.” Accordingly, they regard the following two words as place names. However, in this and some other inscriptions yu 宇 is used concurrently with a regular yu 于. In some contexts, the first yu may have functioned as an emphatic particle accentuating the following action or object. It is noteworthy that the word yu 駙 means “to drive a chariot pulled by horses,” for which the horses obtained from Qiang could be employed. In other inscriptions the verb yu 宇 can directly precede a place name to designate the destination of a ride. However, in the context of the present inscription it is unlikely that Ke was sent to Yan and then had to drive by chariot to Wei, which was already entrusted to Kangshu Feng.

32) This character does not appear in other inscriptions. I follow the interpretations suggesting its meaning as a verb of movement.

33) The expression 人土 in the Yan hou gui finds a parallel in the Yi hou Ze gui. In the latter case, to be discussed below, 人土 was a place where the ceremony of the investiture of a hou took place. This parallelism possibly suggests that in both cases 人土 was a kind of shrine, and that the act of entering the 人土 was a significant element in the legitimation of newly established regional lords. Several scholars suggest reading 人土 in the Yi hou Ze gui as she 社, altar of the soil (see, e.g., Ma Chengyuan, Shang-Zhou qingtongqi, 34). This reading was criticized by Creel, The Origins of Statecraft in China, 368-371. Edward L. Shaughnessy has proposed reading 人土 in the Yi hou Ze gui as zong 宗, “ancestral temple,” and while there could be an obliterated character preceding the 人土 in the latter inscription, it is not possible to verify it as zong. The “Shao gao” chapter of the Shang...
holders of administrative posts, [I, Ke,] made [this] treasured venerated ritual vessel.³⁴

Ke 克, the first Lord of Yan, was son of Duke Great Protector Shao 公太保召, one of the closest fellow combatants of King Wu. The first ruler of Wei, he was given the command to rule over Yan while the king was on a military campaign.³⁵ However, if King Cheng could invest the first ruler somewhere in the territory of Wei, he hardly could do the same with regard to the ruler of Yan, located at a much greater distance. In both cases, the delegation of power happened “on the fly,” in places originally without any special significance—neither in a royal residence, nor in the future center of a regional lord’s domain—perhaps due to the inconstant situation of war. This might also be the reason why, sometimes, places of investitures are not even mentioned in the inscriptions.

Both inscriptions quoted above are very short and do not provide any details about the ceremonial context of the meetings between the king and the newly established regional lords. As of today, the inscription on the Yi hou Ze gui, made by the Lord of Yi 宜 (probably residing on the Yi 宜 River in central present-day Henan),³⁶ and possibly dating to the reign of King Kang, represents the only available description of a formal investiture of a Zhou regional ruler:

shu notes that after the foundation of Luoyi, the Duke of Zhou proceeded to she yu xin yи 社于新邑, i.e. to perform sacrifices at the altar of the soil in the newly built city; see Bernhard Karlgren, The Book of Documents (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1974), 48. Both inscriptions possibly reflect a similar situation.


³⁵) This is suggested by inscriptions on vessels discovered during the nineteenth century in western Shandong and possibly owned by Ke’s brother Xian (cf. Xian ding 盤鼎, Jicheng # 2749; Taibao gui 大保簋, Jicheng # 4140). One of them, the Taibao gui, indicated that the king was on a campaign against a certain Lu-zi Ye 來子耶.

It was the fourth month. The year-planet was in day dingwei. [The king] inspected tokens of the Shang conquered by King Wu and King Cheng, and then proceeded to inspect the tokens of the Eastern states. The king assumed his position in Yi. [He] entered the Altar of Soil. [He] faced south. The king gave order to Ze, the Lord of Yu, saying: “Move [and be the] Lord in Yi” […] (Yi hou Ze gui, jicheng #4320)

Here, the place of the investiture was indicated, possibly because it was performed on the site already laid out to become the center of the new domain. Importantly, the Yi-hou Ze gui shows that, although the rebellions of King Cheng’s days were long pacified, his successor King Kang continued practicing investitures in the new domains instead of in a royal residence. Having once emerged as a response to the necessity of wartime, the in situ investitures probably continued as ritual practices that symbolically recreated the situation of the birth of the Zhou statehood. Coming from the outside, the Zhou king presented himself as the host of the place, where he received the investee as his guest and personally inaugurated the latter as a new host. In this, the king signaled that the legitimacy of the regional ruler fully derived from his beneficence.

Considering the exceptionality of the Yi hou Ze gui, it is difficult to verify whether investitures of regional lords were normally conducted in the course of personal receptions. It cannot be excluded that the formal command “to be a Lord” could be transmitted via intermediaries. The inscriptions on Ke’s vessels do not make clear whether the king had a meeting with the investee or his father, the Great Protector Shao. Another inscription of King Kang’s reign, the Xing hou gui, may also...

---

37) In my interpretation of the word tu 我 I follow Wolfgang Behr, who argues that before it started to signify a chart or a map (as this word is often interpreted in translations of the Yi hou Ze gui), tu designated “some sort of representational token which was used in feudal or military exchanges of the Western Zhou royal house, and aimed at the visual anchorage of territorial affiliation or rank in a court ritual” (see Behr, “Placed into the Right Position,” 120). Huo or in this place is rather guo 國 than yu 城.

38) For the full translation, see Shaughnessy, “Historical Geography and the Extent of the Earliest Chinese Kingdoms,” 14.
reflect a mediated investiture of the Lord of Xing (in southern present-day Hebei):³⁹

It was the third month. The king gave order to Rong and the Internal Secretary, saying: “Cut a dependency to the Lord of Xing!” [The king] bestowed [on the Lord] three kinds of subjects: men of Zhou, men of Zhong, and men of Gao. [The Lord of Xing] bowed touching his head to the ground. “[May] the generous Son of Heaven obtain his great prosperity [and] be able to reach those on high and those below. [May] the Deity not discontinue the Mandate to the Zhou dominion! [I will be] zealous in filially responding, [I will] not dare to fail! [I will] propagate my prosperity and fame, my service to the Son of Heaven. In order to register the King’s charge, [I made] the ritual vessel for the Duke of Zhou.” (Xing hou gui, aka Rong gui, Jicheng # 4241)

Although this inscription gives enough space to expressions of gratefulness and loyalty, it does not inform about the ceremonial context of the transaction between the regional lord and the king. It is not unlikely that the king sent his officer Rong and his Internal Secretary, usually responsible for the announcement of royal commands, on a journey in order to perform a de jure recognition of a regional lord in a domain where the latter had already de facto established himself. On the other hand, the Xing hou gui did not necessarily record an investiture ceremony. The king’s officers might have been ordered to augment the land possessions and to transfer additional population to the Lord of Xing who might have been personally invested by the king earlier.

³⁹ On the date of vessels related to the first Lord of Jing/Xing and on the localization of Jing/Xing, see Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Liang Zhou jinwen ci daxi tulu kaoshi 兩周金文辭大系圖錄考釋 (1935; rpt., Beijing: Kexue, 1957), vol. 6, 40-42; Chen Mengjia “Xi Zhou tong qi duandai,” Jinwen lunwen xuan, 145-209, esp. 155-59; Ma Chengyuan, Shang-Zhou qingtongqi, 45-50; Li Xueqin 李學勤 and Tang Yunming 唐云明, “Yuan shi tongqi yu Xi Zhou de Xing guo” 元氏銅器與西周的邢國, Kaogu 1979.1: 56-59, 88; Shaughnessy, Sources of Western Zhou History, 318-19; Shaughnessy, “Historical Geography,” 19-22 (includes translation on pp. 19-20); Li Feng, Landscape and Power, 68. Alternatively, Tang Lan dated the Xing hou gui to the reign of King Cheng; see Tang Lan 唐蘭, Xi Zhou qingtongqi mingwen fendai shizheng 西周青銅器銘文分代史徵 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 159-62.

⁴⁰ The character 蒳 interpreted here as ge 割 does not occur in any other Western Zhou text. Therefore, the specific action of the royal officials in this context remains unclear.
Of the bronze inscriptions composed during the middle Western Zhou period, the *Bo Chen ding* witnesses the re-investiture of the Elder Chen 伯晨 as a hereditary Lord of Heng 廬 (in southern Hebei).\(^{41}\) Similar to the earlier examples, this inscription does not specify where the ceremony took place:

唯王八月。辰在丙午。王令甾侯白晨曰：「以及考侯于甾」。[...]
It was the eighth month of the king. The year-planet was in the day bingwu. The king gave order to the Lord of Heng Elder Chen, saying: “By virtue of your ancestors and your deceased father, be the Lord in Heng.” […] (*Bo Chen ding* 伯晨鼎, *Jicheng* # 2816)

In contrast to accounts about investitures that lack place references, inscriptions about visits of regional lords to the kings always specify where their meetings took place. In some cases, the purpose of a lord’s

trip was defined as *jian* 见—“to visit,” or “to present something before someone’s sight.” Trip was not necessarily indicated a specific type of reception ceremony but rather that the “guest” went somewhere—a fact not always self-evident, since kings also received persons as guests in their own places. The regularity with which locations are noted in reports about visits to the king’s residences supports the conclusion that investitures reported without place references were held elsewhere or performed via intermediaries.

During regular meetings with regional lords, Zhou kings refrained from pronouncing formal commands and only presented themselves as hospitable hosts. The visits of regional rulers were nevertheless of high political importance, as they confirmed the king’s authority to summon and supervise this category of persons as well as the readiness of the latter to be summoned and to manifest loyalty. As the examples below show, the receptions of regional lords could be held in any of the royal residences.

The famous *He zun* inscription, apparently composed by the head of a collateral branch of the royal house residing somewhere near Baoji 寶雞 (Shaanxi), witnesses a meeting of the “ducal lineages” in the fifth year of King Cheng’s reign:

唯王初邁宅于成周。復稱武王禮。裸自天。在四月丙戌。王誥宗小子于京室。曰：「昔在爾考公氏，克遵文王，肆文王受大命。唯武王既克大邑商。則廷告于天。曰：『余其宅兹中或（國/ 城），自之辟民！』鳥摩！爾有唯小子亡識。視于公氏，有爵于天。播命。敬享哉！惠王恭敬裕天。順我不悔！」王威誥。別賜賜丷新邦。用乍□公寳尊彝。唯王五祀。

The king moved to reside in Chengzhou for the first time. [He] returned [in order] to carry out the ritual of King Wu. [He performed] libation sacrifices starting from Heaven’s [altar]. In the fourth month, day bingxu, the king addressed the younger sons of the [royal] lineage in the High [i.e., royal – M. Kh.] Chamber. [He] said: “Formerly, your deceased fathers, [heads of] ducal lineages were able to come to King Wen. Thereupon, King Wen received this Great Mandate. Later on, King Wu conquered the Great Settlement of Shang and, staying in the courtyard [of a temple], announced [the conquest] to Heaven, saying: ‘I shall reside in this central state (or “area”), and govern the people from there!’ *Wu hu!*

---

42) “To visit” seems to be an appropriate translation of *jian* (originally “to see”). Cf. lat. *videre*, “to see”; *visere*, “to go to see”; “to visit”, *visitare*, “to visit”.

43) Cf. the usage of *jian* in the inscription on the *Ju Fu xu* 駒父盤 (Jicheng # 4464), referring to a visit of a Zhou ambassador to the Yi of the Huai River.
You are but young children having no duties! Look at [the example of your ancestors, heads of] the ducal lineages, acquire rewards from Heaven! Carry out [my] charges! Respectfully offer sacrifices! Shall the king’s reverent virtue satisfy Heaven! Follow me, [and you will have] no regret!” The king completed his address. He* was bestowed with thirty bundles of cowries. On account of this, [I, He*] made the treasured sacrificial vessel for Patriarch (or “Duke”) X. This was the fifth sacrificial year of the king. (He zun 何尊, Jicheng # 6014) 44

In this inscription, jing 京 points at the location of the building (shi 室) where the meeting of the royal lineage was held. Originally, jing signified “high hill” or “high structure” before acquiring the meaning “capital.” In texts dating from or referring to the Western Zhou period, jing was not applied exclusively to one single place but could be associated with each of the royal residences. 45 Although no longer clear to us, to the commissioner and his contemporaries jing in the He zun provided a concrete geographical reference to one of the western residences. 46

The Shu Ze fangding discovered in 2001 near present day Tianma 天馬 (Shanxi) in the Jin 晉 state cemetery in a tomb possibly occupied by its first or second ruler shows that the early Zhou kings also used their eastern residence Chengzhou for meeting the regional lords. 47

44) For the transcription and interpretation, see Tang Lan, “He zun mingwen jieshi 何尊銘文解釋, Wenwu 1976.1: 60-63; Ma Chengyuan “He zun mingwen jieshi 何尊銘文解釋, Wenwu 1976.1: 64-65. The vessel was found in 1963 in a court of a peasant in Gu 賈 village north-west of Baoji, where it was most probably hidden by some workers employed by the warlord and treasure hunter Dang Yukun 段玉珂 during the 1920s. For details about its discovery and for a suggestion about He’s connection to the Duke of Zhou, see Gao Ciruo 高次若 and Liu Mingke 劉明科, “Doujitai mudi chutu qingtong qi yu Zhou gong jiazu wenti de sikao 斗雞台墓地出土青銅器與周公家族問題的思考, Baoji shehui kexue 2006.1: 38-42, esp. 40.

45) Jing was a part of the toponym Pangjing appearing in many bronze inscriptions especially during the early Western Zhou period. In some late period inscriptions, Chengzhou could be called jing shi 高城 “royal residence’s garrison” (cf. Ke zhong, Jicheng # 204; Duo You ding 多友鼎, Jicheng # 2835). In received sources, the following residences could be designated as jing: 1) the residence of Patriarch Liu, ancient ruler of pre-dynastic Zhou (Shi jing, “Gong Liu” 公劉, Mao 250); 2) Zhou-under-Qi (Shi jing, “Wen wang” 文王, Mao 235; “Da ming” 大明, Mao 236; “Si qi” 思齊, Mao 240); 3) Hao, i.e. Zongzhou (Shi jing, “Wen wang you sheng” 文王有盛, Mao 244).

46) The word fu 復 (“to return,” or “again”) indicates that this was not his new residence Chengzhou. This interpretation is reasonable also because King Wu died and was buried in the west. Therefore, King Cheng returned to the west in order to perform sacrifices for the spirit of his father.

47) It is debated whether Shu Ze was the first Jin ruler Shu Yu 叔虞, or his son Xie fu 変父. For alternative opinions on Shu Ze’s identity, cf. Li Boqian 李伯謙, “Shu Ze fangding
It was the fourteenth month. The king [performed] the libation sacrifices, the great ancestral invocation, and the exorcist ritual in Chengzhou. When the sacrifices were completed, the king called to perform the *yin* [ritual] for his men. [He] gave a cap, a robe, a chariot with horses, and thirty bundles of cowries to Shu Ze. [I, Shu Ze] dared to respond to the king’s beneficence. On account of this, [I] made this treasured sacrificial vessel. [I] shall extol the king who distinguishes his men for ten thousand years!

The *yin* mentioned in this text possibly corresponds to the so-called “rituals of the Yin [dynasty]” (*Yin li* 殷禮) which, as suggested by the “Luo gao” 洛誥 chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書, had to be held in Chengzhou with some regularity. Further inscriptions show that later on, Zhou kings delegated the hosting of the Yin rituals to their representatives when they stayed in the west. It cannot be verified whether the Yin rituals without the king were attended by regional lords or their officers, or whether they were purely religious matters, not serving as a pretext for any important meetings.

Several inscriptions of the early period dating from after King Cheng’s reign witness receptions of regional rulers in Zongzhou. One of them, discovered in the cemetery of the state of Wei, states:

唯公遂逐于宗周。陸从公 […]
The Duke hurried up to Zongzhou. Lu followed the Duke […]

---


50) Cf. Xiaochen Zhuan gui 小臣傅簋 (Jicheng # 4206), Zuoce X you 作冊𠌩卣 (Jicheng # 5400), Shi Shang you 土上卣 (Jicheng # 5421).

Another one, commissioned by Zhi, a ruler of the state of Yan, implies that such meetings could be held with some regularity:

Lord Zhi of Yan [went] to pay visit [and to lay the account of his] affairs to Zongzhou for the first time. The king gave him twenty bundles of cowries 

The famous inscription on the Mai zun, commissioned by an official of the ruler of Xing during the reign of either King Kang or King Zhao (977/75-957), provides many details about a reception of a regional lord in Zongzhou:

The location of Gan is problematic. Possibly, it was near the conjunction of the Wei and Qian rivers in present-day Fengxiang 峰翔 county, Shaanxi; see Tang Lan 唐蘭, “Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de Kanggong wenti” 西周銅器斷代中的康公問題, Kaogu xuebao 考古學報 1962: 15-48, esp. 33; Lau, Quellenstudien, 118 with reference to Lu Liancheng 盧連成, “Gan di yu Zhao wang shijiu nian nan zheng” 蓋地與昭王十九年南征, in Xi Zhou shi yanjiu 西周史研究, Supplement no. 2 to Renwen zazhi 1984: 232-48. Li Zhongcao, “Pangjing kao,” 121, has suggested that Gan may have been located on the
hundred families of slaves red-branded on their ankles. He was given a privilege to use horses [that previously] drew the king’s carriage; [he was also given] a metal-[decorated] bridle, a cap, a robe, kneepads, and slippers. As he came back, he extolled the beneficence of the king. He announced that there was no blame. On account of this, [he performed] reverent ceremonies in order to repose [the deceased] Lord [of Xing]. [He performed] illustrious filial sacrifices to [his deceased father former] Lord of Xing […] (Mai zun 麥尊, Jicheng # 6015)

Although these three inscriptions seem to point at Zongzhou as the central point for meetings between the king and regional rulers, new materials acquired during the last decades show that it was used for this purpose not exclusively but concurrently with other royal residences. The inscription on the Zha/Zuo bo gui, commissioned by the ruler of the state of Zuo 周 (in present-day Yanjin 延津 county, Henan), reports on his trip to Zhou-under-Qi. There, Elder of Zuo, a son or grandson of the Duke of Zhou, competed at a “great archery contest” (da she 大射), possibly together with some other regional rulers. A mid- to late period inscription commissioned by Jiangong or Shigong 見(視)工, the Lord of Ying 應 (at present-day Pingdingshan 平頂山, Henan), documents his reception in Zhou-under-Qi. Moreover, it mentions that immediately before this reception the king returned from Chengzhou. Possibly, Shigong was first summoned to Chengzhou where he was given the honor to accompany the king back to Zhou-under-Qi. Thereupon, similar to the royal retainer Xing mentioned above, he was rewarded for having escorted the king on his trip:

唯正二月初吉。王歸自成周。應侯見（視）工遷王子周。辛未王格于康。榮白內右應侯見（視）工。賜彤弓一。彤矢百。馬四匹[…]. It was the second month, the first auspicious day. The king returned from Chengzhou. Lord Shigong of Ying made a present to the king in Zhou. On the day xingwei the king entered the Kang [Palace]. Elder Rong entered accompanying the Lord of Ying Shigong to his right. [Shigong] was bestowed one vermilion bank of the river Qi 九江, i. e. on the eastern edge of Fufeng county, which sounds preferable to me. Ma Chengyuan, Shang Zhou qingtongqi, 47, suggested that Gan meant “bank” (an 岸) and referred to the bank of a large ring-shaped pond.

Both the earlier Mai zun and the middle period Ying hou Shigong gui reflect an interesting feature of the royal hospitality: it was not necessarily limited to one royal residence but could be prolonged to include a journey around the royal territories. Thus, the arrival of the Lord of Xing at Zongzhou was only the prelude to a longer joint journey of the regional lord and the king to Pangjing and then to Gan. By contrast, the Lord of Ying only briefly mentioned Chengzhou, located not very far from his own domain, but stressed that he was granted the gifts in more distant Zhou-under-Qi. Being taken along on a tour with the king was likely considered a favor and a matter of prestige. At the same time, it diminished the significance of the royal residence, because the king staged himself as such not only at this particular place, but at various locations.

That representatives of regional states were supposed more or less regularly to present themselves at royal receptions is reflected in the topos “countries that do not pay court” (bu ting fang 不廷方) used to characterize foreign polities in some Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, in distinction to members of the Zhou political agglomeration (see below). However, although a considerable number of inscriptions commissioned by regional lords during the middle and late Western Zhou

---


57) In Shang oracle bone inscriptions, fang 方 after an ethnonym designated political entities of foreign, i.e. non-Shang peoples. It is often translated as “tribe,” which seems inappropriate to me, since it implies an evolutionist model in which “tribe” is assessed as a political entity below the level of the “state.” The lack of information does not allow us to verify whether political entities of non-Zhou people were inferior to the Zhou regional states in terms of complexity or size (see Morton H. Fried, “T ribe to State, or State to T ribe?” in The Origins of Chinese Civilization, 467-93). In other Shang and Western Zhou contexts, fang signified a “quarter [of the world],” the world being represented as a whole consisting of “four quarters” surrounding the center which was occupied by the ruling dynasty; for an investigation into the si fang system and its evolution into the wuxing cosmological system, see Aihe Wang, Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000). Considering both political and special aspects of this word, I accept Keightley’s translation of fang as “country” (see, e.g., Keightley, “The Late Shang State,” 548).
periods are available, apart from those of Lord Shigong of Ying none is concerned with a visit to a royal residence just for the sake of confirming loyalty. Therefore, it remains unclear whether after the early days of the dynasty, the kings were still able to regularly summon regional lords to the royal residences. Rather, their visits were bound to special occasions, whereas the routine communication could be delegated to envoys. The king’s rotation between the three main residences, Chengzhou, Zongzhou, and Zhou-under-Qi, should have been a factor complicating the communication with regional states. Even today, the distance by road between Xi’an and Luoyang is 400 km, and between Xi’an and Qishan 157 km.\(^{58}\) There does not seem to have existed a rule about holding meetings at certain times in certain places. While both the *Mai zun* and the *Ying hou Shigong gui* date their receptions to the second month, one meeting was in Zongzhou, the other in Zhou-under-Qi, although one should perhaps refrain from comparing inscriptions from very different periods. However, inscriptions of the same period also do not display a clear system of meeting schedules. The assembly referred to in the *He zun* took place in Chengzhou in the fourth month, whereas that of the *Shu Ze făngding* occurred in the fourteenth, intercalary month. The archery contest in Zhou-under-Qi referred to in the *Zuo bo gui* was held in the eighth month. If each king appointed meetings at different times and at different places, one can only guess how intricate the logistics of royal hospitality must have been.

Royal inspection tours through the territories of regional states could have been a response to the growing unwillingness of regional lords to try to meet the king in his extensive domain without being certain whether and where they could find him. In cases where the king met regional lords during his inspection trips,\(^ {59}\) he acted as host just like during investiture ceremonies that had been conducted in the domains of the regional lords. Later on, while touring the regional states, the

---

\(^{58}\) See road distance calculators at http://distancecalculator.globefeed.com/ and http://56.czinfo.net.

\(^{59}\) The *Yi hou Ze gui* defined the aim of the king’s travel in the course of which he attended Yi as xing 䚩 (“to observe”, “to examine”, “to inspect”). The same word was employed in the *Zhong jia* (jicheng # 6514), dating to the reign of King Zhao: “the king made a great inspection of the ‘ducal’ lineages in Geng” 王大省公族于庚.
kings confirmed their rights of overlords and supreme hosts by gathering assemblies in the territories of the regional lords and by handing down gifts to them. The middle period Yi he vessel, commissioned by a member of the royal retinue, witnesses the king’s inspection tour to the state of Lu (near Qufu in present-day Shandong):

“唯十又一月。既生霸甲申。王在鲁。鸞即邦君，者侯，正，有司。大射。”

It was the eleventh month, after the nascent brightness, day jiashen. The king was in Lu. He made a feast for rulers of [foreign] states, rulers of regional states, governors, [and] administrators. [There was] a great archery [contest]. (Yi he 義盉, ficheng # 9453)

The recently discovered inscription on the Cheng gui, also dating to the middle period and made by Lord Cheng of Ying, an ancestor of Lord Shigong of Ying, reports a reception in Gu 姑 (supposedly near present-day Luohe 漯河市, south-eastern Henan):

“唯十又一月初吉丁亥。王在姑。王弗忘應公室。汎室再身。賜貝卅朋。馬四匹。[...]

It was the eleventh month of the king, first auspicious day dinghai. The king was in Gu. The king did not forget the House of the Dukes of Ying! [He] praised Cheng’s person [and] bestowed on him thirty bundles of cowries and four horses as a present […]

Both inscriptions indicate the trend toward making royal hospitality “ambulatory” and toward transposing it to the geographical periphery of the Zhou sphere of influence. Interestingly, in both cases, receptions

---

60) The location of Gu is unclear, as all known Gu 姑 were located very far from both Ying and any royal center. I tentatively suggest that Gu was located in the Ku River 枢河 valley near present-day Luohe city. Gu 姑 and Ku 枢 sounded similar in Old Chinese. Luo could easily be reached from Ying by the Sha 沙 River. The source of the Ku River is located only a few kilometers northeast of Luohe city and separated from the Sha River’s bank by a thin strip of soil. Luohe was an important regional center already before the Shang (see Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo et al., “Yancheng Haojiatai yizhi de fajue” 濟城郝家台遺址的發掘, Huaxia kaogu 1992.3: 62-91). Supposedly, during the Shang and Zhou epochs, Luohe was the center of the small state of Yan 鄚. Western Zhou remains have been found in this area; see Zhang Ruli 張汝鯉, “Gu Yanzi guo kaobian” 古郾子國考辯, Shixue yuekan 1998.2: 113-15.

61) See Li Jiahao 李嘉浩, “Ying guo Cheng gui” 應國成簋, in Baoli cang jin 保利藏金, ed. Baoli yishu bowuguan guwen weiyuanhui 保利藝術博物館顧問委員會 (Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu, 1999), 75-78.
took place in the eleventh month, although they quite certainly did not date to the same year. Hopefully, new inscriptions will help to verify whether some regularity existed in the scheduling of royal inspection tours.

Besides the regular visits of regional lords to the royal residences, having but a revision of the status quo as their purpose, extraordinary meetings could be held at which the kings issued particular commands and rewarded their subsequent execution. These commands never concerned internal affairs of regional states or interregional communication but only wars with non-Zhou neighbors for which Zhou kings borrowed help from the regional lords. Wei, supposedly an early period ruler of Jin, received a command to go on a mission to Fanyang 繁陽 (a non-Zhou, Yi 夷 polity located in the Huai 淮 River valley near present-day Xincai 新蔡 [Henan]) during his visit to Zongzhou. 62 Su 蘇, the ruler of Jin during the late Western Zhou, was first formally offered a reception by King Xuan 宣 (827/25-782 BC) in Su’s own encampment, where he received a command to launch an attack against Xun 詰 (another Eastern Yi polity). Later on, Su was rewarded for his accomplishments in Chengzhou, where he possibly returned from campaign together with the king. 63 Guoji Zi 季子伯, a member of the ruling house of Western Guo 郭 (near present-day Baoji), was rewarded by King Xuan for liberating the area of Chengzhou from Xianyun 黥狁 invaders in the course of a reception held in Zhou-under-Qi, i.e., the royal residence situated most closely to his own place. 64 These examples demonstrate that if regional lords were involved

64) See Guoji Zibo pan 季子白盤 (Jicheng # 10173).
in a common business with the king, they would betake themselves to a royal residence either to receive orders or to report on their execution. However, such communication was scheduled at none of the residences exclusively, even during the reign of one king. Moreover, in order to issue a command to the regional lords, the king not necessarily summoned them to his residence but also met them elsewhere, if it was reasonable under the conditions of war. In each case, the spatial localization of extraordinary meetings between the king and regional rulers depended on the particular situation and was not indicative of the status of one of the royal residences as the central “meeting point” for this category of guests.

Receptions of non-Zhou rulers: purposes and places

If in the relationship between the king and Zhou regional states political communication was not concentrated in one royal residence, we might ask whether the Zhou polity represented itself as a territorially centralized entity toward its non-Zhou counterparts. A number of bronze inscriptions witness that Zhou kings had personal meetings with rulers of non-Zhou polities that were styled as receptions where the king assumed the role of a host, while a non-Zhou ruler behaved as his guest. Inscriptions reveal that the purpose of these receptions was the revision of loyalty, probably (but perhaps not always) related to the delivery of tribute gifts by the guests and including the bestowal of presents by the king.

The first “foreigners” with whom Zhou kings dealt were descendants and former vassals of the conquered Shang dynasty. According to an early period inscription, Bao 保, a ruler of Shang parentage, went to Zhou-under-Qi either together with or on behalf of “the five lords of the eastern Yin states” (possibly located in present-day Shandong) to deliver “six sorts of products” (liu pin 六品) as tribute. In response,

---

65) The Shang parentage of Bao is suggested by the temple name of his father Fu Geng 父癸. It included one of the twelve cyclical signs, which was typical for Shang designations of ancestors. For Bao’s identity, see Peng Yushang 彭裕商, “Zhou chu de Yin dai yimin” 周初的殷代遺民, Sichuan daxue xuebao, Zhexue wenxue ban 2002.6: 112-14.
the king gave Bao or all of them “guest presents” (*bin* 賓).

Bao, whose name can also be interpreted as “Protector,” might have been a regional lord, perhaps even one of the above-mentioned “five lords.” Considering that the rulers of these states were already included in the Zhou nomenclature of ranks, this inscription can be regarded as further evidence for the usage of Zhou-under-Qi for receptions of regional lords.

A reception of “guests from [foreign] states” (*bang* 辆邦) is attested in the inscription on the *Xiao Yu ding*, dating to the reign of

---

66 See *Bao You* 保卣 (*Jicheng* # 5415). Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋 has suggested that these five Yin states could be Bogu 倖墟, Xu 徐, Yan 耙, Xiong 熊 and Ying 益; see Huang Shengzhang, “Bao you ming de niandai, dili yu lishi wenti” 保卣銘的年代、地理與歷史問題, in Huang Shengzhang, *Lishi dili yu kaogu luncong* 歷史地理與考古論叢 (*Ji’nan*: Qi Lu shushe, 1982), 213. This hypothesis seems more persuasive than Chen Mengjia’s identification of the five states as Qi 齊, Lu 魯, Yan 耙, Guan 石 and Cai 咸, all of which were located “to the east of Yin” (see Chen Mengjia, “Xi Zhou tong qi duandai,” in *Jinwen lunwen xuan*, 53-126, esp. 121-22). Chen interpreted *ji* 及 in the sentence “*ji* Yin dong huo [guo] wu hou 及殷東或 [國] 五侯” as a conjunction, understanding that Bao went together with other rulers. Peng Yushang 彭裕商, “Bao you xinjie” 保卣新解, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 1998.4: 68-72. Peng has also argued that the Zhou referred to in this text was not Zhou-under-Qi, but Chengzhou. He bases on the traditional assumption that Chengzhou’s location “in the center” made it more suitable as a meeting point. I doubt that place names could so deliberately be interchanged in inscriptions. Considering that nearly at the same time, the Lord of Yan travelled from the vicinity of modern Beijing to Zongzhou, it is not impossible that Bao travelled from western Shandong to Zhou-under-Qi.

67) In bronze inscriptions, both terms *bang* 邦 and *guo* 國 were used in the sense of “state,” i.e., a geopolitical unit with a certain territory. However, *guo* rather identified regional states within the Zhou network, whereas *bang* identified political units with greater autonomy. In particular, Zhou was referred to as a *bang* (see *Da Yu ding* 大盂鼎, *Jicheng* # 2837; *Da Ke ding* 大克鼎, *Jicheng* # 2836). *Bang* referred to a dependency given to Yu by King Kang (see *Da Yu ding* 大盂鼎, *Jicheng* # 2837). In this case, the king did not order Yu “to become a Lord (*hou*)”, which could signify that Yu enjoyed a higher autonomy in his domain in comparison to ordinary regional rulers (in terms of the “feudal” model, often applied to early China, this difference could parallel that between *allodium and feudum* in the European Middle Ages). At the same time, a hereditary ruler of a Zhou regional state, most probably with the status of a *guo*, could identify his dominion as *bang* (see *Yu ding* 禹鼎, *Jicheng* # 2833). The commissioner of the latter inscription contrasted his *bang* Xing (the rulers of which were indeed “lords” (*hou*)) with “southern and eastern *guo*” which he rescued from the invasion organized by Lord Yufang of E. The terminological difference can be explained by the perspective of the speaker, distinguishing between his own state and other regional states, and, possibly, stressing his authority within his own territory. However, in other contexts *bang* was applied to non-Zhou polities, as
King Kang. It took place in the course of the celebration of the Zhou victory over the northern Guifang people in the Temple of Zhou in Zhou-under-Qi. It is usually assumed that bang bin were representatives of other northern non-Zhou peoples, although this text does not permit us to specify their affiliation.

Non-Zhou rulers not necessarily volunteered to be the king’s guests and ceased to deliver tribute at every occasion. In response, Zhou kings sent war parties to “pacify” them. If the “pacification” was successful without the use of arms, the non-Zhou rulers provided the king’s emissaries with guest-presents (bin). If they resisted by force, they could be required to deliver tribute in person.

Two mid-Western Zhou inscriptions provide an insight into the history of relations between Zhou and the kingdom of Guai (possibly implied by the explicit reference to Guai as “another country” ta bang and by the juxtaposition of the rulers of these countries and the regional lords (see Guai bo gui, Jicheng # 4331; Jing gui 静簋, Jicheng # 4273; Yi be 義盉, Jicheng # 9453). The otherness, or at least a high degree of autonomy, of the bang referred to in the Xiao Yu ding inscription is also suggested by the word bin, “guest,” which was usually applied to strangers (see Khayutina, “Host-guest Opposition,” 92-100). For an alternative view of bang and guo see Li Feng, Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008), 47-49 and 183-89. Although Li also assumes the higher autonomy of the bang as compared to guo, he believes that the bang “were incorporated into the general administrative structure of the Western Zhou state.” Although I agree that this was the case in respect of the bang ruled by Yu or Yu, I hold that in other cases, the bang was completely outside the Zhou hierarchy.

Unlike Shang texts, Western Zhou inscriptions referred to foreign polities simply by their ethnonym, e.g. Rong, a toponym, e.g., Guai, or a combination of a toponym and ethnonym, e.g., Huai Yi, but without such determinatives. Although the quoted example demonstrates that the Zhou referred to some foreign peoples in Shang terms, it is likely that they perceived the combination of the ethnonym and the fang as a single ethnonym “Guifang.”

See Xiao Yu ding 小盂鼎 (Jicheng # 2839). This is the only instance where participants of royal receptions were literally defined as “guests” (bin). Evidently, it was not common to write “I was received as a guest by the king” or the like in first-person reports of royal receptions. However, it is even more likely that in the course of royal receptions, regional rulers and royal officials were not assessed as “guests” but as regular visitors, whereas the term “guest” was applied only to foreigners. Visits by foreigners were referred to extremely rarely, which explains why “guests,” paradoxically, are seldom mentioned in the records of royal hospitality.

For the discussion of this ceremony, see Chen Mengjia, “Xi Zhou tong qi duandai,” in Jinwen lunwen xuan, 210-20; Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 293-351 (includes a translation), esp. 320-22; Khayutina, “Host-Guest Opposition,” 94-95.

See Gong Mao ding 公賀鼎 (Jicheng # 2719), Shi Song ding 史頌鼎 (Jicheng # 2787), Zuoce Huan zun 作冊寰尊 (Jicheng # 5989).
located to the north of the Zhou core territories on the edge of Shaanxi and Gansu provinces.\textsuperscript{72} According to the \emph{Wei ding}, in the ninth year of King Gong’s reign (917-900 BC), an envoy sent by Guai’s ruler Mei’ao paid a visit (\textit{jian}) to the Zhou king in Zhou-under-Qi.\textsuperscript{73} Later on, as reflected in the \emph{Guai bo gui}, a confrontation between the two polities emerged. Hence, the Zhou king (probably King Yih, 899-873 BC) sent a war party into Mei’ao’s territory. As a result, Mei’ao came to visit (\textit{zhi jian 至見}) the king to express his submission, bringing gifts of silk and cowry shells. In return, he received a badger coat.\textsuperscript{74} Thus, the meeting served to fix the relationship between the Zhou and Guai.

Similar to the situations reflected in the early period \emph{Xiao Yu ding} and mid-period \emph{Guai bo gui}, the late period inscription on the bell \emph{Hu zhong} commissioned by King Li (857-842 BC)\textsuperscript{75} demonstrates that also during his time, personal visits of non-Zhou rulers immediately followed the preceding warfare:

\begin{quote}
王肇遙省文武勤疆土。南或（域，或國）服子敢陷處我土。王伐伐，其至僫伐厥都。服子遙間，來逆我王。南夷東夷具見，廿又六邦。唯皇上帝百神保余小子。朕猷有成亡覩。我唯司配皇天。王對作宗周寶鐘。

The king set forth on an inspection tour through the borderlands acquired by the efforts of Kings Wen and Wu. Fu \textit{zi} from the southern areas (or states) dared to bring detriment to our lands and to invade them. The king launched a ferocious attack, even making an assault on his residence. Fu \textit{zi} then sent a negotiator,\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{72} Mei’ao dedicated his ritual vessel to his father, King Ji of Guai. This indicates that he ruled as a king in his own domain. Guo Moruo, \textit{Liang Zhou jinwen}, vol. 7: 147-48, suggested that Guai was located in western Hubei province. However, Li Feng argues that Guai was located rather on the northwestern frontier of Zhou and may originally have been affiliated with the Northern Rong people (see Li Feng, “Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders: Evidence from the Bronze Inscriptions of the Western Zhou Period (1045-771 BC),” \textit{Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities} 74 (2002): 210-42, esp. 220-21; Li Feng, \textit{Landscape and Power}, 185.

\textsuperscript{73} See the Ninth-year \emph{Wei ding} 九年衛鼎 (Jicheng # 2831).

\textsuperscript{74} See \emph{Guai bo gui} 乖伯簋 (Jicheng # 4331).

\textsuperscript{75} After the discovery of other bronzes cast by King Li, the attribution of the \emph{Hu zhong} to him is now generally accepted; see Mu Haiting and Zhu Jieyuan, “Xin faxian de Xi Zhou wangshi zhongqi wusi Hu zhong kao” 新發現的西周王朝中期五器銘考, \textit{Renwen zazhi} 1983.2: 118-21, Shaughnessy, \textit{Sources of Western Zhou History}, 170.

\textsuperscript{76} The meaning of \textit{jian} 閒 is “crevice,” “interstice,” “interval,” “space between,” or “leisure.” Tang Lan 唐蘭, \textit{Xi Zhou qingtong qi mingwen fendai}, 503, argued that here, it was merely a personal name. Ma Chengyuan suggested reading \textit{jian} as \textit{xian} 改 in the meaning of
after which he [personally] arrived to welcome the king. The southern and eastern Yi all came to pay visits, twenty-six [foreign] states altogether! Oh! August Deity on High! Myriads of spirits! Protect me, the small child! Let my plans be successful and not meet opposition! May we govern and conjoin with August Heaven! [I], the king, make in response [to my ancestors’ assistance] this precious bell for Zongzhou. (Hu zhong 鼓鐘, Jicheng # 260)

The reception offered by King Li to the non-Zhou ruler Fu zì crowned the success of the Zhou army and symbolized the submission of a former enemy. The victory over Fu, possibly one of the Han 漢 River polities, triggered a chain of visits of neighboring rulers with promise of loyalty, as it also may have been in the case documented in the Xiao Yu ding. In this light, the involvement of non-Zhou peoples into hospitality relationships with the Zhou kings can be regarded as resulting from—or representing an alternative to—violence. This clearly

fangxian 防閑, “to defend,” “to guard.” However, in this sentence jian is the object of the verb qian 迩 “to send.” In bronze inscriptions qian had objects of two kinds: people, while sent on a mission (usually a military one), or gifts (often granted by an ancestor, like “blessings,” or “happiness”). This sentence evidently refers to Fu zì’s actions signifying his capitulation after his residence was destroyed by the Zhou king. Thus, it is plausible that he sent someone or something in order to negotiate peace. The goal of these negotiations, i.e., “peace,” is one of the derivative meanings of jian as attested in the Zuo zhuan (see Bernhard Karlgren, Grammata Serica Recensa, Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 29 [1957]: 1-332, 69, no. 191). Another derivative meaning of jian is “to intermediate.” It is possible that jian points to a person or an object used to mediate the suspension of arms. Another connotation of jian, “to spy on,” seems even more interesting to our investigation. The etymologically connected word jian 简 (“bamboo strip”) could be used in the sense of “to examine.” Both meanings are related to the action of seeing. Sergei Starostin suggested that jian 简 might have been phonetically related to jian 見 (“to see,” “to visit”); see The Tower of Babel: An International Etymological Database Project [http://starling.rinet.ru/]. I suggest that the meaning of qian jian 迩儂 in the Hu zhong inscription might be similar to qian shi 迩使 “to send an envoy,” or to shi jian 使見 “to send [someone] to visit [someone]” in literary texts. A very similar expression can be found in Han shu, “Xiongnu liezhuan” 匈奴列傳: “The Huhanye shanyu sent an envoy to visit the lesser kunmi Wujiu” (呼韓邪 遣使見小昆鬪烏就屠); see Ban Gu 班固, Han shu 漢書 (Beijing: Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 94B.3800.

The character shao 高 (“high,” “lofty”) in bronze inscriptions often corresponds to zhao 昭 (“bright,” “illustrious,” “to manifest,” “to display”). However, in this case it should be read as shao 敉 (“to continue,” “to transmit”). Tang Lan, op. cit., 505, suggested that shao 敉 in the Hu Zhong is a verb, specifying in which way the king had to be welcomed. I am indebted to Prof. Wolfgang Behr for his advice on this issue.

The location of Fu is not clear. Possibly, it was identical with Fu 復. Rulers of the latter intermarried with Deng (see below). The location of the second Fu is also not known, but its intimate relationship with Deng allows suggesting that it was one of the Han or Huai River polities.
had consequences for the future, as Zhou kings considered the arrival of non-Zhou rulers as a sign of their subordination.

Depending on whether they responded to the royal hospitality or rejected it, a line was drawn between “those who are with the Zhou” and “those who are against Zhou.” In an inscription on another bell commissioned by King Li, he distinguished between those who came or did not come to “pay court” (ting):

This inscription does not make very clear whether or not the king regarded “the countries that do not pay court” as part of the “four quarters” of the civilized Zhou world. From the Hu zhong inscription, it seems that the king hoped that at some point, the bu ting fang would “come to visit” and thus become part of the si fang, which would then be united under his rule.

The representation of whether or not the foreign countries should be brought to the court probably changed with the currents of time. The mid-period Shi Qiang pan boastfully ends the dedication to the commissioner’s sovereign, King Gong, as follows:

---

Note that in this text, fang is used in both its senses as “a quarter [of the entire world]” and a “[foreign] country.”

In this case, fang is used in the sense of “on all sides,” “all” (compare with fang xia, “all the Xia” 方夏, in the “Wu cheng” 武成 chapter of the Shang shu).
However, King Xuan’s words in the *Mao gong ding* inscription sound much smoother:


The last quotation leaves an impression that King Xuan recognized that “not paying court” was a permanent and normal condition of some neighbors, who nevertheless were able to admire the great founders of the Zhou from a distance, not necessarily being inimical to the Zhou. This sounds like a renouncement of the earlier doctrine of forcing the non-Zhou rulers to attend royal receptions in favor of a policy of *laissez-faire*. The inscription on the *Ju fu xu*, dating to 810 BC, corroborates that during King Xuan’s reign, rulers of the non-Zhou polities of the Huai River basin were expected to visit or to send envoys to the Zhou regional states in the south, whereas the latter were obligated to pay visits in return. The southern regional lords were then responsible for delivering to the king his share of the gifts offered by the foreign guests.

Even if before King Xuan’s reign some non-Zhou rulers had personal meetings with the kings, it is not attested that they ever took place at royal residences. After the early Western Zhou period, localizing the receptions noted in bronze inscriptions is problematic. It is noteworthy that the *Guai bo gui*, providing many details about the reception

---

81) In various early Chinese texts, political entities were defined as *you* 有 (normally, a verb “to have”, “to possess”) in a nominal sense. The closest English equivalent would be *dominion* as this term was used in the European Middle Ages and early New Time. *Dominion* derives from Latin *dominium*, signifying “ownership, property, right of possession” in Roman law. In premodern Europe, *dominion* designated “the lands or domains of a feudal lord” and “the territory owned by or subject to a king or ruler” (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

82) See *Ju Fu xu* 駒父溫 (*Jicheng* 4464). For the suggestion about the bilaterality of these relations, see Xia Hanyi 夏含夷 (Edward L. Shaughnessy), *Wengu zhixin lu: Shang Zhou wenhua shi guanjian* 濟故知新錄——商周文化史管見 (*Taipei: Daohuo, 1997*), 160-65.
of Mei’ao, “forgets” to specify its location. By way of analogy with the inscriptions commissioned by regional lords, this possibly implies that the meeting took place not in the king’s residence but elsewhere. Similarly, although King Li made his bell for use in the royal residence Zongzhou, its inscription did not state that Zongzhou was the location where the meetings with the twenty-six non-Zhou rulers took place. Therefore, it is more likely that, like King Yih, King Li was not able or did not wish to summon foreign rulers to his residences but arranged their receptions somewhere else. Several other inscriptions strengthen the assumption that the royal hospitality offered to non-Zhou rulers was usually “ambulatory.” One of them is the Yi he of the middle period, already cited above, stating that the “rulers of the countries” (bang jun), possibly of Huai Yi origin, were summoned to a great archery contest in Lu together with the neighboring regional lords.83

The inscription on the E hou Yufang ding documents King Li’s individual meeting with perhaps the most powerful of the “twenty-six Southern and Eastern Yi” polities referred to in the Hu zhong. Lord Yufang 駭方 of E 嵩 (in present-day Deng 鄴 County, Henan) was the leader of the coalition of the Yi peoples of the Huai River basin during the reign of King Li. Rulers of E intermarried with the royal house of Zhou and, as Lord Yufang’s inscription demonstrates, were even included among the regional lords. Although Yufang was assigned the Zhou rank of a regional lord, the fact that he raised an anti-Zhou rebellion several years later speaks for his own repudiation of this “favor.”84 The meeting between Yufang and the king took place in Pei 戬 (possibly in the vicinity of Lord of E’s territory). The king went by this location when returning from a campaign against the Southern Yi polities Jiao 角 and Jue/Sui 倃 (湯/曕?), possibly in north-eastern present-day Hubei.85 A short mid- to late-Western Zhou inscription

83) See Yi he 義盉 (Jicheng # 9453).
84) The rebellion is reported in the Yu ding (Jicheng # 2833). On the Lord of E’s reception and his anti-Zhou rebellion several years after the meeting in Pei, see Creel, Origins of Statecraft in China, 237-38; Shaughnessy “Western Zhou history,” 330-31; Li Feng, “Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders,” 222-30; Li Feng, Landscape and Power, 330-31. For an English translation, see Li Feng, “Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders,” 222.
85) See E hou Yu fangding 驭侯駭方鼎 (Jicheng # 2810). Many scholars believe that Pei, where this meeting took place, was the same as the Pei 戬 mentioned in the Mai zun and located at Rongyang 榆陽 city in central present-day Henan. This was suggested by Wang
commissioned by the ruler of Deng 鄂, one of the “southern countries” located in the Han River valley (northern Hubei), reads:

唯十又四月。王在侯。姬。鄭公作旅簋。

“It was the fourteenth month, the king was at the Lord’s [place]. [He performed] X (?). The Duke of Deng made this lü tureen for travels.” (Deng gong gui 鄂公簋, Jicheng # 3858)

For the localization of Deng near Xiangfan city in Hubei province during the late Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods, see Xiangfan shi bowuguan 襄樊市博物館, “Hubei sheng Xiangfan shi Deng cheng yizhi shijue jianbao” 湖北省襄樊市鄭城遺址試掘簡報, Jianghan kaogu 2004.2: 19-26. Earlier, Deng could have been located further north.

The vessel designation lü 旅 appears on many bronze vessels for food, especially rectangular food containers xu which were similar in function to the gui tureens, but also on some beverage vessels. The word lü had several meanings, including “travel,” “stay away from home,” “military troops” (in the latter sense often in the Shi jing). Lü was also used in the sense of “sacrifice,” which, possibly, also derived from “travel” (in Han times it denoted imperial sacrifices on the Mt. Tai, distant from the capital). The owners of lü ritual vessels were often involved in military operations or travels for other purposes, during which they could use these usually small and portable objects for ancestral sacrifices; see Khayutina, “Sacred Space of an Aristocratic Clan in Ancient China under Transformation,” in Creating and Representing Sacred Spaces, ed. Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Michael Dickhardt (Göttingen: Peust & Gutschmidt, 2003), 113-44, esp. 119. The argument can be supported by further linguistic evidence. In some cases, lü could be replaced by xing 行 “to travel” (Guo shu xu 竺奴盟, Jicheng # 4389) or zheng 征 “to go on a journey/military campaign” (ji bo zi Ren xu 纪伯自任盟, Jicheng # 4442). An explicit witness of the association of some bronzes with travelling and military activities is the early Western Zhou vessel Mai he 澩 (Jicheng # 9451) that was commissioned by none other than the author of the Mai zun inscription who left a detailed account of his lord’s journey to the royal capital: “Mai … made [this] ewer in order to follow the Lord of Xing in his travels/military campaigns, to travel [perhaps in a carriage, contrasted by the next word—M. Kh.], to go on foot” 漢… 作盉，用從邢侯征事，用旋徒（走）。In the Cai hou ding 蔡侯鼎 (Jicheng # 2441) inscription, the lü is written with a determinative che 車, “carriage,” which points at travelling in a carriage pulled by horses. The same is suggested by the definition yu dun 御鼓, where yu signifies “to drive a carriage” in the inscription on the late Spring and Autumn Teng hou dun 湯侯敦 (Jicheng # 4635).
The name of the regional ruler, at whose place the Duke of Deng could meet the Zhou king, is not specified. This could have been a ruler of Ying, as Deng intermarried with the Ying branch of the royal Ji 姬 clan, or any of the other southern regional lords. Without stating it explicitly, the text implies that the Duke of Deng had a personal meeting with the Zhou king; otherwise, it would be hard to explain why the ruler of a non-Zhou polity would cast a Zhou-styled bronze tureen with an inscription referring to the king's location. This inscription also corroborates that non-Zhou neighbors visited Zhou kings during their stays with regional lords on the Zhou periphery.

In sum, inscriptions referring to royal receptions of non-Zhou rulers show that such meetings were bound to royal residences even less than those offered to the Zhou regional lords. Moreover, they indicate the same trend of transposing royal hospitality to the periphery of the larger Zhou polity, already revealed in the relations between the king and the regional lords.

Receptions in the “smaller” Zhou kingdom: recipients, purposes and places

While the processes of political communication within the larger Zhou polity or between the Zhou and their neighbors are documented very fragmentary, much more can be retrieved about the organization and functioning of the territories under the direct control of the king. Referred to as the “royal domain” (wang ji 王畿) in later received sources, this area can also be understood as the “smaller” Zhou kingdom. Among the inscriptions listed in the Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng, A vessel made by a Duke of Deng as dowry for his daughter was found at the cemetery of the Ying state (see Deng gong gui 鄧公簋, jicheng 3775). See also Zhou Yongzhen 周永珍, “Liang Zhou shiqi de Ying guo, Deng guo tongqi ji dili weizhi” 梁周時期的應國, 鄧國銅器基地理位置, Kaogu 1982.1: 48-53.

I follow Creel, Origins of Statecraft, 363-66, that the “royal domain” was an Eastern Zhou theoretical conception. As I have noted above, Zhou was referred to in bronze inscriptions as a bang, but it is not clear whether this bang included the Western Zhou polity in its broadest territorial limits or just the core territory. I am not convinced by the theory that all land in the Western Zhou polity belonged to the Zhou king, an idea based on a single quotation from the “Bei shan” 北山 ode (Mao 205) in the Shi jing (詩經) that was certainly written after the Western Zhou period and inaccurate even for the Eastern Zhou. I rather suggest that Zhou was the principal bang in the hier-
many are related to royal receptions of persons other than regional lords, their subjects, and non-Zhou rulers: fifty-six from the early, eighty-three from the middle and forty-nine from the late Western Zhou period (cf. the list in the Appendix). Although the exact places of their discovery are often unknown, most of their commissioners lived in the territories stretching between western Shaanxi and central Henan. The considerable number of such inscriptions allows for their quantitative analysis, revealing how the purposes of receptions correlated with their spatial localization.

Three purposes of the receptions offered to inhabitants of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom can be identified: appointment to an office in the royal administration or military hierarchy, issue of a particular command, or a general revision of loyalty. Inscriptions recording appointments and commands have already received scholarly attention in connection with inquiries about the organization of the Western Zhou “feudalism,” bureaucracy, and the system of social relationships based on the exchange of gifts and services. Recently, interest has

archy of other bang and guo. As the latter are identified in English according to the title of their ruler, for instance as “dukedoms” or “earldoms,” it seems appropriate to define the bang of the king as “kingdom.” Since the definition “Zhou kingdom” is often used in the literature as referring to the whole Western Zhou polity, I will define the territory under the direct control of the king as the “smaller” Zhou kingdom.

In this selection, I exclude all cases where gifts or orders from the king could be transmitted by intermediaries, as well as cases where the commissioners could be rulers or members of regional states.


started to turn also to the spatial aspects of the royal receptions where appointments and commands were made.\textsuperscript{93}

When appointments were performed in royal residences, the name of a particular building structure could be specified. These were typically places related to the worship of earlier kings, referred to as \textit{miao} 庙, “temple,” and, most often, \textit{gong} 宮, “[posthumous] palace.”\textsuperscript{94}

Besides, many appointment ceremonies were held by Zhou kings in locations other than royal residences. Li Feng recently provided a detailed analysis of this practice,\textsuperscript{95} proposing that a strong, hierarchical, and to a large extent self-organizing bureaucracy administered the royal domain, whereas the king’s role was to ritually inaugurate bureaucrats in their positions during appointment ceremonies.\textsuperscript{96} While other scholars regard the “palaces” as residential buildings and/or temples, Li takes the \textit{gong} as external “offices” of the Zhou administration where royal officials were also allowed to reside.\textsuperscript{97} However, although administrative commands were often delivered in the \textit{gong}, I doubt that the latter primarily represented “offices” constructed by the Zhou state as administrative outposts. At the same time, I also disagree that the \textit{gong} were primarily structures for ancestral worship. Rather, \textit{gong} was normally a name for residential compounds of the Zhou elites, i.e., “palace,” or perhaps “mansion.” Since in early China kinship organizations, residential units and liturgical communities overlapped, palaces were

---

\textsuperscript{93} See Li Feng, “‘Offices’ in Bronze Inscriptions,” \textit{1-72}.

\textsuperscript{94} For the interpretation of the \textit{gong} as “temples” see Tang Lan, “Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de Kanggong wenti,” \textit{17-18}. However, the \textit{gong} dedicated to royal ancestors rather represented a specific case. It is appropriate to regard them as “[posthumous] palaces”; for this term see Martin Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the \textit{Shangshu}, and the \textit{Shijing}: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou,” in \textit{Early Chinese Religion}, part one: \textit{Shang Through Han (1250 BC to 220 AD)}, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 143-200, esp. 160).

\textsuperscript{95} See Li Feng, “‘Offices’ in Bronze Inscriptions,” \textit{1-72}.

\textsuperscript{96} See Li Feng, “Feudalism” and Western Zhou China”; “Succession and Promotion,” \textit{1-35}; “‘Offices’ in Bronze Inscriptions,” and \textit{Bureaucracy and the State in Early China}.

\textsuperscript{97} Considering that Zhou kings acted as hosts in \textit{gong} occupied by other persons, Li Feng has concluded that these palaces were built by the Zhou state as “offices,” which enabled the king to act as host; see his \textit{Bureaucracy and the State}, 163. I believe that the king was able to act as a host there by virtue of being sovereign, and not because \textit{gong} were built on his account.
used for religious performance. In cases where their owners were engaged in state service, administrative functions were performed there as well. The use of the same structures for various purposes was fully legitimate because, similar to other premodern societies, the private, public and religious spheres of life in Western Zhou society were not separated to such an extent that they needed to be embodied in specific architectural forms.\footnote{In my view, the \textit{gong} were, first of all, residential compounds. Second, as they all included spaces for the worship of ancestors, and as for some ceremonies, e.g., funerals, the entire architectural compound could be used for the liturgy, the \textit{gong}, to a certain extent, represented temples. The “[posthumous] Palace of King Kang” (term by Martin Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the \textit{Shangshu}, and the \textit{Shijing},” 160) could represent a special case, as its functions as a temple were predominant. Third, in the absence of structures erected exclusively for the performance of government and administration, palaces of kings and their officials were indeed used as “offices” as well. Multifunctionalism was also inherent to palaces of rulers in other early states, e.g., ancient Greece; see Christian Lanke, \textit{Politik und Architektur: Eine Studie zur Wirkung politischer Kommunikation in Bauten staatlicher Repräsentation} (München: tuduv, 1995), 48.}

Li Feng has further argued that

\ldots by paying visits to these offices, the king might have played a role as a check on the bureaucracy when his power was strong. The king’s arrival at a \textit{gong} at a prescribed time to announce admonitions, awards, new appointments, and even dismissals, and the ritual presentation of officials to the king by their superiors (the \textit{youzhe}), were elements of an administrative system that defined government in terms of the central position of the king.\footnote{See Li Feng, “Offices in Bronze Inscriptions,” 48.}

The interpretation of royal receptions as procedures of bureaucratic government appears plausible in cases with a clearly pronounced administrative purpose. However, the functions of royal hospitality were not limited to practical administration alone, and receptions without such a purpose were no less significant for the coherence of the Zhou kingdom.

In particular, Li Feng has noticed that in a group of eighteen selected records about royal visits to various palaces, only five mention new or revised appointments. While some receptions discussed by him took place in palaces occupied by persons with official titles, and although many of their participants also held such titles, other receptions occurred in “places with uncertain functions,” where the official status...
of many other participants cannot be verified.\(^{100}\) If not all royal receptions could clearly be recognized as administrative acts or at least as acts addressed to persons directly involved in the administration, it is reasonable to question to what extent and from when royal receptions were part of the administrative system.

The status of officers in the Zhou administrative and military hierarchy could be identified not only by their titles. In many cases, participants of royal receptions are not mentioned by title, but administrative involvement can be deduced from the fact that the king issued commands to them or bestowed on them objects recognizable as insignia of official power, usually colored kneepads and slippers.\(^{101}\) However, Zhou kings also often met persons whose status was not displayed with the help of such markers. In their (usually) short inscriptions, these people only indicated the fact of being given gifts by the king and, in some cases, specified the location of the meeting. An example of such an inscription is the early period \(\textit{Ming gui}:\)

```
唯十又一月。初吉甲申。王在華。王賜命鹿。用乍寶彝。命其永以多友簋飲。
It was the eleventh month, the first auspicious day \textit{jiashen}. The king was in Hua.\(^{102}\) The king bestowed a deer on Ming. On account of this, [I, Ming] made a treasured sacrificial [vessel]. [I], Ming will eternally [use this] tureen to feast with many associates. (\textit{Ming gui} 命簋, \textit{jicheng} # 4112)
```

It would be premature to recognize each recipient of a royal gift as a person in the king’s service even if, by commissioning such inscription,\(^{100}\) \(\text{Ibid.},\) tables 4 and 5 (pp. 67-69).

\(^{101}\) On the kneepads and other elements of ceremonial garment, see Vassili Kryukov, \textit{Ritualnaya kommunikaciya}, 169-91.

\(^{102}\) The location of Hua is not clear. During the Spring and Autumn period, Hua was a powerful clan in the state of Song. Some scholars identify the location of Hua of the \textit{Ming gui} near present-day Xin Zheng in eastern Henan; see Ma Shizhi 馬世之, \textit{Zhongyuan guguo—Lishi yu wenhua} 中原古國——歷史與文化 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang, 1998), 218. If this identification were correct, the \textit{Ming gui} would provide another example of the king’s ambulatory hospitality outside the smaller Zhou kingdom. However, this suggestion can hardly be verified. The toponym or clan name “Hua” is used in a number of middle and late Western Zhou inscriptions where it occurs in contexts of internal matters of the smaller Zhou kingdom (see \textit{Zhong Yi fu ding} 仲義父鼎, \textit{jicheng} # 2541; \textit{Shanfu Ke ding}, \textit{jicheng} # 2836; \textit{He gui} 何簋, \textit{jicheng} # 4202; \textit{Xun gui} 蠻簋, \textit{jicheng} # 4321). Therefore, it is rather plausible that Hua was a place and the name of an aristocratic clan residing on the territories between Zhou-under-Qi and Chengzhou.
he expressed his loyalty to the king. It can be instructive to consider how, in the course of royal receptions, gift-giving and explicit commands issued by the king correlated with each other. Diagram II, based on the quantitative analysis of inscriptions in the *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* on the communication between Zhou kings and persons other than regional rulers or rulers of non-Zhou polities, juxtaposes these two main contents of the royal receptions. It shows that during the early period, kings in most cases only distributed gifts. During the middle period, gifts were given more often in connection with a command, whereas during the late Western Zhou gift-giving without imposing a duty became very rare. Thus, at the beginning, the royal hospitality was mostly a general means of requesting loyalty from the inhabitants of the Zhou kingdom, but not necessarily of engaging them directly in royal service. Starting from the middle period, kings explicitly required service in exchange for the awards. Only then, royal hospitality began to transform into a routine instrument for recruiting and controlling royal officers. Nevertheless, even when the hierarchical network was already constructed and stabilized, receptions of officers often represented a mixture of formal, ritualized communication between office-holders and unconditioned gift-giving, as illustrated by the following example:

```
正月既望甲午。王在周師寳宮。旦。王格大室。即位。王呼師晨召大師虞。入門。位中廷。王呼宰賜大師虞虎裘。[…]
```

In the regulated month, after the full moon, day *jiawu*, the king was in the Palace of Captain Liang in Zhou. At dawn, the king entered the Great Chamber. [He] assumed his position. The king called Captain Chen to invite Grand Captain Cuo. [They] entered the gate [and] took the position in the middle yard. The king ordered to the Master of Ceremonies Hu to bestow a tiger coat on Grand Captain Cuo. […] (*Taishi Cuo gui* 大師虞簋, *Jicheng* # 4251)

This reception of a high military officer was held in the palace of the head of a garrison somewhere around Zhou-under-Qi and involved the participation of another high military officer. Although it was highly ritualized in order to display the supremacy of the king, it included neither an appointment nor a particular command, but only a gift, which, in turn, was not a kind of insignia, but a luxury, prestige object. Compared with contemporary, all-standardizing
administrative sessions, accompanied with written documentation, this particular meeting seems quite un- and perhaps even antibureaucratic.

The processes of transformation of royal hospitality from a generally political into a specifically administrative institution were gradual and not simultaneous in every part of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom. They proceeded parallel to the gradual differentiation in the use of royal residences for administrative and political purposes.

A possible qualitative differentiation between the three main royal residences Zhou-under-Qi, Zongzhou, and Chengzhou can be judged by where political or administrative actions of a certain kind were conducted. A number of examples show that such differentiation was not very distinct. Appointments of persons to the same offices in the royal administration or the issue of identical commands could take place in different royal residences as well as in a variety of other places.

A mid-period inscription on the Qi gui reports:

It was the third month. The king was in Zongzhou. On the day wuyin, the king entered the Great [name of a structure?]. Mishu accompanied Qi on his right-hand side. [They] took their positions. The Internal Secretary [announced the]
charge. The king approvingly said:103 “Qi! I order you to be Grand Administrator of Horses in X-Garrison. [Be responsible] especially for the [military] servants, the archers, [and] the foot soldiers. Interrogate [these from our] neighbors’ estates. Take the toll of five lue. [I] bestow on you red kneepads, a dark jade pendant, [and] a banner with tinkling bells. Use [them for] your service!” […] (Qi gui 豈簋, Jicheng # 4266)104

An inscription on the *Lu gui*, dating to the reign of King Mu (956-918 BC), records a very similar command:

唯廿又四年九月既望庚寅。王在周。格大室。即位。司工右位中廷北向。王呼作冊尹冊申命。曰。「更乃祖服。作冢司馬。汝其諫訊有鄰。取徵十銖。賜汝赤市。幽璜。金車。金勒旃。汝敬敬夙夕。勿廢朕令命！」[…]

It was the twenty-fourth year, ninth month, after the full moon, day *gengyin*. The king was in Zhou. [He] entered the Great Chamber. [He] assumed his place. The Administrator of Works X entered, accompanying Lu on the right-hand side, [and] took the position in the Middle Yard facing north. The king called the Chief Maker of Documents to announce the extended mandate to Lu, saying: “Replace your ancestors [in their] duties. Be Grand Administrator of Horses. May you admonish and interrogate [these from our] neighbors’ estates. Take the toll of ten measures. [I] bestow on you red kneepads, a dark jade pendant, a metal-decorated chariot, a banner with a metal bridle. May you then be reverent mornings and evenings! Do not abandon my charge!” […]105

Both persons, Qi and Lu, were appointed by the king to the same office of the Grand Administrator of Horses, and, apparently, were charged

---

103) Lothar von Falkenhausen has recently suggested a new interpretation for the *wang ruo yue* 王若曰 formula as “the king approvingly said.” According to Falkenhausen, the words of the king represented a response to a “report of the person received in the audience.” This interpretation throws a completely new light on the royal receptions, revealing them as reciprocally communicative, dialogical situations (see Falkenhausen, “The Royal Audience”). I thank the author for sharing his yet unpublished paper. Even though the present inscription does not record the supposed report of Qi, the translation of *ruo* as “approvingly” can nevertheless be accepted.

104) Li Feng, “Succession and Promotion,” 32, has translated part of this command differently. My translation is based on the comparison with the *Shi Lu gui* inscription, which became available after Li Feng’s article was published (see below).

with the communication with some non-Zhou neighbours. Both appointments were conducted in the same ceremonial way, as was typical from the mid-Western Zhou period onward. The insignia given to them to identify them as Zhou officials were partly identical, although some differences in the sets of their gifts might indicate the higher status of the second person. These two very similar appointments were made at two different royal residences: Zongzhou and Zhou-under-Qi. More examples can be provided to corroborate that none of the royal residences was reserved for performing appointments of a certain kind. It can only be speculated whether officials were usually summoned to a residence or other place closer to where they lived and performed their duties, or rather to the royal residence where the king stayed at the time when the reception was scheduled. Possibly, the former was the rule for petty local officers, whereas officers with larger responsibilities in the whole Zhou kingdom or taking charge of communication with regional states or non-Zhou neighbours could be called to each of the royal residences, depending on where the king was presently located. Examples corroborating the latter rule can be found throughout the Western Zhou. In particular, Yu 孟, the commissioner of the already mentioned Xiao Yu ding and a warlord of King Kang’s time, received his first charge in Chengzhou, another one in Zongzhou, and, two years later, was rewarded for his accomplishments in the Temple of Zhou in Zhou-under-Qi. During the late Western Zhou period, Secretary Song 史頌, a trustee of either King Li or King Xuan, received one charge in Zongzhou and another one in Zhou-under-Qi—both of them concerning administrative matters in the Chengzhou area. Another official of King Xuan, Provisioner Ke 善夫克, was summoned either to Zongzhou or to Zhou-under-Qi where he was charged with missions also to be conducted in Chengzhou. These examples (more could be adduced) suggest that although most important decisions for the administration of the whole “smaller” Zhou kingdom or for the communication with non-Zhou neighbours tended to be made in royal residences, there was no qualitative specialization

106) See Yu jue 孟爵 (Jicheng # 9104), Da Yu ding 大盂鼎 (Jicheng # 2837), Xiao Yu ding 小盂鼎 (Jicheng # 2839).
107) See Shi Song ding 史頌鼎 (Jicheng # 2787), Song ding 頌鼎 (Jicheng # 2827).
108) See Ke zhong 克錘 (Jicheng # 204), Xiao Ke ding 小克鼎 (Jicheng # 2796).
of residences for particular political and administrative matters. However, quantitatively, the differentiation was in progress.

As Diagram III shows, during the early period, commands and gifts were given in all the locations without a visible preference of some places mostly for gift-giving or the issue of commands. The situation changed dramatically starting from the middle Western Zhou period. In Chengzhou, similarly as during the early period, most receptions included the distribution of gifts alone and only seldom the issuing of commands. Besides, after the early period, these commands did not concern administration on the scale of the whole kingdom, but only military tasks in the east. Thus, as soon as Zhou kings delegated the control of eastern areas to their officials, Chengzhou’s significance as a royal administrative center decreased, although it continued as a fortified military post and an important reception place for political meetings.

Diagram III: Purposes of receptions with respect to their locations during the three periods of the Western Zhou: early (E), middle (M), and late (L)

In like manner, the distinction between Zhou-under-Qi as “sacred” and Zongzhou as “administrative” capitals suggested by Chang Kwang-chih, “Xia Shang Zhou sandai duzhi,” 51-71, can hardly be corroborated from the data of the bronze inscriptions.

The famous Ze Ling fang zun 矢令方尊 (Jicheng # 6016) shows that during the early period, Chengzhou indeed functioned as an administrative center. For the translation and discussion of the Ling yi, see Shaughnessy, Sources of Western Zhou History, 194-216.

---

109) In like manner, the distinction between Zhou-under-Qi as “sacred” and Zongzhou as “administrative” capitals suggested by Chang Kwang-chih, “Xia Shang Zhou sandai duzhi,” 51-71, can hardly be corroborated from the data of the bronze inscriptions.

110) The famous Ze Ling fang zun 矢令方尊 (Jicheng # 6016) shows that during the early period, Chengzhou indeed functioned as an administrative center. For the translation and discussion of the Ling yi, see Shaughnessy, Sources of Western Zhou History, 194-216.
In contrast, receptions held both in Zongzhou and Zhou-under-Qi usually included the issuing of commands. However, during the middle and late periods, receptions in Zongzhou were relatively rare, while Zhou-under-Qi (“Zhou” in the diagram), including the royal residential and religious center as well as its satellite palaces where royal officials resided, became the area where receptions with or without administrative purposes were held most often and where gifts were most regularly accompanied by commands. Based on its quantitative dominance starting from the middle Western Zhou period, Zhou-under-Qi can be identified as both the main center of royal hospitality and the main administrative center of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom. Zhou-under-Qi’s rise in status can plausibly be related to its reinstatement as the main sacred center of the Zhou lineage, especially after the posthumous “Palace of King Kang” became pre-eminent in the worship of the deceased kings. The frequent allocation of royal receptions in ancestral temples which led to a remarkable “fusion of religious and administrative practices” could be part of the Zhou kings’ attempts to make the royal ancestors relevant for other members of the society without a common religion, which, in turn, very likely was a part of the larger “ritual reform” of the mid-Western Zhou period. Nevertheless, although Zhou-under-Qi rose in prominence, it did not become the exclusive “central place.”

---

111) Its prominence in the records on royal receptions can be explained by the fact that many inscribed bronzes were found in the Zhou plain area, where many royal officials resided. In comparison, the number of bronzes discovered near the two other residences, Zongzhou and Chengzhou, is relatively small. Thus, the discrepancy possibly reflects the fact that Zhou-under-Qi was the main residential center of the Zhou elites.

112) For the centrality of Kang gong in the royal ancestral worship see Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the Shangshu, and the Shi jing,” 160-62. For an attempt to reconstruct the hierarchy of buildings for ancestral worship on the Zhou plain, see Hwang Ming-chorng, Ming-tang: Cosmology, Political Order and Monuments in Early China (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1996), 257-62.

113) See Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the Shangshu and the Shi jing,” 162.

114) For a note on the fundamental difference between the cult of ancestors, which can be practiced only within a kinship group, and a general cult of the dead, which allows a wider participation, see Benjamin Schwartz, The World of Thought in Ancient China (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1985), 21-23.

115) For the “ritual revolution” identified by Jessica Rawson and subsequently reassessed as a “ritual reform” by Lothar von Falkenhausen, see Rawson, Western Zhou Archaeology, in Cambridge History of Ancient China, 352-449; von Falkenhausen, Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius, 29-64.
the sake of gift-giving and the issue of commands, were still often held in places other than royal residences. This means that, although the trend towards a territorial centralization of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom can be recognized, for the Zhou kings, it did not become an end in itself.

**Reassessing royal hospitality in received texts**

The dual observations about the lack of a clear territorial center of the larger Western Zhou polity and the role of Zhou-under-Qi as the incipient capital of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom may meet with skepticism by those who view Zhou history through the prism of Warring States and early Han literature, especially the “Basic Annals of Zhou” 周本記 in Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 Shiji 史記.

The “Basic Annals of Zhou,” the most consistent account of Western Zhou history, strongly suggests that the first Zhou kings aimed to create a single political capital, valid for their entire polity. The text claims that King Wen removed the capital from Zhou-under-Qi and that Luoyi, i.e., Chengzhou, did not become a true capital before the time of King Ping, whereas Feng-Hao was the main center of royal power. This monocentrist view is reflected in a number of scholarly works, although more authors modify it by assigning the status of “secondary capital” to Chengzhou/Luoyi. The model assumes that the Western Zhou was territorially centered on where the “court,” “the state machinery,” or the “central power” were located, and it does not consider the significance of Zhou-under-Qi during the entire Western Zhou period.

---

117) See e. g. Beijing daxue lishixi kaogu jiao yanjiu shi Shang Zhou zu 北京大學歷史系考古研究所商周組, *Shang Zhou kaogu* 商周考古 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1979), 147; Yang Kuan 楊寬, *Xi Zhou shi* 西周史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1999), 115; Ray Huang, *China: A Macro History* (New York: Sharpe, 1989), 9. Huang even speaks of “geographical determinism” in Chinese history according to which Xi’an, the place where the Zhou rose to power, became the political center for many centuries.
Zhou period. The model is based either on the “Basic Annals of Zhou” alone, or on attempts to reconcile this text with data from the *Shang shu*, the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書, and the *Bamboo Annals* 竹書紀年. These texts, which except for the *Bamboo Annals* served as sources for Sima Qian, contradict one another in many ways, and none of them clearly supports Sima’s central argument that for the entire Western Zhou period, the main political center was located near present day Xi’an. His conclusion is very much the result of guesswork, deciphering meanings behind poetry and all sorts of “documents” whose authenticity and reliability have often been questioned since his time.\(^{119}\)

Transmitted texts provide much evidence that in early Chinese representations, hospitality and power were closely bound together.\(^{120}\) The most authoritative of these texts indicate that Zhou kings were supposed to offer hospitality to their subjects and to do so primarily in their residences. According to the “Great Odes” 大雅 of the *Shi jing* 詩經, the Zhou multitudes had “to line up” (*hang* 行) in Zhou-under-Qi; people from all four directions had to come to Feng-Hao to “perform their duties” (*fu* 服), or to “gather” (*qiu* 遐) in Chengzhou, referred to in the respective text as “the central realm” (*zhong guo* 中國) and “the Royal Residence’s Garrison” (*jing shi* 京師).\(^{121}\)

Thus, individual texts of the *Shi jing* represent all three royal residences as places where Zhou kings received their loyal subjects and do not suggest that a single royal residence functioned as the ultimate center where all significant political actions had to be scheduled. However, the focus of the *Shang shu* on Chengzhou/Luoyi in combination with its indifference toward the western residences indicates that its compilers, after the end of the Western Zhou, promoted the eastern residence as the main seat of Zhou kings.\(^{122}\) The *Shang shu* chapter

---

\(^{119}\) For the analysis of the sources of the “Basic Records of Zhou” see Khayutina, “Western ‘capitals’,” 25-65.

\(^{120}\) In particular, such representations are ostensible in the *Bamboo Annals* which I understand as a retrospective account from the Warring States; see Khayutina, “Host-guest opposition.”

\(^{121}\) See the *Shi jing* odes “Mian” 綿 (*Mao* 237), “Wen wang you sheng” 文王有盛, and “Min lao” 民勞 (*Mao* 253). On the reflections of Western Zhou royal residences as “meeting points” and “communication knots” in literary texts, see Khayutina, “Western ‘capitals’,” 31-35.

\(^{122}\) The monocentrist perspective is also detectible in the compilation of the *Shi jing*, achieved during the Spring and Autumn period; see Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Vents
“Duo shi” 多士 purports to transmit the words of King Cheng in the newly constructed Chengzhou:

今朕作大邑于茲洛。予惟四方罔攸賓（箋）
Now I have built this great city here at Luo [River]. There will be no one from the four quarters [of the world] whom I will treat inhospitably. 123

The monocentrist perspective on Chengzhou/Luoyi was articulated more straightforwardly in the “Zuo Luo” 作雒 chapter of the Yi Zhou shu, possibly composed during the Warring States period and pretending to render the speech of the Duke of Zhou, represented as the designer of the new geopolitical layout of the Zhou polity:

予畏周室不延，俾中天下，及將致政。乃作大邑成周于土中[...]以為天下之大湦
“I fear that the House of Zhou will not last long. [Therefore, I wish to] make it central in the All-under-Heaven, and then I will retire from government.” Thus, [he] made the Great City Chengzhou in the center of the Earth [...] so to become the great gathering [point] for the All-under-Heaven. 124

One may suppose that the monocentrist view of early Zhou history with its focus on Luoyi, which became the seat of the Eastern Zhou kings, was promoted by the latter. Up to the end of the pre-imperial period, the view that this place was the capital of the larger Zhou polity since the reign of King Cheng was generally accepted, while the memory of western capitals was suppressed. It was in this form, as Sima Qian resentfully registered, that the historical memory of the Western Zhou was transmitted into the Han period. 125

Few received pre-Qin texts show awareness that from the foundation of Chengzhou/Luoyi to King Ping’s “move to the east,” Zhou kings resided in the west. These texts, including the Guo yu 国语 and the Bamboo Annals, do not explicitly and unambiguously point to any

123) Karlgren, The Book of Documents, 56, reads bin 賓 as 简: “In the four quarters there I have none whom I reject.”
place as “the capital of the Western Zhou state,” possibly realizing its geopolitical polycentrism.\textsuperscript{126} Sima Qian’s failure to recognize that Zhou-under-Qi, Zongzhou, and Chengzhou were simultaneously and continuously in use as a network can be explained by the scarcity of sources on the one hand and by his adoption of the monocentrist paradigm on the other. Trying to rehabilitate the importance of the west in the early history of the Zhou but lacking reliable written evidence, Sima Qian suggested that before 771 BC, Feng-Hao was \textit{the} capital of the Zhou kings.\textsuperscript{127}

But what, beside the general representation of royal residences as communication knots, can identify them as capitals in which functions relevant to the operation of the whole Western Zhou polity were discharged? The examples presented below concern three kinds of royal receptions with political purposes, indicative of the polity’s geopolitical constitution: investitures, individual visits and assemblies of regional rulers.

Some Eastern Zhou texts pretending to document the establishments of the first Zhou kings suggest that regional lords had to be invested in the royal capital. In particular, the already mentioned “Zuo Luo” chapter of the \textit{Yi Zhou shu} states that the investitures had to be performed in Chengzhou.\textsuperscript{128} The “Kang gao” 康誥 chapter of the \textit{Shang shu} providing the account of the investiture of Kangshu Feng as the ruler of Wei seems to support this. Its introduction presents the great assembly of Zhou subjects, starting from regional lords and ending with craftsmen and ordinary people in Luoyi, as the stage for King Cheng’s (or the Duke of Zhou’s) address to Kangshu.\textsuperscript{129} However, it has long been suggested that the introductory lines referring to this assembly did not belong to the original “Kang gao” but were added to this text by later editors, possibly in order to focus historical memory onto a center.\textsuperscript{130} Furthermore, as noted above, the inscription on Kangshu’s investiture does not mention a royal residence.

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{126} For Eastern Zhou representations of the geopolitical organization of the Western Zhou polity see Khayutina, “Western ‘capitals’,” 36-59.
\item\textsuperscript{127} See \textit{Shi ji}, “Zhou ben ji,” 4.170.
\item\textsuperscript{128} See Zhu Youzeng, \textit{Yi Zhou shu jixun jiaoshi}, “Zuo Luo” [48], 78-79.
\item\textsuperscript{129} See Legge, \textit{Shoo King}, 381-98; Karlgren, \textit{Book of Documents}, 39-43.
\item\textsuperscript{130} As suggested by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072); see Legge, \textit{Shoo King}, 382; Karlgren, \textit{The Book of Documents}, 41. The first line of the “Kang gao” refers to the foundation of
Texts concerned with investitures of regional rulers in the Shi jing likewise do not place them in royal residences. The “Han yi” ode (Mao 261), dedicated to the re-investiture of the Lord of Han by King Xuan (827/25-782), reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>奕奕梁山</td>
<td>Grand-great is Mount Liang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>維禹甸之</td>
<td>By Yu [the Great] was it cultivated!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>有倬其道</td>
<td>Grand are his ways!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>韓侯受命</td>
<td>The Lord of Han received the charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>王親命之</td>
<td>The king personally gave order to him:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>繼又祖考</td>
<td>“Follow your ancestors and deceased father,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>無廢朕命</td>
<td>Do not neglect my charge!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>夕夜匪解</td>
<td>Morning and night do not neglect,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>處共爾位</td>
<td>Be pious and reverent in your position!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聲命不易</td>
<td>My charge will not be changed!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>斬不庭方</td>
<td>Deal with countries that do not come to court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>以佐戎辭</td>
<td>As to assist your sovereign!(*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This ode states that the Zhou king personally announced his command to the Lord of Han, but, like the bronze inscriptions on investitures, it does not identify the place of this ceremony. Commenting on this text, James Legge noticed:

The most natural interpretation of these lines is that the prince of Han, after the death of his father, came by the regular route of communication, which was in a good condition, to the capital, to receive the king’s confirmation of his succession. Mao, however, refers the dao to the method of King Xuan’s administration, brilliantly reformed from the disorder which marked the reign of his father. […] To this I cannot agree. 132

132 See Legge, She King, 546.
Although Legge reasonably denied the traditional understanding of *dao* as a moral value and chose, like most of the later translators or commentators, to interpret it as a physical “way” or “road,” this does not need to be understood as a road leading to the capital or the royal residences. “Han yi” notes only one location—Mount Liang, the geographical marker and the sacred mountain of the regional state of Han, whereas *qi dao* may refer to Yu the Great who regulated the flood, ordered the earth, and provided the living place to all beings. Besides, the allusion to Yu the Great who traveled the entire realm may represent a projection of Western Zhou royal mobility. “Han yi” leaves several possibilities: the investiture could have taken place in any of the royal residences, somewhere half-way between Han and one of them, or even in Han below its patron mountain. Another *Shi jing* ode reflects how the investiture of regional lords was delegated to royal officers. According to the “Song gao” ode (Mao 259), referring to the establishment of the state of Shen (near Nanyang), in

---

133 The supposedly earliest epigraphic reference to the flood myth is found in the inscription on the recently discovered bronze container Bin (Sui) gong xu, dated by most experts to the middle Western Zhou period. It contains a reference to Yu the Great that parallels the starting line of the “Yu gong”; see Xing Wen (ed.), *The X gong Xu: A Report and Papers from the Dartmouth Workshop. A Special Issue of International Research on Bamboo and Silk Documents* (Hanover: Dartmouth College, 2003). However, some details of this vessel’s appearance, peculiarities of the inscription’s orthography, as well as the very unusual composition rather suggest a later date; see Cheng Ifang, “A Royal Food Container and Its Discontents,” in *The X gong Xu*, 44-48. For a suggestion of a Spring and Autumn date see Khayutina, “Bin (Sui)-gong xu i konstruirovanie proshlogo v kitaeskoi tradizii” [Bin (Sui)-gong xu and the construction of the past in the Chinese tradition], in *Istoriya Kitaya: Materialy kitaavedcheskoi konferencii ISAA pri MGU (may 2004)* [Chinese History. Proceedings of the Sinological Conference of the Institute of Asia and Africa of the M.V. Lomonosov-State University of Moscow (May 2004)], ed. K. M. Tertitskiy (Moscow, 2004), 59-70. The *topos* of “dwelling on the footprints of Yu” (zhai or chu, 處, and 足[蹟]), or 禹之塜, respectively) appears in two significant bronze inscriptions from early to mid-Spring and Autumn times: one, commissioned by Duke Wu of Qin (678-697 BC) is the *Qin gong gui* (Jicheng # 4315); the other, commissioned by Shu Shi/Yi, a high officer of the state of Qi during the rule of Duke Ling (555-581 BC) is the *Shu Yi zhong* (Jicheng # 276). In both cases, the commissioners claimed they had received the Heavenly Mandate to reside there. As the protagonist of the “Han yi” ode lived during the time of King Xuan, when royal power was still strong—or perhaps because the ode had to conform to ideals of subordination and loyalty—the right of the Lord of Han to dwell in the shadows of Mount Liang could not be claimed in such a straightforward way.
southern present-day Henan) under King Xuan, the king ordered his trustee the Elder of Shao to establish the residence of the Elder of Shen and to command him, possibly in writing, “to serve as a model for the southern [foreign] states.”

Showing that investitures were performed in situ rather than in royal residences, bronze inscriptions do not contradict early received texts, as the latter do not comment on the localities of these ceremonies. Moreover, both received texts and inscriptions indicate that investitures of regional rulers were not to be performed by the king in person. That such investitures were performed not in the king’s place suggests that territorial centralization had yet to emerge. The practice of mediated investitures made the question of “where was the king” irrelevant.

Some post-Western Zhou texts suggest that Zhou kings sometimes performed investitures of non-Zhou regional rulers with whom they cooperated, bestowing on them Zhou titles in order to include them in the Zhou political hierarchy. In particular, the ruler of Xu, a Huai River polity, who previously styled himself “king,” King Dan 王旦, was allegedly appointed by King Mu formally as the “Elder” over the neighboring non-Zhou states in order to accommodate him and keep him away from the Zhou central states. A Spring and

134 Shen was one of the “southern countries” of the Huai River basin with a ruling house affiliated with the Jiang clan. King You’s divorce from his Shen-born queen caused the Earl of Shen to head a joint attack of non-Zhou peoples on Zhou, which resulted in the fall of the dynasty in 771 BC.

135 “The scion Dan of Xu came [to have] an audience [and] was granted the command to be the Elder (bo) (徐子來朝，錫命為伯); see Wang Guowei 王國維, Jin ben Zhushu jinian shu zheng 今本竹書紀年疏證, in Gu ben Zhushu jinian jizheng 古本竹書紀年輯證, ed. Fang Shiming 方詩銘 and Wang Xiuling 王修齡 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1981), 278. According to the Hou Han shu 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), “Dong Yi lanzhuan” 東夷列傳, 85.2808, “The Yi of Xu usurped the royal title and then led the nine Yi in an attack against Zongzhou. In the west, they advanced to Heshang 河上 (near Dali 大荔 county of Shaanxi, meaning that they crossed the Wei River—M. Kh.). King Mu feared that [the insurrection] would set other countries ablaze. Therefore, he separated regional rulers of eastern [non-Zhou] states and ordered King Dan of Xu to be their head.” Inscriptions corroborate that during the Spring and Autumn period, the rulers of Xu called themselves “king,” confirming the account of the Hou Han shu; see, e.g., Xu wang Liang ding 徐王量鼎 (jicheng # 2675). However, it is not certain whether this was perceived as a “usurpation” of the privilege of the Zhou king, since there were a number of other non-Zhou kings on the Zhou borders. For the war between Zhou and Xu, see Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 323-24.
Autumn-period inscription commissioned by Rong sheng suggests that King Mu entered into privileged partnership with some non-Zhou rulers, entrusting to them the communication with other aliens:

Duke Xian [...] carried out the charge (?) of the Son of Heaven Mu. On this account, [he] established [his state] in this external land to govern over the Man and the Rong so as to deal with the countries that do not pay court. [...]

Neither the King Dan account nor the Rong sheng inscription indicates the place of the appointment ceremony. Considering that King Dan was received when the joint armies of several Huai River polities were about to invade Chengzhou and Zongzhou, it is unlikely to have been scheduled in a royal residence. Similarly, it is plausible that the king passed through the territory of Duke Xian, negotiated with him, and recognized him as a mediator between the Zhou and other non-Zhou peoples. Still, the epigraphic evidence so far does not explicitly concur with post-Western Zhou texts that during personal receptions by Zhou kings, non-Zhou rulers were formally assigned certain titles and not \textit{de facto} recognized as political counterparts.

The second kind of political receptions discussed here are individual visits of regional rulers and non-Zhou rulers demonstrating their loyalty to the Zhou king. In early Chinese representations, personal visits of regional rulers were an essential instrument used by the king in order to hold the polity together. Its proper functioning was the most

---


137) The \textit{Fan sheng gui} 番生簋 (\textit{Jicheng} # 4326) might reflect the case of a formal inauguration of the ruler of Fan (located in Gushi 固始 county in southern present-day Henan); see Khayutina, “The Royal Year-Count,” 145-49). Other scholars regard Fan sheng as a high-ranked officer in the royal administration (see Li Feng, \textit{Landscape and Power}, 209). The inscription notes neither Fan sheng’s rank or office, nor does it identify the location of the ceremony.
sensitive indicator of the political legitimacy of royal power. The relationship of non-Zhou neighbors toward the Zhou was often represented in terms of their “coming as guests” (lai bin 来賓) or even as being subject to a “duty [to come as] guests” (bin fu 賓服). Their visits were regarded as an additional measure of royal political strength. Most received texts do not specify where Western Zhou regional rulers or foreign emissaries presented themselves as “guests.” As an exception, the “Song gao” ode identifies the place where, after his new residence was constructed with the help of Zhou craftsmen, the Elder of Shen personally met with the king, similar to post-investiture visits of Zhou regional lords in bronze inscriptions. Notably, his audience took place in Mei (possibly on the banks of the Wei River near present-day Meixian, Shaanxi) forty km south of Zhou-under-Qi. This did not make this meeting less prestigious. Although in other cases reflected in bronze inscriptions, regional rulers could visit the king in his residence, “Song gao” suggests that meetings in other places were seen as normal. Another ode, “Chang Wu” 常武 (Mao 263), glorifies the victory over the rebellious Xu during the reign of King Xuan. After the decisive battle, its ruler “came to pay court” (徐方來庭) on “the

---

138 Therefore, persuaders of the Warring States period represented charismatic kings of antiquity as an example for contemporary rulers: “Even with a territory of only one hundred square li and yet governing it [properly, they] were able to receive regional lords at audiences [and thus] to get the All-under-Heaven” (得百里之地而君之，皆能以朝諸侯有天下) (see Mengzi, “Gongsun Chou” 公孫丑 2A.2). The inability of a king to receive the regional rulers at audiences was recognized as a dramatic loss of power. Thus, according to the “Basic Annals of Zhou,” when King Li of Zhou became oppressive, “the regional lords stopped coming for audiences” (諸侯不朝); see Shiji, “Zhou ben ji,” 4.142. This system, in which the ability of the king to rule depended on his ability to attract the regional rulers to audiences, was severely criticized by Li Si in his famous speech of 213 BC which led to the persecution of scholars and the ban of the classics and of historical works, but which was primarily directed against a feudal system in favor of a bureaucratic organization of the state; see Shiji, “Qin Shihuang benji” 秦始皇本紀, 6.236.

139 Bin fu is often paraphrased as “to submit themselves.” I have suggested previously that fu can be translated as “duty,” which, in the case of non-Zhou neighbors, consisted of visiting the Zhou king, possibly bringing along tribute or presents (Khayutina, “Host-Guest Opposition,” 98-99). For examples representing non-Zhou neighbors as “guests” see Jinhen Zhushu jinian, passim; Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, Mozi jiangu 墨子閒話 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 126; Guo yu 國語, ed. Shanghai Shifan daxue guji zhengli zu 上海師範大學古籍整理組 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1978), 527; Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Guanzi jijiao 管子集校 (Beijing: Kexue, 1956), 392; Wu zeyu 吳則虞, Yanzi chunqiu jishi 墨子春秋集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 188.

140 “Song gao.”
banks of the Huai River, the place of the king’s garrison” \(^{(141)}\), reminding us of the situation in King Li’s \textit{Hu zhong}. These examples indicate that meetings with non-Zhou rulers took place in designated places outside of royal residences. The reasons for this remain unclear.

The last type of political reception, perhaps most indicative of Western Zhou decentralist tendencies, were assemblies of regional lords. Several Eastern Zhou texts state that assemblies (\textit{hui} 会同) or collective audiences (\textit{chao} 朝) of regional lords had to be held in a special architectural structure, the Clear Hall (\textit{mingtang} 明堂) erected by King Cheng and the Duke of Zhou “to make clear who of the regional lords were superior or inferior” \(^{(142)}\) in the capital Chengzhou. In 538 BC, King Ling 羲 of Chu (540-529 BC), eager to become a hegemon and to summon regional lords to assemblies, received the following advice on historical precedent from his counselor Jiao Ju 交居:

\[\ldots\] 諸侯無歸。禮以為歸。今君始得諸侯。其慎禮矣。霸之濟否。在此會也。夏啟有釤臺之享。商湯有景亳之命。周武有盂津之誓。成有岐陽之蒐。康有酆宮之朝。穆有塗山之會。齊桓有召陵之師。晉文有践土之盟。君其何用？\[\ldots\]

\[\ldots\] If the regional lords do not come back [to the leader], \(^{(143)}\) the [appropriate] ritual [can be used] in order to make them come back. Now [you, my] ruler, are starting to attract the regional lords. So, [you] have to be cautious about ritual. Whether being a hegemon will be beneficent or not depends on this meeting. Qi of the Xia [dynasty] had the “Feast at Juntai”; Tang of the Shang [dynasty] had the

\(^{(141)}\) “Chang wu.”

\(^{(142)}\) Zhu Youzeng \textit{Yi Zhou shu jixun jiaoshi}, “Zuo Luo” [48], 78; “Ming tang” 明堂 [55], 100-101; Sun Xidan 孫希旦, \textit{Li ji jijie} 禮記集解 (Xinhua shuju: 1989), “Ming tang wei” 明堂位, 839-58). The “Ming tang” chapter of the \textit{Yi Zhou shu} gives Zongzhou as the location of the Clear Hall. However, the editors of the \textit{Book of Zhou}, like some other Eastern Zhou authors, mixed up the toponyms Zongzhou and Chengzhou (for more details on toponym confusion in Eastern Zhou texts, see Khayutina, “Western ‘capitals’,” 42-46).

\(^{(143)}\) \textit{Gui} 归 means “to return to one’s place of origin.” Here, as often, it is used even though the subject had never been at his destination of \textit{gui}. The idea behind such use of \textit{gui} is that basic values, e.g., virtue, humaneness, or true sovereignty are independent of a particular place, and if a ruler appears who embodies them, the regional lords, the populace, or, especially in later texts, All-under-Heaven may “return” (天下歸之) to him.

Thus, at least in some post-Western Zhou perceptions of the past, possibly already under pressure from increasingly monocentrist representations, the flexible nature of royal political hospitality that allowed for meetings in various royal residences and even places at the distant periphery remained legitimate.

In sum, both bronze inscriptions and certain post-Western Zhou sources (see Map II) reflect that the larger Western Zhou polity was not constituted as centralized around a particular geographical point. Received texts further suggest that in early Chinese representations, the right to host regional rulers and to summon them to the royal residence could be claimed only by kings of untainted virtue. After King Kang, King Xuan was probably the first king who dared to gather zhuhou for such large-scale receptions near one of the royal residences. The Bamboo Annals state that in his ninth year (819 BC) he gathered zhuhou in Chengzhou and proceeded to hunt with them in Fu.147 He could possibly rely on his counsellor Duke Mu of Shao 召穆公, who had started to promote Chengzhou as a meeting point for regional rulers and members of the Ji clan during the Gonghe interregnum.148

144) The localization of Bo-under-Jing is problematic; see Zhu Yanmin 朱彦民, “Shang Tang ‘Jing Bo’ diwang ji qita” 商湯景亳地望及其他, Zhongguo lishi dili luncong 中國歷史地理論丛 2002.6: 44-51.

145) I choose “hosting” as an English equivalent for shì 師, which in this context signifies the gathering of the troops for battle. The text suggests that the king performed a ritual for his troops, which was possibly similar in function, but different in form from the oath that King Wu took with the participants of the battle at Muye. Zhaoling was located near Luohe city in Henan (i.e., near Gu, mentioned in Ying hou Cheng gui 漢書 周紀). 146) See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, Chunqiu Zuo zhuan 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhongshu shuju, 1981) “Zhao 4” (538 BC), 1251-52. 147) See Wang Guowei, Jin ben Zhushu jinian, “Xuan 9,” 289. It is possible that Fu was not a place name but a misspelling of pu—“meadows,” as in the next example. It might refer to the meadows around Chengzhou. 148) “Duke Mu of Shao thought that the virtue of the Zhou became diffuse. Therefore, he united his clansmen [rulers] in Chengzhou 召穆公思周德之不類。故糾合宗族于成周; Yang Bojun, Chunqiu Zuo zhuan “Xi 24,” 423.
According to the “Ming gui” 明鬼 chapter of the Mozi 墨子, King Xuan in 782 BC gathered “several hundred hunting chariots, and several thousand attendants” for a “hunt in the meadows” (tian yu pu 田於圃).\textsuperscript{149} The “Discourses of Zhou” (“Zhou yu” 周語) in the Guo yu 郭語 identifies the location of this hunt as Hao 閨, another reading of Hao 鎬, i.e., Zongzhou.\textsuperscript{150} According to both these accounts, King Xuan was fatally wounded during the hunt by the spirit of the Elder of Du 杜, whom he had unjustly killed three years before. Thus, King Xuan’s ambition to compete with the virtue of the most famous kings of the past by calling an assembly near his residence finally led to his death. This legend implies disapproval of attempts at political and territorial centralization by rulers whose own virtue was below the high standard set by the dynastic founders.

Most dramatically, the possible attempts by late Western Zhou kings to transform their residences into meeting points where they could...
summon regional rulers at will were ridiculed in the legend about the end of King You (781-771 BC). Like his father King Xuan, he probably called assemblies, although there is no evidence for this in any received sources. However, his attempts may be seen behind the story about his consort Bao Si 袍/袅 who had him use beacon fires to call on the regional lords for help, yet in reality only for her own amusement. When later in real danger, thelords left the king to face the peril alone. As noted in the “Yi si” 疑似 chapter of the Lüshi chunqiu 呂氏春秋, King You’s death below Mount Li 麗 “made All-under-Heaven laugh at him.”

Political functions of royal hospitality and the place of the “Western Zhou capital”

Although the commission of sacrificial vessels with inscriptions commemorating royal receptions could be more or less a “private” issue of aristocratic lineages, royal hospitality reflected in them was a political institution facilitating communication between Zhou kings and the Zhou “public.” In general, the political system serves to hold a social-territorial aggregation together, maintains order within it, transforms it according to changing circumstances, and regulates its relationship with its environment. In order to meet these tasks, political agents make decisions, establish rules, and ensure their application. The performance of these operational or governmental functions represents—in the terms of political anthropologist Gabriel Almond—“outputs” of a political system. The appointment of persons to certain positions and the issue of particular orders by Zhou kings in the course of

153) Gabriel Almond specified three “output” functions: 1) rule-making, 2) rule application, and 3) rule-adjudication. As four “input” categories he identified 1) political socialization and recruitment, 2) interest articulation, 3) interest aggregation, and 4) political communication; see Gabriel A. Almond, “Introduction: A functional Approach to Comparative
receptions can be easily recognized as such “outputs.” Whether or not they were connected with specific administrative issues, royal receptions also provided vital “inputs” to the Zhou political system, constituting it, reaffirming its legitimacy, and allowing for its reproduction. Such effects could be achieved even without verbalized commands because hospitality *per se* was a medium of enabling and structuring interaction, as well as a device of communication.

Most commonly, hospitality is offered in a house, i.e., in a physical space under the control of the household’s head(s). Presuming a distinction between the individual “self” and its “own,” “inner” circle of household members on the one hand and the “external” environment inhabited by “others” on the other, hospitality opens a channel for communication between these spaces for a limited period of time and facilitates social integration. Thus, in the horizontal dimension, hospitality can be perceived as an instrument of inclusion and for creating proximity. At the same time, in every society, the “others” eligible to be received as guests usually have to meet some general requirements as to their participation in larger spaces of social interaction, such as the cultural sphere and the social strata.154 A guest not only enjoys proximity to the host but also attains membership in the circle of selected persons for whom such proximity is allowed. Thus, by defining its own limits, hospitality also fixes the boundaries of other spaces and functions as an instrument of exclusion and distinction. By offering receptions and distributing gifts,155 Zhou kings won the hearts of their subordinates even without explicitly engaging them for service. The recipients of the royal hospitality commemorated the receptions in their precious bronzes not least because by doing so they positioned themselves as elites, distinguished by the king as members of his chosen circle. By displaying material gifts received from the king and by reporting on receptions, royal guests transmitted politically relevant

---

154 Hospitality toward everyone was not even thinkable in most historical cultures; exceptions to this rule existed rather in theory than in practice; see Philippe Gauthier, “Notes sur l’étranger et l’hospitalité en Grèce et à Rome,” *Ancient Society* 4 (1973): 1-21.

155 I understand gift-giving as a component of hospitality, since gifts were usually transferred during a meeting between a donor (king or overlord) and a recipient. Only in exceptional cases could they be forwarded to the recipient via an intermediary.
information, including the message about the king’s centrality and superiority, to a broader audience that admired them and desired to attain the same royal favors. Material objects retained in ancestral temples, their inscriptions, and orally conveyed memories inspired future generations to follow the example of their distinguished ancestors and to seek proximity to the king. Thus, the royal guests, their associates, and their offspring constituted a pool of the “king’s men” who potentially could be recruited for royal service. The socialization of people into the Zhou political order, centered on the Zhou king, was the most general “input” or constitutive sociopolitical function of royal hospitality. This explains why so many receptions, especially during the early Western Zhou period but also those meetings conducted away from the royal administrative centers, did not have any specific “output” objective. As the receptions became more regular, formal, and task-oriented during the middle and late periods, the constitutive “input” significance of the royal hospitality gradually waned while its operative “output” functions increased. This dynamic, measurable through the quantitative analysis of bronze inscriptions, demonstrates that in the Western Zhou polity, the shift from mere political association to an administratively managed state was a gradual long-term process both reflected in and defined by the practices of royal hospitality. Not by chance, the changes in the functions of the royal hospitality coincided with the “ritual reform” of the middle Western Zhou period.

In the vertical dimension, even in the domestic context, hospitality produces relations of domination and subordination that derive from the host’s right to control his reception space. Displaying his right to choose, to accept or to reject, hospitality reaffirms and reproduces his authority and sovereignty over his own space. Although I use the masculine form, the household head could also be a female. I previously identified such representations in transmitted texts of the Warring States period (Khayutina, “Host-Guest Opposition,” 98-100, with further references).
unlike literary texts, ritual bronze inscriptions only reported events but did not render attitudes, the fact that royal receptions were their main subject speaks for itself. It indicates that through the right and ability to host all kinds of people anywhere within the reach of their authority, Zhou kings manifested themselves as sovereigns and suzerains. Constructing, reaffirming, and representing the multifold centrality of the king can be recognized as another major constitutive sociopolitical “input” of royal hospitality. As royal receptions were transforming from verbally flexible acts of hospitality (i.e. not conditioned by explicit commands)—as in the case of the Lord of Xing—into routine administrative sessions—as in the case of officials Qi and Lu—the king lost his charismatic radiance while acquiring bureaucratic solidity. That not all hospitality was reduced to the formalized issue of commands and tallies—as with the non-conventional gifts to Great Captain Cuo—signals resistance to being transformed into the mere head of a bureaucratic state who then becomes himself subject to protocol prescriptions.

In demarcating spaces of social interaction and positioning people in them, hospitality physically embodies these concerns. Unlike heads of private households, political regimes must develop specific strategies to justify their claims of authority and sovereignty over the space of a polity and its inhabitants, their subjects. Different strategies of hospitality may be developed:

1) A ruler can travel in person and offer hospitality to people in their own places. By inverting the relationship between host and guest, he reaffirms his authority, but does so only locally, as these places do not function as central meeting points for a larger area. It is irrelevant where the ruler has his own base, but his mobility is crucial for his exercise of authority.\footnote{For examples from other pre-modern societies, see Aron Ia. Gurevich, “The Early State in Norway,” in \textit{The Early State}, 403-23; Yurii M. Kobishchanow, “The Phenomenon of Gafol and its Transformation,” in \textit{Early State Dynamics}, ed. Henri J. Claessen and Pieter van de Velde (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 108-28; Yurii M. Kobishchanow, \textit{Polyud’ye. Yavlenie otechestvennoi i isemirnoi istorii civilizatsii [“Polyud’ye.” The Phenomenon of Russian and World Civilizations’ History]} (Moscow: Nauka, 1995).}

2) A ruler can demand that others gather to meet him in places he has chosen anew for each meeting. The selected place is a “no man’s
land”: the residence of neither the ruler nor the local political actors. The ruler represents himself as the master of his guests coming from various locations and thus affirms his authority over a larger area. The place functions as a central meeting point only once if it is not revalidated thereafter. As in the first case, the location of the ruler’s own base is irrelevant, but his dual ability to move and to move others is significant.

3) A ruler can summon others to a limited number of his own residences. There, he acts similarly to the head of the household, i.e., in his own space, and unlike in the other cases, his legitimacy as host cannot be questioned. The area from where his guests hail is the area where his authority is recognized. If meetings are held in the ruler’s residences regularly, they acquire significance as geopolitical communication hubs. By establishing one of them as the ultimate meeting point for political actors whose personal attendance is substantial for holding the polity together, the ruler can transform it into the territorial geopolitical center of the polity, i.e. its capital.

All three strategies enable the ruler to exercise his authority and to claim sovereignty over a certain territory. The chosen form does not need to correlate directly with the degree of the ruler’s authority, but it does convey status to specific places in the geopolitical landscape. Thus, only the last strategy characterizes a polity as territorially consolidated around a geographically distinct political center.

Rephrasing the recent observation of Mark Edward Lewis on the Han imperial capital Chang’an, a capital is a place “spatially defined” through the “inward flow of people and goods” and “functioning as a capital only so long as it could draw to itself people and goods from the outside.” 160 The territorial political capital is a place where most of the political communication is concentrated, as characterized by the inward flow of political actors to this place. The construction of such a place and its continuous revalidation by regular repetition is the next major constitutive geopolitical “input” of hospitality.

All three strategies of hospitality were employed in China at different times. As David N. Keightley has shown, the predecessors of the Zhou, the kings of the Shang dynasty, were “peripatetic” and “displayed

their power by frequent travel, hunting, and inspecting along the pathways of their realm.” While touring their domain, they received people and conferred gifts.\textsuperscript{161} Thus, they employed the first strategy of decentralized hospitality, whereas their residence, although being a “base of operations, a cult center, a necropolis, an industrial and artisanal center,” was neither a “fixed administrative and redistributive center”\textsuperscript{162} nor a central reception place of the Shang polity. This polity was an archaic or incipient state, centered on the person of the Shang king, but not yet a state territorially centered. While Shang kings had residence cities, the Shang polity had no political and administrative capital.

The second strategy of hospitality in designated places was adopted after the fall of the Western Zhou dynasty, during the Spring and Autumn period. Eastern Zhou kings were still nominally regarded as sovereigns over the regional states and as suzerains over their rulers, but they were not able to host large meetings of regional lords, which would have been necessary in order to regulate inter-state relationships and to organize the defense against non-Zhou neighbors.\textsuperscript{163} Even if regional lords visited Zhou kings in their residence and at certain intervals paid homage to them, these meetings played a lesser role than collective assemblies of regional lords organized by powerful hegemons (\textit{ba} 霸) who were also called “hosts of covenants” (\textit{meng zhu} 盟主). With only few exceptions, hegemons held these meetings neither in royal Luoyang nor in their own residences, but in a variety of designated places that usually lacked political significance of their own.\textsuperscript{164} This form of political hospitality was characteristic for the multi-state


\textsuperscript{162} See Keightley, “Late Shang State,” 552.


\textsuperscript{164} Covenants in the king’s city (\textit{Wang cheng} 王城) or in residences of hegemons were recorded extremely rarely in the \textit{Zuo zhuan}. As Dobson pointed out, meetings with blood covenants were always conducted in insignificant places away from capitals; see W. A. C. H. Dobson, “Some Legal Instruments of Ancient China: The Ming and the Meng,” in \textit{Wen-lin: Studies in the Chinese Humanities}, vol. 1, ed. Chow Tse-tsung (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 269-82, esp. 276.
system with a floating political center. As the Zhou king did not form the true center of the Spring and Autumn political network, Luoyang was not the territorial center of the Eastern Zhou geopolitical agglomeration. Nevertheless, even if hegemons often served as true political centers within this network, the virtual Eastern Zhou polity was not a territorially integrated state and, therefore, did not need a distinct territorial political capital or administrative center.

The Western Zhou is often contrasted to the Shang as a territorially centralized state where political and, at least within the limits of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom, administrative functions were discharged in the royal capital. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the strategy of centralized hospitality should have been preferred by Western Zhou kings. However, bronze inscriptions show that this was not the case, and that the policies of royal hospitality were different at the interregional and regional levels. The main royal residences Chengzhou, Zongzhou, or Zhou-under-Qi functioned as fixed places where Zhou kings scheduled meetings with various categories of guests, including regional rulers. However, the unwillingness or inability of Zhou kings to establish one of these residences as the ultimate meeting point complicated communication with the regions. Present evidence does not suffice to verify whether or not the kings were able to summon regional lords to their residences regularly, and not just occasionally, during the middle and late Western Zhou periods. A number of inscriptions from these periods show that Zhou kings resorted to the policies of decentralized hospitality, scheduling politically significant receptions at the periphery of the Zhou polity. This practice was reflected in later received literature as royal “inspection tours” and “hunts” (xun shou 巡狩). From this perspective, the larger Zhou polity, including regional domains and opposed to non-Zhou neighboring states, was not yet defined as territorially centered around a “capital,” but rather as a political agglomeration centered on the moving person of the king.

165) “When the Son of Heaven goes to [the places of] regional rulers, this is called an ‘inspection tour’ [or] ‘hunt.’ The [goal of] an ‘inspection tour’ [or] a ‘hunt’ is to inspect those [who] guard [the borders]. When regional rulers come to the audience of the Son of Heaven, this is called ‘to report about duty.’ ‘To report about duty’ means to report about one’s duty” (天子適諸侯曰巡狩，巡狩者，巡所守也；諸侯朝於天子曰述职，述职者，述所職也) (Mengzi,”Liang Huiwang” 6B.7).
Nevertheless, as long as the king was able to position himself as host in places all around the large Zhou polity, he maintained his authority. As Lothar von Falkenhausen has remarked recently, in early China political legitimacy was not bound up with the control of any particular location (or, as seems often to have been the case in the Near East, with the cult of a local deity), but with the correct performance of the ancestral cult. The paraphernalia needed were portable and, if destroyed, replaceable; and the temples were relatively modest by international standards (and needed frequent rebuilding even if they remained in the same location). Political power, in early China, emanated primarily from the internal social organization of the lineage system, not from any tangible manifestation of authority in a particular place.  

This was even more true of the rituals of hospitality that could be performed literally anywhere.  

At the same time, in the “smaller” Zhou kingdom, the process of territorial centralization was slowly underway. Bronze inscriptions demonstrate that Zhou kings simultaneously used the three main residences Chengzhou, Zongzhou, and Zhou-under-Qi, a number of secondary residences including Pangjing and Zheng, as well as residences of their trusted men for receptions of their subjects. Over time, royal hospitality gradually transformed from a generally political instrument for accumulating constitutive “inputs” into a specifically administrative institution for discharging operative “outputs.” Although Zhou kings never ceased to offer hospitality “ambulatorily,” this practice was extremely time-consuming and wearisome. It was only a matter of time before a certain location was chosen where the kings were more constantly and easily approachable for reception seekers actively engaged in the management of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom. It was indeed most suitable to arrange receptions in a place where the kings were present most frequently, the location of their ancestral rituals, Zhou-under-Qi. Although qualitatively both Zongzhou and Zhou-under-Qi had similar political and administrative functions, the quantitative preponderance of Zhou-under-Qi suggests that toward the end of the

---

Western Zhou, its importance in the hierarchy of royal residences increased. Being the original core territory and the sacred pivot of the Zhou people, Zhou-under-Qi also was the cultural and economic center and residence of the highest elites in royal service during the entire Western Zhou period. With royal hospitality as a political and administrative institution, it also was the main political and administrative center of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom, and its capital “under construction.” The representation of the personal centrality and supremacy of the kings as well as the concentration of administrative interactions at a specific location, both achieved through regular receptions in Zhou-under-Qi, was a step from a person-centered political agglomeration toward the creation of a territorially centered, administratively managed state within the “smaller” Zhou kingdom—a project the Zhou kings ultimately were not able to accomplish due to the catastrophe of 771 BC.

Concluding remarks

Both epigraphy and archaeology reveal that the old, pre-dynastic center on the Zhou plain continued to have prominent status in the hierarchy of royal residences from the founding of the Zhou kingdom to its fall in 771 BC. However, many authors respect the authority of Sima Qian and hesitate to recognize Zhou-under-Qi as a “capital” equal to the other two centers near Xi’an and Luoyang. Some scholars regard it as a “sacred” capital, different from the “profane,” political-administrative capital (sheng du 聖都 vs. su du 俗都);¹⁶⁷ some define the Zhou plain as the place of settlement of the Zhou aristocracy;¹⁶⁸ some argue that this was a place of residence of “other surnames,” i.e., non-members of the Ji clan;¹⁶⁹ some regard it as the fief of the Duke of Zhou;¹⁷⁰ and some go as far as to recognize it as an “important base of the royal

¹⁷⁰ See Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Qingtongqi yu Zhouyuan yizhi” 青銅器與周原遺址, Xibei daxue xuebao 1981.2: 3-8.
power and aristocratic activities, paralleling the capitals Feng and Hao)—but few scholars attempt an alternative explanatory model for the geopolitical organization of the Zhou polity.

Among this minority, Kim Vassil’ev suggested that four cities—Feng, Hao, Zongzhou (which he identified with Zhou-under-Qi) and Chengzhou—were equal “centers of political-administrative activities and religious life” of the Western Zhou. In his *History of the Western Zhou* published in Chinese in 1984, Hsu Cho-yun proposed the three-capital (san du 三都) model of the Western Zhou polity, regarding Zhou on the Zhou plain, Zongzhou (identified with Feng-Hao) and Chengzhou as political-administrative centers. However, four years later he avoided using the term “capital” with regard to Zhou on the Zhou plain, in a joint monograph written in English with Katheryn M. Linduff, although he still expressed some scepticism about interpreting the site in Feng Valley as the main political center. Recently, the trend of moving from the two-capital model toward the three-capital, or a multi-capital model, has started to manifest itself in mainland China. In particular, Wang Jian has written in his work on the political geography of the Western Zhou,
As a whole, in the Western Zhou there were at least three important capital cities that were in use simultaneously, including Zongzhou (Feng-Hao), Qi Zhou, and Chengzhou. Therefore, these three capitals must be regarded as the centers of political rule over All-under-Heaven (天下的政治統治中心). Among these three capitals, Qi Zhou was the core territory of the Zhou people; this was where King Wen received the Great Mandate, where many important sacrificial activities were performed, and in the vicinity of which many fiefs (feng guo cai yi 封國采邑) were located; this was the center of activities of the Western Zhou regional rulers and aristocracy. Zongzhou had the status of the political center of the entire state from the beginning until the end, whereas the “central realm” (zhong guo 中国) located in Chengzhou/Luoyi became a political center of All-under-Heaven since the time of the Duke of Zhou and King Cheng, and hereafter was used primarily for the control of the eastern states and military activities; besides, it also served as the place of residence for the relocated population of Yin.\footnote{Shengping expressed this opinion earlier in his books Xi Zhou shi zheng 西周史征 (Xi’an: Shaanxi shifan daxue, 2004) and Zhouyuan wenhua yu Xi Zhou wenming 周原文化與西周文明 (Nanjing: Fenghuang, 2005).}

As this passage makes clear, even when they accept the three-capital model, scholars continue to hesitate about the status of Zhou-under-Qi as a political-administrative center, implying that there were some special political-administrative matters that were carried out in Zongzhou, and, perhaps, in Chengzhou, but not on the Zhou plain. The present paper shows that this was certainly not the case. Among Russian Sinologists, beside Kim Vassil’ev, Leonard Vassil’ev has suggested a radical two-capital model in which not Feng-Hao, but Zhou-under-Qi (which he, like Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, Chang Kwang-chih 張光直 and Kim Vassil’ev equates with Zongzhou) played the principal role, whereas Luoyi had the status of a secondary center.\footnote{See Wang Jian, Xi Zhou zhengzhi dili jiegou yanjiu 西周政制地理結構研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001), 101.} In a paper published in Russian, I have suggested a three-capital model, according to which Zhou-under-Qi (which I at that time also identified with Zongzhou) was the main religious, economical, political and administrative center, whereas both Luoyi and Feng-Hao were secondary centers.\footnote{See Vassil’ev, Istoriya vostoka, 186; Dreivniy Kitai, 225.} To my knowledge, as of today, among Western
scholars writing in the principal Sinological languages, only Lothar von Falkenhausen has called Zhou-under-Qi the “principal political center” of the Western Zhou state.\footnote{179}{See Falkenhausen, \textit{Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius}, 53.}

My model proposed from the inscriptive data differentiates between political processes in the larger Western Zhou polity and in the “smaller” Zhou kingdom basically comparable to a regional state. Integral parts of the larger Western Zhou polity, i.e. regional states, were subject to both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies which manifested themselves on the macro- and micro-levels, respectively. Whereas the states politically “drifted away”\footnote{180}{Expression by Li Feng.} from the center, they were at the same time consolidating internally, progressing from insular outposts amidst yet uncontrolled territories inhabited by non-Zhou peoples toward hierarchically structured, territorially centered political agglomerations that finally evolved into territorial states during the Warring States period. The “smaller” Zhou kingdom also, and perhaps even more intensively, experienced both these tendencies.

Although during the early period, Zongzhou functioned as an important meeting point where Zhou kings summoned regional rulers, Zhou-under-Qi did not lose its status of the royal residence with strong representative, political functions. From the time of King Cheng, the same functions could also be discharged in the third residence, Luoyi. Even if kings Wen and Wu temporarily withdrew from the Zhou plain to the area of modern Xi’an while preparing the war against the Shang, religious duties in the ancestral temples and the concern for their own historical roots always brought further generations of Zhou kings back to Zhou-under-Qi. During both the early and middle Western Zhou periods, Zhou-under-Qi was occasionally used for receptions of regional lords and envoys from non-Zhou polities, whereas meetings of the latter kind are not attested in Zongzhou or Chengzhou. This may indicate that Zhou-under-Qi outscored Zongzhou as a place for political communication between the Zhou and the surrounding territories, but this possibility awaits further inscriptive confirmation. The irregular character of the receptions of political guests from regional states and beyond, as well as the transposition of royal hospitality to designated places and to the geographic periphery, reveal that the
political “capital” of the larger Western Zhou was rather a retrospective idealization. The practices of royal hospitality in relation to regional and non-Zhou rulers both reflected and defined the Western Zhou as a territorially decentralized agglomeration centered on the person of the king. Possibly, during the reign of King Xuan, when the kingdom was again flourishing, some attempts took place to re-establish one of the existing royal residences as the center of communication with regional states and thus to stimulate a territorial centralization of the larger polity. Yet, the attempts of the late kings to stage themselves as new omnipotent sovereigns of All-under-Heaven by summoning regional lords to assemblies near their residences failed as the lords were now unwilling to place themselves at the king’s disposition.

In contrast, the regular arrangement of royal receptions for Zhou officers in Zhou-under-Qi gradually transformed it from the ancient base and center of ancestral worship into the capital of the “smaller” Zhou kingdom. Importantly, by arranging receptions in royal ancestral temples and encouraging their guests to commission inscribed bronze vessels commemorating these meetings in their own ancestral shrines, the Zhou kings created links between otherwise isolated liturgical communities of lineages of different surnames. This did not yet signify the creation of a state religion, as the royal ancestors were not worshiped outside the royal lineage, but it offered the possibility of drawing legitimacy from ancestral cults of other lineages promoting the deceased kings as their benefactors. In this way, the political receptions served to create some sort of common “sacred space” that could in turn be used to support political aims.

One cannot avoid the question what the absence of a single stable center meant for the developments after 771 BC. This question cannot yet be answered unambiguously. On the one hand, the lack of a center might have negatively affected the image of the king, whose political centrality was not represented and monumentalized in tangible forms as something immovable and unchallengeable. However, before the murder of King You, the stability of the Zhou kingship as the centralizing element of the polity was never questioned. On the other hand, the king’s flexibility also entailed some advantages: the loss of the western residences did not signify a complete ruin, which means that subsequent Zhou kings, while reduced to a single eastern residence,
could still command appropriate respect. More harmful to the king’s political stature was, probably, his later inability to move around his realm and to act as a hospitable host outside of Chengzhou – neither in the shrunken “smaller” Zhou kingdom, nor in the domains of the regional lords of the Spring and Autumn period.

APPENDIX

Bronze inscriptions concerned with activities and locations of Zhou kings included in the statistics in this article (in *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* numbers)*

Early Period (96 cases):
416, 935, 944, 949, 2405, 2425, 2453, 2456, 2459, 2506, 2531, 2579, 2615, 2625, 2626, 2628, 2659, 2661, 2682, 2720, 2723, 2725, 2729, 2730, 2740, 2748, 2751, 2756, 2758, 2775, 2785, 2791, 2803, 2837, 2839, 3731, 3732, 3747, 3748, 3791, 3822, 3907, 3942, 4029, 4030, 4041, 4044, 4059, 4060, 4097, 4112, 4121, 4131, 4132, 4140, 4169, 4201, 4205, 4206, 4238, 4241, 4261, 4300, 4320, 5252, 5319, 5383, 5397, 5402, 5407, 5409, 5410, 5415, 5421, 5426, 5431, 5432, 5959, 5962, 5974, 5977, 5979, 5983, 5985, 6000, 6001, 6002, 6014, 6015, 6016, 6512, 9104, 9299, 9551, 9888, 10360.

Middle Period (97 cases):
247, 2487, 2695, 2705, 2731, 2733, 2734, 2735, 2742, 2747, 2754, 2776, 2780, 2781, 2783, 2784, 2789, 2792, 2804, 2806, 2807, 2809, 2812, 2813, 2817, 2820, 2824, 2830, 2831, 2832, 2838, 3950, 3976, 4046, 4047, 4165, 4178, 4191, 4192, 4194, 4195, 4196, 4199, 4207, 4208, 4209, 4214, 4237, 4240, 4243, 4250, 4251, 4256, 4262, 4266, 4267, 4268, 4270, 4272, 4273, 4276, 4283, 4302, 4316, 4341, 4343, 4462, 4626, 5381, 5403, 5408, 5418, 5419, 5423, 5424, 5433, 5956, 6011, 6013, 6516, 9453, 9455, 9456, 9714, 9723, 9727, 9728, 9897, 9898, 10161, 10170, 10166, 10168, 10169, 10175, 10321, 10322.

Late Period (76 cases):
40, 104, 133, 143, 187, 204, 260, 358, 2779, 2786, 2787, 2790, 2796, 2805, 2810, 2814, 2815, 2818, 2819, 2821, 2825, 2827, 2833, 2835, 2836, 2841, 3858, 4197, 4202, 4215, 4216, 4225, 4244, 4246, 4253, 4255, 4258, 4274, 4277, 4279, 4285, 4286, 4287, 4293, 4294, 4296, 4298, 4303, 4312, 4313, 4317, 4318, 4321, 4323, 4324, 4326, 4328, 4331, 4340, 4342, 4435, 4438, 4454, 4459, 4464, 4465, 4467, 4469, 4579, 4580, 4627, 4628, 9725, 10173, 10174, 10285.

* In the statistics of kings’ locations in Diagram I, all listed inscriptions have been considered. Bold numbers refer to the inscriptions related to receptions in the royal domain, shown in Diagrams II and III.