

Welcoming Guests – Constructing Corporate Privacy?

An Attempt at a Socio-Anthropological Interpretation of Ancestral Rituals Evolution in Ancient China (ca. XI - V cc. BC).

The privacy issue has become one of the most popular topics of legal, political, sociological and ethical discourse of the last decades, especially in connection to the problems of personal or corporate data protection in the age of statistics and global informational networks (cf. Westin 1967, Flaherty 1984). Different standards of informational privacy in different countries are evidently rooted in the more basic representations of the contents and borders of private life *per se* as removed from the public sphere, reserved from governmental control, and protected from intrusions of other third parties. The classical statement of the “privacy of private life” was formulated at the end of the nineteenth century by Warren and Brandeis as the “right to be let alone” (Warren/Brandeis 1890). Understandings of privacy, include, but are not limited to, the right to have sufficient moral freedom to exercise full individual autonomy (Cate 1977: 19-22), the right of an individual to anonymity, reserve, solitude and intimacy (Westin 1962: 31-2), and the right of individuals, groups, or institutions to control information about them (Westin 1967: 7; EU Directive 95-46). Usually four facets, or “interests” of privacy are distinguished: information privacy, bodily privacy, privacy of communication and territorial privacy (cf. Langheinrich: 1; Privacy Report: 21-22).

Despite a more or less clear idea of what privacy should be in Western societies, in everyday life, the privacy of private persons is repeatedly challenged by state, commercial and informational structures (Flaherty 1989, McLean 1995). The relevance of this theme for our “here-and-now” reveals a question about conscience and effectuation of privacy “there” (the rest of the world). This interest is supported by empirical experiences of individuals, who travel abroad for business or personal reasons and meet there with “different concepts of privacy” in the sense that there, in particular in China (Thurston/Turner-Gottschang 1994: 54), privacy is even less protected.

However, modern concepts of privacy in Europe and the United States, which emphasize this right of single individuals, and, on the other hand, its universality for every individual regardless of his social status and circumstances, were shaped in their present form not so long ago and were a result of dramatic social and economical changes (cf. Habermas 1962; Coontz 1988). Just as their emergence may be understood only through the study of history of private life in precedent times (cf. Ariès/Duby 1985-7, Bessmertny 1998, 2000, Coontz 1988), the specifics of contemporary non-Euro-American concepts of privacy can be conceived only if their development “then”, i.e. in pre-modern times (cf. McDougall/Hansson 2002) is studied.

The present paper offers an excursion into what may be called “the archaeology of private life” both in a figurative and in a proper sense: first, it explores ones of the earliest written accounts of privacy awareness in ancient China, and second, it deals with ritual bronze vessels and bells from Western Zhou (ca. 1046/45 - 771 BC) and Springs and Autumns (770 – ca. 403 BC) periods as objects of material culture. In the focus of this study are the following aspects:

- 1) Where and how was the private according to the selected sources manifested?
- 2) How was it differentiated from the non-private?
- 3) Which means served to secure privacy?

I. Sources

During the eight hundred years between the beginning and the end of Zhou (ca. 1046/5 – 221 BC), ancient Chinese society went a long way, from the early centralized monarchy, through the period of its gradual dissociation, to the age of political disunity and ceaseless wars, which were stopped for a while by the establishment of the first Empire in 221 BC.

From the conservative kinship-based type of social cohesion with the hereditary system of office transfer, it transcended to the state with much higher degree of social mobility with more accessible employment opportunities (cf. Hsu 1965, Hsu/Linduff 1988). On a macro-historical level, this dramatic transition process caused numerous changes in the most immediate social practices of individuals and communities on every level of the social hierarchy, as well as in the mentality of the people. Therefore, one may not hope to find a single and universal concept of privacy in Zhou China. One has to deal with a multiplicity of meanings and facts, which may be understood only in relation to the whole historical process in the development of Chinese society.

However, once one decides to explore this process, one encounters a problem with the sources. Abundantly available for the last part of the Zhou, i.e. the Warring States period (ca. 403 – 221 BC), the literary sources are scarce and random for the preceding periods. But even those dealing with the Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns periods, such as *Shang shu* (*The Book of History*), *Shi jing* (*The Book of Poetry*), *Zuo zhuan* (Zuo's Commentary [to the *Springs and Autumns Annals*]), *Yi jing* (*The Book of Changes*) etc., should be used with a great caution. In the chronological sense they represent multi-layer compositions, in which only some parts may be attested to as being authentic for the said periods, while the rest could be added or reedited during the Warring States period or even later. Therefore later accounts about former periods could display a modernized and therefore distorted image of the past that may lead to erroneous conclusions about the dynamics of social changes.

Fortunately, there are some authentic sources from the Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns periods besides the literary tradition. These are inscribed ritual bronze objects.

Ritual bronze vessels and bells produced by members of various noble clans for use in rituals of ancestral worship during the Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns periods have long since been the focus of the closest interest, not only to archaeologists and art scholars, but also paleographers, philologists, and historians. The reason for such attention is that some of these bronzes provide unique, immediate, and authentic written sources available for this epoch. Therefore they can be understood not only as objects of material culture, which, of course, can be studied and interpreted, but remain mute themselves. Shorter or longer inscriptions on them are at some times very informative. Cast in metal, these texts, unlike the literary writings, could not be reedited later, which means that they reflect the representations of the times when the objects were produced¹. However, one should take into account that the informational field of these sources is narrower than that of literary writings, because of their different function. They represented reports and prayers of men addressed not to human readers but to ancestral spirits, and were supposed to be transferred to them during the sacrificial act in order to obtain blessings. Assuming that the bronzes should be regarded primarily in the context of their immediate purpose, i. e. ritual usage, I will limit my investigation of literary sources to the ritual poetry of the corresponding periods only – namely to the Odes of the *Shi jing* (“The Book of Poetry”)², which were plausibly composed during the Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns periods.

II. “Private fields” and “private feasts”.

The Chinese concept *si* covers both the English concepts “private” and “privacy” (McDougall 2002: 6). In ancient China, beginning as early as at least with the Warring States period as well as later, it often appeared in dichotomy to the concept *gong* (governmental or

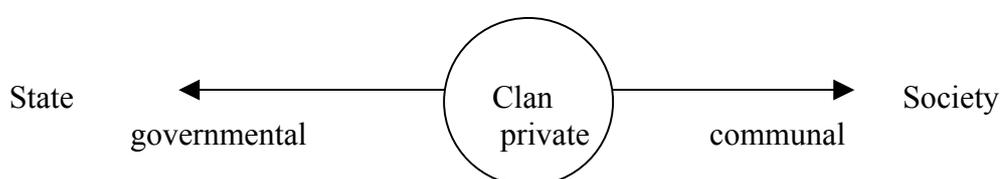
¹ Their attribution to the earlier or later parts of the Western Zhou or the Springs and Autumns periods may be effectively done based upon their shapes, decorations, calligraphy, place of discovery, linguistic features and the content of the texts.

² I will not discuss the *Guo feng* (“The Airs of the States”) parts of the *Shi jing*, since they do not represent *ritual* poetry, but lyrics. On the other hand, they probably date to the later period comparing to the ritual texts in this compendium.

communal). Any socio-political or economic activity undertaken by individuals or collectives apart from or against the interests of the state or society as a whole was regarded as “private”. Private spheres could be distinguished on various levels of social organization (clan, party, small group, individual persons). Bodily functions and states of mind could be classified as “private”. Such variability of meanings in any case does not mean that the ancient Chinese did not have a clear idea of what is “private”, but shows that, as in modern societies, the distinction between private and non-private was “fluid and permeable, encompassing social sectors, spatial realms, issues, interests and activities” (Nagy 2001: 6).

The main residence of the “private” as opposed to, on the one hand governmental structures, and on the other hand the society as a whole, was a clan – a large corporate body of kin relatives and their spouses³ (cf. Khayutina, 2002: 90, see Scheme I). Therefore in many cases, as well as in examples, discussed below, “private” is manifested not as individual, but as *corporate*.

Scheme I. Location of the Private.



The earliest examples, found in ancient Chinese sources, use the concept *si* apart from habitual social, economic, political or psychological discourses. The distinction of the private sphere appears to be first visible in ritual contexts. This opens one specific dimension of privacy representation in ancient China, which supposedly sheds some light on the process of private sphere construction in aristocratic clans during the Western Zhou and Springs and Autumns periods.

Jürgen Habermas retraces the origins of modern European concepts of privacy to the “institutionalization of public-related privacy in bourgeois families” during the Enlightenment (cf. Habermas 1990: 107-9). In particular, he attaches great importance to the creation of the salon in homes of the bourgeoisie, as a space where “private people came out of the intimacy of their rooms in order to gather before the public” (Habermas 1990: 108). This way “private” became conceptualized through its juxtaposition to “public” (cf. Habermas 1990: 115). The process, which took place in families of the top-level nobility during the Springs and Autumns period in China may be regarded as structurally similar, though rather in a place similar to a European salon, the extant sources place it in the ancestral temple.

One well-known example of the *si-gong* (private vs. governmental or communal) dichotomy may be found in the ode *Da tian* (“The Great Field”⁴). Arthur Waley translates the relevant passage in this way:

“A damp air comes chill,
Brings clouds together,
Raining on our lord’s fields (*gong tian*)
And then on our private (*si*) plots” (*Shijing*: 546).

However, the impression that this text deals with everyday agricultural occupations of farmers, who express their care about a good harvest and demonstrate their loyalty to their ruler⁵, is probably erroneous. A more attentive reading reveals that a subject of the ode is not

³ About the structure of clan (*zongzu*) in Zhou China cf. Kryukov M. 1967: 200.

⁴ Waley translates the title of this ode as “The Big Field” (Waley: 201). However, it seems that the definition *da* (“big”/“great”) concerns not the size but quality of the field: it is great because it is holy.

⁵ This interpretation of the text is obviously indebted to Mencius, who quoted the passage from the *Da tian* ode in his discussion of the system of mutual aid (*zhu*), which included the so-called system of well-fields (*jin tian*):

farming for everyday consumption as such, but rather agricultural production as a source of providing sufficient offerings for ancestral spirits. The central figure in this text is referred to as the “reverent grandson” (*zeng sun*) and represents him not as a mundane ruler, but rather as a mediator between the men and the ancestors, i.e. sacrificer, who

“...Makes offering to the quarters,
Smoke-offering and sacrifice,
With his red bull and his black,
With his wine-millet and cooking-millet,
Makes offering and sacrifice,
That blessings may be ours for evermore” (*Shijing*: 546, Waley: 201).

The “lord’s field”, or “communal field” (*gong tian*), at the same time referred to as a “Great field” (*da tian*) in this context is obviously the field, where the crops are cultivated in order to raise sacrificial animals, and to produce grain and wine for the offerings. It plausibly corresponds to so-called “scepter field” as referred to in *Mengzi*⁶, which is cultivated by common efforts for the cult needs. In this context “communal” equals sacred, while “private” equals profane, both of which represent two spheres of interests of a clan as a *private* corporate body.

Once again the concept *si* appears in the ode *Chu ci* (“Thick Star-Thistle”). This text represents a detailed description of a ritual ceremony in an ancestral temple. First, animal victims are selected and vegetable offerings are prepared. The sacrificial food is then cooked and served in appropriate ritual hollowware under the inspection of the sacrificer’s wife in order to serve impersonators of ancestral spirits (*shenbao*) and guests (*binke*). Then the official ceremony takes place (cf. *Shijing*: 529).

“The rites have all been accomplished,
The bells and drums are ready.
The pious son (the sacrificer – M. Kh.) goes to his seat
And the skillful recitant conveys the message:
“The Spirits are all drunk”.
The august Dead One (the ancestral impersonator – M. Kh.) then rises
And is seen off with drums and bells;
The spirits and protectors have gone home.
Then the stewards and our lord’s lady
Clear away the dishes with all speed,
While the *uncles and brothers* (italic is mine – M. Kh.)
All go of to the lay (literally *private* – M. Kh.) feast” (*Shijing*: 529, Waley: 195).

The leaving of “spirits and protectors” draws a line between the two parts of the ritual feast. However, the “private” part is probably not completely profane:

“The musicians go and play,
That after-blessings may be secured.

“A square *li* covers nine squares of land, which nine squares contain nine hundred *mou*. The central square is the public field (*gong tian*), and eight families, each having its private (*si*) hundred *mou*, cultivate in common the public field. And not till the public work is finished, may they presume to attend to their private affairs” (*Mengzi*, transl.: Legge: 245).

⁶ According to *Mengzi*, this system is appropriate to the country-men (*ye ren*), while the men of superior grade (*junzi*) must have “scepter fields” (*gui tian*) each according to their rank (cf. *Mengzi*, orig. in Legge: 245). Jade scepters *gui* were used as symbols of aristocratic rank, power insignia and sacrificial objects in Zhou China. The produce from these fields was intended to supply the means of sacrifice (Legge: 245). The concept *gong tian* in the *Da tian* is evidently used not in the same profane sense as Mencius employs it, but plausibly corresponds to the concept *gui tian* in the same text.

Your viands are passed round;
 No one is discontented, all are happy;
 They are drunk, they are sated.
 Small and great all bow their heads;
 “The Spirits”, they say, “enjoyed their drink and food
 And will give our lord a long life.
 He will be very favored and blessed,
 And because nothing was left undone,
 By son’s sons and grandson’s grandsons
 Shall his line for ever be continued” (*Shijing* 530-1, Waley 196).

The private feast does not seem to be a secular event, where the participants relax after the official part and enjoy themselves. It represents rather a sacred communion of the ruler, who is at the same time a clan’s head, with his clansmen, during which the results of the public ceremony are once again evaluated and reaffirmed. Its main difference from the former part lies in the fact that it is held without intermediaries (ancestral representatives and ritual specialists) and without strangers (guests). Thus, it is likely that this ceremony was defined as “private” because it was held among the members of the private circle.

III. “Nobody equals your brothers”: Boundaries of the Private Circle.

Some inscriptions on bronze ritual vessels from the Springs and Autumns period list different categories of people among the participants of ritual festivities. For example, an inscription on the bell *Xuzi zhong*, made by the ruler of domain Xu, reads as follows:

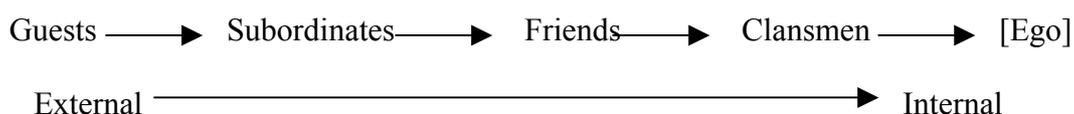
“<...> [I will] use [this bell] in order to offer feasts, to gladden [and] to play music for the fortunate guests (*jia bin*), the grandees (*daifu*) and my friends (*pengyou*). <...>” (cf. LZJW, vol. VIII, p. 178).

Another text on a bell, similarly made by a ruler of another domain, mentions the attendants of ritual ceremonies in a slightly different order:

“[I will] use [this bell] to gladden and to treat with wine, to join the one hundred families in the harmony, to strengthen the greatness, to be sincere in oaths and sacrifices. I [will use it for] feasts and pleasure. [I will use it] to play music for the fortunate guests (*jia bin*), fathers and elder brothers (*fu xiong*), and all the nobles (*shi*)” (cf. LZJW, vol. VIII, p. 160).

These examples make distinctions among various categories of intimate and non-intimate relationships, in which the authors of these texts were involved: kinship, friendship, service and hospitality (Scheme II).

II. Structure of social communication.



The “private circle”, as referred to in the *Chu ci*, included “close relatives” as understood in the Zhou clan-based society, where the category *zhu fu xiong di* (“many uncles and elder and younger brothers”) included all adult male clansmen⁷.

⁷ Cf. Kryukov 1972: 157-162.

From the *Chang di* ode we learn about the high spirit of group solidarity among the clansmen:

“Of men of the nowadays
Nobody equals to elder and younger brothers” (*Shijing*: 360).

Such feeling of belonging to a common whole characterizes the clan as a “primary group” with which members naturally identify themselves using the expression “we” (cf. Cooley 1909: 23-4). As Charles Cooley noticed, it does not suggest that a primary group represents a realm of “harmony and love”. However, despite differentiation and competition within it, the common goals allow for the controlling of feelings and actions of their members (cf. Cooley 1909: 26). The example of the *Chang di* ode demonstrates that relations within the clan were not always unclouded:

“Brothers may quarrel within the walls (*yu qiang*)” (*Shijing*: 360, Waley: 136).

But these disturbances were not to leave the private space (“within the walls”, which is differentiated here from the *wai* – “external” world) and not harm to the familial solidarity:

But outside they defend one another from insult,
Whereas even good friends
Pay but short heed” (*Shijing*: 360, Waley: 136).

The relationship among clansmen can be compared to contemporary relationships among siblings, which may be defined as intimate insofar as they “have been officially related and shared a common past of intimate behavior” (Davis 1973: XVIII). In the context of ancestral religion one may guess that the perception of the “common past” among the clansmen was different and concerned not only their own experience of interpersonal communication with parents and with each other, but also the feeling of being a part of longer generational continuity within a clan.

Spouses constituted another category of intimates, which could be regarded as such because “by having been officially related” they “shared a common future of potential intimate behaviors” (Davis 1973: XVIII). Another ode, *Chang di* (“Cherry-Tree”), depicts a banquet held within the private circle of clansmen, in which spouses and children of clansmen apparently also participated:

“All the brothers are here together, <...>
Wives and children are in agreement” (*Shijing*: 136).

However, the *Chu ci* example demonstrates that women did not take part in the “private” ritual feast, which appears to have been a purely male enterprise. Despite their belonging to the circle of intimates, it might be plausible and understandable that in the context of ancestral cult wives could be regarded as non-members of the private circle because they had no common ancestry with the clansmen. This also explains why they took part only in the first, public portion of the sacrificial ceremony, and left together with the spirit representatives and guests.

Identification of the close group of intimates in the *Chang di* results from their contraposition to more external category of intimates, i.e. friends, who were defined in this text as “good friends” (*liang peng*) probably not without irony:

“There are wagtails on the plain;
When brothers are hard pressed
Even good friends
At the most do but heave a sigh” (Waley).

Friends, who were engaged in intimate behaviors (cf. Davis 1973: XVIII), were at the same time not officially related, did not share common ancestry with clansmen and similarly to the spouses could be not included in the “private circle” in the context of ancestral worship⁸.

Although the private circle apparently did not include all groups of intimates, the fact that some did participate in the clan ancestral ceremonies still did not make them public events. This could be possible only through introduction of non-intimates.

A category of *hungou* (relatives by marriage⁹) took place somewhere between intimates and non-intimates, since they were officially related through the ties of marriage, but could be currently not engaged in intimate behaviors with clansmen. Mentions of *hungou* appear in some inscriptions on late Western Zhou vessels, while during the Springs and Autumns period they apparently were not distinguished from other guests.

Relations towards subordinates (*daifu* and *shi*) may be classified as “role-relations”, which engage persons “in a few narrowly prescribed reciprocal behaviors between segments of themselves” (Davis 1973: XVIII), while relations towards guests may be regarded as “acquaintance with ex-strangers¹⁰”, who “cannot matriculate for advanced degree of intimacy or are in the process of acquiring intimacy credits¹¹” (Davis 1973: XVIII). The last two relationships referred to in the inscriptions on the bronze bells – service and hospitality may be defined not only as non-private, but also as substantially non-intimate, although a certain “personal touch”, i.e. personal behavior among the engaged persons was not excluded.

IV. Private and public functions of ancestral sacrifices.

Non-clan attendants of ritual ceremonies are mentioned in a relatively small number of texts¹², while usually the circle of participants was usually not a subject for description at all. Originally conceptualized as a “private” self-service religion, ancestral worship had clan-limited validity and did not suppose any participation of non-clansmen at all (Khayutina forth.). Because of the absence of any foreign elements in the “own” space of the clans, there was no need to distinguish between “private” and “non-private”, just as in “pre-bourgeois families of the ‘people’” in old Europe (cf. Habermas 1990: 108). The absence of mentions about guests in the ritual inscriptions of Western Zhou periods may be used as a negative demonstration of exclusiveness of the ancestral ceremonies. The appearance of such mentions in inscriptions of the Springs and Autumns period and in the ritual poetry of the *Shijing* demonstrate its gradual development in the direction of a larger involvement of non-clan members in ritual performances (Khayutina 2000: 223-232). However, this development was slow and the changes initially took place where the contacts between private persons and strangers became inevitable – namely, in the clans of domains rulers.

⁸ This suggestion is hypothetical and cannot not be proven on the basis of extant sources. The concepts *you* and *pengyou* in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions supposedly defined clansmen, rather than friends as non-relative intimates (cf. Zhu Fenghan 1990: 311, Khayutina 2000: 25-6), who in some cases were referred to as sacrificers together with the authors of inscriptions. These examples are, however, very rare, are not descriptive, and do not provide any evidence upon which to judge in which capacity “true”, i.e. not kin-related friends took part in sacrificial ceremonies of the fellow clansmen. The ritual texts of the *Shijing* also do not give any examples, where friends were shown as participants of clan ritual performances.

⁹ I.e. relatives of clansmen’s wives.

¹⁰ Davis distinguishes “strangers” as one of categories of non-intimate relationships. Strangers “engage in scarcely any reciprocal behaviors at all beyond merely responding to each other’s general social existence, when they are in each other’s presence” (Davis 1973: XVIII). Strangers in this sense were certainly not allowed into ancestral temples of Zhou nobility.

¹¹ Perhaps, some of persons from this category could become later “friends” or “relatives by marriage”.

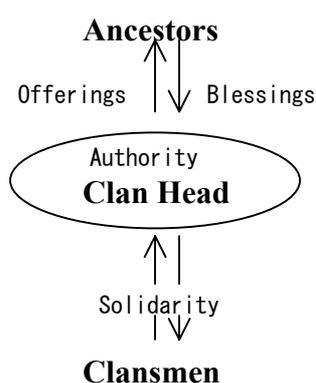
¹² Cf. LZJW, Vol. VIII, pp. 159-63, 178-79.

Most of the authors, who emphasized the participation of different categories of people in their rituals, were rulers of domains (*zhuhou*), while other owners of ritual bronzes almost never mentioned guests in their inscriptions. Evidently, during the Springs and Autumns period even the rulers of relatively small domains, such as Xu, opened some positions in the state administration to people other than their own clansmen. Some of *zhuhou*¹³ allowed their subordinates (*dai fu* and *shi*) to access to sacred ceremonies in their ancestral temples, probably in order to maintain trust and loyalty among them. Similarly, they allowed messengers of the fellow domains to attend these ceremonies as guests (*bin, ke*) in order to demonstrate their friendliness. Thus, the ancestral ceremonies were transformed from purely private matters to public events. Where formerly a collective “we” gathered in order to bring offerings to the common ancestors and to collectively benefit from the results of sacrifices, now people with different relations to one another and with different interests in taking part in religious performances meet together. However, their public functions did not replace but rather augmented the private ones.

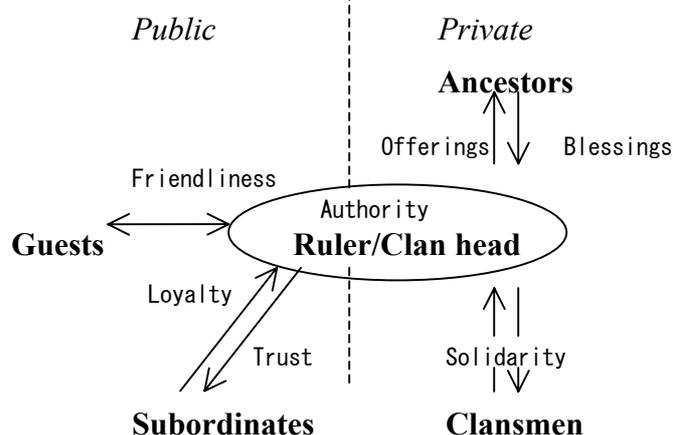
As a clan head, a ruler of a domain still executed the functions of intermediary between his clansmen and deified ancestors. This function of ancestral ceremony remained private. However, the structure of this private communication also became more complicated. Now a clan head addressed his ancestors not immediately, but through the appointed ancestral representatives, as referred to in the *Chu ci*, and, very plausibly, through the guests, who were eventually regarded as bringing fortune to the hosting clan (cf. Khayutina 2000: 229-231). Although in this sense the participation of non-clansmen served private goals of a clan, they did not have their share in the results of the sacred communication with ancestral spirits and were not integrated into the private circle. Therefore only after their departure from the place of the ceremonies could the clansmen themselves feel completely “at their own”.

Scheme III. Relationship between the agents of ancestral ceremonies.

A. Private ceremonies



B. Public ceremonies



Thus, one may suppose that it was the introduction of non-private elements into the space in which privacy was never before questioned which first placed the question of privacy on the agenda.

¹³ It is not possible to judge, how far this practice was familiar among the *zhuhou* of the Springs and Autumn periods. Only a small number of inscriptions made by *zhuhou* attest to non-clansmen's participation in sacred rituals, while others are silent about this point.

IV. Means of Securing Privacy of the Private Space.

Once the private sphere was conceptualized, it was to be protected from the unauthorized access from the outside. It was effectuated through various means.

IV.1. Welcome as a method of controlling access.

Although it sounds paradoxical, one of the means of controlling access was the verbalization and institutionalization of welcome to the strangers. The *Shijing* provides several examples of ritual songs, which panegyricize hospitality, and which were probably sung during the feasts, as, for example, *Nan you jia you* ode:

“In the south there are lucky fish,
In their multitude they leap,
Our lord has wine;
His lucky guests shall feast and rejoice” (*Shijing*: 385; Waley: 145).

The offering of welcome to the strangers suggested that they were not supposed to intrude into the private space without invitation. It was the right of a host (at least rhetorical) to control the access of foreigners, i.e. to secure the privacy of the clan. Opening but controlling access from the outside signifies one’s certitude in one’s own rights over one’s own space, what makes privacy similar to sovereignty (cf. Lu 2001). As Jacques Derrida argues, “the constant collision between traditional hospitality, hospitality in the common sense, and power is such that for the host, i.e. the one who receives, the power in its ultimateness is to know of the necessity to choose, to elect, to filter, to select his invited, his visitors or his guests, those to whom he decides to offer asylum, the right of visit or hospitality. There is no hospitality in the classical sense without the sovereignty of the self (soi) over the “at oneself” (le chez-soi), ... which cannot be exercised except through filtering, choosing, as well as excluding and using violence” (Derrida 1997: 53, trans. is mine – M. Kh.). This demonstrates that offering welcome to non-members of a clan signifies at the same time recognition of its sovereignty over its private domains, i.e. the ability to protect its privacy.

IV.2. Spatial Arrangements.

Also the spatial limits of strangers’ access were set, especially by the allocation of guest seats (cf. *Shijing*: 567; Waley: 207). As the *Xing wei* (“Wayside Reeds”) ode witnesses, guests did not choose their seating order themselves; rather it was a host’s obligation to seat (*xu*) them according to their dignity (*shan*) such that they would not feel dishonored (*bu wu*) (cf. *Shijing*: 675-6, Waley: 247-8). Andrew Kipnis emphasizes the role of seating at a banquet in China as a means of constructing a certain system of relationship (*guanxi*), which is “relevant to problems of reproducing and recreating specific hierarchies” (Kipnis 1997: 47). Positioning of guest and host served as one of the means of “embodying respect and/or friendly feelings” (Kipnis 1997: 40). The more formal were relations between the counterparts, the more strictly ritual formalities were observed (Kipnis 1997: 40-45, Stafford 2000: ch. 2). The emphasis of *Shijing*’s examples on the correct positioning of guests at a banquet demonstrates a higher formality of relationships with them in comparison to ones among clansmen, whose seating order was never discussed. This also underlines a distinction between private and public spheres.

Another feature of the spatial arrangement of ancestral ceremonies looks not so conspicuous, but probably it also reveals some important mechanisms in the process of privacy construction. It does not concern the organization of the place, where the performance proceeded, but rather its material equipment, namely the ritual bronze objects.

Due to the exceptional qualities of this beautiful material, which was appraised as “fortune-bringing metal” (*ji jin*), bronze ritual objects¹⁴ were regarded as mediators of sacred communication between men and ancestral spirits (Khayutina forth.). Bronze hollowware was an indispensable tool of sacrifice (cf. Chang 1983: 101), where it served as a container of a victim (meat, grain or wine)¹⁵. In this relation bronze bells played probably a secondary role, while they did not get in touch with sacrificial victim, but only accompanied the ceremonies¹⁶.

A number of studies highlight the roles of bronzes as markers of wealth and power, tokens of noble status (Chang 1983: 95-101, Hsu/Linduff: 311-2), and instruments of social binding between the Zhou kings and the nobility (Kryukov 1997: 148)¹⁷. These interpretations mostly concern the “outward” functions of the bronzes, i.e. explain, how did their owners use them in order to communicate with the others. On the other hand, their “inward” role for the collective of their users was little discussed.

Evidently, the casting of bronzes served first of all to self-identification and self-estimation of their producers as individuals¹⁸. On the other hand it served to their identification with their clan as a continuity of generations of ancestors and descendants¹⁹. It also served the self-identification of the whole collective of clansmen as members of this continuity, and participants and beneficiaries of ancestral sacrifices²⁰. In this relation the sacred bronzes can be compared with “personal objects” of an individual, which “mediate between spheres of experience and tendencies, and contribute to integration of the personality, and which are essential for it’s functioning and sense of well-being”²¹ (Habermas T. 1999:

¹⁴ This does not mean that every object produced of bronze was regarded as sacred. It concerned only bronze, selected for casting of ritual objects (cf. Khayutina forth.).

¹⁵ “The procedure of sacrifice consists in establishing a means of communication between the sacred and the profane worlds through the mediation of a victim, that is, of a thing that in the course of ceremony is destroyed” (Mauss 1994: 97).

¹⁶ Elsewhere I have suggested that “the function of sound, spread by the bells, was to a certain extent similar to that of the visible and tangible victims” in a sense that it could be regarded as a medium of the sacred communication (cf. Khayutina forth.). However, bells were not so widely possessed as sacrificial vessels, which probably could be found in every noble family. Bells apparently were available only to hereditary rulers of domains or to the top-level officials in the capital quarters. That means that the bells were not indispensable for the performance of a sacrifice.

¹⁷ A large number of inscribed bronzes were produced after their casters met with Zhou king at an audience, where they were granted a donation. Vasily Kryukov emphasizes the role of the “system of donations” as a basic means of maintaining solidarity within nobility and securing loyalty of the noblemen to the kings during the Western Zhou period (cf. Kryukov 1997: 137-91). The casting of ritual vessels after the reception of gifts from the kings and commemoration of this event in inscriptions on the objects used in ancestral sacrifices, served to build a inter between the Zhou ruling clan and the clans of nobility.

¹⁸ The authors of inscriptions often described their own merits in state service. The majority of authors described in detail the audience with the king as their personal experience. They reproduced the speech of a king, who addressed to them, calling them by their personal name. They described not only the actions by the king, but their own reply to the king as well. They recorded that it was they who produced the sacrificial objects in order to serve the ancestral spirits.

¹⁹ The casters dedicated ritual vessels for their ancestors and prayed for the reproduction of generations of “sons and grandsons”, who will “eternally use them as a treasure” (cf. LZJW, passim).

²⁰ The bronzes were placed in the ancestral temple of a clan. A head of a clan acted as the host (*zhu*) of sacrifices before the spirits on behalf of the whole clan body (cf. *Li ji*: II: 67, Vandermeersch 1977: 45, 53, Granet 1948: 210-213). Therefore, the sacrificial bronzes were not in individual usage of their owners, but in the collective usage of the whole clan group. A clan identified itself through its ancestral worship and through its tangible manifestations – the ancestral temple and bronzes as sacred tools (cf. Khayutina forth.) Similarly the “Nine Bronze Tripods” (*jiu ding*) – the main sacrificial objects of the Zhou ruling clan – served as symbols of power and sovereignty of the Zhou kings and of the integrity of the Zhou “nation” as a whole.

²¹ According to Tilman Habermas, personal objects execute mediatory function in a four-fold way: 1) “they mediate between man and nature, especially in a form of instruments” (compare with sacred bronzes’ function as a means of manipulating ancestors in order to obtain well-being, cf. Khayutina forth.); 2) they “mediate between a particular person and his culture” (comp. with the specific Zhou tradition of bronze casting as a whole); they structure actions not only through their physical manipulation option, but first of all through their socially shared

497). As far as sacred bronzes at the same time belonged to and were used by individual persons and their clans, they may be approached to as quasi-personal objects. Similarly to personal objects, which “usually belong to private and even intimate sphere, which at the same time may be described as a border sphere between the person and environment, but first of all serve the person to mediate between the both of them” (Habermas T. 1990: 502), the sacred bronzes as an inherent private property of a clan (cf. Khayutina forth.) served its communication with non-clan visitors of an ancestral temple.

The sacred bronzes were regarded as the main treasure (*bao*) of a clan, which should be not only possessed, but also protected (*bao*) from an unauthorized access (cf. Kryukov V. 2000: 22-3; Khayutina 2002: 91). This protection was effectuated in several ways. First, the objects were placed inside the temple, which was located inside the residence, what already made an unwished access of persons from the outside little possible. Second, when outside visitors could enter the temple upon invitation, they were not allowed to move around freely, so that the safety of objects could not be damaged. Thirdly, the idea of protecting the privacy of a clan’s sacred space was manifested in the very construction of objects, as follows.

Bronze objects could be (but not necessarily were) inscribed. The inscriptions on sacrificial vessels were placed on their inner surface. It did not originally mean that these texts should be concealed from the view of people, because before ancestral ceremonies became public events, there were any way only clansmen, who could get access to the vessels. The texts were cast in the bottom or inner walls of vessels plausibly due to idea that communication with spirits happened through the inside of a sacred medium (cf. Khayutina forth.). Clansmen probably knew the content of these texts, and these of them, who prepared vessels for the ceremonies or washed them after, could read the texts personally (of course those, who could read at all). When guests and other visitors received access in the ancestral temple, they could observe the impressively decorated vessels only from outside, while their inner surface was covered with food. Thus, they could not know, whether a vessel was inscribed at all, or, if they supposed it was, they could only guess what it is about²². Therefore, the process of sacred communication was not transparent, and the hosting clan possessed the right of privacy on the related information.

The later development of the bronze tradition demonstrates a further specialization of means of constructing and protecting privacy. Starting from the Middle Western Zhou bronze chime-bells became a part of a standard ritual set in families of *zhuhou* and top-level officials (cf. Rawson: 427-30). Inscriptions on chime-bells were placed not inside, but outside. This change was probably related to the transformation of ancestral rituals in public performance in families of top-level nobility. In particular, the majority of inscriptions, where subordinates and guests are mentioned, were cast on chime-bells²³. The ode *Dan gong* (“The Red Bow”) associate the playing bells (*zhong*) with the reception of guests:

cultural meaning; 3) they “mediate between a particular person and other persons, especially his significant Other”; personal objects can a) remind about or even represent a significant other (note the dedication of sacred bronzes for the sacrifices to the ancestors, especially fathers; also recording of a personal meeting with the king, as well as sometimes mention of other persons); b) serve as a “means of relations with others, where they function as common objects and organize common actions” (note the collective usage of the bronzes within a clan, as well as their usage in ceremonies with participation of others – guests etc.); <...> 4) they “mediate between an individual and his own spontaneous tendencies and affects, so to say of an internal nature”; they can serve “regulation of excitement and relaxation, ...secure from fears” etc. (Habermas T. 1999: 497-500). This last function is also quite evident. These similarities allow one to regard sacred bronzes as personal objects of their casters and quasi-personal objects of a clan.

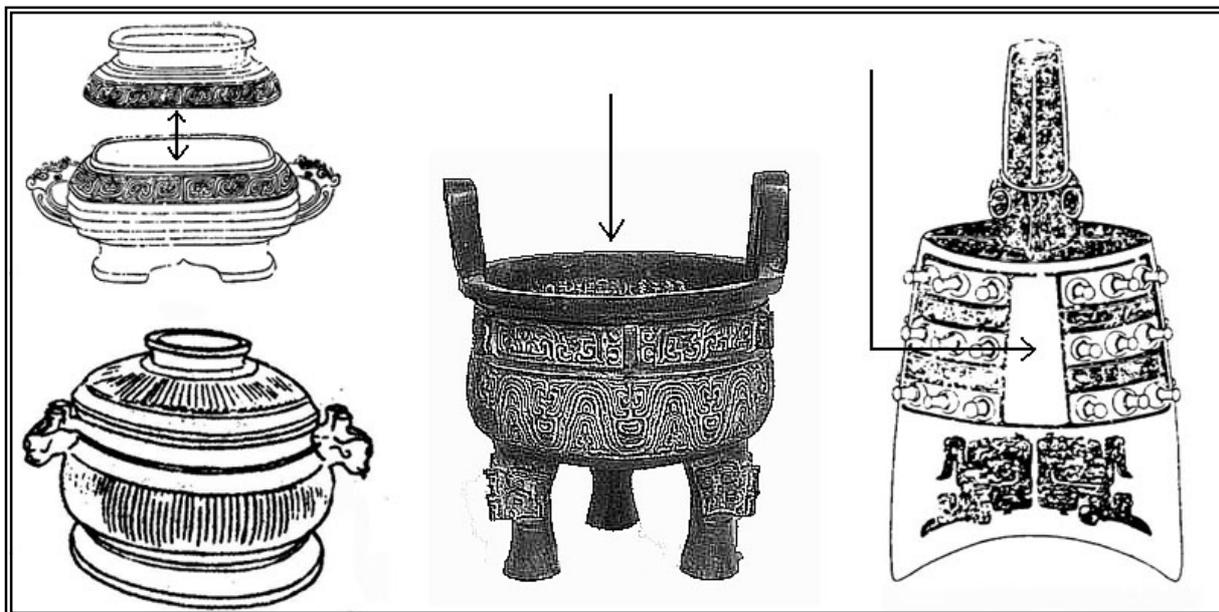
²² Even if a text were read aloud, it would be a decision of a host to open more information, i.e. effectuation of his right of privacy.

²³ Exteriorization of ritual texts, formerly intended to internal usage only, finds a distant resemblance with reading, copying, exchange and publication of private letters, which made “the innermost courtyard of the private” become public-related in Enlightenment Europe (cf. Habermas J. 1990: 114). As Habermas notes, the “opposition to literary communicated intimacy is indiscretion, but not publicity as such” (ibid).

“I have a lucky guest;
To the depths of my heart I honor him.
The bells and drums are all set;
The whole morning I feast him” (*Shijing*: 394; Waley: 148).

On the other hand, sacrificial vessels of the same periods remained inscribed inside (cf. Scheme IV).

Scheme IV. Placement of texts on ritual objects.



This difference plausibly suggests that the sacrifices as such, even if held before public, remained and were conceptualized as private matters of a clan, while other manipulations with sacred bronzes proceeded in public sphere and served communication with others. Thus, the distinction between private and public functions of a ritual ceremony manifested not only in spatial organization of place, but also in construction of ritual tools.

IV.3. Temporal Limits.

If welcome sets the earlier temporal limit of strangers' presence in the "own" space, the seeing off of guests sets the later one. The *Chu ci* demonstrates that guests and ancestral representatives should not stay beyond the conclusion of the appropriate ceremonies were finished (cf. *Shijing*, p. 529). However, effectuation of this rule in practice met with considerable problems. As Warren and Brandeis noted, "to whatever degree and in whatever connection a man's life has ceased to be private, <...> to that extent the protection [of privacy] is likely to be withdrawn" (Warren/Brandeis 1890: 215). This is illustrated by the ode *Bin zhe chu yan* ("The guests are taking their seats"), another description of a ritual feast, which comprised a bow shooting competition, a sacrifice to the ancestor of the host, a musical and dancing performance, and a wine banquet. The guests, who were very welcomed at the beginning of the ceremonies, were considered a disruption by their end, because they had not left at the appropriate time, while their hosts had lost control over the course of events:

If when they got drunk they *went out*,
They would receive their blessings like the rest.
But if they get drunk and *stay*,
The power of feast is spoilt" (cf. *Shijing*: 567; Waley: 207).

IV.4. *Comportment standards.*

The insobriety of the guests was regarded as an aggravating circumstance. However, the excessive alcohol consumption *per se* was not considered reprehensible. It is noteworthy that members of the private circle were not only allowed, but also encouraged to “drink and eat to repletion” (*ji zui ji bao*, cf. *Shijing*: 529), or to “drink wine to your fill” (*Shijing*: 361). For example, the ode *Zhan lu* (“Sopping Dew”) represents a joyful allegoric image of a clan night-drinking festival (*ye yin*), probably of the same kind as the “private banquet” referred to in the *Chu ci*:

“Sopping lies the dew;
Not till the sun comes will it dry.
Deep we quaff at our night-drinking;
Not till we are drunk shall we go home” (*bu zui wu gui*) (*Shijing*: 392, Waley: 147).

The *Bin zhe chu yan* is in agreement with other odes on the same subject and claims that drinking wine brings great fortune (*yin jiu kong jia*). What is considered appropriate among members of the private circle is disapproved of in the behavior of guests as a deviation. This means that guests, who took part in the official, “public” part of ritual ceremonies, faced other comportment requirements. Manners (*yi*) became an object of critical observation and regulation:

When the guests first take their seats,
How decorous they are, how reverent!
While they are still sober
Their manner is dignified and correct;
But when they are drunk
Their manner is utterly changed (*Shijing*: 568-9, Waley: 208).

Elaboration of different standards of comportment in public and private spheres – a more reserved and algorithmic one in the former, and a more relaxed and informal one in the later one²⁴ – became another powerful tool of protecting the privacy of the private sphere. The recognition of this factor led to further developments of a strict comportment canon (*li*, “ritual”, or *yi li* “manners regulations”) and its fixation in a written form during the late Zhou and early Han (ca. II – I cc. BC) periods.

Techniques of conceptualizing and securing privacy.

Based on the preceding analysis, it is possible to conclude that the private sphere of a clan in the nobility circles in ancient China became conceptualized because of and through the contacts with non-clansmen, i.e. through the creation of the public sphere. The demarcation and protection of the private sphere were effectuated in several ways:

²⁴ Here one is reminded of an example, referred to both in the *Zuo zhuan* and in *Guo yu* about the spouses, who behaved in their private life as guests: “Jiu Ji, passing by Ji on a mission, saw Que of Ji weeding in a field, when his wife brought his food to him. He showed her all respect, and behaved to her, as he would have done to a guest. <...> *To behave outside one’s door as if one were receiving a guest* (italic is mine – M. Kh.), and to attend at all businesses as if it were a sacrifice, is the pattern of perfect virtue” (*Zuo zhuan*, Chin text and partly Engl. transl. after Legge: 226). This also demonstrates two different comportment standards in private and a public life. It is noteworthy that if the pattern of a private behavior is not acceptable in the public sphere (cf. *Bin zhe chu yan*), the standard of behavior in public appears very advisable for application in private relations. Just as in the public sphere in the examples given above it protects the privacy of a clan against undesirable intrusions of foreigners, in a small family it allows a protection of individual privacy. The *Zuo zhuan* provides a considerable number of examples in support of this thesis, but their discussion goes beyond the scope of the present study, since this source was most likely written much later than the period under study.

	Creating Public Sphere	Securing Private Sphere
Relation to the sacred communication	Allowing foreigners to <i>execute instrumental roles</i> in the rituals	Keeping the right to <i>benefit from the results</i> of sacrifice for the clansmen
Verbal communication	Welcome of foreigners	Differentiation between private circle members and foreigners
Spatial and temporal relations	Allowing foreigners to attend the place of sacrifice during the sacred ceremonies	Setting spatial and temporal limits of access
Behavioral practices	Elaboration of ritual norms, permitting participation of foreigners	Setting different comportment standards for private and public spheres

The available sources – ritual texts and ritual objects – allow one to examine this process only on the level of corporate groups but not that of individuals. This does not mean that the representation of individual privacy did not exist in the Springs and Autumns China, but only that there was no demand for it in the ritual sphere, since the ancestral worship was basically a collective enterprise. The corporate privacy was manifested in the discussed examples in its territorial, communicational and informational aspects. As to the right to privacy, one may observe that it was basically understood in the similar way as in modern societies: as a right to control the access to the “own” space and the “right to be let alone” when this access was not desirable.

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