

ALBERT RECKITT ARCHAEOLOGICAL LECTURE

STATESMEN OR BARBARIANS? THE
WESTERN ZHOU AS SEEN THROUGH THEIR
BRONZES

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British Museum

Read 19 October 1989

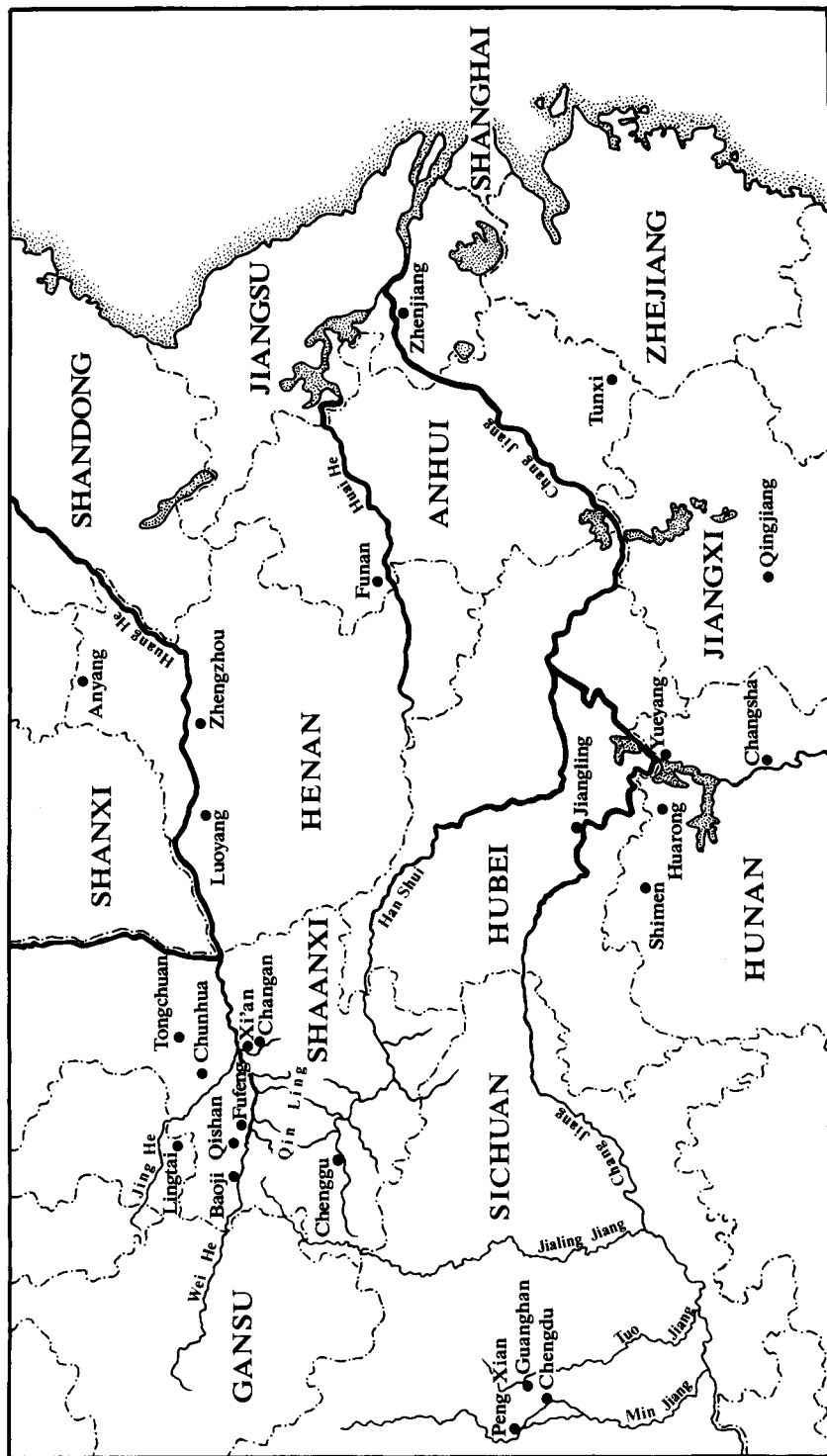
It is a great honour to have been invited to give the Albert Reckitt archaeological lecture at the British Academy, and I particularly welcome the opportunity to talk about Chinese archaeology in these august surroundings. My choice of subject is the early Zhou dynasty and their bronzes, a subject on which I have been fortunate to work over the last decade.¹

The Zhou came to power in about 1050 BC by defeating the Shang, whose kingdom was centred on the middle reaches of the Yellow River (Map 1).² There are two principal sources of information about the Zhou: bronze vessels cast for sacrificial offerings of food and wine to ancestors, and texts, either handed down or cast in the bronzes themselves. These two forms of information give two rather different pictures of the Zhou. Early Zhou bronzes are gauche or even eccentric; the texts are polished and persuasive. In the light of this contrast, I have chosen to balance the traditional view of the Zhou as great statesmen with the suggestion that they were perhaps also outsiders or, with reference to the Shang, even barbarians.

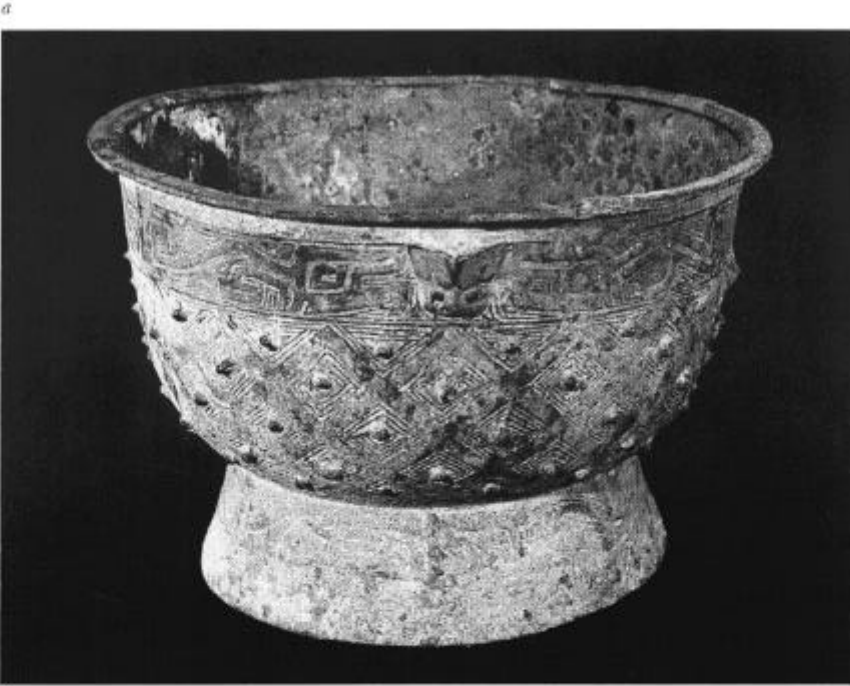
When considering Zhou ritual bronzes, comparison with Shang vessels is inevitable. The Shang developed to a high level of sophistication the casting of bronze vessels for sacrificial offerings.

¹ This paper takes further work on the Western Zhou begun in connection with a catalogue of bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections (Rawson, 1990).

² From 841 BC the absolute chronology of the Zhou is well-established. Although the sequence of reigns before that date is known, their lengths are not. A dozen different chronologies have been proposed for the first half of the Zhou period. For a brief summary in English of the different proposals, see Hsu & Linduff (1988), p. 387–90.



MAP 1. Central and Western China.



a, Bronze ritual vessel, *gui*, height 14.1 cm. Shang dynasty, 13th–12th century BC. Arthur M. Sackler Collections. *b*, Bronze ritual vessel, *gui*, height 15 cm. Pre-dynastic Zhou or early Zhou dynasty, 11th century BC. From Qishan, Shaanxi province. After Gifu (1988), Pl. 19.

PLATE XIV



a



b

a, Bronze ritual vessel, *gui*, height 23.5 cm. Early Western Zhou, 11th century BC. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. b, Bronze ritual vessel, *gui*, height 23.8 cm, from Shaanxi Baoji Zhifangtou. Early Western Zhou, 11th century BC. After Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), Vol. 2, colour pl. IV.



a



b

Da Yu ding and inscription, height 101.9 cm. Early Western Zhou, 11th–10th century BC. Shanghai Museum. After Shanghai (1964), Vol. 1, Pl. 29, Vol. 2, p. 25.

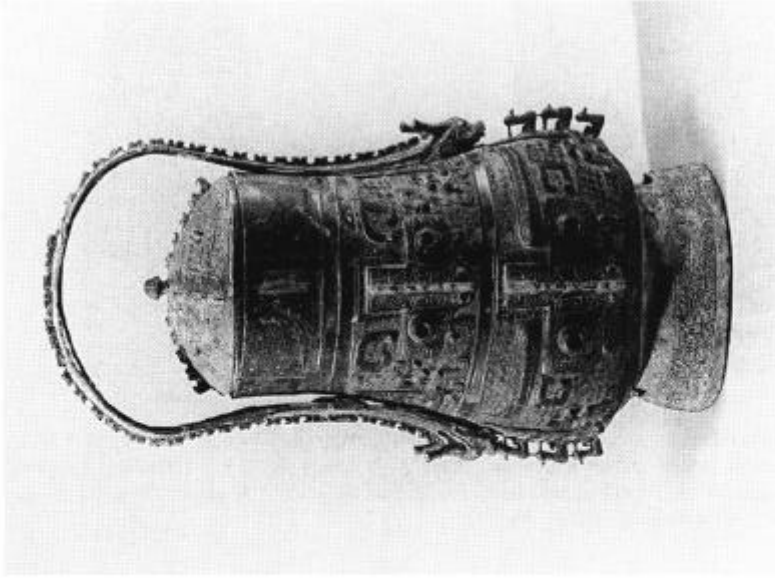


a



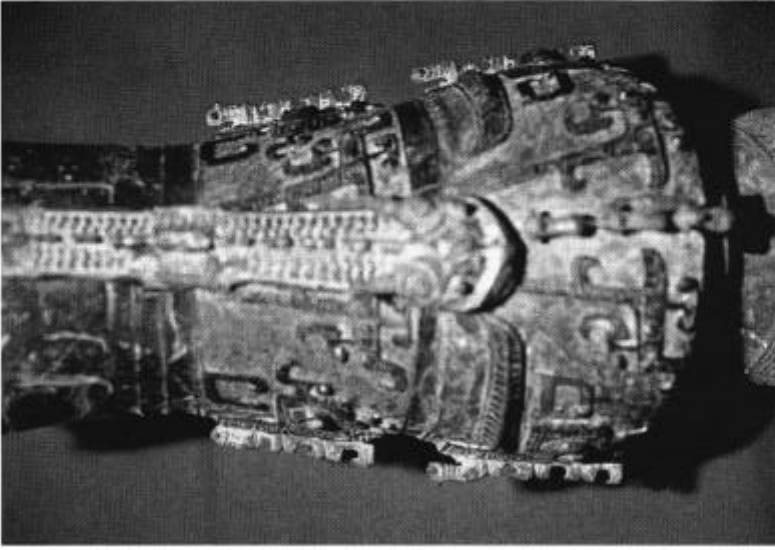
b

a, Bronze ritual vessel, *gui*, height 31 cm, from Shaanxi Baoji Zhifangtou. Early Western Zhou, 11th century BC. After Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), Vol. 2, Pl. VI.
b, Bronze ritual vessel, *lei*, height 69.4 cm, from Sichuan Peng Xian Zhuwajie. Early Western Zhou, 11th century BC. After Li Xueqin (1985), No. 195.

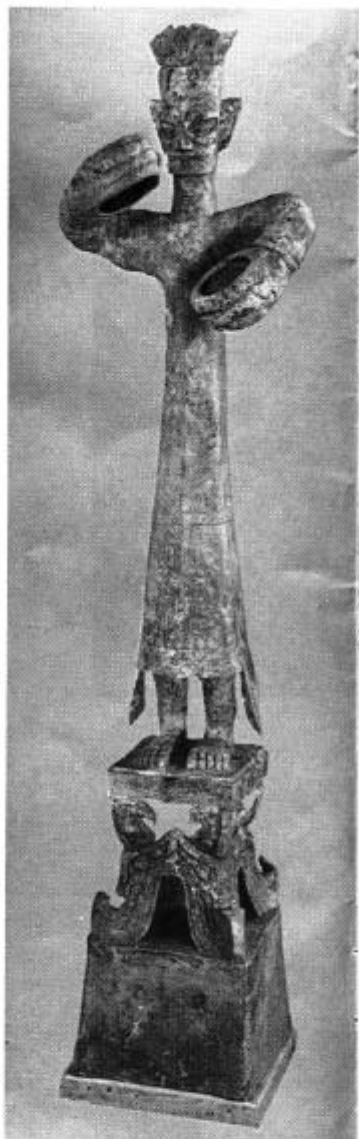


a

a, Bronze ritual vessel, you, height 47.5 cm, from Hunan Shimien. Shang period, 13th-12th century bc. After Tokyo (1981), Pl. 22. b, Detail of you to show birds within the flanges.



b

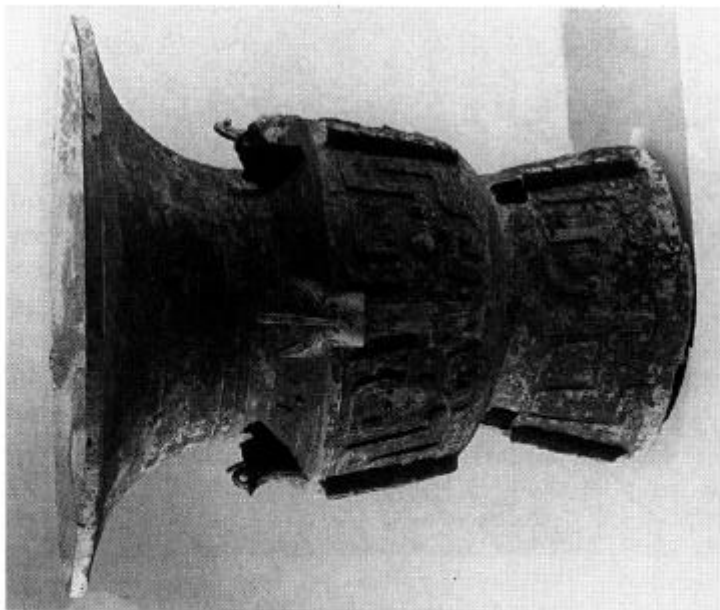


a



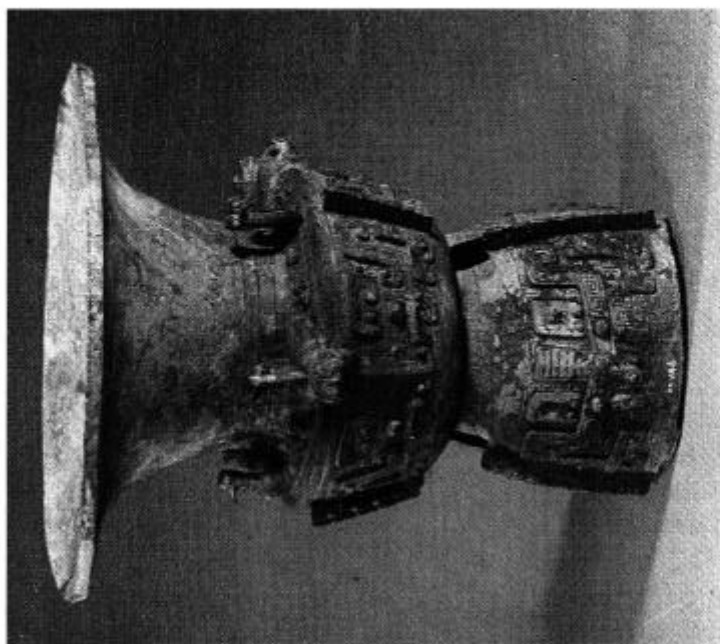
b

a, Bronze standing figure, height 262 cm, from Sichuan Guanghan Sansixingdui, pit 2. Shang period, 13th–12th century BC. After Sichuan (1988). *b*, Miniature standing figure, height 18 cm, from Shaanxi Baoji Rujiazhuang. Middle Western Zhou, 10th–9th century BC. After Beijing (1984), Fig. 70.



4

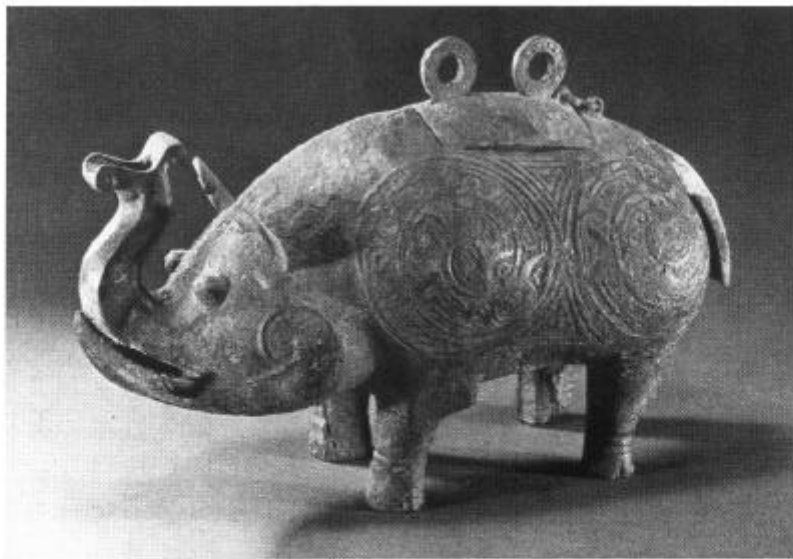
4, Bronze ritual vessel, *zun*, height 56.2 cm, from Hunan Yueyang, Shang period, 13th–12th century BC. After Tokyo (1981), Pl. 38. *b*,
Bronze ritual vessel, *zun*, height 53 cm, from Sichuan Guanghan Sanxingdui, pit 2, Shang period, 13th–12th century BC. After *Hemua*
(1985), 5, pp. 1–20, colour pl. 2:2.



b



a



b

a, Bronze ritual vessel, *zun*, height 44.8 cm, from Shaanxi Chenggu Xian. Shang period, 13th–12th century BC. After Beijing (1979), No. 111. *b*, Bronze vessel in the shape of an elephant, height 21 cm, length 38 cm. Middle Western Zhou period, 10th–9th century BC. After Beijing (1984), No. 49.

It was their repertory of vessel types that the Zhou also employed. Plate XIIIa illustrates a Shang food vessel of the type *gui*, and the next two plates show contrasting forms of the Zhou equivalents of the same vessel (Pls XIIIb, XIVa). Carefully curved sides on the Shang example carry neatly executed animal faces, known by their later name of *taotie*. Their principal characteristic is the intricate detail with which the face and its dragon-shaped horns are buried in a background of spirals. On Shang bronzes of more elaborate shape, the bands of decoration are precisely fitted to the form.³

The Zhou *gui* in Pl. XIIIb shows a vessel less carefully worked in all respects than its Shang counterpart: the basin spreads outwards rather stiffly, and the decoration is banal and poorly executed. The more spectacular vessel in Pl. XIVa, in the collection of the Freer Gallery in Washington, is aggressive and even barbaric, with large handles and sharp projecting bosses.

While early Zhou bronzes are generally either banal or eccentric, the earliest texts describe the Zhou as just and wise, ruling within a long tradition of benign kingship. Above all these texts are renowned for a theory with which their writers justified the Zhou conquest. A ruler such as the Zhou king, Wu, who defeated the Shang, was demonstrably a virtuous ruler, it was argued, as his conquest could only have been achieved with the support of Heaven; Heaven of course only endorsed virtuous rulers. Conversely, the defeated Shang king lost his kingdom because he had been corrupt and dissolute. A just king would receive the 'Mandate of Heaven', an unjust one would lose it.

The fullest and best known expositions of these views are found in the *Book of Documents*, or *Shu Jing*, a text of which important sections are accepted as dating from the Western Zhou period (c. 1050–771 BC).⁴ What is more remarkable is that the same views appear in inscriptions cast in bronze ritual vessels. A well-known example of such an inscription occurs in a large tripod in the Shanghai Museum, known as the *Da Yu ding* (Pl. XV).

The most glorious King Wen [father of King Wu] received the Great Mandate. It remained with King Wu. He inherited the State governed by King Wen. He punished the evil men, took under his protection the Four Quarters, and governed their peoples.⁵

³ Compare Bagley (1987), Figs. 114–16.

⁴ For translations from the *Shu Jing* see Karlgren (1950) and Dobson (1962).

⁵ Translation after Dobson (1962), p. 224.

Other bronze inscriptions of a slightly earlier date, namely from the reign of the second king, King Cheng (son of King Wu), provide evidence of the very early stage in the Zhou period at which such views became commonplace. It is worth remembering that King Cheng was a minor, ruling under the regency of his uncle, the Duke of Zhou. Theoretical support for the regime may have been particularly necessary and widely proclaimed. An inscription in a *zun* of this date, cast by one He, includes the following sentences:

Wen Wang received the Great Mandate, and Wu Wang carried out the conquest of the Great City of Shang, announcing it to Heaven with the words: 'I must dwell in the centre and from there rule the people.'⁶

The theories and arguments presented in the *Book of Documents* and in the bronze inscriptions are particularly important as they are the earliest surviving discussions in Chinese of the nature of kingship and of the state. They appear without any apparent predecessors. The Zhou have gained their reputation as the founders of the Chinese political theory on the basis of this written evidence and of the failure of the Shang to leave anything comparable for future generations to read. Such well expressed, polished views cannot, however, have come out of nothing. Either the Zhou were expressing ideas they had borrowed from the Shang, or such notions had had a general currency among the Zhou before the conquest.

In the context of the present paper, the interest of these views lies in the Zhou claim to a rightful place as rulers of the 'centre', as just successors and inheritors of the Shang kingdom. In terms of their own day, the Zhou were claiming to be righteous, fully equipped to take over the largest and most powerful state within their field of vision. Indeed, they saw themselves as the statesmen. They also implicitly claimed to be insiders to the world of the Shang.

The question I wish to pose is: were the Zhou, as they have always been portrayed, insiders, successors within a tradition to which the Shang also belonged, or were they perhaps outsiders, as their bronzes seem to indicate?

In some important respects of course the Zhou were insiders, particularly in their use of language and writing. They used the character system of their predecessors, the Shang, and they also spoke the same language, namely Chinese. In addition, they

⁶ Translation after New York (1980), p. 198.

employed similar rites, both for divination and more importantly for sacrifices to ancestors. Notwithstanding this shared language and ritual, much of the material record, and especially their bronzes, reveals the Zhou as outsiders. In particular, the Zhou can be shown to have had strong ties with western Shaanxi, which lay outside the Shang sphere of influence, and to have maintained links with these areas throughout their period of dominance of central China, that is until 771 BC.

I shall examine pottery and bronzes at three different chronological points, emphasizing the contribution of western Shaanxi in providing features of Western Zhou bronzes that are quite distinctive and separate from those of the Shang. The periods to be considered are:

1. the pre-conquest period in Shaanxi province, the home of the Zhou, in the early eleventh century;
2. the immediate post-conquest period, *c.* 1050 BC, and the contributions of the south and south-west;
3. the ritual revolution of the late Western Zhou, *c.* 880 BC.

Several major finds have recently illuminated Zhou casting. Especially useful are the tombs of the petty Yu state, uncovered at Baoji in western Shaanxi, and large hoards of bronze vessels from the ritual centre which the Zhou maintained north of the Wei River, in what is today part of the Qishan and Fufeng counties.⁷ In addition, finds of extraordinary bronze faces and masks discovered at the site of a Shang period city, built by non-Shang peoples at Guanghan in Sichuan province, are evidence of a major foundry or foundries working outside the main sphere of Shang influence.⁸

Pre-dynastic Zhou

There are no written records to show us precisely where the Zhou were living before they came to power. Even inscribed bones used for divination by the Zhou before the conquest, discovered at Qishan, give no guidance as to where the earliest Zhou settlements were. Shang oracle bones mention the Zhou, but do not give precise geographical information on their whereabouts.

⁷ For publication of these sites see Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988) and Chen Quanfang (1988).

⁸ *Wenwu* (1987) 10, pp. 1–17; *Wenwu* (1989) 5, pp. 1–20 give initial reports on the excavation of the two sacrificial pits at Guanghan. See also Bagley (1988).

Early poetry, assembled in the *Shi Jing*, is often cited to illustrate the movements of the Zhou before the conquest. In addition the famous history, the *Shi Ji*, compiled in the first century BC, gives a list of early leaders or rulers of the Zhou and briefly describes their movements.⁹ Unfortunately most of these records were compiled long after the Zhou period.

In many respects, therefore, archaeology offers firmer ground. Although no pre-dynastic inscriptions have been found which might demonstrate incontrovertibly that peoples living in Shaanxi contemporary with the Shang rule were the Zhou, we can reasonably assume that the Zhou emerged from among these peoples. After all, at the time of the conquest the Zhou established their new capitals near Xi'an. It seems likely, therefore, that for at least the previous decades and probably much longer they had been inhabiting Shaanxi.

Excavations have now shown that two or possibly three separate clusters of peoples, with different material cultures, occupied Shaanxi during the Shang period. In the east, the peoples came directly under Shang influence.¹⁰ Both early and late Shang ritual bronzes and weapons have come to light here. Relatively early examples occur as far west as Qishan; the later ones are concentrated in the east near Xi'an, where a major site has been excavated at Laoniupo. Other Shang bronzes, both early and late, have come from Tongchuan. More important in distinguishing peoples dependent on the Shang from those living further west is the pottery vessel known as a *li*, whose circular body opens into three lobed feet. In the eastern areas the lobes of the *li* were interconnected, without any internal walls separating them from one another (Fig. 1a). These *li* were made in a variety of different ways, but all forms differed from the principal type of pre-dynastic Zhou *li*.¹¹

This quite different *li* has been found at sites along the upper Wei river and its tributary the Jing. The sites belong to the Doujitai and Liujia groups shown in Map 2. This *li* has three lobes separated from one another internally (Fig. 1b). Each one was

⁹ Hsu & Linduff (1988), pp. 34–5.

¹⁰ Excavation has been energetically pursued in Shaanxi province, and sites attributed to the Zhou before the conquest have been widely discussed. Lu Liancheng (1988) and Zhang Changshou & Liang Xingpeng (1989) provide surveys of the recently published material. For references to Shang sites in Shaanxi see Rawson (1990), pp. 136–7. *Wenwu* (1988) 6, pp. 1–22 describes the important site of Laoniupo.

¹¹ Lu Liancheng (1988), pp. 32–40; *Kaogu yu wenwu* (1982) 1, pp. 73–4.

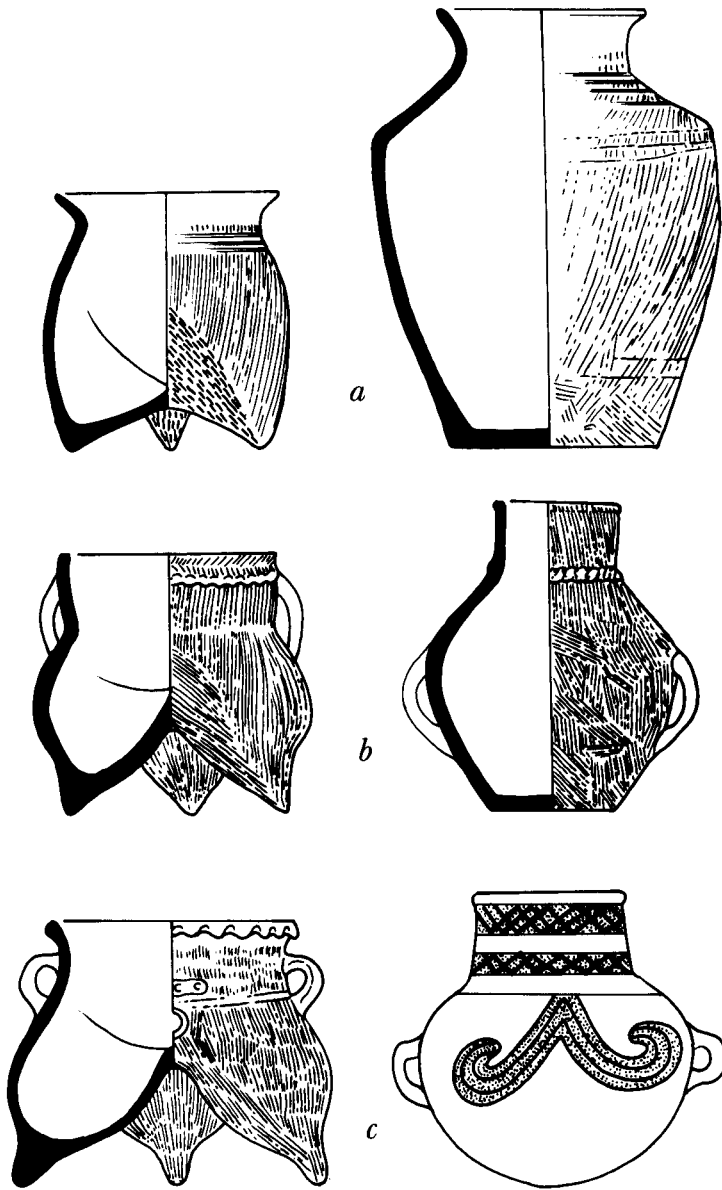
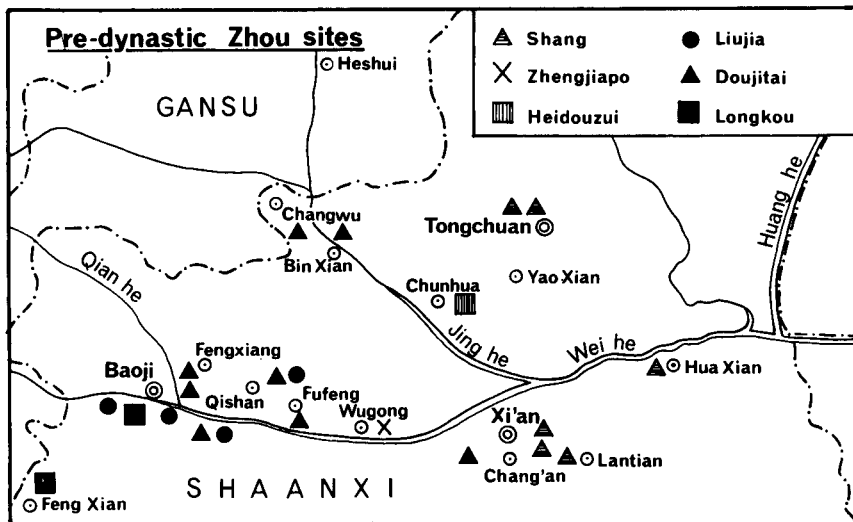


FIG. 1. Comparison of *li* and *guan* from Shang, pre-dynastic Zhou and Xindian sites. *a*, Shaanxi Laoniupo, after *Wenwu* (1988) 6, pp. 1–22, Figs 26:4, 40:3; *b*, from Shaanxi Fufeng Liujia, after *Wenwu* (1984) 7, pp. 16–29, Figs 10:2, 13; *c*, from Gansu Yongjing, after *Kaogu xuebao* (1980) 2, pp. 187–220, Fig. 24:19 and Gansu Linxia, after *Wenwu* (1988) 3, pp. 7–19, Fig. 11:2.



MAP 2. Pre-dynastic Zhou and Shang period sites in Shaanxi province.

made by moulding it, probably over an existing vessel.¹² Then the three lobes were pinched together and a ring of clay was added as a neck, often with two small handles. Cultures using this *li* form were identified in the 1930s at Baoji, and many other related sites are now known.¹³ It seems very likely, especially as examples of this *li* form seem to have been spread gradually eastwards, that the Zhou among others were the makers of this *li*.¹⁴

In addition to this tripod, the same peoples can be identified by distinctive types of jar. One form has sloping shoulders and two small loop handles at the widest point of a body, with a flat or a rounded bottom (Fig. 1*b*). Another has two handles at the neck, and a third type has a single handle. These jars differ from the principal Shang types, which have sloping shoulders, flat bases

¹² The use of moulding is demonstrated by the appearance within the lobe of cord marks, usually used as decoration on the outside of vessels.

¹³ The *li* with separate lobes appears to be a left over from the neolithic cultures of east coast type that had gradually spread eastwards, forming in Shaanxi the Kexingzhuang II cultures, which like their east coast counterparts were rich in lobed vessels, made often it would appear by moulding. For Kexingzhuang remains in Shaanxi see Beijing (1962), pp. 17–69.

¹⁴ For the distribution of the *li* and of the contrasting *li* type the *lian dang li*, see Lu Liancheng (1988) and Zhang Changshou & Liang Xingpeng (1989). The Zhengjiapo culture employed the *lian dang li*. See also the Heidouzi culture marked on Map 2. The *lian dang li* was made using a cylinder of clay in which three slits were made at the bottom. These loose sections could then be joined to make the lobes. Some Shang *li* were made in this way.

and no handles (Fig. 1a). Not only do these pottery forms distinguish the inhabitants of western Shaanxi from those of the eastern half of the present-day province, they also make it possible to trace antecedents of these people further west. Both ceramic types, the *li* with separate lobes and the rounded jar with handles, are found at an earlier date among the neolithic peoples of Gansu and western Shaanxi, known as the Xindian and Siwa cultures (Fig. 1c).¹⁵ Thus the recent ancestors of the Zhou seem to have inhabited western Shaanxi, and their more distant ancestors seem to have come from yet further west.

While the ancestors of the Zhou inherited their pottery from the west, they aspired to some aspects of the eastern culture of the metropolitan Shang. In the decades before the conquest, they adopted simplified and stereotyped forms of late Shang ritual bronzes. The most popular types were a lobed tripod, or *li ding*, and a *gui* basin decorated with bosses within diamonds, already characterized as a gauche version of more sophisticated Shang bronzes (Pl. XIIIb).¹⁶

To sum up, the archaeology of Shaanxi shows that before the conquest the area was divided between two large groups.¹⁷ In the east the inhabitants had adopted many features of metropolitan Shang culture, while to the west were peoples who were more independent of Shang influence, retaining their own pottery types, while slowly adopting some Shang bronze forms. Gradually these western peoples seemed to have moved east, finally establishing their capital at Xi'an. At first sight there is no doubt that in Shang terms the Zhou were outsiders, barbarians even. But they were barbarians with a difference. They were able to adopt Shang clothing, both in terms of their writing and their divination, and in terms of their ritual vessels, which they imposed on or added to their own pottery repertory.

Eccentric early Western Zhou bronzes

Early Western Zhou casting is known not only for its rather staid imitations of the Shang ritual vessels (Pl. XIIIb), but also for bold

¹⁵ For excavation reports on typical Xindian sites see *Kaogu xuebao* (1980) 2, pp. 187–220; *Wenwu* (1988) 3, pp. 7–19. For Siwa pottery ancestral to pre-dynastic Zhou types see *Kaogu yu wenwu* (1982) 1, pp. 69–74, Pl. II.

¹⁶ For a tomb at Fengxi near Xian containing pre-dynastic Zhou *li* and rather inferior bronze ritual vessels see *Kaogu* (1984) 9, pp. 779–83.

¹⁷ As mentioned above (note 14), there are significant subdivisions within the western group, defined by the use of different *li* types.

eccentric bronzes with long projections and relief ornament (Pl. XIVa).¹⁸ Both appendages and decorative motifs were applied to a range of vessel forms already established as canonical by the Shang. Decoration of such early Zhou vessels, as opposed to their basic shapes, was quite distinct from that of Shang vessels and the main pre-dynastic bronzes and ceramics just described.¹⁹

One of the principal centres for the use and possibly the manufacture of these eccentric bronzes was at Baoji, in the extreme west of Shaanxi (Map 1). This area has been recognized for some time as the source of certain eccentric bronzes, mainly now in western collections.²⁰ One of these is a four-handled *gui* in the Freer Gallery, Washington (Pl. XIVa). In addition to its four handles, the *gui* is remarkable for decoration of buffalo heads, sharp projecting bosses and a high moulded footring. A closely related *gui* from Zhifangtou at Baoji confirms that such bronzes were current in western Shaanxi (Pl. XIVb.)

The sites at Baoji are the remains of the small kingdom, or petty state, of Yu. Twenty tombs were found at the villages of Zhifangtou, Zhuyuangou and Rujiazhuang.²¹ Bronzes from several of these tombs will be described in this section and the next.

The *gui* from Zhifangtou was one of five recovered from a partially disturbed tomb. It is a feature of early Zhou burials in western Shaanxi that several *gui* and *ding*, often of strikingly different character, were included in any one tomb. Among the *gui*, for example, were the following: one very conventional *gui* on a square base, a strange basin on a high foot, the *gui* with four handles already illustrated (Pl. XIVb) and a *gui* profusely decorated with buffalo horns (Pl. XVIa).²²

This last *gui* makes it possible to pursue further sources of features such as projecting horns, buffalo heads, and hooked flanges, which define eccentric early Zhou casting. The vessel consists of a two-handled basin on a square stand. It is remarkable for its sculptural effects, produced by large buffalo horns rising out of the surface of the vessel and by its hooked flanges in the

¹⁸ Rawson (1983).

¹⁹ These eccentric bronzes were one of several sub-groups within early Zhou casting (Rawson [1990], pp. 25–73).

²⁰ For a discussion and list of the so-called two Baoji sets see Rawson (1990), Appendix 3, pp. 155–60. Watson (1962) gives one of the earliest accounts of the distinctive character of the Baoji bronzes.

²¹ For a full archaeological report see Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988).

²² For the contents of the tomb from Zhifangtou see Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), Vol. 2, Pls II–XIII.

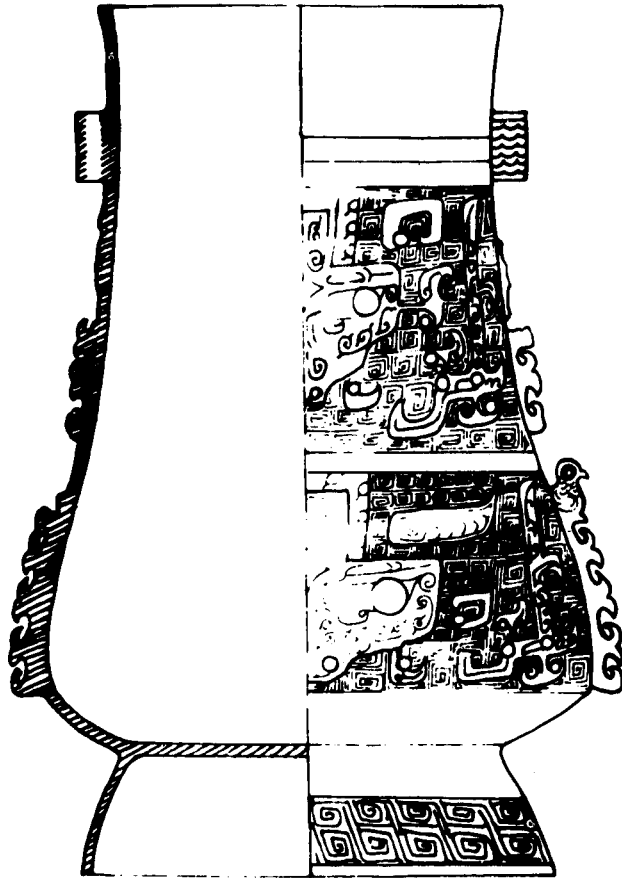


FIG. 2. Bronze ritual vessel, *hu*, height 32.8 cm, from Shaanxi Chunhua Xian. Shang period, 12th century BC. After *Kaogu yu wenwu* (1986) 5, pp. 12–22, Fig. 5:4.

shape of birds in profile. These two features are also found on the most eccentric bronzes known to date, discovered at Peng Xian in Sichuan province. Several large round wine jars, or *lei*, found at this site have hooked flanges, many in the shape of birds, and they are profusely decorated with projecting horns, like those on the Baoji *gui*. On the *lei* illustrated (Pl. XVIb) the flanges on the lid are in the shape of birds. Others carry small realistic buffaloes supporting the handles. Creatures in relief on the vessel bodies are drawn as dragons with coiled bodies.²³ These dragons are

²³ The sites at Peng Xian are reported in *Wenwu* (1961) II, pp. 28–31; *Wenwu* (1980) I2, pp. 38–47; *Kaogu* (1981) 6, pp. 496–9, 555.

almost a signature of early Western Zhou bronzes and are never found on bronze vessels from metropolitan Shang areas.²⁴

Peng Xian in Sichuan and Baoji in western Shaanxi are thus two of the principal sites at which bronzes with sculptural animal features and hooked flanges, long identified as early Western Zhou characteristics, have been found. It is possible to extend this line of argument and suggest that this eccentric style, which was clearly prevalent in the west and south-west, had its foundation in an earlier bronze tradition that bound together Hunan, Sichuan, southern Shaanxi and the Wei river in an arc lying outside the range of metropolitan Shang culture.²⁵

Bronzes of the pre-conquest period illustrate communication around this arc. A Shang period *you* from Shimen in Hunan (Pl. XVIIa) and a *hu* of the same date from Chunhua in Shaanxi (Fig. 2) resemble one another in their forms, their decoration of animal masks with buffalo horns and above all in their flanges (Pl. XVIIb). Along the handle of the *you* and the sides of the *hu* are small flanges broken into paired hooks. A rare and unusual feature of both vessels is the combination of these paired hooks with small birds. Small birds included in flanges were unknown in the main metropolitan Shang areas on the Yellow River.²⁶ There is also no evidence that this distinctive combination of birds and flanges was transmitted directly northwards from Hunan through Hubei and the main Shang areas of Henan and then westwards to Shaanxi. Instead communication seems to have been by way of the great rivers (Map 1).

From Hunan the route westwards followed the Han river to Chenggu Xian, before skirting northwards along tributaries of the Yangzi to Baoji. The Qinling is a formidable mountain barrier lying south of the Wei river, preventing direct links between the lower Wei and the middle Han. Similarities between bronzes from Funan in the east, in Anhui province, and at Chenggu Xian in the

²⁴ For excavated vessels with this motif, see *gui* from Baoji Zhuyuangou tomb one (Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng [1988], Vol. 2, Pl. LXIV) and from Jingyang Gaojiabao (*Wenwu* [1972] 7, pp. 5–8).

²⁵ Links between the areas forming an arc joining the north-east, the north-west, west and south-west have been discussed by Tong Enzheng (1987). Bagley (1987), pp. 32–6 describes the provincial character of southern bronze casting in the Shang periods and suggests its contribution to the casting traditions of the early Zhou; see also (Bagley) 1988. Neither author, however, explores the full character of the geographic links which would contribute to the explanation of shared characteristics in the south and north-west.

²⁶ For a discussion of birds and flanges see Bagley (1987), No. 104.

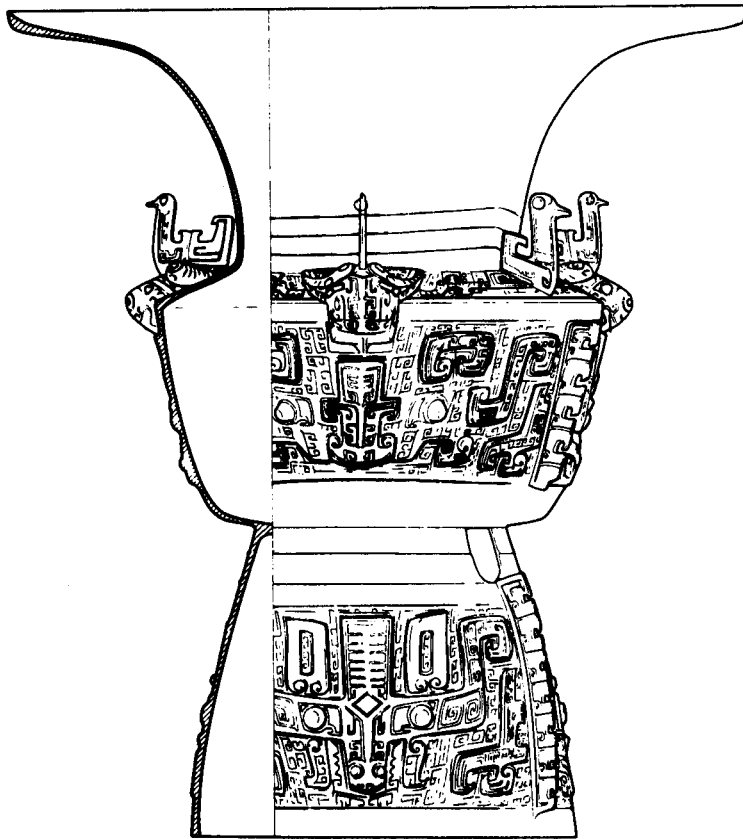


FIG. 3. Bronze ritual vessel, *zun*, height 53 cm, from Sichuan Guanghan Sanxingdui, pit 2 (see Pl. XIXb). Shang period, 13th–12th century BC. After *Wenwu* (1989) 5, pp. 1–20, Fig. 15:2.

west suggest that at least some of the communication went along the Han river.²⁷ However, bronzes from other sites important to this account at Yueyang, Huarong and Shimen in Hunan indicate that the Yangzi was also a major artery, with the route northwards again following the tributaries passing through Guanghan and Peng Xian in Sichuan, and rounding the Qinling again near Baoji.

²⁷ Although not illustrated in this paper, bronzes found at Funan, Guanghan Xian and Chenggu Xian shared some remarkable and unusual features. Two *zun* from Funan Xian have long been known (Bagley [1987], Figs 79, 171). On one of these *zun* a figure of a man is displayed beneath a tiger with its body split to show it from two views. Exactly the same motif appears on a *zun* fragment found at Guanghan Xian (*Wenwu* [1987] 10, p. 7, Fig. 11). A *lei* very like the other *zun* from Funan was found at Chenggu Xian (*Wenbo* [1988] 6, pp. 3–9, Pl. 1:2).

Finds from Chenggu Xian indicate that it may have been the site of a military outpost.²⁸ In addition to a few vessels, large numbers of weapons and chariot fittings have been found in a number of deposits. Further south at Guanghan in Sichuan is one of the most remarkable sites excavated in recent years.²⁹ Two large sacrificial pits have been excavated on the edge of the remains of a large walled city, contemporary with the Shang dynasty, but clearly inhabited by a group of people who owed little cultural and probably no political allegiance to the Shang. Bronze heads and masks, and even more tantalizing a complete standing figure (Pl. XVIIIa), unearthed here are quite unprecedented. In addition, the pits contained many jades of shapes familiar from other sites and a number of ritual vessels, particularly of the type known as a *zun* (Fig. 3, Pl. XIXb).³⁰

This *zun* type offers useful evidence of the links between Hunan, Sichuan, and southern and central Shaanxi. *Zun* from Yueyang (Pl. XIXa) and Huarong in Hunan, from Guanghan in Sichuan (Pl. XIXb, Fig. 3) and from Chenggu Xian in Shaanxi (Pl. XXa) have similar shapes with an especially conspicuous tall and sometimes slightly curved foot.³¹ On many of the provincial *zun*, the *taotie* decoration is rendered in strips of relief and often includes almost triangular ears (Pls XIXa, b, Fig. 3). On the vessels' shoulders are animal heads with hooked crests and small birds in place of flanges. These are the likely sources of bird-shaped flanges and projecting horns on the *lei* from Sichuan (Pl. XVIb) and the *gui* from Baoji (Pl. XVIa). Such later bronzes, however, exaggerate the rounded animal heads and bird flanges of the earlier *zun*.³²

Two wine vessels of the type known as *jia* illustrate ways in which earlier vessel shapes and decorative motifs were preserved into the late Shang and early Western Zhou periods to provide inspiration for the eccentric bronzes of the early Western Zhou (Fig. 4). The wine vessel on the left was found with late Shang

²⁸ For a survey of bronzes found at Chenggu Xian see *Kaogu* (1980) 3, pp. 211–18.

²⁹ See note 8 above for references to archaeological reports. Additional discussion is found in Sichuan (1988) and *Sichuan Wenwu* (1989) (special issue).

³⁰ A number of early *lei* were also uncovered (*Wenwu* [1989] 5, pp. 1–20, Fig. 15:3). The popularity of *lei* at an early date may explain the prevalence of *lei* in Sichuan during the early Western Zhou.

³¹ See also Bagley (1987), No. 43.

³² Sources of bird-shaped flanges are discussed in Bagley (1987), pp. 37–36 and No. 104 and Rawson (1990), pp. 47–55.

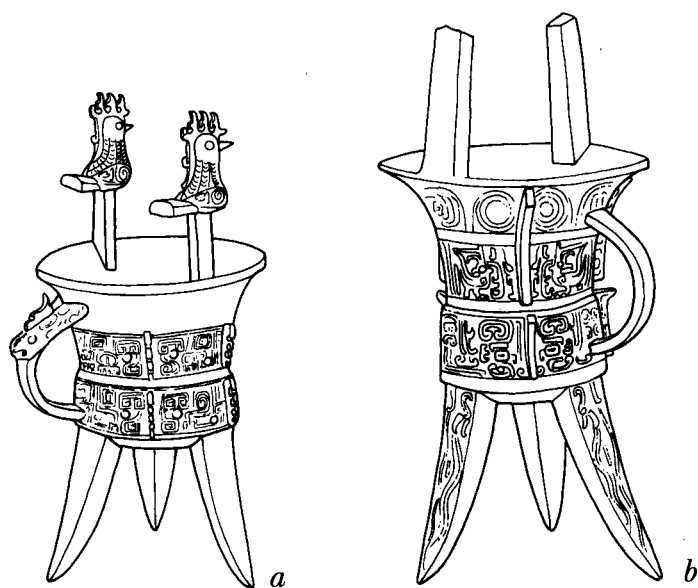


FIG. 4. *a*, Bronze ritual vessel, *jia*, height 41 cm, from Shaanxi Qishan. Shang period, 13th–12th century BC. After Beijing (1979), No. 22; *b*, Bronze ritual vessel, *jia*, height 57.5 cm, from Shaanxi Chenggu. Early Western Zhou period, 11th–10th century BC. After Beijing (1979) No. 113; *c*, Rubbings of decoration on *jia* from Shaanxi Chenggu. After *Wenwu* (1963) 3, p. 43, Fig. 1.

bronzes at Qishan in Shaanxi.³³ Its shape is typical of the middle Shang period, while its surface decoration is similar to that on the *zun* from Chenggu Xian (Pl. XXa). Two crested birds on the posts are very unusual and resemble birds on southern bronzes.³⁴ Thus a bronze from the south, or one copied from a southern vessel, survived to a date later than the general currency of these southern bronzes, being treasured and used with conventional late Shang-period bronzes. The second *jia* shows how an early form was reused much later in the first half of the Western Zhou (Fig. 4 b, c). The vessel shape is similar to that of the previous *jia* and reflects, therefore, a thirteenth-century bronze. Its decoration of plumed birds belongs, however, no earlier than the early Zhou period, and may date from the tenth century (Fig. 4c). Thus vessels such as the *jia* on the left had survived to be copied in pieces such as the *jia* on the right. In this way, in areas remote from metropolitan Shang centres, early provincial features were reused and modified in the brilliantly eccentric bronzes of the early Western Zhou.

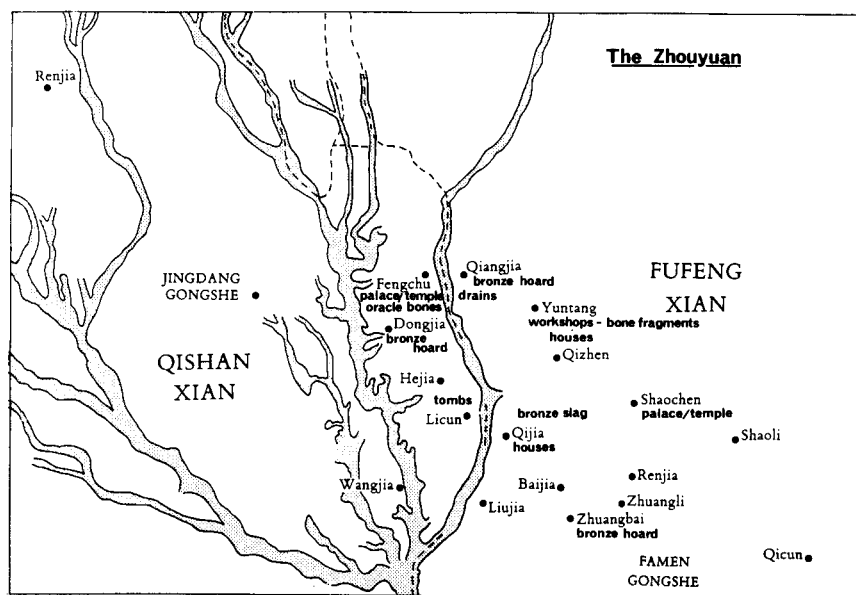
As the Zhou consolidated their rule, some features of their provincial origins were submerged. Eccentric bronzes gave way to vessels that resembled Shang bronzes more closely. However, in the west at Baoji, links with western and southern casting traditions continued. Weapons for example were made in Sichuan style.³⁵ Even more remarkable is the copying in a miniature figure from Baoji Rujiazhuang (Pl. XVIIIb) of the large hands of the massive figure from Guanghan (Pl. XVIIIa).³⁶ At Baoji also, animal-shaped vessels were used down to the middle Western Zhou (Pl. XXb). Animal-shaped vessels had been particularly well developed in southern China during the Shang period, especially

³³ For excavation reports of the two *jia* see *Kaogu* (1976) 1, pp. 31–8 and *Wenwu* (1963) 3, p. 43.

³⁴ Discussed in Bagley (1987), No. 104.

³⁵ See Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), Vol. 1, pp. 413–62.

³⁶ Other bronzes from Baoji indicate contacts with the casting traditions of Guanghan. On some bronze heads from Guanghan a hairstyle with a long pigtail was popular (*Wenwu* [1989] 5, pp. 1–20, Fig. 8). A similar head with a similar hairstyle appears in miniature decorating an axe from tomb 13 at Baoji Zhuyuangou (Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng [1988], Pl. XXVI). A jade face found in Shaanxi province at the Feng Hao site (*Kaogu* [1987] 1, pp. 15–32; *Kaogu* [1987] 5, pp. 470–3, 469) helps to locate in western China a number of unprovenanced grotesque jade faces in museums in and outside China. It seems possible that these faces, some of which have bulbous noses or projecting flapping ears, were descended from the bizarre bronze masks employed at Guanghan (*Wenwu* [1989] 5, pp. 1–20, colour plate 2:1).



MAP 3. Sites in the Zhouyuan in Qishan and Fufeng counties.

in Hunan province, but had died out in Shang metropolitan centres.³⁷ The Zhou must have gained their interest in them from the south. This provincial and independent character of western casting was to make an important contribution to bronzes of the third period to be discussed below.

The Ritual Revolution

The third topic, that of the new repertory of bronzes created in about 880 BC, concerns the region known as the Zhouyuan.³⁸ The most important excavations in recent years in the field of Zhou studies have been made here, in a large area covering parts of the counties of Qishan and Fufeng (Map 3). Remains of palatial buildings, workshops, walls and tombs have been uncovered.³⁹

³⁷ Animal-shaped vessels appear in Fu Hao's tomb (Rawson [1987], Fig. 7). For discussion of southern animal shaped vessels see Bagley (1987), pp. 32–36.

³⁸ For a fuller account of the changes in ritual vessel type see Rawson (1990), Introduction, pp. 96–111.

³⁹ The area has been excavated by several archaeological agencies. There is, therefore, no single comprehensive survey of all the material excavated in the region. References to archaeological reports are found in Chen Quanfang (1988), Rawson (1990), p. 138. For lists of major bronze finds see *Kaogu* (1982) 4, pp. 398–401, 424; *Kaogu yu wenwu* (1988) 5, 6, pp. 71–89.



FIG. 5. Vessels of three generations of the Wei clan found in a hoard at Shaanxi Fufeng Zhuangbai: *a*, the Zhe vessels, early Western Zhou, 10th century BC; *b*, the Feng vessels, middle Western Zhou, 10th–9th century BC; *c*, the Shi Qiang vessels, late middle Western Zhou, 9th century BC. Height of the *Zhe fang yi* (top left) 40.7 cm. After Beijing (1980), Nos. 14–16, 18–20, 24–25.

Particularly unusual are the large number of hoards of bronzes found here. When the Zhou were forced to flee in 771 BC before the invading Quan Rong, they buried their ritual bronzes in cellars or pits, obviously hoping to return to claim them. This they never did. In agricultural work over the last century, vast groups have been rediscovered.

From the large number of such hoards surviving, it is possible to infer that the area was a ritual centre, separate and distinct from the capitals more than 100 kilometres further east in Chang'an Xian. Hoards are quite different from tomb groups. In a tomb group, the minimum number and range of types thought proper for a burial were included, in other words the essentials, but not more, for the correct performance of ritual. A hoard is likely to contain the vessels owned by a family in 771 BC, too precious or too recent to have been buried in tombs. These vessels

are often of high quality and frequently contain long inscriptions valuable to the family, and therefore too precious to bury in tombs. The bronzes in a hoard are normally of several different periods.

The key group for this discussion was found at Fufeng Zhuangbai in 1976.⁴⁰ Here 103 bronzes belonging to the Wei clan came to light. The inscription on one of them, a middle Western Zhou water basin of the type *pan*, can be used to identify the bronzes belonging to the earlier generations of the same family. On the information supplied in the *pan* inscription and in the inscriptions on the other vessels, the chronological sequence of the individuals named, and therefore of the bronzes they owned, has been established.⁴¹

Among bronzes of the earlier generations, wine vessels predominated. Indeed the first generation for which bronzes survive dedicated their efforts to the most complex wine vessel types of all, the *fang yi*, *zun*, and *gong* (Fig. 5*a*). The next generation possessed vessels of the same types, but on a smaller scale (Fig. 5*b*). The fortunes of the family or even of the state seem to have been declining. Similar vessel types were also used in the immediately succeeding reigns (Fig. 5*c*). Then suddenly in the fourth generation there was a startling change. In place of the wine vessels, almost all of which were abandoned, sets of food vessels in identical matching designs were used (Fig. 6). Large flasks were all that remained for wine. Among several new bronze types, large sets of bells were the most remarkable.

A society that in 950 BC required sets of wine vessels as well as food vessels and in 880 BC had abandoned most of them, replacing them by extended sets of food vessels, must have effected major changes in ceremonies and even in beliefs. There was also, visible still today, a major change in the presentation of the bronzes. Early Western Zhou vessels were comparatively small and intricate (Pl. XVI*a*, XVI*b*, Fig. 5*a*). To appreciate them fully they must have been viewed from close quarters, at least on occasions. It seems reasonable to suggest that the ritual may have been a relatively private matter, celebrated by a small number of people who were close to the bronzes. Later Western Zhou vessels achieved their impact from a distance, by sheer numbers and

⁴⁰ *Wenwu* (1978) 3, pp. 1-18.

⁴¹ For discussion of the inscription on the *Shi Qiang pan* see *Kaogu xuebao* (1978) 2, pp. 139-48, 149-58; *Gu wenzi yanjiu* 5 (1981), pp. 1-16; 17-26; 7 (1982), pp. 87-101.



FIG. 6. A selection of the Wei Bo Xing vessels, belonging to the fourth generation of the Wei clan, found in the same hoard as the vessels in Fig. 5. Top, eight *gui*, centre, two pairs of *hu*, bottom, one of the sets of bells. Middle to late Western Zhou, 9th century BC. Height of the largest bell 70 cm. After Beijing (1980), Nos. 33-40, 29-32, 59-64.

mass. Their surfaces were no longer decorated with minute detail (Fig. 6). Indeed the prevalent motifs of ribbing or wave bands offered no advantage to close inspection. Their relatively coarse designs could just as well be seen from further off. In addition, bells introduced a new element—the expenditure of bronze to

make music. Both the spectacle of rows of large bronzes and the impact of bell music seem to imply that at this date a larger number of people than previously witnessed the ritual, standing perhaps at a respectful distance. Alternatively, while the numbers involved in rituals may not have changed, in the later period, the ritual vessels and bells may have been formally displayed on other occasions.

We may never know why the changes were made to the ritual vessels. We can, however, trace many features of the change to practices prevalent in the area of Baoji and further west. In most early metropolitan Western Zhou tombs, pairs of *gui* and *ding* were standard.⁴² In tombs at Zhuyuangou near Baoji, on the other hand, *gui* and *ding* were employed in larger sets. Tomb thirteen provides a good example. In it were seven *ding* and three *gui*. At this relatively early date, the particular specimens seem to have been chosen to exhibit as many different variations on the shapes and decoration as possible.⁴³ In succeeding decades, vessels of much greater similarity to one another were used; tomb one, for example, contained five almost identical *ding*.⁴⁴

Slightly later tombs at Baoji Rujiazhuang illustrate the next development.⁴⁵ Here one of the rulers of Yu was buried with his concubine and with his wife Jing Ji in an adjacent tomb. While the ruler and his wife had several *ding* and *gui* each, all differing from one another, the concubine had a simplified set in which the vessels were undecorated and identical in shape (Fig. 7). As with the later *gui* in the upper part of Fig. 6, these vessels were not intended to be examined in detail, they seem intended to convey the correct impression at a cursory glance. This simplified set heralded the future. It seems that when a conscious decision to change the ritual was implemented at the capital at Xi'an, and at the Zhou ritual centre in Fufeng and Qishan, the western practice of using sets of identical food vessels was taken over as the new standard.

The introduction of bells supports the notion that western practices were the model followed in the ritual change. Bells are useful to the discussion as they were not, it seems, employed at the capital in early Western Zhou. They had been used at Anyang, the Shang capital, but had thereafter died out in the north, surviving,

⁴² Compare for example bronzes from early and middle Western Zhou tombs at Shaanxi Jingyang Gaojiabao and Fufeng Qijiacun (Rawson [1987] Fig. 15).

⁴³ Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), Vol. 2, Pls XIV–XLI.

⁴⁴ Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), Vol. 2, Pl. LXIII.

⁴⁵ Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), Vol. 2, Pls CLI–CCVIII.

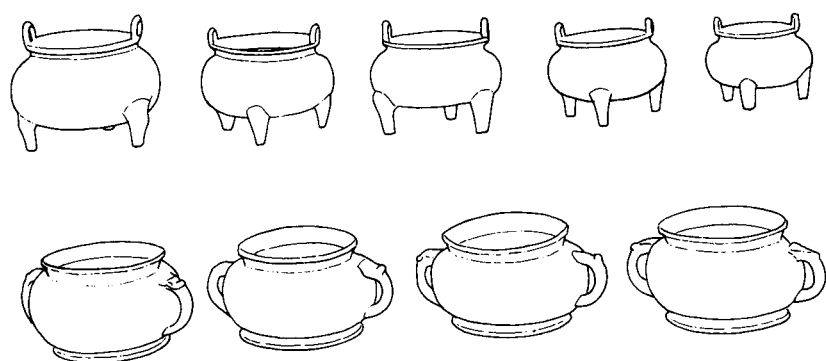
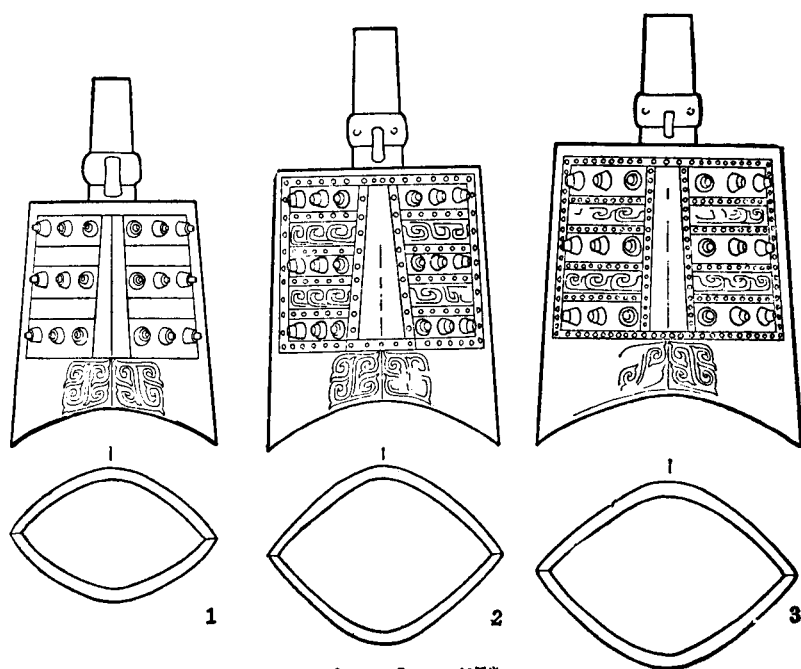


FIG. 7. A set of matching *ding* and matching *gui* from the concubine's tomb at Baoji Rujiazhuang. Middle Western Zhou, 10th–9th century BC. Height of the largest *ding* 17.7 cm. After *Beijing* (1984), Nos. 73, 74.



图七四 竹园沟七号墓青铜编钟
1. BZM7 : 10 2. BZM7 : 11 3. BZM7 : 12

FIG. 8. A set of three bells in southern style from tomb seven at Shaanxi Baoji Zhuyuangou. Height of largest bell 34 cm. Early Western Zhou, 11th–10th century BC. After Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng (1988), p. 97, Fig. 74.

however, in the south, where they were greatly enlarged and elaborated.⁴⁶ They were first mounted mouth upwards, and then hung the other way up with their mouth downward. The first appearance of southern bells at Western Zhou centres takes place at Baoji.⁴⁷ Once again it seems likely that the river routes provided the means of communication. Tomb seven at Baoji Zhuyuangou, dating to the early Western Zhou, contained a set of three bells of southern type (Fig. 8).⁴⁸ Within a short time the bells were being used much further east at the Zhou capital.⁴⁹

In revising the repertory of bronzes used for ancestral sacrifices, the Zhou clearly looked to the extreme west for inspiration. This action itself implies that, although established in Xi'an, ruling over a large territory that lay further east, the Zhou retained some regard, even a high regard for western practices. This concern with the west had been established in their pre-conquest days.

Once uncovered, these ties explain some of the major deviations of Zhou bronzes from those of their Shang predecessors. In the pre-conquest period, bronzes from Shaanxi were more often than not inferior imitations of late Shang vessels, cast by a people living beyond the range of metropolitan Shang influence. As the Zhou came to power they made use of the diverse casting modes available to them; in particular they exploited eccentricities of design earlier employed on bronzes cast in Hunan and Sichuan, beyond the sway of the Shang empire. During the latter part of their rule, the Zhou turned again to the west, in what can only be seen as an attempt to make wholesale changes to the ritual vessel repertory.

Judged in the light of their bronzes, therefore, the Zhou appear as outsiders, even unrepentant outsiders. From this perspective, it is possible to look again at the inspiring words of Zhou polemic and suggest that the persuasiveness of their arguments reflected not the strength of their claims, but their weakness. It seems possible that because the Zhou were outsiders their claims to be wise, just and above all legitimate rulers were made with particular force. Thus the barbarians became statesmen.

⁴⁶ A general survey of the development of bells is given in Chen (1987). For a survey of southern bells see Kao (1986).

⁴⁷ Tomb thirteen at Baoji contains a yet earlier bell, derived from the Anyang rather than the southern tradition (Lu Liancheng & Hu Zhisheng [1988], Vol. 2, Pl. XV).

⁴⁸ A southern precedent for such bells is seen in bells from Jiangxi Xinyu (*Kaogu* [1963] 8, pp. 416–18, 422, Fig. 3); see also Rawson (1990), pp. 745–7.

⁴⁹ Compare a set of bells from Puducun in Chang'an Xian (*Kaogu xuebao* [1957] 1, pp. 75–85, Pl. 2:1).

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