

Cultural Interactions during the Zhou Period (c. 1000-350 BC)

A study of networks from the Suizao corridor

Beichen Chen



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Chapter I

Introduction

The Mountains of Qinling 秦嶺 and marshes of the Huai 淮 River are collectively recognised as China's north-south boundary,¹ covering most of the present-day south Shaanxi 陝西, north Hubei 湖北, north Anhui 安徽, and north Jiangsu 江蘇 province (figure 1).² This boundary is normally referred to as a dividing line of the northern wheat-growing region and the southern rice-growing regions,³ but based on other elements that invite comparison, it can be sometimes extended southwards, reaching the Yangtze 揚子 River region.⁴ From prehistoric times, interregional communications, such as movements of people, materials, languages, symbols, and rituals, have had numerous impacts on this natural boundary. Multiple itineraries used by travellers for crossing the mentioned rivers and mountain ranges indicate that permeable geographical boundaries did not hinder mobility. The wide distribution of Bronze Age cultures from both north and south China⁵ demonstrates long-distance maritime and overland connections no later than the second millennium BCE, running through the later Shang 商 (c.a. 1600-1050 BCE) and Zhou 周 periods (c.a. 1050-221 BCE).

The Suizao corridor 隨棗走廊 in northern Hubei province,⁶ located in the middle of this geographical

boundary, has been involved in extensive trade and exchange networks with both north and south China (figure 1). A flat riverbank and extended river network make the corridor into a liveable area for large social groups and settlements. In the past five years, excavations here have kept updating our understanding of the local material culture, and revealed a well-connected and unusually long-lasting social group, known as the state of Zeng 曾,⁷ which was present in the corridor for over 600 years, from no later than the 10th century BCE to the 4th century BCE. After the importance of the Zeng was noticed, close attention was paid to this state, and many questions have been raised in the academy, such as: why the Zeng was here in the Suizao corridor; what made it happen; why did it keep going; and how far or how close was its relationship with the dominant culture in different periods?

The current book aims to give thought to these questions. It mainly, but not exclusively, focuses on what are known as Chinese ritual bronzes,⁸ as the inscription on them are closely related to their owners' social and ritual practice,⁹ and the making and usage of

¹ The boundary here is normally marked between 32 and 35 degrees north latitude.

² Three geographical terms – *North China*, *South China*, and *Central Plains*, closely related to this north-south boundary, are especially relevant to our discussion in this study. The term *North China* normally refers to the present-day provinces Qinghai 青海, Gansu 甘肅, Shaanxi 陝西, Shanxi 山西, Hebei 河北, Liaoning 遼寧, Shandong 山東, Inner Mongolia, northern Henan 河南, Jiangsu 江蘇, and Anhui. The term *South China* often includes the provinces Sichuan 四川, Hubei, Hunan 湖南, Jiangxi 江西, Zhejiang 浙江, Fujian 福建, Guangdong 廣東, Guangxi 廣西, and Yunnan 雲南. The term *Central Plains* (Zhongyuan 中原 in Chinese) generally refers to the present-day Henan province, especially the areas centred on the middle reaches of the Yellow River.

³ Buck 1937: 9.

⁴ The 'other elements' here not only refers to the differences of natural factors, such as average annual temperature or precipitation, but also to the differences of cultural factors, such as local people's dietary habits and personality types. Although the boundaries vary, most of them are not far from the natural line marked by the Qinling Mountains and the Huai River.

⁵ For a distribution map of China's important archaeological centres dated to the Shang and Zhou periods, see figure 1.

⁶ The Suizao corridor is a northwest-southeast flat valley in north Hubei province, which is named after the two present-day cities – Suizhou 隨州 and Zaoyang 棗陽 at the two ends of the valley. It is sandwiched by the north Tongbai 桐柏 Mountain and the south Dahong 大洪 Mountain, and endowed by waterways used for transport, such as the west Huayang 華陽 River, and the east Yun 滙 River, as well as their numerous tributaries. From the map, the Suizao corridor has been richly provided with both overland routes to the

north and waterways to the south and west. For further discussion, see the section 'Geographical background' below.

⁷ Current evidence of Zeng-related large cemeteries at the ruler's level (for example at Yejiashan 葉家山, Leigudun 擂鼓墩, Wenfengta 文峰塔 in Suizhou, and Guojiamiao 郭家廟 in Zaoyang), and settlement remains accompanied by them (such as the Miaotaizi 廟台子 site in Suizhou, the Zhoutai 周臺 site and the Zhongyizhai 忠義寨 site in Zaoyang) suggests a strong and long-lasting Zeng state existed in the Suizao corridor from the early Western Zhou to mid-Warring States period (for distribution of Zeng-related remains, see figure 14). In the meantime, it also suggests that, for some reasons, the location of the Zeng capital was likely to have changed with the movement of Zeng people, at least twice in the Zhou period (first from Suizhou to Zaoyang at the end of the Western Zhou period, and then from Zaoyang back to Suizhou after the early Spring-and-Autumn period), but until it was defeated by Chu 楚, the Zeng state had never left the Suizao corridor. For further discussion, see Zhang Changping 2009a: 11-12, and Fang Qin 2016: 86-88.

⁸ Ritual vessels made of bronze (an alloy of copper, tin, and usually lead as major elements) are commonly found in high-standard tombs and hoards in both central and regional communities during the Shang and Zhou periods. Nearly all of them were made by piece-mould casting, a casting technique initialised and developed in the Central Plains, which was extremely complicated and thus very difficult to transfer from one place to another. For further discussion see the section 'Producing bronzes' in Chapter II.

⁹ In most of the archaeological discoveries dated to the Shang and Zhou periods, only a small percentage of bronzes are found with inscribed Chinese characters, and only roughly half of these bronze inscriptions carry useful information, such as 'who made this vessel for whom', normally with their owners' or the patrons' surnames and their relationship with each other. So, through these inscriptions, though not so large in number, we may be able to approach the social identity of the vessel owners, and further of the social group that they belonged to.

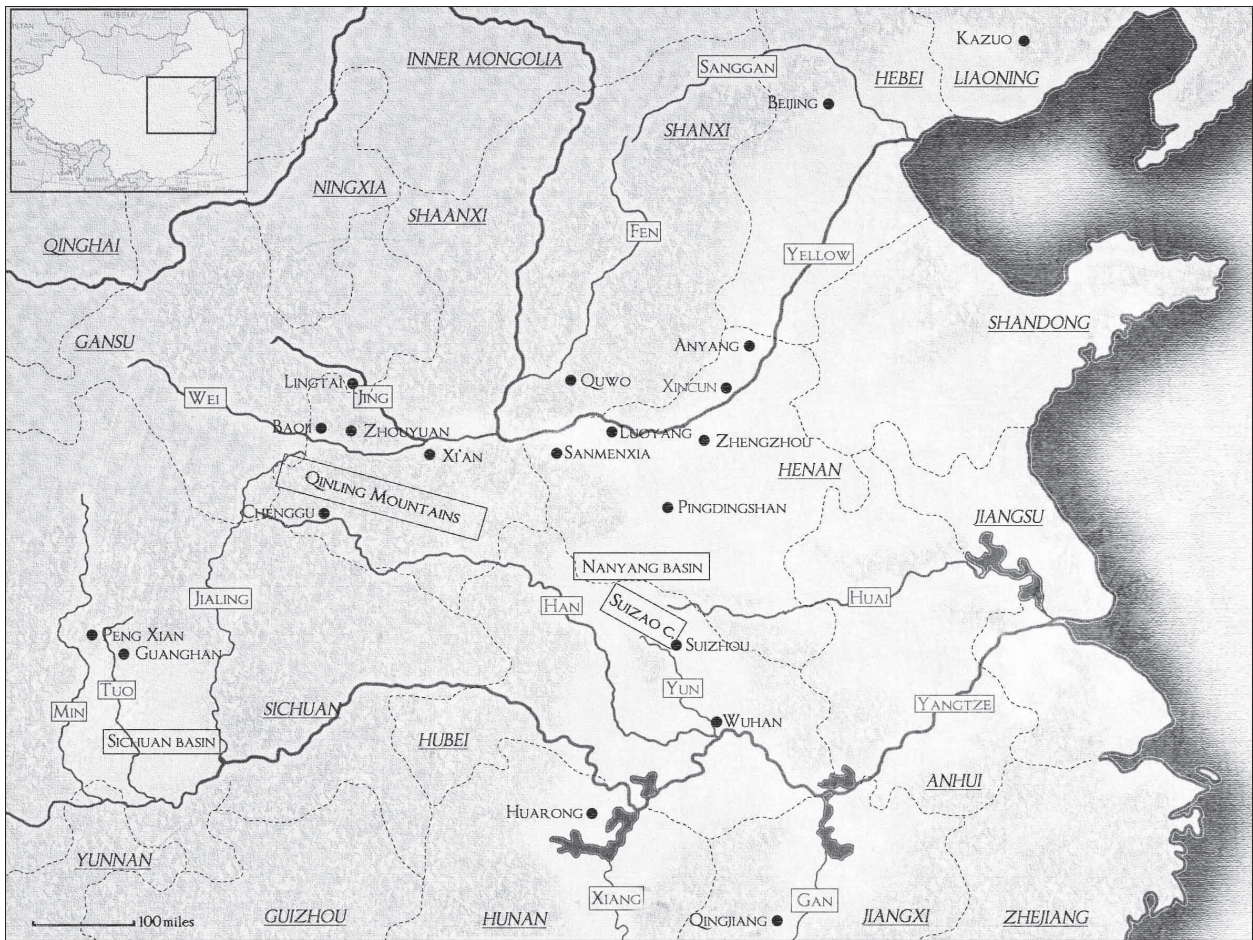


Figure 1. Distribution of important sites dated to the Shang and Zhou period. Drawn by Beichen Chen.

such bronzes can be seen as a source of evidence that the local group was in contact with the customs either of the dominant Zhou culture or of other regional traditions. Based on the comparison between the local tradition and its contemporaries from other parts of the ancient China, this research pays special attention to the social identity of Zeng people and the ways in which it changed over time. Central to this study is illumination of the shifting patterns of interregional contact in different periods manifest in the material culture from the Suizao corridor, and exploration of how the strategic location of the corridor, especially its closeness to metal sources along the Yangtze River region, may have stimulated such networks and have protected the local group from being invaded or annexed by others.

The first two sections of this introductory chapter explain the social and archaeological backgrounds of the Zhou dynasty, with special emphasis on the latest archaeological discovery of the main Zeng state cemeteries. It then locates the Suizao corridor in a larger geographical framework, and highlights its position on the southern borderland of the Zhou culture, as well as its close relationship with the regions of the northern

and south-western parts of China. In the next section, it sets out a literature review related to the current Zeng study, and then a description of the main research approaches and framework. A short paragraph stating the structure of this book is at the end of this chapter.

1. Social background

Zhou and regional states

As one of the early major dynasties of ancient China, the Zhou held power from around 1050 to 771 BCE (known as the Western Zhou 西周 period),¹⁰ and then continued

¹⁰ The whole Western Zhou period, starting with the conquest of Shang and ending with the fall of the principal Zhou capital, is conventionally divided into three subperiods: early, middle, and late, based on three broad developmental stages in the style of Zhou bronzes. Each of the subperiods approximately corresponds to the succession of Zhou kings: 1) early Western Zhou period – King Wu 武 (1049/1045-1043), Duke of Zhou (1042-1036), Cheng (1042/1035-1006), Kang (1005/1003-978), and Zhao 昭 (977/975-957); 2) middle Western Zhou period – King Mu 穆 (956-918), Gong 恭 (917/915-900), Yi 懿 (also known as Yi, 899/897-873), and Xiao 孝 (872?-866); 3) late Western Zhou period – King Yi 夷 (865-858), Li 厲 (857/853-842/828), Gong He 共和 (regency, 841-828), Xuan 宣 (827/825-782), and You 幽 (781-771), see Chen Mengjia 1945: 55, and the absolute dates for Western Zhou kings proposed by Edward Shaughnessy, see

as a minor state till 256 BCE (known as the Eastern Zhou 東周 period),¹¹ the activities of which are seen from both textual and archaeological sources.¹² To rule the vast territory, the Zhou employed a balance between a rigorous, disciplined mode of central government and an ethical, kin-based mode of control network.¹³ On one hand, they set up an innovative administration system, with multiple capitals (also known as government branches or royal residences), numerous lineage centres,¹⁴ and their affiliated settlements (*yi* 邑 in Chinese),¹⁵ organised by the government and their appointed chief officials.¹⁶ On the other hand, numerous small regional states¹⁷ were set up on the basis of ties

of kinship, which were under control of the elites with different social backgrounds.¹⁸ By examining the surnames of the ruling families of these regional powers in a geopolitical sense, a wide-reaching kin-based network of Zhou has been reconstructed by researchers, as illustrated in figure 2. Many scholars believe that at the beginning of the Western Zhou period, the Zhou rulers sent out their trusted royal kinsmen and relatives to establish regional states in an effort to ensure loyalty and to maintain Zhou authority over the territory.¹⁹ Most of the key points with rich agricultural lands and of strategic importance were occupied by the Jī 姬 lineages, who shared the same surname, or, in a deeper sense, shared common ‘collective memory’²⁰ with the Zhou royal family, such as the rulers of Guo 虢 state²¹ in Henan and of Jin 晉 state²² in Shaanxi. Meanwhile, the presumably ‘less important’ lands that surrounded the royal residences and the major Jī lineage-controlled areas were allocated to the non-Jī states, such as the Kui-surnamed 媿 Peng 棚 state in Shanxi,²³ and the Mi-surnamed 隹 Chu state in the Yangtze River region (figure 2).²⁴ Regardless of whether they belonged to the

Shaughnessy 1991: xix. Though disputed, historians also see these periods as developmental stages: 1) early Western Zhou expansion; 2) mid-Western Zhou transition; and 3) late Western Zhou decline, see Shaughnessy 1999: 307-330. The Zhou royal family maintained power for almost 300 years, until the mid-eighth century, when one of its capitals was sacked by the Marquis of Shen 申 and a group of outsiders – the Quanrong 犬戎. For further discussions of the fall of Western Zhou, see Shirakawa 1992, Yang Kuan 2003, and Li Feng 2006.

¹¹ Traditionally the Eastern Zhou is further divided into the Spring-and-Autumn period (Chunqiu 春秋: 771 – 476 BCE) and the Warring States period (Zhanguo 戰國: 475 – 221 BCE). After the capital was taken, the Zhou royal house had much weaker authority and relied on lords of the regional states for protection, especially during their flight to the eastern capital. From then on the Zhou kings only held nominal power with little control over their small royal domain until the Zhou was terminated by the Qin 秦 state in 256 BCE. See Hsu 1999: 545-550, and Lewis 1999: 632-640.

¹² Recent Zhou studies critique the traditional understanding of the socio-political situation in Western and Eastern Zhou period. Some scholars suggest that the extent of centralised political control exercised by the Western Zhou authority has been greatly exaggerated, and the vaunted fragmentation of the political structure in Eastern Zhou period was probably overemphasised. For further discussion, see von Falkenhausen 1999b: 543.

¹³ See a discussion in Creel 1970: 423-424, followed by Li Feng in his book of Western Zhou bureaucracy, see Li Feng 2008: 42-95, and 235-270.

¹⁴ The term ‘lineage’ here is a general English translation of the Chinese term ‘*zongzu* 宗族’, ‘a consanguineal kin group comprising persons who trace their common relationship through patrilineal links to a known ancestor’ according to Paul Chao. See Chao 1983: 19.

¹⁵ This administration area is also known as the ‘Zhou royal domain’, or the general term ‘Zhou centre’. After the initial Zhou residence – Zhou-under-Qi (Qizhou 歧周) near Qi 岐 Mountain, Hao 鎬 (sometimes Feng 豐 is also counted) was made the Zhou capital – Zongzhou near the present-day Xi’an 西安 in King Wu’s reign. Then King Cheng 成 set up a new government branch – Chengzhou 成周 (also known as Luoyi 洛邑 – the Settlement on the Luo) at present-day Luoyang (about 300 miles east of Xi’an). Having established this new eastern capital, the Zhou kings did not abandon earlier centres, but perambulated within the network of all the three royal capitals from time to time, see Khayutina 2008: 26-28.

¹⁶ The chief officials could be appointed by people from families other than the Zhou royals, such as members of the Wei 微 family, see further discussion in Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui and Yin Shengping 1992: 58-92. Ritual bronzes cast for four generations of their family were found near the Zhou centre at present-day Fufeng 扶風, Shaanxi. Shaanxi Zhouyuan kaogudui 1978: 1-18.

¹⁷ The term ‘regional state’, which sometimes can be equal to the term ‘regional polity’, is a conventional English translation of the Chinese term ‘*zhuhouguo* 諸侯國’ or ‘*fangguo* 方國’ in the Zhou period. It normally refers to those social groups with a certain size of population and amount of farmland, but located some distance away from the Zhou centre, where most of the population, farmland, temples and cemeteries were located. However, this translation is often criticised, as the definition of ‘polity’ or ‘state’ in English is not synonymous with the definition of ‘*zhuhouguo*’ or ‘*fangguo*’ in Chinese. In his book about Western Zhou state and bureaucracy, Li Feng discusses the

negotiations of the term ‘regional state’, and further suggests its social hierarchy, which normally contained four levels: 1) regional rulers and their families; 2) elites; 3) Zhou and non-Zhou immigrants; and 4) local residents. See Li Feng 2008: 235-270.

¹⁸ Based on the Western Zhou regional states, Maria Khayutina makes a distribution map with sources such as *Zhongguo Lishi Dituj* 中國歷史地圖集, evidence of migration, extension, and marriage of lineages, and ‘new finds that permit to adjust localisations based on traditional sources’. See the map in Fig 1-2. For further discussions, see Khayutina 2014: 6-16.

¹⁹ Shaughnessy 1999: 311-313, and Li Feng 2006: 66-76.

²⁰ The key idea of the term ‘collective memory’ can be seen in Coser 1992. For further discussion about the collective memory of the Jī-surnamed Zhou people, see the section ‘Research framework’ below.

²¹ The Jī-surnamed Guo state is traditionally recognised as two states: Eastern Guo at Henan and Western Guo at Shaanxi, founded by Guo zhong 虢仲 and Guo shu 虢叔, two brothers of King Wen 文 at the very beginning of the Western Zhou period. Western Guo was then relocated to Henan with the flight of Zhou royalty around 771 BCE. The Guo rulers were believed to hold administrative positions in court through successive generations. See Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui 1999: 534-538, and further discussion in Li Feng 2006: 251-262.

²² The Jī-surnamed Jin state was a major power founded in the early Western Zhou period at Shanxi, and split into three successor states: Han 韓, Zhao 趙 and Wei 魏 around 450 BCE, marking the beginning of the Warring States period, see Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 2004.

²³ For the brief report of the excavation of the Peng state cemetery in Hengshui, Jiang xian, in Shanxi province, see Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo *et al.* 2006a.

²⁴ Despite the establishment of large numbers of small states with non-Jī surnames, only very few of them, such as the Chu, survived in the successive years of tangled warfare in the Spring-and-Autumn and Warring States period. Chu is recorded as a significant power towards the end of the Western Zhou. It was based in the Yangtze region, and expanded northward by annexing territories of the Zhou peoples in the Han 漢 River region and a number of non-Zhou states in the Huai River valley. The Chu state absorbed an increasing number of neighbouring regional polities, and managed to set up a rival alliance system modelled upon that of the Zhou. Many of its conquests were documented in transmitted texts, such as *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo’s Tradition*) and *Shi ji* 史記 (*Records of the Grand Historian*). The Chu state will be further defined and discussed in Chapter IV, as after the early Spring-and-Autumn period, it had gradually invaded the Suizao corridor, and finally took the Zeng capital no later than

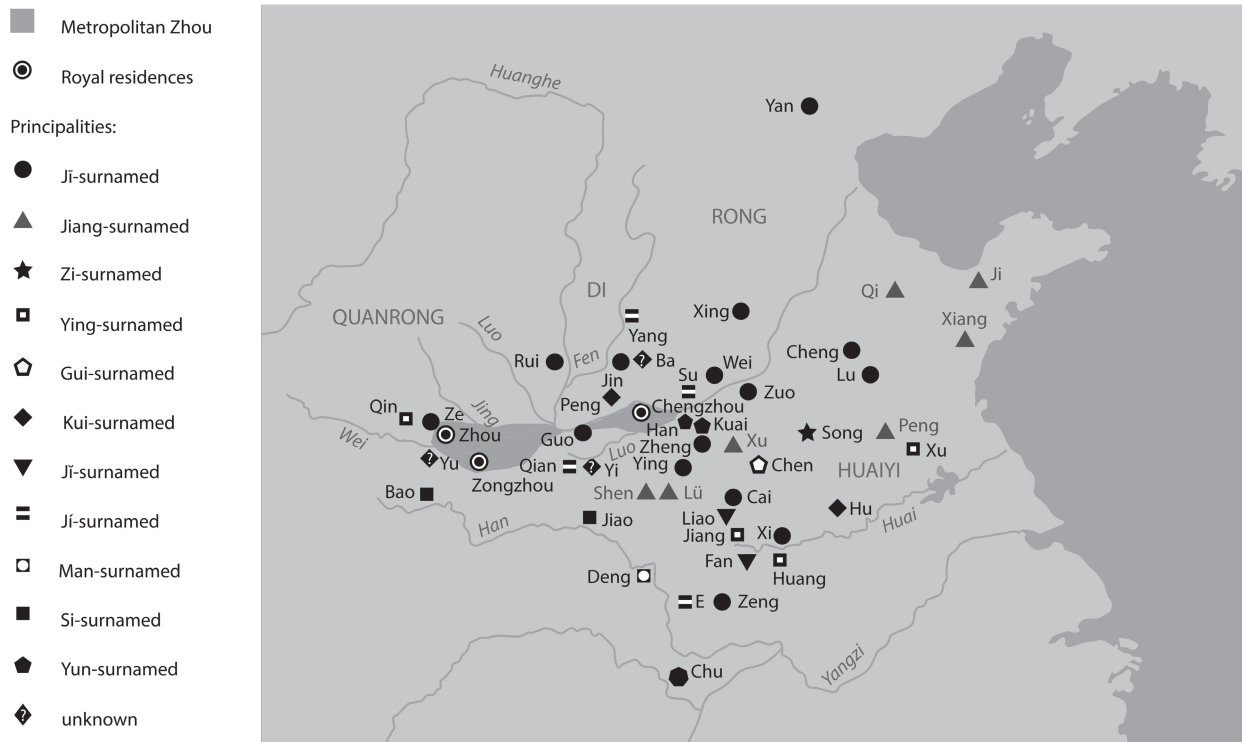


Figure 2. Distribution of the main locations of Ji lineages and non-Ji lineages in the Zhou period. After Khayutina 2014, map I.

same social group, the non-Ji lineages were sometimes able to join the Zhou family by marrying a Ji-surnamed elite,²⁵ by being bestowed a royal surname,²⁶ or, as some scholars believe, by pretending to be one.²⁷

The Suizao corridor had been part of Zhou territory since the 11th century BCE,²⁸ with at least two regional powers, the Zeng state and the E 鄂 state,²⁹ controlling or partly controlling the area. Unlike the E ruling family, who is believed to be a non-Ji lineage, the surname of the Zeng rulers has been long debated. Until early 2011, most scholars agreed that the Zeng rulers were ‘100% Ji-surnamed’ in the Spring-and-Autumn and later

periods,³⁰ but this viewpoint was heavily challenged when the Yejiashan excavation revealed a number of non-Zhou features later that year,³¹ for example the ‘date inscription (*ri ming* 日名 in Chinese)’ inscribed on some of the Yejiashan bronzes.³² Indeed, clarifying the social group to which the Zeng belonged is one of the fundamental steps to understand the social identity of the people from the Suizao corridor, as well as their implicit relationship with the Zhou royalty in both the material and spiritual dimensions.

the mid-Warring States period. See Hsu 1999: 556, Xiangfan shi kaogudui *et al.* 2005: 310-321, and von Falkenhausen 2006a: 263-265.

²⁵ Chen 2006.

²⁶ Zhu Fenghan 1990: 28-29.

²⁷ Very few scholars suggest that some of the seemingly Ji-surnamed regional powers we know were actually not Ji-surnamed in the first place. For some reasons, a few non-Ji lineages gave up their surname at some point, and claimed to be Ji-surnamed. For related examples, see discussion in Tani 2013: 1077-1073.

²⁸ Li Xueqin *et al.* 2011.

²⁹ The location of the Ji-surnamed 姑 E state remained uncertain until 2007, when the Yangzishan 羊子山 excavation revealed an early Western Zhou E Marquis tomb at the Suizao corridor. The site is very close to the Yejiashan Zeng cemetery (only 17 miles in between), so most people believe that the Zeng and E must have lived side by side in the early Western Zhou period. For further discussion, see Zhang Changping 2011a. In 2013, a Spring-and-Autumn E Marquis cemetery was confirmed at Xiaxiangpu 夏响铺, Nanyang 南阳 basin, suggesting that E may have relocated from Hubei to Henan from the middle or late Western Zhou period. For further discussion of the E state, see the section ‘Major archaeological sites’ in Chapter II.

³⁰ See Shu Zhimei’s 舒之梅 argument based on two *ge* 戈 inscriptions from a Spring-and-Autumn Zeng tomb in Shu Zhimei and Liu Binhui 1982. Zhang Changping 张昌平 agrees with this viewpoint in his book of Zeng bronzes, but he ends his discussion by citing Shu’s original sentence with double quotations. It seems Zhang still has some hesitation on this point. Zhang Changping 2009a: 346-347.

³¹ For further discussion of the non-Zhou patterns in the Yejiashan cemetery, see Chapter II; and for the brief report of the first Yejiashan excavation from 2010 to 2011, see Hubei shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011.

³² The ‘date inscription’ normally refers to the ten characters of ‘*tiangan* 天干’ (sometimes translated as ‘celestial stems’): *jia* 甲, *yi* 乙, *bing* 丙, *ding* 丁, *wu* 戊, *ji* 己, *geng* 庚, *xin* 辛, *ren* 壬, and *gui* 癸, which were used to record dates on oracle bones or bronzes in the late Shang period. See Li Boqian’s 李伯谦 argument in Li Xueqin *et al.* 2011: 65-67, who is inspired by Zhang Maorong’s 张懋镕 paper ‘Zhou people did not use date inscriptions’, see Zhang Maorong 1993. However, more and more discoveries in the Ji-surnamed Zhou states show otherwise. For example, in the Ying 应 state, a bronze ritual vessel ‘Ying Gong 应公’ *ding*, found in Pingdingshan 平頂山 M8, Henan province, shows that the King Wu of Zhou also had a date inscription ‘*ri ding* 日丁’ in his name. See Ying Gong *ding* and other similar examples in Wang Entian 2014: 69.

*Ritual and religion*³³

A nested structure is recognised between the material world and the spiritual world: a burial assemblage is part of a funeral service; a funeral service is part of a set of rituals by which the living deal with the deceased; and a set of rituals is part of a religion, constructed by an underlying belief system which involves supernatural beings.³⁴

On the grounds of a ritual tradition partially inherited from the Shang and from earlier periods,³⁵ the Zhou authority developed a new form of belief system to govern the vast territory and unite the regional states,³⁶ which was basically a bronze-based system with special emphasis on ancestral worship, formalised by a series of ritual rules and performances, and materialised by bronze ritual vessels³⁷ and the inscriptions on them.³⁸ The usage of these inscribed vessels was also nested. For one thing, they were used as practical containers to offer at formal banquets (for example meat and alcohol containers) to the ancestors of the family, and to be buried with their owners so that they could continue

to offer such banquets in the afterlife.³⁹ In view of that, they were also envisaged as carriers to assist communication between the living and the deceased in sacrifices of which the Zhou ancestors were supposed to partake.

The Zhou kings and their royal ancestors in the main line of descent were endowed with supremacy under the Zhou belief system. Unlike the earlier Shang kings, who normally sought approval or assistance from the High God (*Di* 帝),⁴⁰ in the Zhou period, the highest power had been passed on to the Zhou kings themselves. No later than King Cheng's 成 reign, the term 'Mandate of Heaven (*Tian ming* 天命)' had been added into the bronze inscriptions, which often occurred with the names of King Wen and King Wu.⁴¹ This was done probably to remind both the Ji and non-Ji people that their ancestors served under the first Zhou kings, who were given a mandate to rule by Heaven. As descendants, they should follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, taking their current Zhou king as the very one with Heaven's mandate to rule. Through royal assemblies and formal banquets, this message spread out with the ritual bronzes. Those who attended these events, either the Ji or the non-Ji lineages, would have become well familiar with the contents of these bronze inscriptions, as well as the related performances and ritual practices. It is very likely that the Zhou ancestral worship and political legitimacy were bonded together, and the relationship between the Zhou and its regional states was consolidated in this process.

2. Archaeological background

Shortly after the conquest of the Shang,⁴² a far reaching state control of Zhou authority had stimulated production and circulation of valuable materials over the Zhou realm, as seen in the general consistency of burial goods in various places.⁴³

³³ Most researchers do not pay attention to either the definitions of 'ritual' and 'religion', or the distinction between them, which cause many misconceptions in the field. See Li Feng's definition of ritual: 'ritual is a set of acts performed not for their utilitarian value but for their symbolic meaning in a common proceeding prescribed by a religion or by the tradition of a community'. See Li Feng 2008: 11-20, footnote no.59 in particular.

³⁴ Morris 1992: 1-2.

³⁵ See the spiritual connections between 'people and god' in Shang and earlier periods in Chang 1983: 56-80, and Keightley 1999: 251-268.

³⁶ As the conquerors from the north-western borderland, and as the new ruler, the Zhou had wanted to demonstrate to its people that they were the one who had been granted the legitimacy to rule the land. To claim such legitimacy, an exclusive belief system of Zhou (similar to the Shang system in its features, but different in nature) was needed, so the notion of 'the Mandate of Heaven' was put forward by the Zhou ruling class, which will be further discussed later in this section.

³⁷ 'Bronze ritual vessels' are normally in forms of food and drinking containers, including *ding* 鼎, *gui* 簋, *li* 鬲, *yan* 甗, *fu* 簋, *dou* 豆, *jue* 爵, *jia* 斝, *gu* 觚, *zun* 尊, *zhi* 卣, *hu* 壺, *you* 卣, *lei* 罍, *he* 盃, and some uncommon types. They were cast in sections of clay moulds, the technique of which is also known as the Chinese mould casting, a very sophisticated technique requiring high-level ceramics and metallurgy. For the mould casting, see a recent paper on Anyang 安陽 mould research in Yue Zhanwei *et al.* 2011.

³⁸ 'Bronze inscriptions' are among the earliest forms of Chinese writing. They are found on ritual bronzes from the Shang to Zhou dynasty and even later, normally recording the names of the vessel owner and descriptions of their honours or achievements. See Qiu Xigui 1988: 45-46, Zhu Fenghan and Xu Yong 1996: 15-20, and von Falkenhausen 2006b: 343-345. They can be found inside ritual vessels or on their surface, ranging in length and complexity from less than 10 characters; 'who makes the vessel for whom', to hundreds of words; the narratives of victories in battle or the details of services rendered to the Zhou royal house. Moreover, bronze inscriptions have several features that also enable them to be dated. The long narratives often contain historical data, such as the names of kings or important events, which can be correlated with transmitted texts, but they also provide valuable information about local calligraphic styles, linguistic content and shared names, which can allow even the briefest descriptions to be dated. See Shaughnessy 1991, 1999, and Rawson 1999b.

³⁹ Rawson 1999b: 364-368.

⁴⁰ See Keightley 1999: 251-268.

⁴¹ '*Tian ming*': Heaven had given Zhou a mandate to rule. See bronze inscriptions in this period such as the He 何 *zun* inscription (Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 1984: no. 6014). As outsiders, the Zhou kings seemed anxious to look for moral support for their conquest of the Shang, and to claim the rightfulness of their ruling. See related texts in the *Shang shu* 尚書 (*Venerated Documents*, also known as the *Shu jing* 書經, *Classic of Documents*) in Shaughnessy 1999: 314-315, and Luo Xinhui 2012: 4-7.

⁴² Around 1050 BCE, after the conquest of the late Shang polity (c.a. 1250-1050 BCE), the Zhou power came to control some of North China from its centre in the west (primarily in the present-day Shaanxi province) across the Central Plains of China in the east, ruling from the present-day Wei River valley to the middle Yellow River basin, and then to the vast lands of the northern China plains, which covers over 300,000 square kilometres, including parts of present-day Hebei, Henan, Shandong, and part of Shanxi, Jiangsu and Anhui province.

⁴³ Most of the burial goods and the ways they were used in ritual and burial occasions can be seen as a complex, which had been introduced as a 'package' into different places, and integrated with the local material culture to form their own traditions. The term 'ritual and burial occasions' here refers to the habitual use of certain types

Jī-surnamed Zhou Burials

Archaeologists have found almost no evidence of any Zhou royal burials so far, so they have had to switch their attention to the second best choice – the Jī-surnamed state cemeteries – to understand burial traditions initiated in the early Western Zhou period. According to the known burials in the confirmed Jī-surnamed regional states,⁴⁴ their burial practice took over proto-Zhou features (for example the shaft pit with north-south orientation), with elements adopted from Shang burials, such as wooden coffin (*guan* 棺) and coffin chamber (*guo* 槨),⁴⁵ sloping ramp (*mudao* 墓道),⁴⁶ upper platform (*ercengtai* 二層台),⁴⁷ chariot and horse

of tombs, their structures and positions in a whole cemetery, and related arrangements for ritual activities, which may have been heavily affected by local people's ritual and burial tradition, and thus can be seen as indicators of different groups of people. Another term here, 'package', was elaborated by Stuart Piggott in 1992, who used it to describe the introduction of the chariot to China and other parts of Eurasia. In Piggott's argument, the spread of chariots is not as simple as acquiring the animals and artefacts. A whole set of features make a package, including both natural resources (like the proper pasturage, hay, grain and other fodder for the high-performance horses) and human resources (such as skilled stable staffs for horses, construction and maintenance staffs for chariots, and well-trained charioteers for combats). See Piggott 1992: 45-49, and Rawson 2013b: 7-8.

⁴⁴ The major Jī-surnamed Western Zhou cemeteries here include: the Wei 衛 state cemetery at Xincun 莘村, Xunxian 濬縣, Henan province (Guo Baojun 1964); the Yan 燕 state cemetery at Liulihe 琉璃河, Fangshan 房山, Beijing 北京 (Wang Wei and Huang Xiuchun 1984, Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo Liulihe kaogudui 1990, Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo 1995, and Su Tianjun 2000); the Guo state cemetery at Shangcunling 上村嶺, Sanmenxia 三門峽, Henan province (Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo and Sanmenxia wenwu gongzuodui 1992, Jiang Tao *et al.* 1995, and Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui 1999); the Ying 應 state cemetery at Pingdingshan 平頂山, Henan province (Wang Zhenglong *et al.* 1988, and Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo and Pingdingshan shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 1992); and the Jin state cemetery at Beizhao 北趙, Shanxi province (Beijingdaxue kaoguxi and Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 1994, Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijingdaxue kaoguxi 1994a, Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijingdaxue kaoguxi 1994b, and Beijingdaxue kaoguxi and Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 1995); the Rui 芮 state cemetery at Liangdaicun 梁帶村, and Hancheng 韓城, Shaanxi province (Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan *et al.* 2010).

⁴⁵ A confused nomenclature of *guan* and *guo* and their English translations appear in most archaeological reports. To avoid conflicts, in the current study, *guo* refers to the wooden chamber or the outermost wooden coffin, and the rest of the inner ones are all named *guan*. Notably, most of privileged burials were found with two or more *guan*, one nested inside another.

⁴⁶ The *mudao* refers to the sloping ramps towards the side of a shaft pit, ranging from one to four ramps per burial. See a list of burials with *mudao* in Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 1959: 535. In the Western Zhou period, only the most privileged burials were equipped by one or more ramps, but there is no firm evidence that the number of ramps was directly determined by the rank of the tomb occupant. See further discussion in Zhang Yingqiao 2009.

⁴⁷ The *ercengtai* is normally characterised by a half-metre high platform against the wall of a shaft, which can be made during digging (*shengtū* 生土 *ercengtai* in Chinese), or can be constructed after the pit bottom is finished (namely *shutū* 熟土 *ercengtai* in Chinese). If there was no intention to place burial goods on the platform, then it would be built much narrower than those with the purpose of being so used to display items, see the narrow platform in Jin Marquis cemetery and Guo cemetery in Beijingdaxue kaoguxi and Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 1995 and Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui 1999.

pit (*chema keng* 車馬坑),⁴⁸ and waist pit (*yaokeng* 腰坑) in few cases.⁴⁹ So, though certainly not all, the majority of the Jī-surnamed Zhou burials shared common characteristics as follows: a vertical shaft tomb deployed with a wooden coffin chamber and a series of nested coffins lying at the bottom of a north-south rectangular pit, sometimes equipped by one or more chariot and horse pits, and sloping ramps. Although placed on the upper platform in some cases, bronze ritual vessels were normally arranged between the wooden chamber and the coffin, accompanied by groups of other funeral objects, such as weapons, pottery, high-fired ceramics, and lacquer wares. Inside the inner coffin, complex strings of beads and jade plaques were often found with the tomb occupant.⁵⁰

The Jin Marquis cemetery in southern Shanxi province provides a good example of how a Jī lineage arranged their family cemetery over generations. As shown in figure 3, the whole cemetery is evidently self-contained, with three general rows of burials. Approximately in north-south orientation, most of the tombs came in pairs on the basis of successive generations of Jin rulers and their consorts. Coffin chambers, double wooden coffins, and sloping ramps were frequently encountered when excavating these burials. Starting from the east of the cemetery, later generations were usually buried to the west of their forefathers, separated by an assorted chariot and horse pit between adjacent pairs. Inside the shaft pit, bronze and pottery vessels were normally placed in the space between the wooden chamber and the coffin, while jade or other objects were placed inside the inner coffin.⁵¹

Non-Jī-surnamed Zhou Burials

The Western Zhou burial tradition of the non-Jī lineages⁵² was complicated. The related tombs were

⁴⁸ The *chema keng* is characteristically a collective term referring to the individual burials of chariots and/or horses up to the Shang period, which sometimes can be divided into two terms – *che keng* 車坑 (chariot pit), and *ma keng* 馬坑 (horse pit). The largest Western Zhou chariot and horse pit known so far is K1 at the Jin Marquis cemetery, buried with 48 chariots and over 100 horses. For an exclusive report of the pit K1, see Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijingdaxue kaogu wenbo xueyuan 2010.

⁴⁹ The *yaokeng* refers to a pit in rectangular or oval shape, set under the ground of the tomb pit, beneath the waist of the tomb occupant, and normally equipped with a sacrificial dog, or very occasionally with sacrificial human or burial goods. Although they started in the late Neolithic period, the waist pits are normally seen as a late Shang tradition, adopted by their successors in the early Zhou period, but much fewer than in the Shang period, see Wang Zhiyou 2006.

⁵⁰ For the examples of strings of beads and jade plaques, see further discussion of the Jin cemetery in Huang 2004, and of the Rui cemetery in Rawson 2013b.

⁵¹ For an example of this arrangement, see M62 in figure 4.

⁵² The major non-Jī-surnamed Western Zhou cemeteries here include: the Baicao 白草坡 site at Lingtai 靈臺, Gansu province (Gansu sheng bowuguan wenwudui 1977); the Yu 漁 state cemeteries at Baoji 寶雞, Shaanxi province (Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988); the Peng 棚 state cemetery at Hengshui 橫水, Jiangxian 絳縣, Shanxi province (Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo *et al.* 2006a); the E state

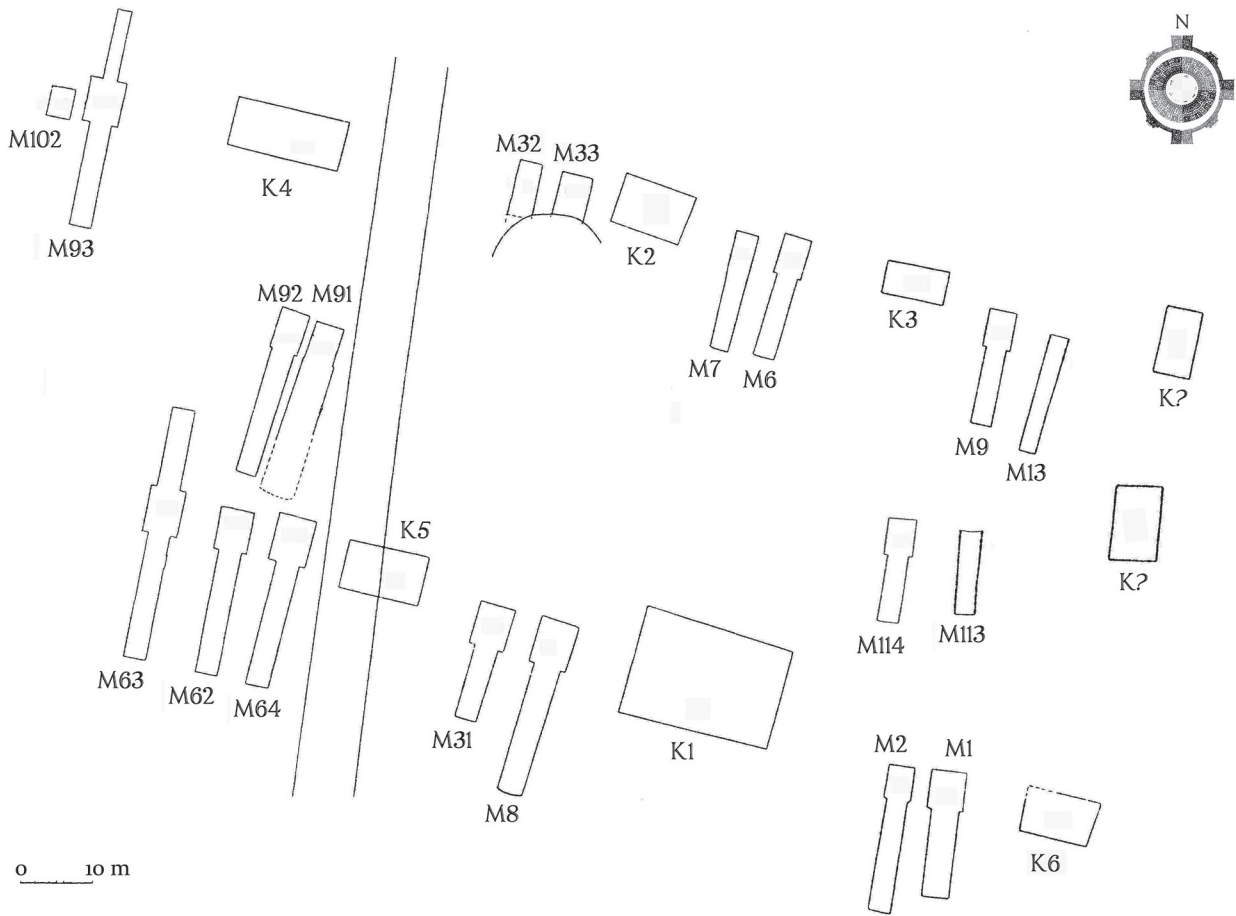


Figure 3. Layout of the main tombs and chariot/horse pits of the Jin marquis cemetery. Redrawn after Beijingdaxue kaogu wenbo xueyuan and Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 2001: fig. 1.

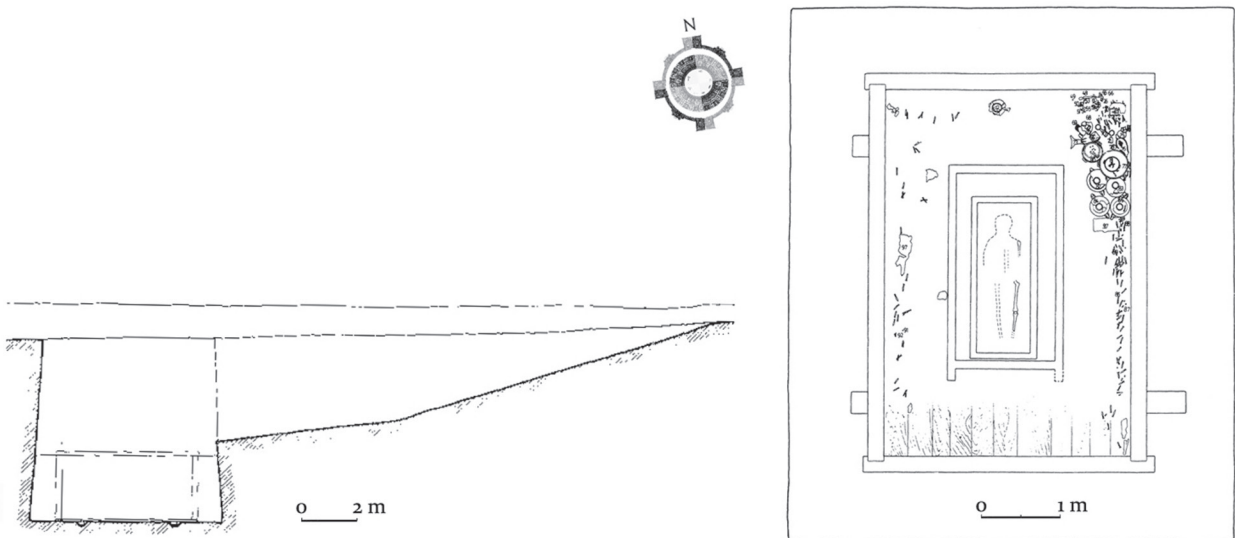


Figure 4. Profile and chamber layout of M62 in the Jin marquis cemetery. Redrawn after Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijingdaxue kaoguxi 1994a: figs. 9 and 10.

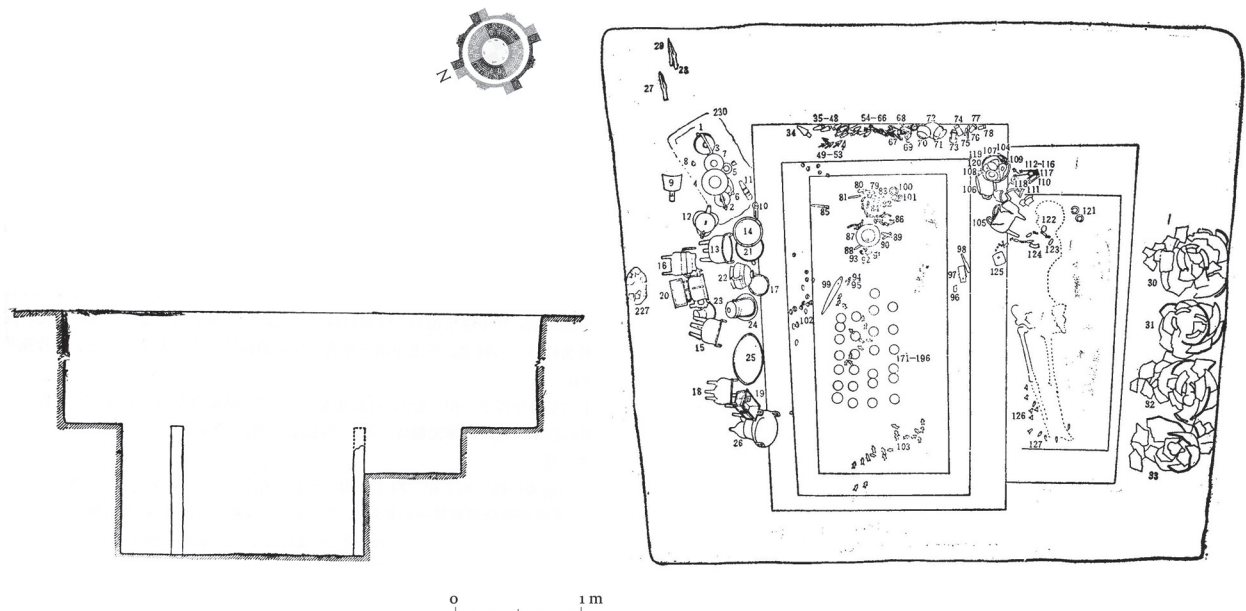


Figure 5. Profile and chamber layout of Zhuyuangou M13. Redrawn after Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988: figs. 33 and 34.

often a mixture of Shang traditions, local traditions, and even some foreign ideas from beyond the Zhou borders. The Shang burial traditions, rarely applied in the Ji-surnamed burials, were better preserved among the non-Ji lineages, such as the east-west orientation (figure 5), and a general use of waist pits (figure 6).⁵³ On the other hand, some characteristics of the non-Ji burials, such as the use of niches (*bikan* 壁龕, see figure 7 and figure 8)⁵⁴ and inclined tunnels (*xiedong* 斜洞), were extremely rare among the Zhou burials. Taking the inclined tunnels in Dahekou M1 for instance,⁵⁵ as

cemetery at Yangzishan, Suizhou, Hubei province (Zhang Changping 2011a); the Ba 霸 state cemetery at Dahekou 大河口, Yicheng 翼城, Shanxi province (Xie Yaoting 2012); the Shigushan 石鼓山 site at Baoji, Shaanxi province (Shigushan kaogudui 2013).

⁵³ For example: 1) the east-west oriented burials at cemeteries of Yu state (figure 5) in Shaanxi, Peng state and Ba state in Shanxi; 2) the massive use of waist pits at Hengshui, Dahekou, and Baicao site (figure 6) in Shanxi and Gansu. In some cases, burial goods were placed inside the coffin chamber, but the non-Ji lineages also preferred to place their bronze ritual vessels on the upper platform (figure 5).

⁵⁴ See examples applied at Shigushan site (figure 7) in Shaanxi and Dahekou site (figure 8) in Shanxi. The *bikan* are the niches burrowed horizontally in the pit wall, normally onto or at some distance above the upper platform. In some cases, at Shigushan for example, *bikan* was associated with a special type of pottery *li*, named *gaoling daizu li* 高領袋足鬲 in Chinese (a tripod *li* with high neck and stout legs, distributed in Shaanxi and Gansu province, see Su Bingqi 1948). The same situation is also seen in Shigushan M4 (excavated in 2013, see Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan *et al.* 2016: 4-52), Zhuanglang 莊浪, Gansu province (Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 2006), and Qishan and Fengxi 豐西, Shaanxi province (Dai Yingxin 1976, Lu Liancheng and Chen Chang 1984), suggesting that the mentioned burials here might have belonged to the same group of people with non-Ji traditions (Shigushan kaogudui 2013).

⁵⁵ Including the Dahekou case, there are only three examples of similar inclined tunnels known so far, all found in the past ten years: one in Hubei (Zeng cemetery at Yejiashan), and two in Shanxi (Ba cemetery at Dahekou, and Peng cemetery at Hengshui), see Shanxi



M2139, Dahekou cemetery, Yicheng, Shanxi

Figure 6. Bird's eye view of a waist pit and a sacrificial dog inside Dahekou M2139. Redrawn after Xie Yaoting 2012: 15.

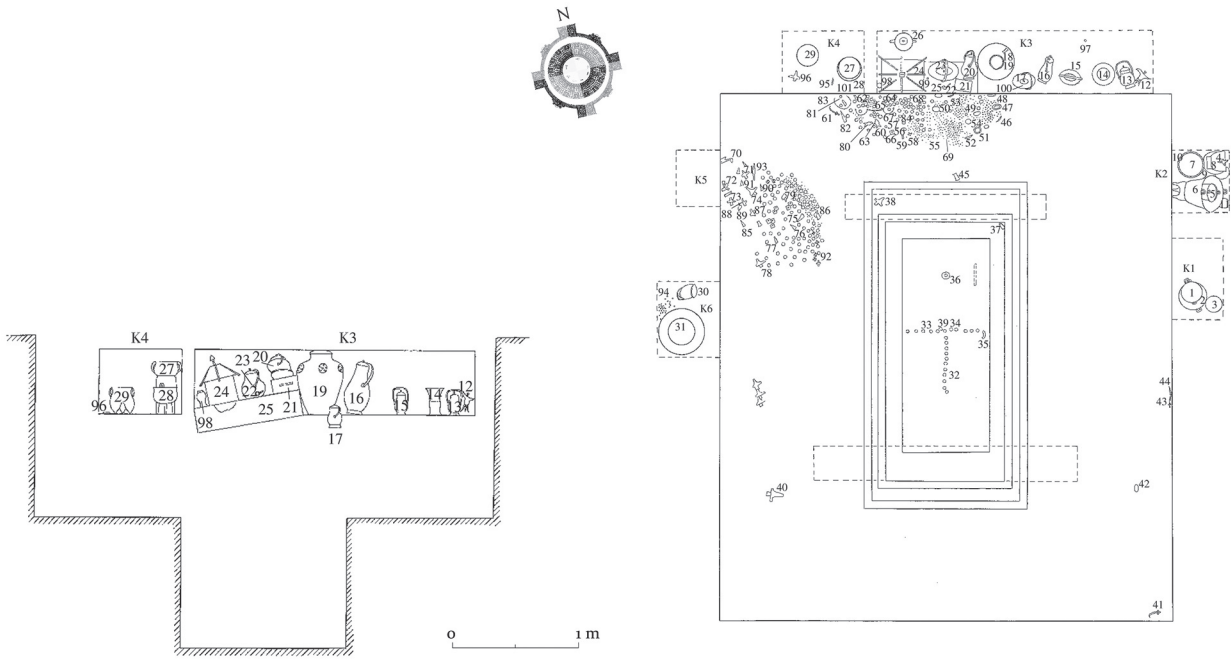
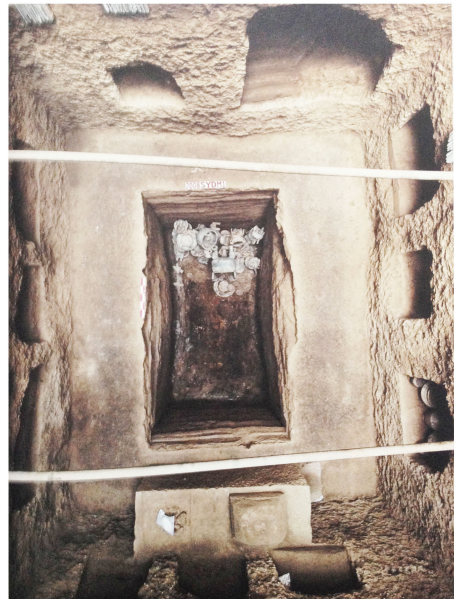


Figure 7. Profile and chamber layout of Shigushan M3. Redrawn after Shigushan kaogudui 2013: figs. 3 and 11.



M2, Hengshui cemetery, Jiang xian, Shanxi



M1, Dahekou cemetery, Yicheng, Shanxi

Figure 8. Bird's eye view of Hengshui M2 and Dahekou M1. Redrawn after Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo *et al.* 2006b: pl. 5.3, and Xie Yaoting 2012: 27.

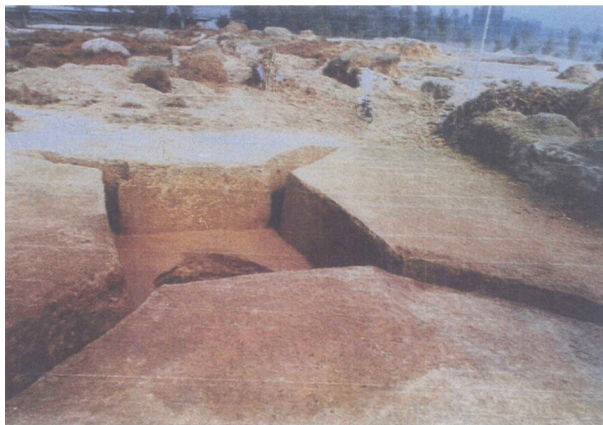


M1, Dahekou cemetery, Yicheng, Shanxi



Inclined tunnels

Figure 9. Dahekou tomb M1 and its four inclined tunnels. Redrawn after Xie Yaoting 2012: 17-18.



M1193, Liulihe cemetery, Fangshan, Beijing

Figure 10. Liulihe tomb M1193 and its four 'sloping ramps'. Redrawn after Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo Liulihe kaogudui 1990: pl. 1.1.

shown in figure 9, four tunnels, in an inclined manner, were constructed next to the four corners of the shaft pit, connecting the ground surface with the middle of the pit wall. The tunnels seem to have been smoothed, but no rope marks or other tool marks were left on their inner surface. Therefore, archaeologists are still confused about the exact purpose of these tunnels and about the reasons why they were constructed like

sheng kaogu yanjiusuo *et al.* 2006a, Hubei shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011, and Xie Yaoting 2012. In 1986, archaeologists found a large tomb in the Yan cemetery at Beijing Liulihe. It seems to have a similar tunnel-like structure at each corner (figure 10), but the tunnels measured at least one meter in diameter, and are described as sloping ramps, see Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo Liulihe kaogudui 1990: 20-21.

this.⁵⁶ But for now, at least one point is clear: such a structure was not a Zhou custom. Rather than being imposed by the dominant culture, these tunnels and the related practice are more likely to have been chosen by the people of the locality. If these non-*jī* lineages did learn the idea from some groups other than the Zhou, the social connection between them must have been tight, as they maintained their non-Zhou identities by this practice.⁵⁷

Burials in the Suizao corridor

Since the 21st century, a number of large cemeteries found in the Suizao corridor have been well excavated and published.⁵⁸ Three of them, all associated with the Zeng state, are especially relevant to this study: 1) the Yejiashan cemetery in Suizhou, dated to the 11th–10th century BCE;⁵⁹ 2) the Guojiamiao cemetery in Zaoyang,

⁵⁶ The excavators at Shanxi give three explanations of the use of these tunnels: 1) to place the coffin/coffin chamber with ropes through the tunnel; 2) to help refill the pit with earth through the tunnel; and 3) to help the spirit go out through the tunnel. See Xie Yaoting 2012: 17-19. But none of these explanations make perfect sense in the face of the evidence we see today.

⁵⁷ Later in Chapter II, this non-*jī* practice will be used to illustrate how much the Zeng state practice resemble those of the non-*jī*.

⁵⁸ Not only the newly excavated cemeteries mentioned here, but also excavations in the last 40 years also provide a number of key hints on understanding of the local burial traditions, such as the Leigudun cemetery, excavated in 1978, 1982 and 2003 (Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989, Suizhou shi bowuguan 2008, and Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi wenwuju 2003), the Sujialong 蘇家壘 cemetery, excavated in 1966 and 2008 (Hubei sheng bowuguan 1972a, and Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2011), and the Jiuliandun 九連墩 cemetery excavated in 2002-2003 (Liu Guosheng 2003, and Hubei sheng bowuguan 2007).

⁵⁹ For the 2011 excavation of the Yejiashan cemetery, see brief reports (including tombs M1, M2, M27, M65) in Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011a, Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011b, Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2012; for brief information and burial goods of the later excavations after 2013 (including tombs M28, M111, M50), see a Yejiashan catalogue in Hubei sheng bowuguan *et al.* 2013.



Figure 11. Layout and major burials of the Yejiashan cemetery. Redrawn after Hubei sheng bowuguan *et al.* 2013: 12.

dated to the 9th–mid-7th century BCE;⁶⁰ and 3) the Wenfengta cemetery in Suizhou, dated to the 6th–5th century BCE.⁶¹ Each of the following chapters will focus on one of them.

⁶⁰ For the 2002–2003 excavation of the Guojiamiao cemetery, see a primary report in Xiangfan shi kaogudui *et al.* 2005.

⁶¹ For brief reports of the Wenfengta excavation, see Hubei sheng

Since 2011, archaeologists have excavated a large-scale, early Western Zhou cemetery at Yejiashan with 147 burials. As highlighted in figure 11, most of the tombs at the ruler's level were placed on a highly visible mound, surrounded by middle-sized and

wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2013, and Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2014a.

smaller burials. Like other contemporary Zhou burials in north, the locations of all the important burials had been carefully arranged. Starting with a possible ruler's tomb M1 in the north part of the cemetery, three pairs of major burials of later generations, all east-west oriented, were arranged in two orderly rows running north to south.⁶² Coffin chambers and single wooden coffins were conventional settings. Waist pits are only seen in the earliest generations M1 and M3, while sloping ramps and horse pits were employed for the later and largest burials M28 and M111. In most of the cases, weapons and the vessels in bronze, ceramic, lacquer and stoneware were placed in groups on the upper platform. Jade, chariot and harness ornaments were found inside the inner coffin.

The early Spring-and-Autumn Guojiamiao cemetery was first found in 2002, which is located at the other end of the corridor, about ten miles southeast of Zaoyang city and 50 miles northwest of Suizhou city.⁶³ Most of the burial traditions in the previous Yejiashan period seem to have been continued here. There are in total 25 tombs, two chariot pits and one horse pit excavated in this cemetery, all arranged in east-west orientation. Sitting on the higher ground, the largest burials GM21 and GM17 are believed to belong to a couple, possibly a Zeng ruler and his consort. Each of them has a rounded tomb pit with a sloping ramp to its east (highlighted in figure 12). GM21 was equipped with a coffin chamber and double coffins, and GM17 had a single coffin plus a small compartment to the south of its wooden chamber. The whole cemetery started with GM21 (dated to the end of the Western Zhou period), and later burials were normally placed to the south of the earlier ones. All the burials here had long been looted in a seemingly organised way, so apart from a small compartment of GM17, most of the burial goods were gone or heavily disturbed. From what is left of them today, the bronzes, ceramic vessels, chariot and horse ornaments and weapons are normally found between the wooden chamber and coffin, while the jade, carnelian beads and smaller bronze ornaments are next to the occupant.

The Wenfengta cemetery, newly excavated in 2012, is situated in the southern part of Suizhou city,⁶⁴ three

miles southeast of the Leigudun 擂鼓墩 cemetery.⁶⁵ As with the situation at Guojiamiao, this cemetery had also been heavily looted in early periods. The 2012 excavation revealed 54 shaft tombs, two chariot and horse pits, and one horse pit. Most of the burials, though not all, adopted an east-west orientation as well, and were arranged approximately from north to south (figure 13). Some larger burials were equipped with waist pits and sloping ramps. The largest burial, M18 in the south part of the cemetery, is especially interesting for its cross-shaped tomb structure. With a stepped sloping ramp to its south, the main coffin chamber of M18 was surrounded by four square compartments, one on each side.⁶⁶ The main chamber contains a nest of three inner coffins, and a round waist pit with a pottery vessel inside. Outside the tomb pit, there are three additional pits (two by two metres) to its east, north, and west. Most of the surviving burial goods in M18 are found in the east compartment, and in the additional pits.⁶⁷

These recent discoveries have outlined a long-lasting Zeng state all through the Zhou dynasty. Although its continuity between Yejiashan and later periods still remain in doubt,⁶⁸ most scholars are nudging towards the conclusion that the Zeng, as a Zhou regional power, was sustained in the Suizao corridor from no later than 1000 to 350 BCE.⁶⁹ If that was the case, the related studies may be able to reveal the development process of a local material culture over a relatively long period of time, thereby reflecting the changes of social identity of the people lived in the Suizao corridor in the negotiations between locals and their contemporaries.

kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2014a. Before that, three individual burials, Wenfengta M1, M2 (2009), and M3 (2011) were found 100 metres southwest of the 2012 Wenfengta site, see Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2014b. All the mentioned burials are located in the Yidigang 義地崗 area, where a number of Zeng burials have been found in the past 30 years.
⁶⁵ The Leigudun cemetery is normally referred to as the general area where the famous Leigudun M1 (tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng 曾侯乙墓) and M2 are located. However, the name 'Leigudun' is actually the name of a mound next to the high ground of M1 and M2, and the name of their own mounds is East Tuanpo 東團坡 and West Tuanpo 西團坡, see Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi wenwuju 2003: 25-32, and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2008: 1-7.

⁶⁶ The east compartment is the only one that survived without being looted in the past. Over 70 bronzes are found inside this compartment, ranging from *ding*, *gui*, *li*, to *jian*, and square *hu*.

⁶⁷ The instalment of compartments (or storages as some scholars believe) is occasionally found in tombs dated to the Spring-and-Autumn period (such as the compartment in Guojiamiao GM17). Meanwhile the idea was widely spread in Warring States period (such as Pingshan 平山 M1 in Zhongshan 中山 state cemetery, see Hebei sheng wenwu guanlichu 1979a), especially the Chu-related burials, the Leigudun M1 for example. However, such a cross-shaped arrangement in Suizhou is one of a kind in this period.

⁶⁸ There are clear 'gaps' between the Yejiashan and later periods. For example: 1) the calligraphy of the character 'Zeng' in bronze inscription was changed from '𠄎' in Yejiashan to the later '𠄎'; 2) the possible change of surname of the Zeng rulers from non-Ji in Yejiashan period to Ji in later periods. The related issues will be discussed further in Chapter II.

⁶⁹ Li Xueqin *et al.* 2011: 64-77.

⁶² The east-west orientation of Zeng burials, though was not a typical Zhou choice of burial practice, seems to be very stable in the Zeng state, which can be observed archaeologically all through the six centuries of Zeng history.

⁶³ In 1972 and 1983, two individual burials were found in the Caomenwan 曹門灣 area (see KG1975.4, and Tian Haifeng 1983), only 300 metres to the south of Guojiamiao cemetery. Due to the distance, the Caomenwan area is recognised as part of the Guojiamiao cemetery. To differentiate them, in the Guojiamiao primary report, they are named separately after their initials (Caomenwan: CM-; Guojiamiao: GM-). See Xiangfan shi kaogudui *et al.* 2005: 4-7. In 2014-2015, another rescue excavation took place at the Caomenwan area, and revealed 28 burials. For further details, see Fang Qin and Hu Gang 2015.

⁶⁴ The main body of Wenfengta cemetery was excavated in 2012, see Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2013, and Hubei sheng wenwu

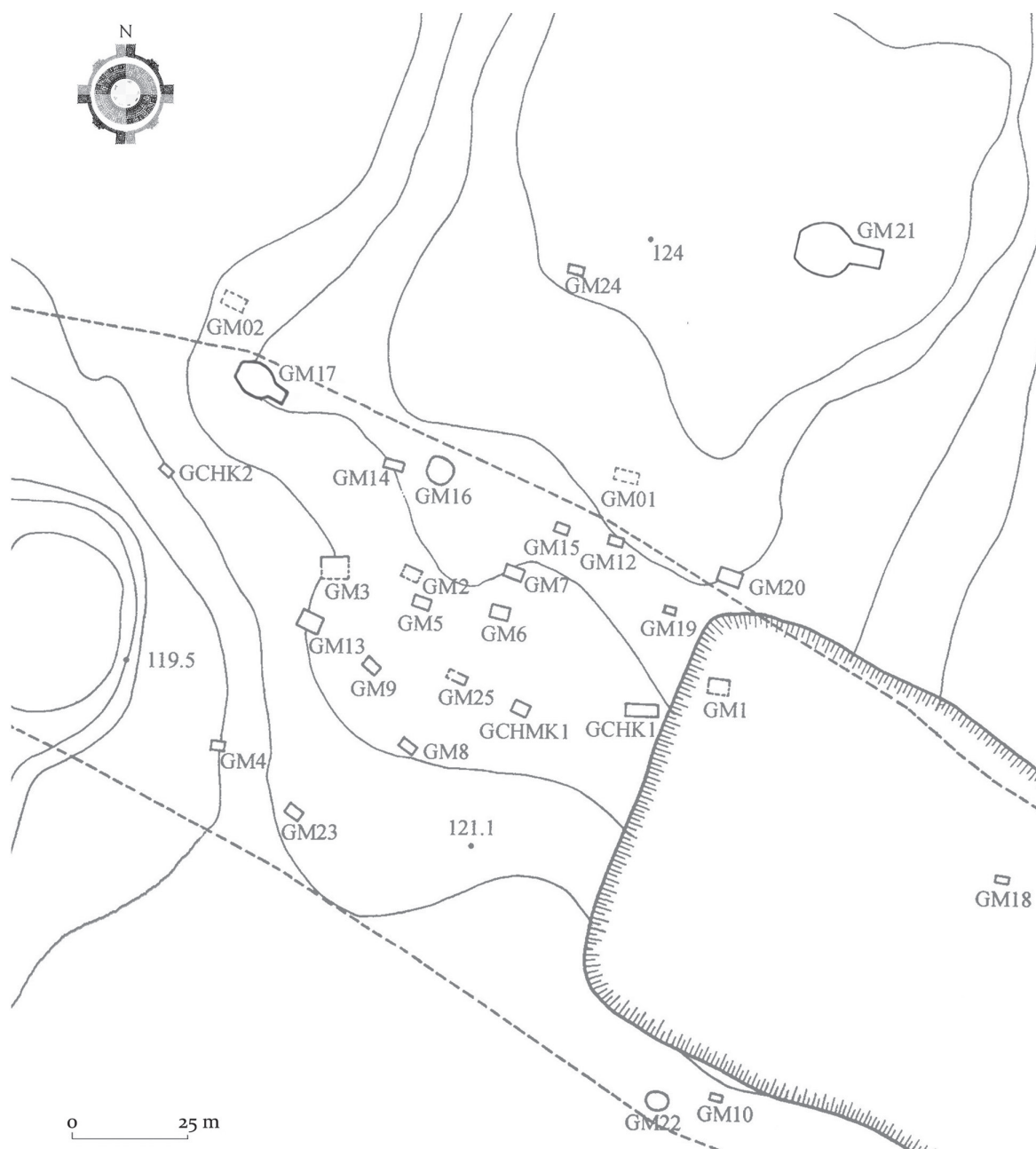


Figure 12. Layout and major burials of Guojiamiao cemetery. Redrawn after Xiangfan shi kaogudui *et al.* 2005: fig. 3.

3. Geographical background

Situated on the south boundary of the Zhou realm (figure 1), the Suizao corridor had been inevitably involved in the interactions between the northern Zhou or non-Zhou groups and the social groups along the Yangtze River region and further south.⁷⁰ In this

⁷⁰ Although it is still not clear whether in the Shang and Zhou periods there was a massive transmission of copper ore from the Yangtze River region to the north, the discovery of the large-scale mining and smelting sites in Hubei Tonglǐshan 銅綠山 and Anhui Tongling 銅陵 has made it hard to deny that the widely distributed bronze cultures in the north, or at least some of them, may probably have had some metal sources from the south. See reports of the mentioned

sense, the current section focuses on an extended river network, which will be defined and discussed below. The communications within this network are likely to have been driven by the demand for metal or other precious resources. An interactive research method will be thus applied to explain the flow of raw material, intermediate goods, and the employment of similar artefacts found in different social groups.⁷¹ Therefore,

sites in Huangshi shi bowuguan 1999 and Anhui sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2013.

⁷¹ Take the study of metal flow for instance. In recent years, the ways of using chemical and archaeological data as indicators to trace movement of both metal and artefacts have been widely used in

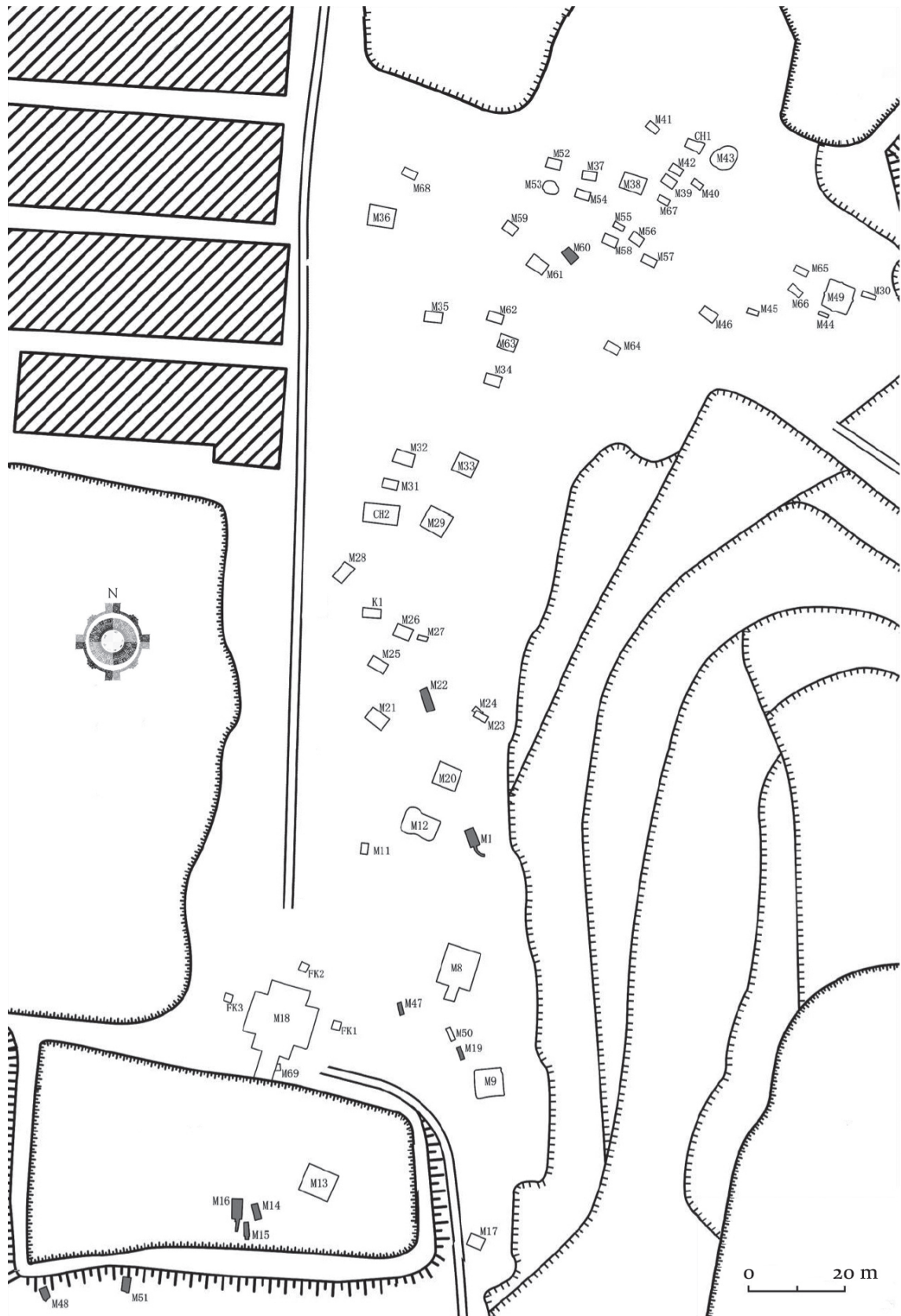


Figure 13. Layout of Wenfengta cemetery. Redrawn after Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2013: fig. 1.

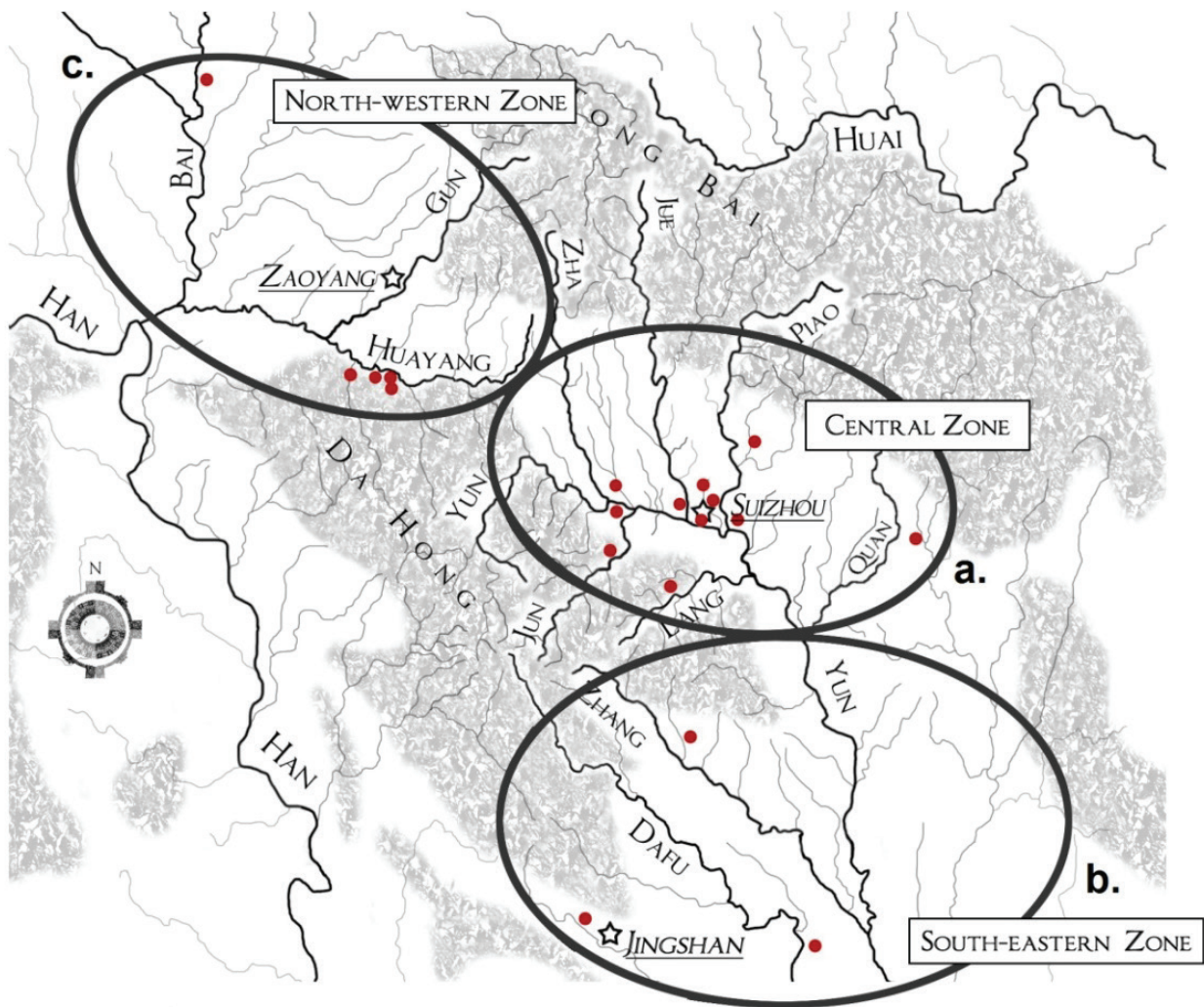


Figure 14. Local river network in the Suizao corridor, and three zones of the main Zeng burials in Zhou period. Drawn by Beichen Chen.

the geographical relations of archaeological sites and the communication channels between them become extremely important to the current study.

The Suizao corridor

The Suizao corridor is situated in the gap between the foothills of the Qinling Mountains and the plain west

related studies, such as the FLAME project (Flow of Ancient Metals across Eurasia) at the School of Archaeology, Oxford. In a recent paper, Jessica Rawson, as one of the project partners, suggests that in Shang period, 'large and elaborate castings... from Sanxingdui and... Hunan, Jiangxi and Anhui, suggest that at least some of these distinctive bronze industries must have been based upon large and stable supplies of metal', see Pollard *et al.* 2017. Their burial goods show that the Shang did not have allegiance from these regional powers who may have controlled metal sources along the Yangtze River. If the following Zhou people wanted to access these sources, allegiance from the neighbouring areas was essential, and the Suizao corridor was apparently one of the favourite places that the Zhou would have needed.

of the main area of the Huai River. In addition to the land access through the Nanyang 南陽 basin to its north (figure 1), the corridor is also well connected to its west and southeast by series of major waterways. As illustrated by figure 14, the locations of the Zeng-related burials show that they were likely to be moving around on the basis of the river network. To facilitate the discussion, the corridor is divided into three zones on the basis of local rivers: 1) *Central zone* in the Suizhou area, based on the tributaries and the upper and middle reaches of the Yun River; 2) *South-eastern zone* in the Jingshan 京山 area, based on the tributaries and the lower reach of the Yun River; and 3) *North-western zone* in the Zaoyang area, based on the tributaries of the Han River.

The *central zone* is normally considered as the core of the Suizao corridor, as this particular area has been a rich source of archaeological remains from the

whole Zhou period (figure 14a).⁷² All the key sites are distributed along the major waterway – the Yun River and its network of six main tributaries: four of them, the Zha 滎, Jue 灊, Piao 漂, and Quan 泉 come from the Tongbai Mountains; and the other two, the Jun 均 and Lang 浪, rise in the Dahong Mountains.⁷³ With the help of this river network, the importance of this zone is self-evident: to the west of the central zone, the river Zha is closely connected with rivers in the north-western zone; to its north, the Jue and Piao almost reach the region of the Huai River on the other side of the Tongbai Mountains; to its south, the Yun, Jun and Lang, as well as the two rivers in the south-eastern zone, all originate in the same mountainous area, very close to each other. Therefore, it is believed that the Yun may have been used as the primary route of transportation for people to communicate through the Suizao corridor.

Only a few sites are confirmed in the *south-eastern zone*, all dated from the late Western Zhou to the early Spring-and-Autumn period (figure 14b).⁷⁴ As in the central zone, the most convenient route of communication here would be by the main channel of the River Yun. With its help, people were able quickly to reach the possible mineral priority areas at Daye 大冶 Tonglùshan near the present-day Wuhan 武漢 on the bank of the Yangtze River.⁷⁵ In the meantime, its tributaries, Zhang 漳 and Dafu 大富, also provide an alternative way from the corridor to its southeast. Although sparsely distributed, the sites located in the transitional areas between the Dahong Mountains and the lower reaches of the Yun imply a certain degree of communication between the mountainous area and the open plains.

As an important gateway from the Yangtze region to both the Central Plains (via the Nanyang basin) and to southwest China (via the Han River or the Yangtze

River),⁷⁶ the *north-western zone* also contains rich burials dated from the late Western Zhou to the Warring States period (figure 14c).⁷⁷ The west-flowing Huayang goes down the north side of the Dahong Mountains, joins the Gun 滾 and then goes further west, meeting the Bai 白 and soon running into the Han River. Most of the tributaries of the mentioned three rivers rise in Tongbai Mountains, running away from the mountainous regions to its southwest, and interrupting, or, at least showing down, the direct on-land communication between the Huayang region and the Nanyang basin in the north to a large degree. Therefore, it is likely that the best choice for travel between the Suizao corridor and the northwest was along the main channels of the Huayang and Gun to reach the confluence of the three rivers (figure 14c). Then the river network provided two choices for a route further west: 1) to enter directly the Hanzhong 漢中 basin via the Han river valley; and 2) to go further south via the Han River, entering the Yangtze region, and then turn west to the Sichuan basin via the Yangtze River.

Arc of territory

Given the close ties between the Suizao corridor and southwest China through the main rivers, it is necessary to take into account of interaction with the ‘outsiders’, those who lived on or beyond the boundaries of the Shang and Zhou ‘metropolitan area’.⁷⁸ The arc of territory, or a literal translation from its original term – ‘the crescent-shaped cultural-communication belt (*banyuexing wenhua chuanbodai* 半月形文化傳播帶),’⁷⁹ refers to the vast lands of mountain and highland regions, covering most of the areas from present-day Yunnan, Qinghai, Sichuan, the south of Gansu and Hexi 河西 corridor, to Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei and further to Inner Mongolia and Liaoning (figure 15). A wide range of local groups are believed to have been moving around in this broad area of mainly elevated terrain. Although the whole area is vast, similar materials and burial traditions were often borrowed from one another, such

⁷² The locations of the main burials in the central zone are as follow: 1) Yangzishan, Yejiashan in the early Western Zhou period; 2) Xiongjialaowan 熊家老灣 (E Bing 1973), Taohuapo 桃花坡 (Suizhou shi bowuguan 1982a), Hejiatai 何家台 (Suizhou shi bowuguan 1982b), Xuguang Zhuanwachang 旭光磚瓦廠 (Zuo Detian 1985), Wudian 吳店 (Yingshan xian wenhuaguan wenwuzu 1980), Yidigang (Suizhou shi kaogudui 1994), and Huangtupo 黃土坡 (Tuo Gu and Xiong Yan 2007) from the late Western Zhou to the early Spring-and-Autumn period; and 3) Leigudun, Wenfengta in the Warring States period.

⁷³ These six tributaries are only chosen for the convenience of discussion, as they are very close to the archaeological sites nearby. They do not represent all the tributaries of the Yun River in the Suizao corridor.

⁷⁴ The locations of the main burials in the south-eastern zone are as follows: Sujialong, Xibeitai 西北台 (Xiong Xuebing 1983), Yingcheng 應城 Zhuanwachang 磚瓦廠 (Li Yinan and Wang Yanming 1996).

⁷⁵ Within an area of eight square kilometres, archaeologists have found hundreds of tunnels and shafts with wooden structures, copper-smelting stoves, tools and tons of slag, indicating that the Tonglùshan was possibly a large-scale mining and smelting site with rich underground deposits, which may have been functional from the Western Zhou period to the Han period. For the primary report of the Tonglùshan site, see Huangshi shi bowuguan 1999.

⁷⁶ For the relative positions of the mentioned places and rivers, see figure 1.

⁷⁷ The locations of the main burials in the north-western zone are as follows: Xiaoxiguan 小西關 (Zheng Jiexiang 1973), Duanying 段營 (Hubei sheng bowuguan 1975), Zhoujiagang 周家崗 (Suizhou shi bowuguan 1984), Guojiamiao (Xiangfan shi kaogudui *et al.* 2005) from the late Western Zhou to early Spring-and-Autumn period; and Jiuliandun (Liu Guosheng 2003, and Hubei sheng bowuguan 2007) in the mid-Warring States period.

⁷⁸ The term ‘outsider’ and people from the ‘metropolitan area’ are two relative concepts. The latter normally refers to China’s Central Plains and the surrounding areas, including the main cities such as Zhengzhou 鄭州, Panlongcheng 盤龍城 and Anyang in Shang period, and the regional states of Jin, Wei and Yan in the Zhou period, see Rawson 1998: 115. Notably, before the conquest of Shang, the Zhou people themselves had also been seen as outsiders to the authority in the Central Plains. See Rawson 1989.

⁷⁹ See the original definition of the arc of territory in Tong Enzheng’s 童恩正 paper in Tong Enzheng 1986. Also see Rawson’s reinterpretation in Rawson 2013a, and 2013b.

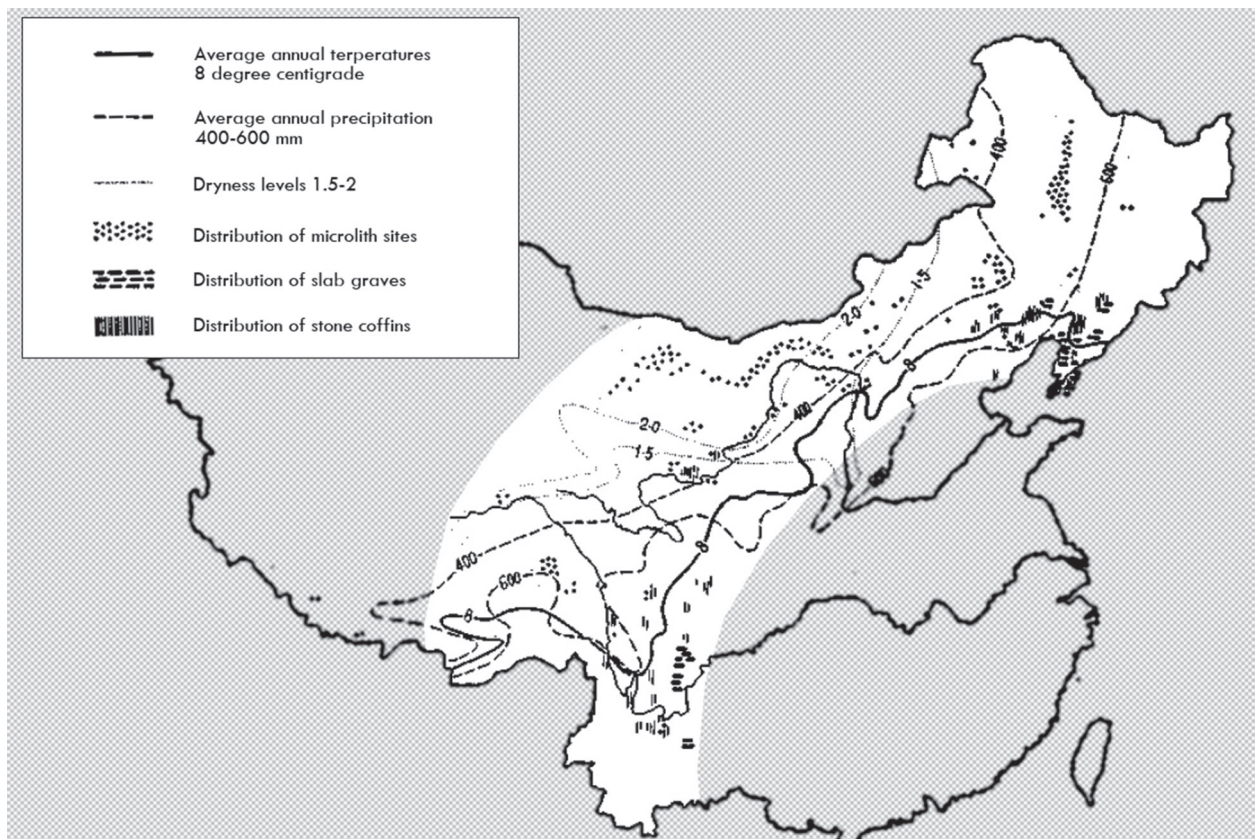


Figure 15. General map of the arc of territory. Redrawn after Tong Enzheng 1986: 19.

as the wide use of stone tombs,⁸⁰ and the long-distance spread of bronzes with animal-related designs.⁸¹ This crescent-shaped region is therefore treated as a whole geographic unit, sharing similar traditions internally, while never ceasing to interact with central China and other regions in East Asia.

The idea of the arc as a ‘cultural-communication belt’ has been further supported by a number of new archaeological discoveries, such as the southern style triangular bronze *ge* 戈 found at the Yu cemetery in Shaanxi,⁸² and the discovery of northern style bronze weapons at the Yangtze region in west Sichuan.⁸³ In the meantime, many researchers have continuously added new dimensions to the current understanding of the arc. Focusing on the early types of pottery *li*, Miyamoto Kazuo 宮本一夫 discusses the interactions between central China’s farming zone and the north farming-pastoral transitional region.⁸⁴ After years of excavation in Shaanxi province, Xu Tianjin 徐天進 points out that the Zhouyuan 周原 and its

neighbouring areas are not only the birthplace of Zhou, but also a crossroad of cultural interaction between the Central Plains and other regions.⁸⁵ Jessica Rawson uses a number of unusual burial goods found at the Rui state cemetery in Shaanxi to discuss the shared features within the arc, and their connections with areas outside the Zhou centres.⁸⁶ Using the arc as a clue, Anke Hein investigates the archaeological materials from southwest China, including western Sichuan, northwest Yunnan and eastern Tibet, and discusses their long-distance connections to north China.⁸⁷ In light of these studies, the current book, while focusing on waterway communication, will also discuss what this arc of territory contributed to the local material culture in northern Hubei province.

The extended river network

To this study, the arc of territory provides an important means of communication to bridge China’s north and

⁸⁰ Tong Enzheng 1986: 23-24.

⁸¹ Tong Enzheng 1986: 30-31.

⁸² Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988.

⁸³ Sichuan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo *et al.* 2012.

⁸⁴ Here the distribution of pottery *li* refers to China’s Great Wall region, ranging from the west Liaoning, south parts of Inner Mongolia and Shanxi, to the Wei River valley in Shaanxi, Miyamoto 2006: 109-111.

⁸⁵ Xu Tianjin 2006.

⁸⁶ Many of the shared features were used by peoples in present-day Xinjiang, Mongolia and Siberia. See discussions of the use of miniature bronzes in Rawson 2013a. The unusual burial goods here also include alien types of ceramic vessels and hanging beads from trapezoidal plaques, see Rawson 2013b.

⁸⁷ Here the south-western materials refer to stone graves, double-handled jars, and ‘animal style’ designs in bronze work and decoration, see Hein 2014: 4-6.



Figure 16. Map of extended river network. Drawn by Beichen Chen.

south, not from the eastern plains of China, but from the western mountainous region (figure 1). To be specific, it shows a close relationship in the material culture between the north – the Wei River valley, and the south – the Yangtze River region (figure 16). When the notion of the arc was first introduced, similar choices of population movement and human activities were mostly attributed to the similarity of the natural environment.⁸⁸ However, except for a few scholars,⁸⁹ the rivers' contribution to the arc of territory is rarely noted, although waterway transportation is normally considered as one of the most convenient and cost-efficient means in ancient times.

Figure 17 shows a sketch of river network along China's west and south boundary, which is abstracted from figure 16. Both north and south China have their own river courses running from the west mountainous region to the east plains: 1) the Wei River and Yellow

River in the north, connecting the Zhou royal domain with the Central Plains; 2) the Yangtze River in the south, connecting the Sichuan basin with the Lianghu 兩湖 Plains.⁹⁰ But the north-south paths that connect the two main river regions are quite rare. One of them, perhaps the only direct waterway route, is by the south-flowing Jialing 嘉陵 River within the arc. This river provides a significant north-south expressway, communicating from the Wei River valley to the Yangtze River region.⁹¹ It also passes by the west end

⁸⁸ The natural environment here refers to solar radiation, air temperature and moisture, rainfall, animal and plant resources. See Tong Enzheng 1986: 33-34.

⁸⁹ Such as Jessica Rawson, who has pointed out the important of waterway communication between Shaanxi and Sichuan (using the main rivers from Sichuan, going up, rounding the Qinling Mountains from its west, and arriving at Shaanxi), see Rawson 1989: 82-83.

⁹⁰ The Lianghu Plains are named after the two provinces Hubei and Hunan. It is composed of the Jiangnan 江漢 Plains in Hubei and the Dongting 洞庭 Plains in Hunan, separated by the Yangtze River. Although there is no assurance that the river system in Zhou period was the same as it is today, the received texts have pictured a much wetter land in Hubei and Hunan, with rich river and lake resources, which was together called the Yummeng ze 雲夢澤 (Mere of Yunmeng), generally located in the north of Yangtze River and along the Han River region. See Zou Yilin 1993: 32-35.

⁹¹ Although the Jialing River does not directly reach the Wei River valley, it starts high in the Qinling Mountains, very close to the source of a small tributary of the Wei River. This tributary, named Qingjiang 清姜 River, runs towards the northeast, and meets the Wei River right at the Baoji city. From a present-day satellite's view, the two rivers are connected by a zigzag mountain road, with a distance of only 10 kilometres or less. Further information and the geography of the area can be found at Google Maps 2014: <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Jialingjiang>, 2 September 2014.

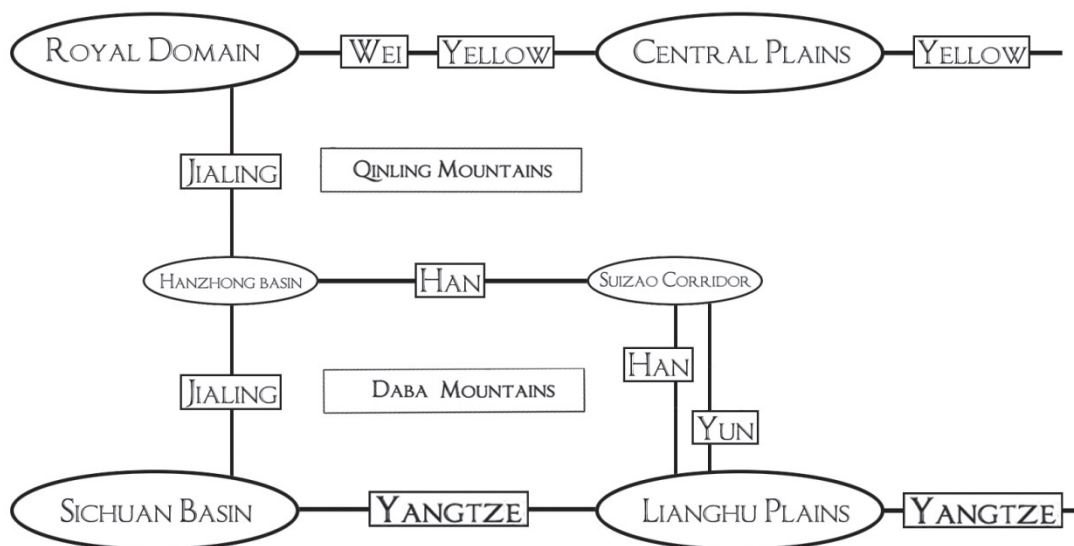


Figure 17. A sketch of general river network. Drawn based on Figure 16, by Beichen Chen.

of the Hanzhong basin, where the southeast-flowing Han River has its origin.⁹² The Han is able to swiftly reach the Suizao corridor, and further the Lianghu plains in the middle reaches of the Yangtze region. As described in previous sections, the locals from the Suizao corridor, and possibly other people from further south, had already well recognised the importance of rivers in the Bronze Age. Unlike the Shang people who based themselves in the Central Plains, the Zhou, who originated in the arc of territory, were likely to have a better connection than the Shang with the south, and therefore, a better chance to acquire the knowledge of how to take advantage of the river network.

4. Literature review

Before introducing the main methodology to be applied in this research, it is necessary to get a general sense of the development of Chinese archaeology (Chinese bronze studies in particular), their strengths, weaknesses, and the resulting Zeng studies.

The current understanding of the study of Chinese bronzes has two major sources: 1) the traditional studies of Chinese bronze and stone (*Jinshixue* 金石學 in Chinese) and Antiquarianism (*Guqiwuxue* 古器物學 in Chinese), which started from the Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279 AD), focusing on documentary evidence and basic features of bronzes, for example their inscriptions and decorations; 2) Art History and Archaeology from the

West, which were first introduced to China in the early 20th century,⁹³ concentrating on material evidence and context, such as the making of bronzes, their usage in ritual performance, and their burial environment. Additionally, the tendency to follow traditional historiography, as a 'by-product' of the major sources, also constitutes an indispensable element in current bronze studies.⁹⁴

As the social group who had actual control over the Suizao corridor for centuries, the state of Zeng was likely to be more powerful and influential than any other coexisting groups in this area, so the Zeng tradition can be seen as a representative of the local material culture to a large extent. In this sense, Zeng history and the study of Zeng bronzes are important sources for us to understand the Suizao corridor and the people who lived in it. The following sections are set to review the research history of Zeng bronzes, to see how the current understanding of the Zeng material culture has been formed.

Traditional studies of Zeng bronzes

Bronze and stone studies in China and the later Antiquarianism had developed in the Song dynasty and the Qing 清 dynasty (1636-1912 AD), when collecting and cataloguing antiquities were in vogue.⁹⁵ The

⁹² The overland linear distance between the Jialing River and the source of Han River is less than 30 kilometres. For further information of this route, see *Google Maps 2014*: <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Hanjiang>, 2 September 2014.

⁹³ The first archaeology-based excavations in China all took place in 1920s. For further discussion, see the section 'Archaeological approaches' later in this section."

⁹⁴ See further discussion in the section 'Tendency towards historiography' below.

⁹⁵ After the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907 AD), traditional Chinese

greatest achievements of these early studies were catalogues of bronze collections,⁹⁶ which included rich information covering the basics of a bronze vessel, for example the shape, decoration, inscription and the place it was first found. Their authors, however, often ignored the importance of these features. Most of them concentrated only on the bronze inscriptions and on how to interpret them in a documentary context.⁹⁷ Examples include some Zeng bronzes first catalogued by Xue Shangong in 1144 (figure 18),⁹⁸ and then by Ruan Yuan 阮元 in 1804 (figure 19).⁹⁹

Entering the twentieth century, possibly influenced by the development of modern archaeology, the location of the Zeng capital became an important topic of discussion. In his 1940 book, *Zeng Yigong* 曾毅公 (1903-1991) claimed that the known Zeng bronzes must have belonged exclusively to a documented Zeng 鄫 state in Shandong.¹⁰⁰ Such an arbitrary conclusion may have been caused partially by the related transmitted texts and partially by Zeng Yigong's own conjecture, as it was difficult to locate where the bronzes come from under the circumstances back to 1920s. In fact, as some scholars point out, Zeng Yigong may have consciously avoided recording some Zeng bronzes that undermined his argument in this catalogue.¹⁰¹ In the same period, two scholars, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978) and Yang Shuda 楊樹達 (1885-1956) suggested that at least some of the Zeng bronzes in Zeng Yigong's catalogue might have come from a Zeng state in south China, possibly

painting and calligraphy had been greatly developed (Vainker 1996: 8-9). With this trend, the popularity of collecting antiques among the literati also gave fresh impetus to public attention on bronzes. Antiquarians thus begin to treat bronzes seriously and publish their works with the developed printing technique at that time.

⁹⁶ Representative works of these two periods include Lü Dalin's 呂大臨 (1044-1091) *Kaogutu* 考古圖, Wang Fu's 王黼 (1079-1126) *Bogu Tulu* 博古圖錄, Xue Shangong's 薛尚功 *Lidai Zhongding Yiqi Kuanzhi Tulu* 歷代鐘鼎彝器款識圖錄 in the Song dynasty. The Qing catalogues *Xiqing Gujian* 西清古鑒 and *Ningshou Gujian* 寧壽古鑒, both commissioned by the Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 who supported studies of ancient bronzes and made major collections in the Palace.

⁹⁷ Such an attitude of Jinshixue has a far-reaching impact on the related studies, such as the study of Chinese bronzes, which can still be seen in recent works of Chinese archaeology, for example the tendency to emphasis historiography, and the over-dependence on typology.

⁹⁸ The earliest documented Zeng bronzes - the Zeng shi ji fu 曾師季餽 pan was recorded by Xue Shangong in his *Lidai Zhongding Yiqi Kuanzhi Tulu*, but the character 'Zeng' was not recognised, which thus remained absent until the Qing dynasty. For the original record, see Xue Shangong 1986: 165.

⁹⁹ Ruan Yuan (1764-1849), in the late Qing dynasty, recorded two new Zeng bronzes in his *Jiguzhai Zhongding Yiqi Kuanzhi* 積古齋鐘鼎彝器款識: Zeng bo shu 曾伯畧 fu and Zeng zhong 曾仲 pan, see Ruan Yuan 1937: 69-70. Unlike his predecessors, Ruan had successfully recognised the character 'Zeng' 曾, and creatively linked it to the documented 'Zeng 鄫' state, which was a Si-surnamed 姒 state, regarded as 'the seed of Xia 夏' and arguably located in present-day Shandong province. For further discussion, see Qu Wanli's 屈萬里 comment on the bronze fu in Qu Wanli 1962: 337-341.

¹⁰⁰ The original publisher of Zeng Yigong's book: *Shandong Jinwen Jicun Xian Qin Bian* 山東金文集存先秦編 is unclear. For a republished version, see Zeng Yigong 1980.

¹⁰¹ Zhang Changping 2009a: 3.

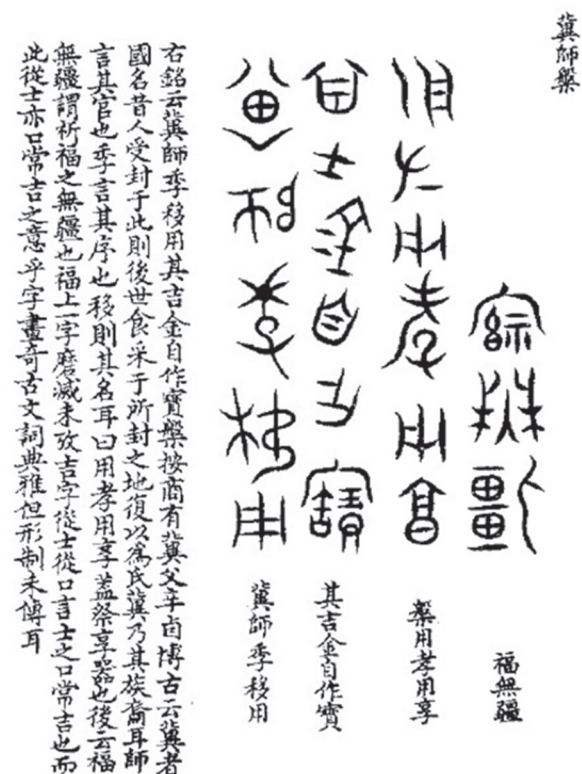


Figure 18. Early documented Zeng bronzes: Zeng-shi-ji-X pan. Redrawn after Xue Shangong 1986: 332-333.

related to the Chu state.¹⁰² On this basis, Liu Jie 劉節 (1901-1977) further indicated that there might have been more than one Zeng state in the Zhou period.¹⁰³

Tendency towards historiography

When modern archaeology was introduced into China in the early 1920s, it did bring new viewpoints and methods into the study of Chinese bronzes.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, the related fields seemed still to be captured by old research habits, especially by the Chinese bias towards historiography.¹⁰⁵ It is basically

¹⁰² In 1933, inspired by a newly excavated bronze square hu, inscribed with 'Zeng ji Wuxu 曾姬無卹' from Anhui province, Guo Moruo and Yang Shuda successively concluded that most of the Zeng bronzes should have come from Shandong. Meanwhile, for the rest of the Zeng bronzes which cannot be associated with the northern tradition, they classified them together as the bronzes that belonged to the Zeng state near the southern Chu region. See Guo Moruo 2002: 207-211, Zhang Zhenglang 2011: 116-117, and 128-129, Yang Shuda 1952: 70-71, 118, 121 and 149.

¹⁰³ Liu Jie 1958: 108-140. Despite being challenged, Liu's viewpoint was soon followed by many other scholars. One of the topics is a debate on Zeng's surname, focusing on two possible surnames Ji and Si. See Li Xueqin's discussion in Sui xian bowuguan 1980: 54-58.

¹⁰⁴ For example the importance of fieldwork was first raised in the early 20th century.

¹⁰⁵ K.C. Chang was one of the first scholars to stand out and criticise this tendency in Chinese archaeology, see Chang 1981: 156-169, which is followed by Lothar von Falkenhausen, see von Falkenhausen 1993b: 839-849.

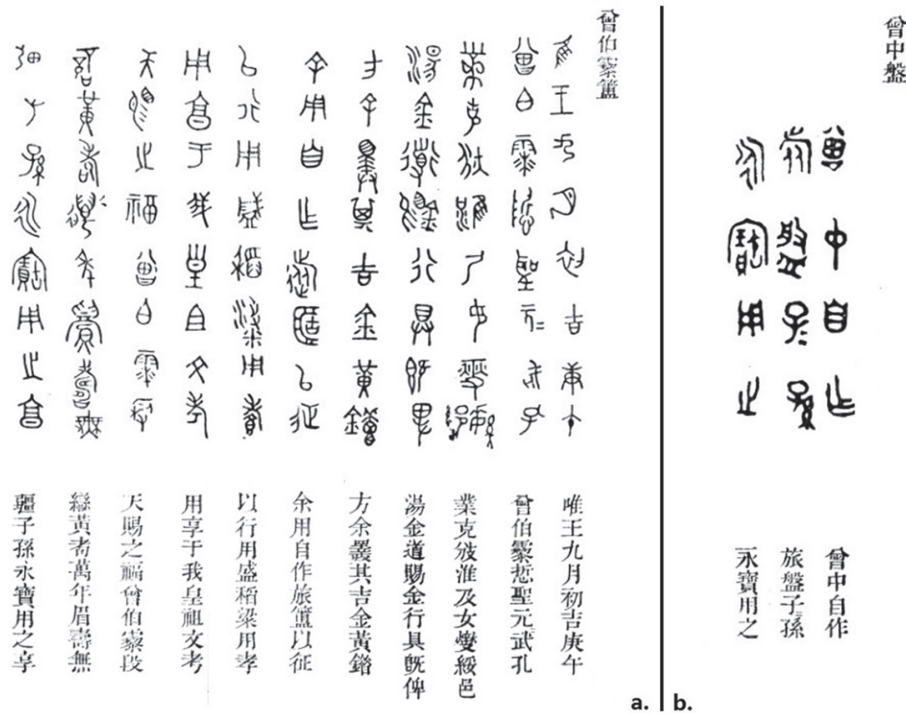


Figure 19. Early documented Zeng bronzes: a) Zeng bo fu; b) Zeng zhong pan. Redrawn after Ruan Yuan 1937: 69-70, and 107.

a tendency that most Chinese scholars working on archaeological material, consciously or unconsciously, paid excessive attention to the historical texts. This phenomenon became particularly obvious after Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927) proposed his approach of 'dual attestation (*erchong zengjufa* 二重證據法)' in 1925,¹⁰⁶ which, as some scholars believe, was basically an approach of using excavated materials to underpin transmitted texts. It is hard to dispute that Chinese scholars have benefited greatly from this strategy, as China has been a text-rich country for much of its long history. But at the same time it has chained Chinese scholarship to a traditional narrative that may not be at all accurate.¹⁰⁷

In the past two or three decades, the study of the Zeng state is a good case to illustrate this tendency of historiography. The transmitted texts may have misled researchers by providing too much distracting information but few details about the very Zeng state that researchers wanted to know about. One of the representatives is a 37-year debate of the 'Mystery of Zeng' (*Zeng guo zhimi* 曾國之謎), raised by Li Xueqin 李學勤 shortly after the discovery of Marquis Yi's tomb in 1978.¹⁰⁸ According to Li's argument, the *Zuo zhuan*

mentioned names of a number of Spring-and-Autumn regional states located to the north of the Han River. All of their names can also be seen on the inscribed bronze ritual vessels, except for one – the presumably most powerful state – Sui 隨.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, with the increasing number of the excavated Zeng burials, researchers have gradually realised that the state of Zeng had the most widely distributed bronze remains in the same region, but had not been documented in any of the transmitted documents. Therefore, Li became confused about why the documented Sui occupied areas had so many high-standard Zeng tombs buried there. Back in the 1970s, Li was probably one of the first scholars who paid serious attention to this situation, and attempted to demonstrate that the Zeng state from palaeographic sources and the Sui state from the transmitted texts referred to the same regional power.¹¹⁰ However, although Li and his followers have done a large amount of work, none of the possibilities they have presented so far seems to be really persuasive.¹¹¹ In fact, with the new discoveries found in the Suizao corridor, such as the collected and excavated Sui bronzes (figure 20 and figure 21),¹¹² many of their assumptions have already been seriously challenged.

¹⁰⁶ See the original text in Wang Guowei 1994: 3.

¹⁰⁷ The Chinese archaeologists have often failed to make full use of the archaeological evidence, but have tried to 'proofread' the written documentation with their first-hand excavated materials. See von Falkenhausen's critique on Xia Nai's 夏鼐 '*Xiayi lishixue* 狹義歷史學 (History in the narrow sense)', von Falkenhausen 1993b: 839.

¹⁰⁸ See Li Xueqin 1978: 1, and Li Xueqin 1990: 146-150. Some archaeologists believe that a particular bronze inscription found in the newly excavated Zeng cemetery at Wenfengta, Suizhou, are able to close this debate. The related issues will be discussed further in the

section 'Wenfengta cemetery' in Chapter IV.

¹⁰⁹ For related records, see the sixth year of Duke Huan in *Zuo zhuan* (左傳·桓公六年).

¹¹⁰ The main supporters of this viewpoint are Li Xueqin and Shi Quan. They claim that Zeng and Sui were the same state with two names. See Li Xueqin 1978, and Shi Quan 1988.

¹¹¹ See some of the assumptions of the 'Mystery of Zeng' in Zhang Changping 2009a: 7-10.

¹¹² In Wenfengta excavation, the first excavated Sui bronzes – a bronze *ge* was found with the inscription 'Sui dasima Xianyou zhi xing *ge* 隨大司馬獻有之行戈', showing that it belonged to an official (Dasima)

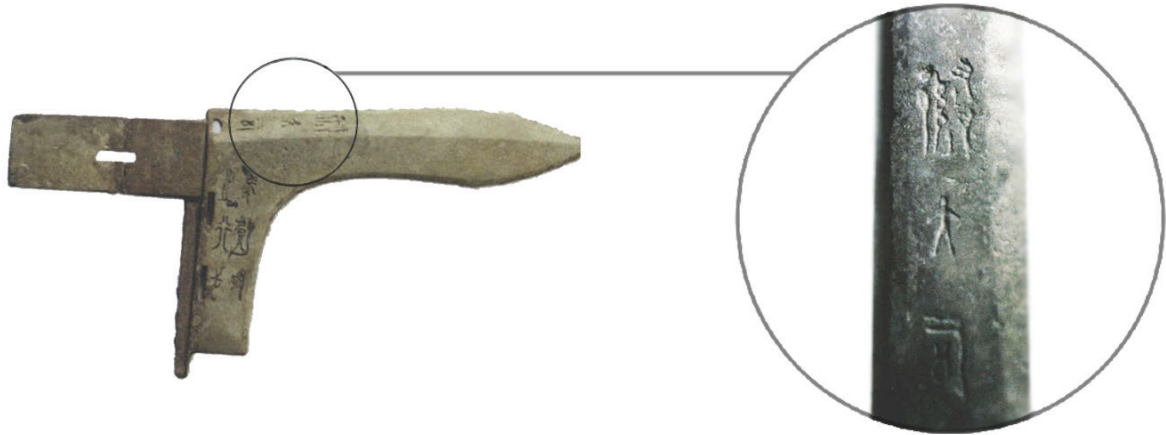


Figure 20. Excavated Sui bronzes: Sui dasima Jiayou zhi xing ge (Wenfengta M21: 1). Redrawn after Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2014a: fig. 45 (scale is not provided).



Figure 21. Collected Sui bronzes: Sui zhong mi jia ding. Redrawn after Cao Jinyan 2011: figs. 1 and 2 (scale is not provided).

Archaeological approaches

The most essential improvement made by modern archaeological approaches over previous studies is

of the Sui state, see Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2014a: 30-31. Another example is a Sui zhong Najia ding 隨仲嬭加鼎, published by Cao Jinyan 曹錦炎 in 2011 (Cao Jinyan 2011). Since this Sui ding was not recovered in an archaeological context, Zhang Changping made a comprehensive analysis on this vessel and confirmed that it was a typical Chu style ding, cast in the middle of Spring-and-Autumn period (Zhang Changping 2011c).

the emphasis on the context in which materials have been found.¹¹³ One of its consequences in China is that scholars' attention was gradually diverted from historical documents to systematic fieldwork. This process began in early 1920s with J. G. Andersson's (1874-1960) surveys and excavations in Beijing Zhoukoudian 周口店,¹¹⁴ and Henan Yangshao 仰韶.¹¹⁵ Later in that

¹¹³ See Renfrew 2000: 11.

¹¹⁴ See Andersson 1923.

¹¹⁵ Andersson was the first man who revealed literally China's first

decade, Li Ji 李濟 (also known as Li Chi, 1896-1979), as China's first anthropologist and archaeologist, combined both the traditional Chinese disciplines and Western archaeological approaches in his fieldworks, for example the Shanxi Xiyin 西陰 excavation in 1926,¹¹⁶ and the Henan Anyang 安陽 excavations from 1928 to 1937.¹¹⁷ However, although they demonstrated the effectiveness of field methods in investigating Chinese antiquity, deep-rooted academic habits in China were not easily changed within the following few decades. As Li pointed out in his 1966 paper, though the archaeological data provided in the contemporary reports were essential, most of the conclusions drawn by Chinese archaeologists did not either reinforce or diminish the former understanding of the materials.¹¹⁸

Here I take the Zeng studies, again, as an example. From the 1950s to the 1980s, most of the Zeng burials marked in the distribution map (figure 14) had already been excavated and published. But apart from listing newly excavated materials, the majority of the related archaeological reports or publications failed to show sufficient concern for the material-based Zeng state, while almost unanimously dedicating themselves to searching for clues of the Zeng state in texts. For example, the reports of excavations in Sujialong, Xinye 新野 and Zaoyang had all linked their first-hand materials to the text-based Si-surnamed Zeng state.¹¹⁹ The Liujiaya and Leigudun M2 reports, probably affected by the 'Mystery of Zeng', had treated its excavated Zeng materials directly as evidence of the Sui state.¹²⁰

Such historiographical tendencies had been extremely popular in most of the archaeological reports down to the late 1980s, until the primary report of Leigudun M1 was published in 1989, which is considered as a 'comprehensive expression' of the study of Marquis Yi's tomb.¹²¹ From then on, especially after the millennium, archaeologists have made great progress in improving the presentation of their work from different layers and angles. The series of Yejiashan reports is a good

reflection of the trend.¹²² Among the brief reports of the Yejiashan excavation, archaeologists use different ways to provide illustrations of the tomb structure, burial goods, and their locations. In the very first report in 2011, the chief excavator, Huang Fengchun, tried an old-fashioned way to group their materials by categories (for example all the available bronzes, ceramics, and jade formed three individual sections), so the same type from different tombs can be directly compared and discussed. But then the following reports went back to the prevalent 'tomb by tomb' form, as it is still considered as a better way of presenting the nature of a tomb, as well as of the whole cemetery.¹²³ The excavation team also published an individual paper to gather different opinions from a number of scholars (such as Li Xueqin, Li Boqian, Zhang Changping, and others) who have specialised in Western Zhou archaeology.¹²⁴ It is a very successful attempt, which is probably one of the most efficient ways to improve our understanding of the nature of the Yejiashan cemetery.

Chinese Zeng studies

Like the studies of other regional states, serious researches of the Zeng state also began in 1980s. Using typological approaches, Zhou Yongzhen 周永珍 made the first chronological sequence of Zeng bronzes in 1980.¹²⁵ By comparing the Zeng bronzes (from Suizhou, Zaoyang, Jingshan and Xinye) with those from the northern regions, she divided them into seven groups, and concluded that all the Zeng bronzes can be dated from the late Western Zhou to the late Warring States period. Moreover, those dated before the late Spring-and-Autumn period presented typical styles of Zhou central culture.¹²⁶ Following her work, Shu Zhimei and Liu Binhui 劉彬徽 further pointed out the high similarity on bronzes between Zeng and Chu in the Warring States period.¹²⁷

Many scholars have made contributions to Zeng studies since then, such as Li Xiandeng's 李先登 inscriptional

prehistoric site at Yangshao, Henan. His discovery was later named the Yangshao culture (c.a. 5000-3000 BCE). See Andersson 1934.

¹¹⁶ See Li 1927.

¹¹⁷ See Li 1977, and Chen Xingcan 1997: 145-151.

¹¹⁸ See Li 1966.

¹¹⁹ See Hubei sheng bowuguan 1972a: 49-50, Zheng Jiexiang 1973: 18, and Hubei sheng bowuguan 1975: 225.

¹²⁰ See Suizhou shi bowuguan 1982b: 141, and Hubei sheng bowuguan and Suizhou shi bowuguan 1985: 16-36.

¹²¹ Unlike others, after the regular contents (such as burial conditions, materials, and dating), this report spends a whole chapter and most of its appendices to discuss the context of ancient music, casting technology, palaeography, arts and crafts (Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989: 471-486). It also sets out a number of scientific studies on Marquis Yi's bronzes, such as the metallographic analysis of the chime bells and the technical analysis of the *zun-pan* vessel (see discussions of chime-bells in Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989: 618-623, see *zun-pan* in Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989: 646). Although most of its images failed to present detailed information of the burial materials, this report can still be considered as one of the most representatives of archaeological report in 1980s.

¹²² See Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011a, Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011b, Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2012, and Hubei sheng bowuguan *et al.* 2013.

¹²³ The inedited Yejiashan primary report (2018) is also in the 'tomb by tomb' form.

¹²⁴ See Li Xueqin *et al.* 2011.

¹²⁵ See Zhou Yongzhen 1980.

¹²⁶ The discoveries of Zeng bronzes before the 1980s left a number of 'blanks' in chronology, especially in the mid and late Spring-and-Autumn period. Zhou Yongzhen's chronology was thus not a strictly continuous one, but a list of different batches of excavated Zeng bronzes in a time sequence. See Zhou Yongzhen 1980.

¹²⁷ In both the articles in 1982 and 1984, Shu Zhimei and Liu Binhui compared the shapes, decorations and inscriptions on Marquis Yi's ding vessels, as well as other bronzes, and discussed the close relations between Zeng and Chu state after the Warring States period. See Shu Zhimei and Liu Binhui 1982, Li Xiandeng 2001: 60-64, and 104-111.

work,¹²⁸ Shi Quan's 石泉 study on Zeng territory,¹²⁹ and Chen Qianwan's 陳千萬 work on casting technology.¹³⁰ The most important studies came from the early 1990s, when Yang Baocheng 楊寶成 and Zhang Changping successively made detailed chronologies of Zeng bronzes. Both of them agreed that the Zeng bronzes first followed the tradition of the Zhou vessels and later adopted the Chu style around the middle or late Spring-and-Autumn period, but they had a disagreement in the chronology before the late Western Zhou period. Zhang Changping dated the earliest Zeng bronzes to the late Western Zhou period,¹³¹ while in Yang's opinion, the first known Zeng bronzes also included some Shang and early Western Zhou bronzes found in the Suizhou area.¹³² Now we know that the Yejiashan excavation did indeed reveal an early Western Zhou Zeng state, but back in the 1990s, Yang's viewpoint was less convincing, especially when he did not provide any evidence as to why those early bronzes would be included into his chronology. Therefore, most people believed in Zhang's more cautious work, and his viewpoint became the mainstream in the academy.¹³³ On that basis, Zhang published a comprehensive study of Zeng bronzes in 2009,¹³⁴ in which he collects nearly all the available Zeng-related material evidence, and discusses in great detail the cultural interactions between Zeng and other regional groups, such the Zhou royal house, the Chu state, and the other regional cultures. Zhang's work does lay a good foundation for later Zeng studies. Yet, it is slightly less than comprehensive, as he did not give enough weight to the geographical advantages of Zeng, nor was the source of the Zeng state's great wealth sufficiently explored. Zhang was also not able to avoid the negative effects from the historiographical tendency. In the discussion of the 'Mystery of Zeng', he made a 'reasonable assumption' to reconcile the material-based Zeng state with the document-based Sui state, by suggesting that the Sui state had occupied another document-based 'Zeng 繒' state, and then decided to abandon its state name and claimed itself as the state of 'Zeng 曾'.¹³⁵ Such an interpretation seems to reflect his evasive attitude towards this issue,¹³⁶ as

he did not explain the reason why both of the states of 'Zeng 繒' and Sui chose to cast the same character 'Zeng 曾' on their own bronzes, rather than using their state names. In fact, even he, himself, admitted that this view was more textual based rather than material based, which would perhaps be overturned by new materials in the future.¹³⁷

Western contributions

The academic interest in Chinese bronzes in the West can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century. The early serious works in Chinese art history and archaeology that have been done by the Western scholars were much earlier than those in China. They include Bernhard Karlgren's (1889-1978) chronological work of the Shang and Zhou period in the 1930s,¹³⁸ and Max Loehr's (1903-1988) five-style typology of Shang bronze decorations in 1960s.¹³⁹ Following in their footsteps, more Western scholars have made essential contributions to the study of Chinese bronzes with their acute insights. Take three representative figures for instance: starting with the bronze hoards in Shaanxi, Jessica Rawson introduced the concept of Ritual Reform in the late 1980s;¹⁴⁰ Edward L. Shaughnessy used Zhou bronzes to discuss the development of bronze inscriptions in the early 1990s;¹⁴¹ and Robert Bagley studied the pattern-block casting technology on the basis of bronze products and clay debris from the Houma foundry in the mid-1990s.¹⁴² Their works enriched the current study of Chinese bronzes from various standpoints. In the meantime, a number of synthetic books were published in succession, such as the studies of Chinese bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections,¹⁴³ Loewe and Shaughnessy's edition on the *Cambridge History of Ancient China*,¹⁴⁴ Jenny So's edition of Bronze Age music,¹⁴⁵ and von Falkenhausen's book on Bronze Age Chinese society. Also, there were a number of Western Zhou studies, such as Hsu and Linduff's book on Western Zhou civilization,¹⁴⁶ and Li Feng's two books on the Western Zhou regime.¹⁴⁷

Due to the outstanding cultural features of the Zeng bronzes, most of those synthetic studies have

¹²⁸ Li argues that different writing styles of the character 'Zeng' can be used to separate the Zeng state from Hubei and the one from Shandong, see Li Xiandeng 2001.

¹²⁹ Use transmitted texts, Shi indicates that the capital of Zeng was located not at the Suizhou area, but at Anju between Suizhou and Zaoyang, see Shi Quan 1988.

¹³⁰ Based on first-hand materials from Guojiamiao, Chen argues that the shape and casting technique of the Guojiamiao bronzes, especially weapons and chariot and horse fittings, were very similar to the north Guo state. See Xiangfan shi kaogudui *et al.* 2005: 396-402.

¹³¹ The bronzes here refer to the related discoveries from Xiongjialaowan, Taohuapo and three other locations, see Zhang Changping 1992: 60-66.

¹³² Yang Baocheng 1991: 16-22.

¹³³ Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2007: 10-18.

¹³⁴ See Zhang Changping 2009a.

¹³⁵ Zhang Changping 2009a: 372-390.

¹³⁶ For this view, see Li Boqian's critique on Zhang's assumption in Li Xueqin *et al.* 2011: 66.

¹³⁷ This viewpoint is according to unpublished materials based on notes of a private conversation with Professor Zhang Changping at Wuhan University, Wuhan, Hubei province, 3 July 2012.

¹³⁸ Karlgren 1935.

¹³⁹ Loehr 1968.

¹⁴⁰ See Rawson 1988 and 1989.

¹⁴¹ Shaughnessy 1991.

¹⁴² See Keyser 1979, Bagley 1995 and 1996.

¹⁴³ There are in total three volumes of the Sackler collections published over an eight-year span. For further information of the Sackler collections, see the Shang volume in Bagley 1987, the Western Zhou volume(s) in Rawson 1990, and the Eastern Zhou volume in So 1995.

¹⁴⁴ Shaughnessy 1999.

¹⁴⁵ So 2000.

¹⁴⁶ See Hsu and Linduff 1988.

¹⁴⁷ See Li Feng 2006 and Li Feng 2008.

mentioned the Zeng state and its bronze remains. But rather than embarking on a comprehensive analysis or further discussions of the archaeological context of the whole Zeng state, Western scholars have concentrated more on specific aspects, such as the study of musical instruments, tomb structures, and casting technology. Most of these studies have been inspired by the discoveries in Leigudun M1 – the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng. For example: 1) the study of chime-bells: starting with his 1993 book,¹⁴⁸ von Falkenhausen have published a series of bell studies, from the history of individual bells to the development of inscriptions and technology on musical assemblages in the Zhou period;¹⁴⁹ 2) the study of irregular tomb structure: as one of the first multi-chamber tombs with four compartments, Marquis Yi's tomb chamber is often referred to as an 'underground house',¹⁵⁰ 'subterranean palace',¹⁵¹ or replicas of domestic and social surroundings;¹⁵² 3) the study of lost-wax casting technique: based on observation of Marquis Yi's *zun-pan*, Bagley suggested that both the traditional mould casting and the new lost-wax casting methods can be observed on this vessel, and the latter was probably imported in the Warring States period.¹⁵³ Rawson further suggested that China's brief interest in lost-wax casting might come from further north or west, reaching central China by way of the Yangtze River or some similar routes.¹⁵⁴ On the basis of these studies, the next section will introduce a few basic concepts in current archaeological theory, and attempt to put the fragmented ideas together in a coherent manner to understand the Zeng state and the social group they belonged to.

¹⁴⁸ A tone study of chime bells, especially on Marquis Yi's bells, see von Falkenhausen 1993a: 244-255.

¹⁴⁹ In these books, von Falkenhausen emphasises the rites, technology and political matrix, and challenges the tone-related records in transmitted texts, thus underlining the importance of music performance in ritual practice. See von Falkenhausen 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993a, 1995, 2000 and von Falkenhausen and Rossing 1995.

¹⁵⁰ Based on the number of victims and the functions of burial materials, Wu Hung 巫鴻 emphasised the different functions of the rooms between the ruler's 'ritual orchestra' in the formal audience hall and those 'informal performances' in his private quarter. See Wu 2010: 38-39.

¹⁵¹ Lothar von Falkenhausen pointed out that all the imitated doors, windows, and other constructed or painted architectural elements in Marquis Yi's tomb reflected the notion of 'subterranean house or palace'. See von Falkenhausen 200: 306-308.

¹⁵² See Rawson 1999a: 30-31. Rawson suggested that the burial practices in the Eastern Zhou period had generated new variations of the ideal life, and some of its features might come from the south, see Rawson 1998: 123-125. For discussions of southern images on bronzes, see also Rawson 2002.

¹⁵³ The lost-wax casting did not replace the traditional mould casting, but only had a limited use on detailed elements like the openwork attachments. See further discussion in Bagley 1987: 44-45.

¹⁵⁴ See Rawson 2006: 75 and 85. In the past five years, an intense debate about the casting techniques used on the fine openwork decorations on the *zun-pan* vessel was started among Chinese scholars. One group claims that those openwork decorations were made by the traditional piece-mould method, while another group insists that it was cast by the lost-wax technique. The details of this debate will be discussed later in Chapter IV.

5. Research approach

Towards interregional similarities in material remains in the Zhou period, rather than marking points on a map, archaeologists are expected to bring interpretations to the underlying motivations behind them. Focusing on relations between people and the material world,¹⁵⁵ the current study intends to treat the people in the Suizao corridor as groups of 'indigenous inhabitants',¹⁵⁶ who lived on the boundary of the Zhou realm, but were closely related to the dominant culture. The main factors regulating local people's behaviour were in essence their identities and positions within the network of cultural interaction. Together, they generated the preference and expectations of individuals in their lives and afterlives,¹⁵⁷ or triggered changes when the geopolitical environment altered.¹⁵⁸

Social identity

The choices of individuals' burial and ritual behaviour were not determined only by themselves, but evolved through interactions between individuals and the material world to which they belonged. In other words, individuals did not only exist through their own body or consciousness, but were habituated and prompted by 'an exterior environment'.¹⁵⁹ To give expression to symbolic concepts, the materiality of the constructed exterior environment conditioned and facilitated the behaviours of those participating in ritual through the use of 'divine images' or the construction of 'sanctuaries',¹⁶⁰ which, in the current Zeng study, are provided by the bronze-based ritual system with a core of ancestral worship of the first kings of the Ji-surnamed Zhou royal family (from King Wen and then King Wu, who was given a mandate to rule by Heaven). Such worship of common ancestors was shared within the Ji lineages, which strengthened the social bonding between them, and set an example to follow for those

¹⁵⁵ As John Robb suggests, material things are a medium through which we create ourselves and understand other people, see Robb 2005: 6. Underground materials have been used by archaeologists as the main tool to approach people and their relationships in the pre-modern period. Three basic relations are thus emphasised as the theoretical framework of this research: 1) the relations between people and materials; 2) the relations between different groups of people; and 3) the relations between materials.

¹⁵⁶ In most of the Zeng-related studies, the Zeng people are often arbitrarily regarded as Ji-surnamed Zhou people from the north, see some scholars' opinions in Li Xueqin *et al.* 2011. Only a few scholars discuss them from a local perspective. For a similar viewpoint, see Shu Zhimei and Liu Binhui 1982: 72-73.

¹⁵⁷ In Pierre Bourdieu's argument, people's identity affects their social practice. It underlines the choices of their burial and ritual behaviours, such as using certain burial forms, owning and displaying bronze vessel sets, and performing in ritual occasions. For further discussion, see Bourdieu 1977: 78-80.

¹⁵⁸ The Zeng choice to follow Chu instead of Zhou in the Spring-and-Autumn period is good example of such alternation. For further discussion, see Chapter IV.

¹⁵⁹ Miller 2005: 5.

¹⁶⁰ Renfrew 2005: 160.

non-Jī groups who wanted to work with the Zhou. However, even in the closest non-Jī groups among the Zhou neighbours, such as the Yu state near the Zhou centres,¹⁶¹ the materiality of non-Jī environments were different from the Jī-surnamed. So, even if similar ritual bronzes had been used in both Jī and non-Jī practices, their burial and ritual behaviours may have been varied.

In this sense, social identity becomes crucial to our discussion, especially to the Zeng people and the social group to which they belonged.¹⁶² In archaeological studies, social identity is normally used to describe the dialectic relationship between similarity and difference of social groups, and the negotiation between internal and external identification of them.¹⁶³ The social identity of the local groups in the Suizao corridor is visible archaeologically through their burial assemblages, which reflect their ritual and burial behaviours, following the external definition given by the dominant Zhou practice, and the internal understanding of their own tradition. Identities are more tellingly exposed when ‘cross-cultural conversions’ took place, which is an overall change of a society, normally accompanied with new social, economic, and religious institutions.¹⁶⁴ This notion may be helpful here, as it can be used to signify a process by which peoples adopted or adapted foreign cultural traditions.¹⁶⁵ Towards conversions, the individual and collective identities of the local people might largely influence their choices of what traditions or to what degree did they want to adopt to support new cultural alternatives.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ For the primary report of the Yu state cemetery, see Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988.

¹⁶² From the Western Zhou on, the social identity of individuals in regional states was initially divided into the Jī and non-Jī groups. See the discussion in section 1-3 above.

¹⁶³ In Richard Jenkins’s theory, there are two basic threads running through his definition of identity: 1) identity is a process and/or a practical accomplishment; and 2) individual and collective identities can be understood in the model of the dialectical interplay of the process of making internal and external definitions. Jenkins 2008: 46. The differentiation of individual identity and collective identity are especially helpful in the current study, as the Zhou practice can be seen as an external process to represent the collective identity of the Zhou in general, and each of its followers must have negotiated with this process, and decided to what degree they wanted to adopt it on one hand, while keeping their internal practice to show their individual identity on the other.

¹⁶⁴ The notion of ‘cross-cultural conversion’ has various forms, which are collectively defined as a ‘process of syncretism that blended indigenous and foreign cultural traditions, and the phenomenon of resistance to foreign cultural challenges’. For further discussion, see Bentley 1993: 6-9.

¹⁶⁵ China’s adoption of Western modernity is a good example. In contemporary Chinese culture studies, the Western modernity in China, started by European force of arms during the 19th and 20th centuries and soon fixed with aspects of the traditional Chinese imperial system, is ‘both a product of Chinese history and an alternative to Western paradigms’. For further discussion, see Valentine 2006.

¹⁶⁶ According to Jerry Bentley, rather than a single dynamic, conversion analysis turns up three patterns: 1) conversion through voluntary association; 2) conversion induced by political, social, or economic pressure; and 3) conversion by assimilation. These served as roads, penetrating boundaries and enabling regional traditions to

Social group and boundary studies

The material culture observed archaeologically in the Suizao corridor is so diverse that researchers have to look for an effective way to understand the social identity of the local people, as well as the relationship between the local group and the Zhou royalty or other regional groups. Given the unique location of the Suizao corridor, an ethnicity study, especially its methodology combined with boundary studies,¹⁶⁷ offers a good way to approach our research questions. Current ethnicity studies contain two sub-fields in general: 1) social studies, which discuss ethnic or racial relations; and 2) anthropological studies, which discuss the essentials of ethnicity itself.¹⁶⁸ As ethnicity and racial issues are not quite relevant to the current study, some key concepts in the ethnicity study, such as ‘ethnos’ and ‘ethnic group’ or ‘ethnic community’ will not be specified here. Instead, a more general term – ‘social group’ will be used to refer to those groups of people who lived in different areas in the Zhou realm, which, as mentioned above, have been basically divided into the Jī-surnamed groups, the non-Jī groups, and mixed groups.¹⁶⁹ However, as we shall discuss later in the following paragraphs, this classification is not necessarily congruent with the objective nature of a social group (blood-related for example), but is sometimes determined by people’s subjective social identification.

Before the 1960s, researchers usually discussed a social group from the objectivist’s point of view, with an emphasis on the internal characteristics within a group. They suggested that a social group was a group of people with shared language, social organization, physical and cultural features, or other related characteristics, and, in turn, these common objective factors, as social identifications, could be used to define a social group.¹⁷⁰ In later studies, however, this method received strong criticism as researchers discovered that these shared factors are often very hard to provide

spread their influences to new people. Syncretism is another aspect that Bentley emphasises in this process. He suggests that ‘the simple effort of communicating beliefs and values across cultural boundary lines almost inevitably entailed a certain amount of syncretism, since the explanation of foreign concepts required some degree of comparison and assimilation to familiar ideas’. Therefore, large-scale conversion always involved some degree of syncretism rather than wholesale acceptance of an alien system of beliefs and values. See Bentley 1993: 7-15.

¹⁶⁷ The subject ‘boundary study’ here basically refers to the studies related to boundaries or borders across the social sciences, which has been associated with the studies of social identity, cognition, immigration, racial and ethnic group positioning and many other subjects. For a recent discussion of the boundary study, see Lamont and Molnár 2002.

¹⁶⁸ Wang 2006: 5.

¹⁶⁹ Sometimes a Zhou regional state may have had more than one sub-group, such as the Liulihe Yan state cemetery, which contains at least two sections with different burial traditions. See Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo 1995, and Su Tianjun 2000.

¹⁷⁰ Naroll 1964: 283-291.

help in distinguishing one group from another.¹⁷¹ Unfortunately, until now this flawed approach has still had a strong effect on current Zhou studies, especially on the definition of the Ji-surnamed Zhou practice. Since the most representative Zhou royal burials cannot be seen clearly in archaeological remains, it seems that the only way to distinguish the Ji practice from the non-Ji is based on their common characteristics and interests.¹⁷² But with the accumulation of archaeological materials, more and more scholars have started to realise that these shared factors are not enough to define the Zhou group properly, as most of them had not been exclusively used in the Ji-surnamed families. To overcome the disadvantage of this method, researchers started to discuss the related issues through a subjective way, which was adopted from the post-1960s ethnicity studies with an emphasis on the boundary of a group. Rather than shared characteristics, subjectivists propose that the main factor that defines a social group is at its boundary,¹⁷³ and sub-groups from the borderland are able to subjectively adjust their social identifications to define the social group they belong to, and to distinguish others.¹⁷⁴ In this sense, it may have been possible for a non-Ji group to give up its identity, and subjectively change its social identification to transfer to a Ji-surnamed group.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ For the related criticism, see Barth 1969: 10-15. Here we use one of the simplest examples to illustrate this problem. People from China use Chinese characters (*hanzi* 汉字) in their writings, which can be seen as an objective factor representing this group of people. Meanwhile Japanese people also use Chinese characters (*kanji* 漢字) in their writings, but of course one cannot say that Chinese and Japanese people belong to the same social group. In fact, it is difficult in practice to use objective factors to define a social group. As Michael Moerman points out in his 1965 book, such definitions from objectivists' viewpoint cannot be consistently observed. Instead, changing of recognition is often the norm. See Moerman 1965: 1215-1230.

¹⁷² Some of the Ji-surnamed characteristics in common come from examples shared among the Ji-surnamed groups, such as the use of the upper platform in tombs and the north-south burial orientation. Sometimes they also come from the counter-examples among the non-Ji groups, such as the avoidance of using waist pit and date inscriptions. For further discussions of the Zhou practice of the Ji or non-Ji groups, see the section 'archaeological background' above in this chapter.

¹⁷³ The boundary here refers to not only the special boundary, but also the abstract social boundary. For further discussion, see Barth 1969: 15-16.

¹⁷⁴ One of the first contributors to this subjective approach is Edmund Leach. In his 1964 book, he uses two different local groups - the Kachin and the Shan who live in the northern part of Burma, to examine different interpretations of the same myth, and further discusses the local political system. As a by-product of this study, he suggests that the difference between Kachins and Shans is not a difference of ethnic, cultural or racial type, but 'a difference of ideal' in the eyes of Kachins. Sometimes Kachins can become Shans if they subjectively adopt the Shan way of thinking. See Leach 1964: 279-292. This observation is very helpful in boundary studies. To the Kachins, those people who think they are Shans are still the same people they knew, but the new Shans have subjectively drawn a boundary between themselves and the Kachins. Similarly, those who stay inside the boundary of Kachins also tend to think of the difference between the Kachin and Shan as being a difference of ideal, and thus distinguish Shans subjectively.

¹⁷⁵ The prompting here could be from outside, such as the Zhou king's command, or could be from inside, such as the group members'

Such a transformation of social identification is an issue of great complexity in boundary studies. In terms of different understandings of how the social identification has been formed and transferred, the subjectivists are split into two opposing camps: 1) the instrumentalists, who view social identification as an ever-changing instrument that can be situationally formed, maintained, and transferred under stressful circumstances, such as social conversions, and political or economic resource competitions;¹⁷⁶ and 2) the primordialists, who argue that the subjective identification of a social group comes from its members' 'primordial attachment', an innate, inheritable sense, such as language, custom, and blood ties.¹⁷⁷ In some related studies, the notion of 'collective memory' has been introduced to reconcile the conflicts between the two. In this framework, the 'history' of a social group is seen as its collective memory, which on the one hand is of primordial importance to keep the group together, while on the other hand can be used as an instrument, which can be constructed, changed, or forgotten under certain external circumstances.¹⁷⁸ In a recent study of China's north-western borderland, this method is used to discuss the relationship between the Zhou and outsiders after the conquest of Shang. According to the received texts, the early Western Zhou court had repeatedly emphasised terms like 'agriculture', 'settlement', and 'pacifism' on different occasions, aiming to use these social characteristics to set a boundary between their own groups and those 'non-agricultural', 'mobile', and 'combative' outsiders, though the Zhou themselves were the same 'non-agricultural', 'mobile', and probably 'combative' outsiders to the west of Shang people before the great conquest.¹⁷⁹ For the Zhou people, the conquest of Shang

decision. The current study will further discuss the related issues later in Chapter II, focusing on the material culture of the Suizao corridor in the early Western Zhou period.

¹⁷⁶ See Haaland 1969: 68-69. During the Shang and Zhou period, the external circumstances of a regional social group could have changed from time to time, such as the replacement of Shang, and the several crisis that the Zhou authority had been through. The instrumentalists' approach provides us a good way to understand how the regional power had reacted towards the change of external condition, which will be stressed and further discussed later in Chapter III, following one of the major social conversions in mid-late Western Zhou period.

¹⁷⁷ The 'primordial attachment (or primordality)' here is used to tie individuals to a social group that they grew up with, see Keyes 1981. In the current study, the primordial attachment can be used to highlight the essential differences between the Ji and non-Ji identities. For example, the image of King Wu was different in the eyes of the Ji and non-Ji groups in terms of their primordial attachments. In their ritual and burial practices, both the groups could have used bronzes directly referring to King Wu, or his achievements, but the primordial attachments to the non-Ji identity may have prevented those people appreciating the symbolic meanings of the ritual bronzes in the same way as the Ji-surnamed groups did.

¹⁷⁸ The collective memory is especially relevant to our discussion in Chapter IV, which will be used to highlight the underlying connections between the Zeng state and the strong Zhou central power long past, and further to differentiate the Ji-surnamed Zeng people from the Chu people with a non-Ji identity.

¹⁷⁹ In the proto-Zhou period before 1050 BCE, the Zhou people who lived in the north-western boundary of the Shang territory had also

had transferred their subjective social identification from the ‘people of the western land (*xitu zhiren* 西土之人 in Chinese)’ to the actual controller of the Central Plains. The title of ‘outsiders’ no longer applied. So whether it was real or not, such claims of ‘agriculture’, ‘settlement’, and ‘pacifism’ can be seen as instruments to gain recognition from the agricultural groups on one hand, while establishing a social boundary for the outsiders on the other.¹⁸⁰

Movement of material

‘How things travelled?’ is also important to our discussion. Normally in forms of trade and exchange,¹⁸¹ material movement took many shapes in ancient times, occurring as barter, remunerated transactions, and direct or indirect interactions between groups and individuals.¹⁸² Intertwined with social relations, exchange is seen as a part of social process, functioning to provide or redistribute resources, maintain alliances, and establish prestige and status.¹⁸³ It thus generated a communication network, maintained by items of exchange value, including not only subsistence materials, but also other items carrying important symbolic values.¹⁸⁴ Apparently, the bronze ritual vessels, as common and pervasive as they were buried in tombs and hoards throughout the whole Zhou period, are of both exchange value and symbolic value to the individuals in the Zhou period. Their nature as luxuries, exotics, and high quality artefacts with social meanings, made the ritual bronzes one of the most desirable consumer goods at that time,¹⁸⁵ driving trading activities, and leading both to the intensification of local production for exchange, and to the emergence of wider systemic structures.¹⁸⁶

been seen as outsiders to the Shang authority. For further discussion, see Rawson 1989.

¹⁸⁰ For their legendary origin in Zhou collective memory, see Wang 2006: 145-148.

¹⁸¹ Archaeologically speaking, trade and exchange are recognised by identifying artefacts and connecting them to their place of origin, noting spatial distribution and stylistic patterns. Dillian and White 2010: 7. In Colin Renfrew’s definition, exchange occurred as internal trade, between individuals within a social or a geographic unit, or as external trade, which was exchange between individuals of different social or geographic units. Renfrew 1984: 86.

¹⁸² There are other more informal ways of trade and exchange, such as heirlooms, gifting, and collecting souvenirs, which resulted in the situation that similar materials could travel not only from one place to another, but also from one period to the next. Dillian and White 2010: 4.

¹⁸³ Hodder 1982: 200, and Renfrew 1984: 91.

¹⁸⁴ Notably, such an ideological dimension here is a crucial aspect to examine trade and exchange, such as symbolism, information flow, and social change, see Earle 1982: 3. In the Zhou period, dowries, royal gifts, can be seen as exchangeable items of symbolic values, while along with these items, some activities of the Zhou king, such as making military communications and fieldtrips, inviting people to royal ceremony, sending out government officials as overseers, can also be included in the communication network in general.

¹⁸⁵ The tradable or exchangeable goods here, as seen in the Shang and Zhou burials, also include jade, beads, cowrie shells, and certain types of lacquer wares and pottery.

¹⁸⁶ In an interactionism approach, Andrew Sherratt uses three

The advanced waterway communication in the Yangtze River region in the Shang and Zhou period may have originated in such a context.¹⁸⁷ In fact, waterways exerted a significant influence on social interaction and the development of complexity from the prehistoric period:¹⁸⁸ physically they were critical in travel, navigation, boundary demarcation, and the exchange of goods;¹⁸⁹ and socially, they played important roles as both obstacles and conduits to hinder and facilitate movements.¹⁹⁰ Take examples in the current study: 1) on the one hand, the marshes of the Huai River served as a natural boundary that shaped and delimited social interaction between north and south China; 2) on the other hand, waterways such as the rivers in the Yangtze region and the Jialing River in the arc directed and speeded the flow of people, goods, and information in several directions, providing important routes and destinations for potential patterns of social contact and interaction, and allowing distant communities to participate in large social aggregates.¹⁹¹ Such long-distance communication is normally seen as a chain-like system, a combination of a number of shorter routes, linking key areas, nodal points, and bodies of water.¹⁹² As a long, narrow strip of river valley, the ancient Suizao corridor had been no doubt a major nodal point in the lines of communication from long before the Zhou period, monitoring and controlling the movements between the Yangtze region and either north China or the arc of territory.¹⁹³

correlated aspects of concerns to interpret communications: ‘the relative rarity of condition, the movement of goods, and the social meaning of goods’, see Sherratt 1995: 10. At the current stage, archaeologists know very little about how much bronzes were traded, but as ritual bronzes fulfilled all the three criteria that Sherratt lists, it is very unlikely that the bronzes had not been included in the regional communication network in the Shang and Zhou period.

¹⁸⁷ See a discussion of early forms of trade and exchange in the prehistoric period along the Yangtze River region in He Nu 2014.

¹⁸⁸ In Sherratt’s view, water-transport is more cost-effective than overland carriage. The access to rivers and seas should be one of the most critical aspects in the growth of urban communities. See Sherratt 1995: 13.

¹⁸⁹ The goods here especially refer to the valuable materials that travelled over long distances in small amounts, such as metals, and other valuable materials in small quantity and suitable to be carried on and off boats.

¹⁹⁰ O’Shea 2011: 162

¹⁹¹ Howey 2007: 1841.

¹⁹² See Sherratt’s example of the three rivers Avon in Sherratt 1996a. He likens this chain-like system to a series of exchange-relays (involving many changes of ownership along the way), and further points out that ‘such a set of riverine routes belongs to a term of relatively high-value low bulk trade, before the development of volume traffic requiring fully marine transport. When trading reaches this larger volume and density, the whole topology of transport networks changes, and certain areas lose their importance in the network’, Sherratt 1996b: 216.

¹⁹³ Articulations or nodal points here refer to the particular geographic locations such as confluences, rapids, portage sites, and river mouths, where movement would necessarily be slowed down or halted. Such places, as parts of the whole waterways communication network, are visible archaeologically through rich burials, river finds, and other remains like monuments and fortifications. See Brose and Greber 1982.

Representation

In discussion of the relationship between people and the material world, the meaning of objects is an unavoidable issue, and the notion of representation, also known as the representational system, seems to offer an appropriate way to understand the issue. The aim of a representational system, in a common sense, is to use signs (such as language, images, and practices) to produce and exchange meanings, which, as some scholars point out, works by two subsystems: 1) a conceptualising process (between objects and concepts) – clustering and organising various elements and information to form a mental map; and 2) a signifying process (between concepts and signs) – using signs such as sound and words that carry meanings to represent the concepts.¹⁹⁴

Although the complete representational system seems to be initially discussed through a semiotic approach, we can use at least part of it to help us understand objects in an archaeological context. As we know, through interactions of different social groups, an object is able to travel a long distance, however, the meaning on it can hardly do so. In other word, it is relatively easy to have a foreign object, but the ideas of what it is, and how to use it, are not easy to acquire. The representational system provides a reasonable explanation for it. According to the second subsystem above, the meaning of an object is emphasised as a result of the signifying process, which is constructed and fixed by a coding-and-decoding system.¹⁹⁵ That is to say that, on one end, different ways of coding and decoding may have been the main issue that stops the meaning from traveling with the object from one social group to another.¹⁹⁶ On the other end, amidst the acceptance of a foreign object, if the ideas of what the object is, and how to use it, are exactly the same as that in the original context, the receiver's group and the giver's group are highly likely to have the same coding-and-decoding system, and further, they may have shared the same tradition, and may have even belonged to the same group of people.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Representational systems consists not of individual concepts, but of different ways of clustering, organising, classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them, such as the use of principles of similarity and difference to establish relationships between concepts, or to distinguish concepts from one another. For further discussion, see Hall 1997: 17-19.

¹⁹⁵ See an example of Ferdinand de Saussure in Culler 1976, and a further discussion of the coding-and-decoding system on 'bell' will be carried out in Chapter III.

¹⁹⁶ A group of three bronze *zun* with metropolitan style found in Sanxingdui, Sichuan province, may have been formed in such a context. For further discussions and details of these imported bronze vessels, see Bagley 2001: 140-149.

¹⁹⁷ These are of course two extreme precedents. In the real world, most of the cases are in between. For examples from the Suizao corridor, see discussion in Chapter III.

This research intends to take the approach of historical archaeologists to understand cultural interactions through a consumerism approach,¹⁹⁸ focusing on the choices that the local group of the Suizao corridor made in selecting foreign materials and ideas available through trade and exchange activities within the extended river networks.¹⁹⁹ Archaeological evidence shows that, in different periods of the Zhou dynasty, the local taste in commodities and ideas varied, reflecting not only the contemporary consumer preference or exotic allure, but also the implication of locals' social identity, and their recognition of the contemporary political situation. Combining with three important cross-cultural conversions in Zhou history,²⁰⁰ this book uses the latest discovery of three Zeng cemeteries to investigate how the local social groups as well as their choices changed with time.

6. Research framework

The three key cemeteries at Yejiashan, Guojiamiao, and Wenfengta mentioned in the background section not only show the general adoption of the burial tradition of the Zeng state itself, but also mark three different periods in the history of the Suizao corridor, in which the local burial behaviours, such as the use of standard tomb structure, bronze inscriptions and ritual vessels demonstrate that the social group quite precisely followed the current burial and ritual practice employed elsewhere within or outside the Zhou realm. In this sense, the interaction network of the Suizao corridor will be discussed in three phases: 1) Period I – c.a. 1000–900 BCE; 2) Period II – c.a. 850–650 BCE; and 3) Period III – c.a. 650–350 BCE.²⁰¹

Period I

The first period is generally dated to the early Western Zhou period from the 11th to 10th century BCE. The Yejiashan Zeng state cemetery and Yangzishan E state cemetery form the centrepiece of the discussion. Bronzes from both cemeteries can be directly divided into two groups – Shang and Zhou – on the basis of their inscriptions. The Shang group includes the inscribed bronzes with dates or clan names, such as the 'Fu Gui 父

¹⁹⁸ Dillian and White 2010: 6.

¹⁹⁹ See the section 'The extended river network' above.

²⁰⁰ All the periods are chosen to represent three major cross-cultural conversions: 1) the early Western Zhou period (after the conquest of Shang); 2) the late Western Zhou period (after the Ritual Reform); and 3) the Warring States period (after the competition of main regional powers). See further descriptions in the section 'Research framework' below.

²⁰¹ Although these three periods are selected on the basis of the chronological sequence of the Zeng state, the lifespan of Zeng as a group of people is not necessarily restricted to these periods. In fact, the character 'Zeng', either as a place name or a family insignia, may have been in existence long before the Zhou period. For further discussion of the Zeng observed in oracle-bone scripts, see Yu Xingwu 1999: 27.

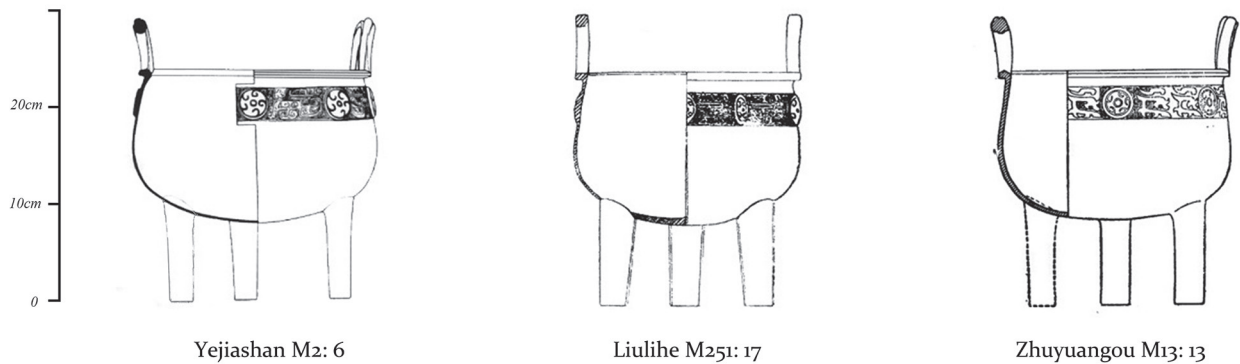


Figure 22. A comparison of rounded *ding*. Redrawn after Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011a: fig 62.1; Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo 1995: fig. 76.a; Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988: fig. 36.1.

癸' *gui*,²⁰² and '子' *zhi*,²⁰³ which are common in Shang period in terms of their content and calligraphy. The Zhou group, on the other hand, contains the inscribed bronzes with titles like 'Marquis of E 鄂侯' or 'Marquis Jian of Zeng 曾侯諫', indicating that their owners saw themselves as rulers of a Zhou regional polity.

Typologically speaking, the ritual vessels from the two cemeteries also fall into different groups. First of all, some bronzes are similar to the very standard bronzes from the Zhou metropolitan area, such as the Yu state in Shaanxi,²⁰⁴ and the Yan state in Beijing.²⁰⁵ If we take the example of the rounded *ding*, as shown in figure 22, the left Yejiashan *ding* shows overall identical features with others, which have been recognised as 'typical early Western Zhou bronzes' and dated to the period 'between King Cheng (1042/35-1006 BCE) and King Kang 康 (1005/3-978 BCE)'.²⁰⁶ Secondly, although most of the bronzes here present standard design and casting techniques, some special casting habits that are different from those of the majority are still visible, such as the overuse of spacers on some *ding* vessels, suggesting that they may represent a provincial casting tradition in the corridor.²⁰⁷ Thirdly, some special bronzes, like those with 'flamboyant style'²⁰⁸ or those with a bell

suspended on their underside²⁰⁹ by contrast with those in the metropolitan area, were fairly popular in the corridor. Figure 23 shows a collection of flamboyant style bronzes, including a *gui* from Zhifangtou, a *zun* from Baoji, and three *lei* from Zhuwajie, Yangzishan, and Yejiashan, indicating a clear sign that the bronzes from the corridor might have been closely connected to the outsiders through the extended river network.²¹⁰

In this period, a regional consistency in bronze styles is confirmed among different regional polities all over the Zhou realm, which is thought to be the consequences of direct contact with the Zhou royal domain after the conquest of Shang. In the Suizao corridor, such straightforward links were visible as well. But in the meantime, similarities among those 'flamboyant' bronzes also suggest some contacts between the corridor and China's southwest regions, which derived not from the metropolitan area, but from the southern Yangtze region.²¹¹

including Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, and Sichuan, all located in the arc of territory and relatively far away from the Central Plains. As an important aspect on ritual bronzes, the flamboyant style will be particularly introduced and discussed in Chapter II.

²⁰⁹ In this example, little bronze bells are cast on the underside of bronze ritual vessels, normally obscured inside the square base (such as the square-based *gui* from Shaanxi Baoji, or high ring-foot, such as the *lei* from Hubei Suizhou) of a vessel, by the flake-like foot (such as the *zu* from Liaoning Kazuo), or by the downward projecting decorations (such as the double-ram *zun* in the British Museum - early China collection), so in most of the cases, viewers cannot tell whether a bell is equipped or not unless a ringing sound is heard.

²¹⁰ Related sites: see the Zhifangtou 紙坊頭 site at Baoji, Shaanxi in Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988; see the Zhuwajie 竹瓦街 site at Peng xian 彭縣, Sichuan in Wang Jiayou 1961.

²¹¹ In her discussions around 1990, Jessica Rawson argues that the Zhuwajie bronzes might represent the intermediary between the middle Yangtze and the early Zhou style. See Rawson 1989: 79-87, and Rawson 1990: 30. At that time, Zhuwajie was the isolated example of 'flamboyant' bronzes, so not everybody was convinced by this idea. See opposition in von Falkenhausen 2001: 185-187. However, after the discoveries of the similar style in Yangzishan and Yejiashan in the

²⁰² Yejiashan M65: 53, Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Suizhou shi bowuguan 2011.

²⁰³ See bronzes no. 27 of Yangzishan M4 in Suizhou shi bowuguan 2009.

²⁰⁴ Baoji shi bowuguan 1983: 1-11 and Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988. Though Yu state is located in the Zhou royal domain, and some of the Yu bronzes are fairly traditional Zhou bronzes, the Yu state itself is still considered as an outsider. See further discussion of Yu's multiple links with the Western Asia in Rawson 2010a: 19-24.

²⁰⁵ Su Tianjun 2000: 3-302.

²⁰⁶ See Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988, and Su Tianjun 2000.

²⁰⁷ See Zhang Changping's discussion in Li Xueqin *et al.* 2011: 64-77.

²⁰⁸ 'Flamboyant style' bronzes belonged to a very unusual bronze casting tradition in China's western or south-western regions,



Figure 23. A comparison of flamboyant style bronzes. Redrawn after Wang Jiayou 1961: pl. 1; Suizhou shi bowuguan 2009: no. 35; Hubei sheng bowuguan *et al.* 2013: 217; Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng 1988: figs. 19 and 79.

Period II

The second period, dated from the mid-9th to mid-7th century BCE, can also be seen as the post-Ritual Reform period. It started from the end of mid-Western Zhou period, marked by an institutional change, known as the Ritual Revolution or Ritual Reform.²¹² It was a cross-regional transformation, which took place as seen in a relatively sudden change in casting and usage of ritual vessels. New vessel assemblages, new quantities of

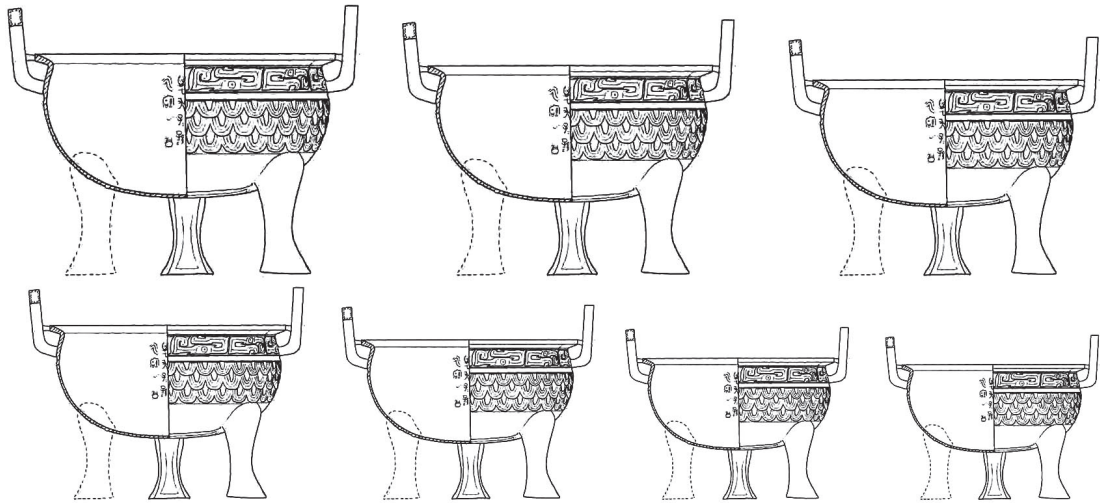
following years, there is every reason to believe that the Suizhou area was another important nodal point within the arc of territory. More importantly, those flamboyant bronzes seem more likely to be one of the key intermediaries between the north and south.

²¹² For the emergence of this concept – ‘Ritual Revolution’ see Rawson 1989: 87–93, which has been followed up by Lothar von Falkenhausen with the name ‘Ritual Reform’ in later publications, see von Falkenhausen 1997 and 2006. This change in vessel type is considered as an interregional ritual rearrangement in shapes, decoration, function and ritual practice. From the comparison of the numbers of ritual vessels between different polities, it may be possible to detect the different response in each state, reflecting the relationship between the Zhou centre and those regional polities in this period.

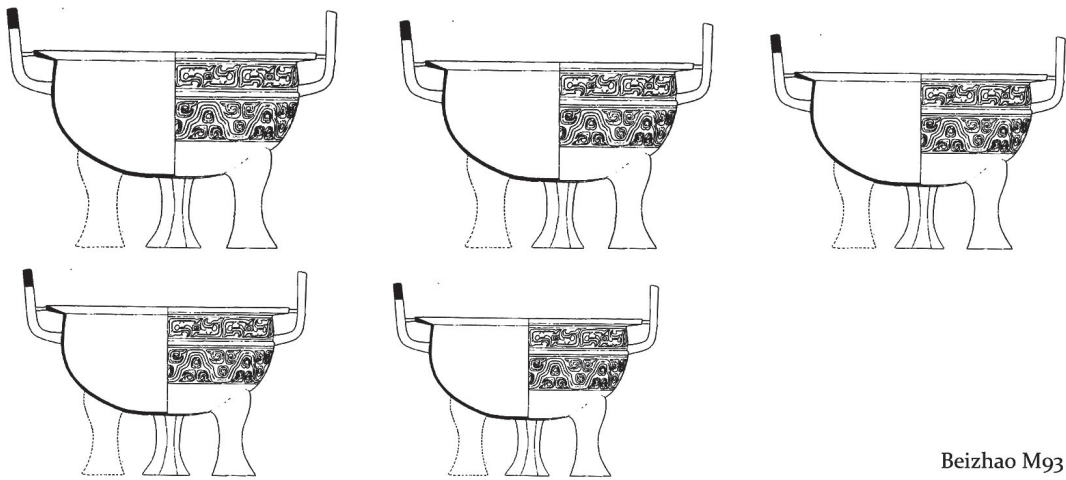
offering food or drink, and new performances in ritual and burial practice were instituted across the Zhou realm around 850 BCE, and were then basically kept stable in the following two hundred years or so. Such a complex reform across most of the known regional states must have been consciously adopted. Among all the archaeologically observable differences,²¹³ the most representative change is the replacement of the older varied bronzes with new sets of matching vessels (*ding* and *gui* for example). Though the Suizao corridor was distinct from the Zhou royal domain, it seems that the local material culture was directly affected by this reform, seen by the simultaneous application of the matching sets (figure 24), as happened also in the Guo and Jin states in the metropolitan area.²¹⁴ It is thus

²¹³ See the five aspects of the vessel change in Rawson 1988: 230. Further details and complementary aspects that related to this reform will be discussed in Chapter III.

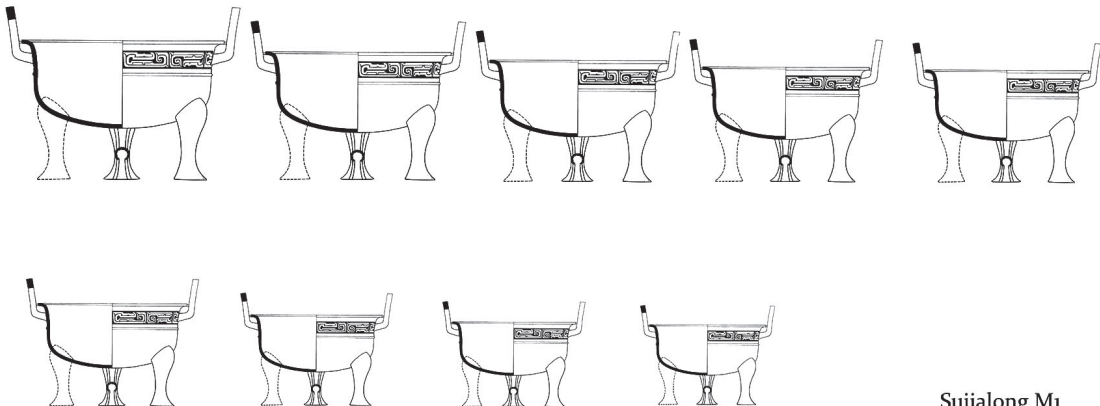
²¹⁴ There is a common misperception in the study of matching sets. Take the *ding* vessel in Figure 1-6.3 for example. If we judge the owner’s social status by the vessel quantity only, as many archaeologists do, it is very easy to jump to a conclusion that ‘the occupant of Sujialong



Sanmenxia M2001



Beizhao M93



Sujialong M1

Figure 24. A comparison of matching sets of *ding* vessel. Redrawn after Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui 1999: fig. 22.1; Beijingdaxue kaoguxi and Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 1995: fig. 37.3; Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2007: 12-13.

suggested that the previous connections in Period I were still maintained between the Suizao corridor and the royal domain.

Period III

The third period is dated from the late Spring-and-Autumn to the mid-Warring States period (from the mid-6th to mid-4th century BCE). It is widely accepted that with the decline of Zhou royal house in this period, the formal regional states were relieved of the restraint of the Zhou, and become more independent one after another. In the Suizao corridor, with the expansion of Chu, the previous lands of Zeng at Zaoyang and Jingshan area were occupied by Chu people,²¹⁵ and the Zeng centre moved back to the Suizhou area, where its old capital had been in the first period.²¹⁶ Headed by Leigudun M1 and Wenfengta M33, a number of high-level tombs with rich burial goods in this period have been excavated in this area, and many of them were more than equal with the finest finds from the contemporary powerful states, like the Chu and Jin.

Both the southern artistic effects and the northern technical effects occurred on Suizao bronzes in this period. On the one hand, most of the bronzes found in the Leigudun cemetery present typical characteristics from the Yangtze region: 1) the combinations of *jian-fou*²¹⁷ 鑑缶 (figure 25a) and *zun-pan*²¹⁸ 尊盤 (figure 25b), the idea of which is also seen in those Chu-related burials from

Hubei and Anhui (figure 25c);²¹⁹ and 2) the interlaced openwork decorations on certain Zeng bronzes (normally seen as traces of lost-wax casting method), which are also seen on the Chu bronzes from Xiasi 下寺 in Henan.²²⁰ On the other hand, a typical northern casting tradition, the pattern-block technique,²²¹ is also observable in the corridor. With a more effective way, this casting method was used to create repetitive patterns on bronzes, most of which are believed to be products of the Houma foundry in Shanxi. It seems that this technique may have been used for the bronzes from the Suizao corridor as well. Figure 26 shows two typical examples (a Houma product and a bell from Marquis Yi's burial assemblage),²²² and highlights their repetitive pattern pieces. Although decorative styles are different, the shared casting tradition reveals a deeper level of communication between the corridor and the north.

For this period, the bronzes found in the Suizao corridor are so advanced and sophisticated that we may need to consider the possibility that this area may have been acting as a bronze casting centre or as a more important stronghold in this period. Along with its advantageous position in the extended river network, the corridor people must have had strengths in bronze casting, and kept in close touch with both northern and southern casting traditions.

7. Chapter outline

Previous research, both the Chinese disciplines and Western perspectives, have helped us draw a baseline for understanding the material culture of the Suizao corridor in Zhou period. Thanks to the massive new materials excavated in recent years, archaeologists have been inspired to ask questions that are very different than those posed fifteen years ago. The research questions have evolved from state location, the mystery

M1 had a higher rank than the rulers from the contemporary Jin and Guo state'. Transmitted texts, like the *Li ji* 禮記 (see Loewe 1993), state that the vessel quantity in a ritual set was correlated to the social ranks of the owner; the more vessels, the higher the social rank they had (for a further discussion see von Falkenhausen 2009: 43-64). However, this assumption can be easily challenged by comparing sets in several tombs (figure 24): 1) the Guo ruler had seven inscribed *ding* in his set, but his son who is supposed to have had a lower status than him, was also buried with a set of seven *ding* (see the set of Guo Ji 虢季 *ding* in Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui 1999: 30-34; see the set of Guo prince *ding* in Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui 1999: 321-324); 2) the Jin Marquis had a set of five *ding*, but only two were inscribed and of good quality (see the *ding* set in M93 in Beijingdaxue kaoguxi and Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 1995: 25); 3) In the Sujialong set, only two out of the nine *ding* were found with inscriptions, and the rest of them were believed to be 'replicas' of poor quality (see Zhang Changping 2009a: 182-189). Therefore, the vessel quantity did not necessarily reflect the social status of Sujialong's occupant.

²¹⁵ See more discussion on Chu's occupation of the Suizao corridor in Liu Binhui and Wang Shizhen 1984: 91-92, and Zhang Changping 2007a: 80-86.

²¹⁶ This move and the reduction of Zeng territory may not simply be due to the occupation of Chu, because shortly after the move, its material remains showed that Zeng had more wealth and obtained higher casting technologies than ever before.

²¹⁷ The bronze *jian-fou* is a combination of a square *fou* (a wine container) and a square *jian* (a large basin). When putting them together, the space between them could be used to store ice or hot water, in order to regulate the wine's temperature inside the *fou*. See related description in the exhibition hall at the Hubei Museum.

²¹⁸ The bronze *zun-pan* is a combination of a round *zun* (a wine container) and a round *pan* (a large basin).

²¹⁹ See Jiuliandun in Hubei sheng bowuguan 2007, and Shouxian in Anhui sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 1956.

²²⁰ See Xiasi in Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo *et al.* 1991. Those finest decorative units (measured one centimetre or less) were too tiny to be cast by China's traditional mould casting method. The primary report of Leigudun M1 thus concluded that this kind of decorations were probably executed by a special lost-wax casting technique, which was not a Chinese tradition and probably imported to China in the Zhou period, see Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989: 646.

²²¹ See Bagley 1995: 46-54, and 1996: 50-58.

²²² See Jinshengcun 金勝村 report in Taiyuan shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2004. As indicated in figure 26a, a *lei* vessel from Jinshengcun carried repeated pattern pieces. As seen at the edges of an incomplete piece, there was not enough space to attach a complete pattern. The pattern piece had thus to be cut down to fit the rest of the space. The same situation is seen on the Marquis Yi's bronzes. Figure 26b also shows a *bo* bell out of the 65 chime bells, and one of its surfaces was fully covered by the clipped pattern pieces (highlighted in figure 26b), indicating the decoration here may be used the same technique applied on the *lei* above. This special casting technique was first discussed by Barbara Keyser (see Keyser 1979), and then elaborated by Robert Bagley, see further discussion of pattern-block technique in Bagley 1995 and 1996.

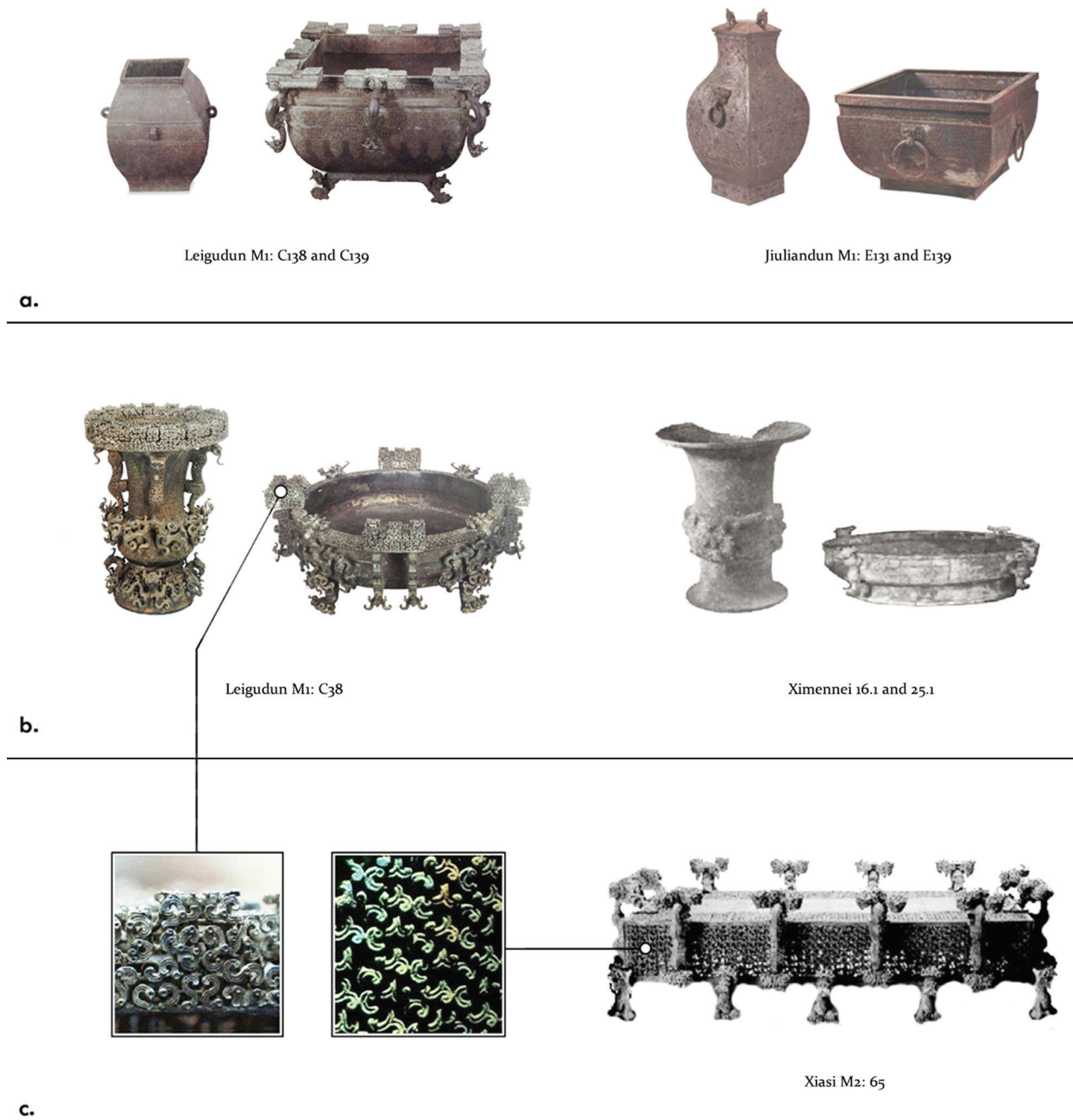


Figure 25. Suizao bronzes with southern traditions. Redrawn after Tan Weisi 2003: 117-118; Hubei sheng bowuguan 2007: 38 and 43; Anhui sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 1956: fig. 13; and Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo *et al.* 1991: fig. 49.

of Zeng and Sui, to scientific researches of metal flow, and incorporate discussion of identity, meaning, social status, and sources of power. Such a shift of concern is a significant change from early scholarship that simply linked materials to texts, or producers to consumers. Instead, archaeologists are now dealing with a dynamic system through the exchange of material culture in an extended network. By presenting the shifting patterns of interregional contact in the mentioned three periods,

the rest of this book will be divided into four parts. Each of the contact periods will form an individual chapter: 1) Chapter One: the Yejiashan period, concentrating on the Yejiashan and Yangzishan cemeteries; 2) Chapter Two: the post-Ritual Reform period, focusing on the Guojiamiao and Sujialong cemeteries; 3) Chapter Three: Marquis Yi's period, centring on the Leigudun and Wenfengta cemeteries. At the end of the book, they will be followed up by a short conclusion.



a.

b.

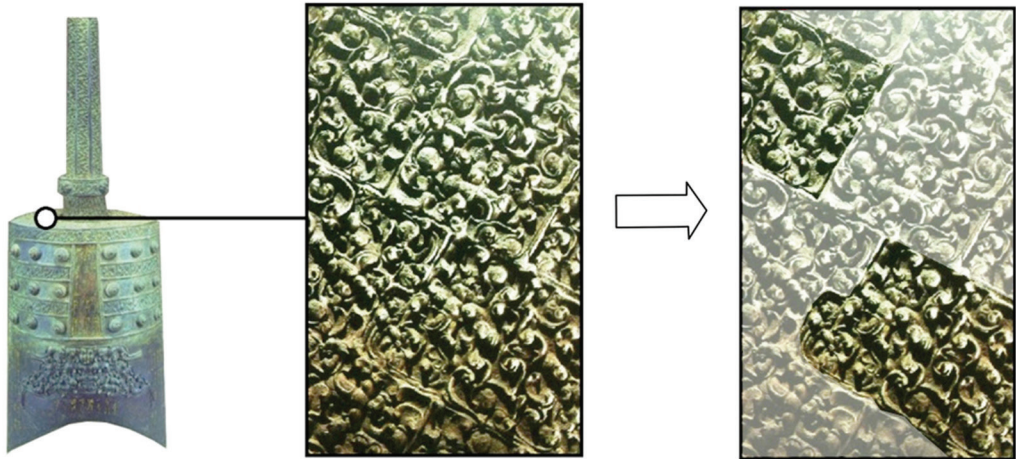


Figure 26. Suizao bronzes with northern traditions. Redrawn after Hubei sheng bowuguan 1989: M1-C65; Taiyuan shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2004: 25; and private photos taken on 21 September 2012 by Beichen Chen.