

Working for His Majesty

Research Notes on Labor Mobilization in Late Shang China (ca. 1200–1045 B.C.), as Seen in the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, with Particular Attention to Handicraft Industries, Agriculture, Warfare, Hunting, Construction, and the Shang's Legacies



David N. Keightley

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Preface

Egyptian, by contrast, ultimately gave rise to all historically known scripts of the modern world, save those of East Asia. . . . China is, in other words, one of only two civilizations in the history of mankind to have invented *ex nihilo* a script that has endured down to the present day, and thus to have influenced the course of human history in regard to the most fundamental feature of historical civilization itself, the use of writing. (Boltz 1999:123)

The present work deals with the Shang 商 dynasty (ca. 1200–1045 B.C.) in North China, the first to leave written records, and its efforts—evidently with great success—which focused on the artisan corps, labor mobilization, farming, warfare, hunting, building, leadership, and culture that made it all possible. My introduction to the subject of Shang labor mobilization—apart from the obligatory graduate student brush with Karl August Wittfogel’s work—came about quite accidentally in a Tokyo 東京 bookstore in mid-December 1967. My wife, Vannie, and I* had just spent two-plus years in Taipei 臺北 and were then spending six weeks in Japan before I returned to Columbia University to write my dissertation on labor mobilization in the Eastern Zhou 東周 (770–221 B.C.). When I asked what the bookstores had on ancient China, one of the clerks showed me Shima Kunio’s 島邦男 concordance, *Inkyo bokuji sōrui* 殷墟卜辭綜類 (A comprehensive compilation of divinations from the waste of Yin), whose first edition had been published in November 1967. I was not then working in the Shang. I didn’t read oracle-bone inscriptions. So I merely flipped it open, glanced at the first page, and moved on to other volumes.

The memory of that first page, however, remained lodged in my mind. I had evidently had the good sense to realize that it transcribed a series of inscriptions that dealt with the “raising” of men. Indeed, had I been able to read the first inscription that Shima transcribed (presented below at inscription number [52AB]) I would have found: “In the present season,

*. The name Keightley is pronounced “Keetly,” not “Kitley”: Yorkshire, not Germanic.

His Majesty should raise men, five thousand (of them), and march to regulate the Tufang, (for We) will receive abundant assistance.” Almost a year passed. I thought I should write a preface on the Shang background. The moment I began to study the oracle-bone inscriptions I realized they contained a mine of information. And before I knew it, the focus of my dissertation was shifting from the Eastern Zhou to the Shang and Western Zhou 西周 (1045–771 B.C.) (Keightley 1969). I immediately contacted the Tokyo bookstore and ordered a copy of Shima’s invaluable concordance, which arrived in New York in October 1968, and which opened up the Shang inscriptions to me, as it did to all scholars, in ways that permitted Shang history to be studied in a systematic way.

To Chao Lin 趙林, a student of the Academia Sinica in 1968, who first guided my early steps in the oracle bones, I owe a substantial debt. My first publication (Keightley 1969a) was a review of Shima Kunio’s contribution, and I dedicated my first book (Keightley 1978) to him.¹ Since I was largely self-taught in oracle-bone studies, I suspect that I might never have been encouraged to focus on labor mobilization in the Shang had I not both stumbled across Shima’s volume in that Tokyo bookstore, and had I not flipped it open to that crucial first page. As the Shang would have appreciated, luck, or perhaps ancestral guidance, plays a role.

I have devoted works to the study of the sources (Keightley 1978, 1994, 1999b, 1999e); the origins of Chinese civilization (1983, 1987a); the Shang environment (1999a); the Shang in general (1999b, 2000); Shang religion (1978a, 1984, 1985, 1998, 2004) and divination (1988, 1999d, 2001, 2006a, 2008); the origins of Chinese writing (1989a, 2006); comparisons with the Greeks (1993); and numerous reviews (e.g., 1973, 1982, 1982a, 1990, 1997). (I cite only works that bear upon the present endeavor.) But I have kept my 1969 dissertation—never before published—much in mind over the intervening forty-plus years. My dissertation focused in part on the activities of the *zhong* 眾 and *ren* 人; they still play a central role in the pages that follow. But I had subsequently found it necessary to treat the dependent laborers of Shang in their full administrative and cultural context.² I had translated 102 Shang oracle bones in the dissertation; the present work has 341 of them, often with several charges on the bone or shell (I estimate about 535 charges).

This book deals with oracle-bone inscriptions of the Late Shang dynasty, covering the period from Wu Ding 武丁 (ca. ?–1189 B.C.) to Di Xin 帝辛 (ca. 1086–1045 B.C.). Wu Ding presumably reigned for more than twenty years (Keightley 1978:175–76), but we do not have a firm grip on the year

1. One appreciation of Shima’s book is at Wang Yuxin and Yang Shengnan 1999:404–06.

2. For an introduction, in English, to the oracle bones, see, among many others: Creel 1937: 21–26, 185–96; 1938:1–16; Keightley 1978; 1990; 1997; 1997a; 1999e; 2001; Rawson 1980:55–57; Takashima 1988–89; Wilkinson 2000:395–406.

Notes about the Sources, Citation, and Transcription Conventions

One copy of the oracle-bone script and its modern transcription may be found in Yao Xiaosui 姚孝遂 and Xiao Ding 肖丁, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci moshi zongji* 殷墟甲骨刻辭摹釋總集 (1988), abbreviated as MZ (reviewed by Keightley 1997:507–08).

The main source for the oracle bones is Guo Moruo 郭沫若, ed., Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, ed. in chief, *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 (13 vols., 1978–82, abbreviated as *Heji* (reviewed in Keightley 1990:39–51). A consultation of Hu Houxuan et al., *Jiaguwen Heji cailiao lai yuanbiao* 甲骨文合集材料來源表 (vol. 2, 1999), will refer you to the original publication sources—from 1903 to 1979—with more potential glosses. I also refer frequently to Hu Houxuan et al., *Jiaguwen Heji shiwen* 甲骨文合集釋文 (1999) for the modern characters, abbreviating it as *Heshi*. In addition to the *Heji*, which contains 41,956 oracle-bone inscriptions, Peng Bangjiong 彭邦炯 et al., *Jiaguwen Heji: Bubian* 甲骨文合集: 補編 (1999), contains 13,450 more pieces; I will cite this as *Hebu* 合補.¹ I also refer to Cao Jinyan 曹錦炎 and Shen Jianhua 沈建華, *Jiaguwen xiaoshi zongji* 甲骨文校釋總集 (2006; abbreviated as *JGXS*) and to varied computer databases, in particular CHANT (Chinese Ancient Texts) (and see Shen Jianhua and Cao Jinyan 2001). All of these must be considered.²

I also cite Hsü Chin-hsiung, *Oracle Bones from the White and Other Collections* (1979) and *Xiaotun nandi jiagu* 小屯南地甲骨 (1980, 1983) (reviewed in Keightley 1990:51–59), both of which appear in MZ and Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding, eds., *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan* 殷墟甲骨刻辭類纂 (abbreviated as *Y*; reviewed in Keightley 1997:507–13). I also cite, but rarely, a variety of other collections in Bibliography A.

1. “Since the first discovery of oracle bone inscriptions in 1899, more than 160,000 inscribed pieces have been unearthed” (Lu Liancheng and Yan Wenming 2005:166).

2. Cai Zhemao (1999:115–45) gives a list of nearly one thousand of the inscriptions that appear twice in *Heji*. Also see Hu Houxuan (1991); Song Zhenhao (ed., 1999)—which lists 10,946 bibliographic entries on the *jiaguwen*; and Wilkinson (2000:395–406).

A substantial portion of the book is devoted to “Inscription Glosses” (Appendix 1) and “Glossary of Shang Terms and Phrases” (Appendix 2). The meaning of the Shang words is by no means always clear—our first Chinese dictionaries, the *Er Ya* 爾雅 and *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, have been dated to a millennium or more later—and scholars have frequently disagreed about their interpretation (see Serruys 1974:12–13). The “Glosses” and “Glossary” provide an introduction to the interpretative issues and alert the reader to the uncertain nature of some of the readings that I have adopted. They are intended to be honest accounts of my thinking, rather than assertive refutation of the thought of others. They leave grounds for disagreement and invite readers to form their own conclusions.

A word should be said about the periodization.³ Archaeologically, I assign the finds from Erlitou 二里頭 and Yanshi 偃師 to the pre-Shang period;⁴ I assign Erligang 二里崗 and Zhengzhou 鄭州 to the Early Shang;⁵ I assign Huanbei 洹北 to the Middle Shang;⁶ and I assign Xiaotun 小屯 (or Anyang 安陽) to the Late Shang.⁷

I divide the finds from the sites into “Yinxu I” (Pan Geng 盤庚 [ca. 1300 B.C.], Xiao Xin 小辛, Xiao Yi 小乙, and early Wu Ding 武丁); “Yinxu II” (late Wu Ding, Zu Geng 祖庚, Zu Jia 祖甲); “Yinxu III” (Lin Xin 廩辛 to Wen Wu Ding 文武丁); and “Yinxu IV” (Di Yi 帝乙 and Di Xin 帝辛 [to 1045 B.C.]).⁸ For the oracle-bone inscriptions, I use the five-period dating of Dong Zuobin (1945),⁹ dating the periods from Period “I” (Wu Ding)—the diviner Bin 賓, Que 殼, etc.—till Period “V” (Di Xin). But I do not follow Dong in seeing the re-emergence of the “Old School” in Period IV, a dating that was also followed by *Heji*. I place, rather, the Shi 隹-group and Li 歷-group in the two Periods of I and II.¹⁰ Among other problems,

3. Shaughnessy (1999:25) provides a chronology of the last nine Shang kings. Several articles of the Xia-Shang-Zhou chronology project (in English) have appeared in the *Journal of East Asian Archaeology*: Li Xueqin 2002; Nivison 2002; Zhang Changshou 2002; Zhang Peiyu 2002. See too Nivison 1982–83; 1993; Pankenier 1981–82; 1995.

4. Li Liu and Xingcan Chen 2003:26–101; Thorp 2006:21–61.

5. Kwang-chih Chang 1980:263–88; Li Liu and Xingcan Chen 2003:92–99; Thorp 2006:62–116.

6. Jigen Tang, Zhichun Jing, and George (Rip) Rapp 2000; Thorp 2006:131–33.

7. Kwang-chih Chang 1980:67–259; 1986:317–39; Keightley 2000; Thorp 2006:117–263.

8. See, e.g., Gu Fei 2002; Thorp 2006:125. Under Zu Jia, the ritual system may have become regularized (Keightley 2004:30). See, e.g., Jigen Tang (2001) and Yun Kuen Lee (2002; 2002a) for a review of Xia 夏 and Shang chronology. Keenan (2002:61) rejects the use of eclipses and planetary conjunctions to determine the chronology of ancient China, which has led to more comment (e.g., Keenan 2007; Pankenier 2007; Stephenson 2008).

9. Keightley 1978:92–94, 203, table 14.

10. There is good reason for doing so: Li Xueqin 1981:27–28; Lin Yun 1984; Lian Shaoming 1987; 2003; Huang Tianshu 1991; Qi Wenxin 1991a; Qiu Xigui 1992; YXFX:172–73; Peng Yushang 1994, esp. pp. 307–11; 2001; Li Xueqin and Peng Yushang 1996; Chen Fang-mei

ONE

Introduction: The Setting

The social conditions and cultural dimensions of work in early China were deeply involved in the genesis of its elite dynastic culture. Neolithic men and women in China probably worked harder, and were less handsomely rewarded, than their hunter-gatherer forebears.

The prehistoric cultures that developed in China from ca. 8000 to 2000 B.C. are traditionally described as “Neolithic,” meaning that farming was the main method of subsistence for a community, there was sedentism rather than seasonal mobility, and people relied upon pottery vessels for the preparation and consumption of food, as well as on ground stone tools. (Underhill and Habu 2006:122)

At the same time, a division of labor was occurring along gender lines as early as the sixth millennium B.C., a division that was associated with the general decline in the social and economic status of women and children. As early as the Neolithic, the ability to enjoy and display the labor of others contributed to social status, and this ability was increasingly demonstrated by the appearance of tools, more finely made and polished than mere utility would require, whose function as grave goods was to delineate enduring status (Keightley 1999:7–10). That some of the earliest victims of human sacrifice were buried with their tools and alongside their masters further testifies to the way in which dependent labor relations in this life were expected to continue in the next. It may also be suggested that the ancestors were exalted by the living in both the Neolithic and Bronze Ages because the living could, wittingly or unwittingly, put them to use. The dead, in this culture, were not simply grieved; they were put to work.

The trends involving the differentiation of sex and status and the symbolization of authority by means of emblematic work tools continued to develop in the Bronze Age.¹ This survey of dependent labor in Late Shang

1. On the Neolithic background of the Shang, see, e.g., Kwang-chih Chang 1986:71–294; Li Liu 1996; 2000; 2004; Underhill 2002; Underhill, Feinman, Nicholas, et al., 2002; Li Liu and Xingcan Chen 2003; 2006.

considers the *zhong* 眾, the *ren* 人, the officers who led them, the nature of their mobilizations, and their roles in agriculture, warfare, hunting, and construction (see chs. 12–15). Study of the handicraft industries, also directed by the royal house, confirms that the Shang elites presided over a sophisticated and complex economy. An examination of who the state laborers were leads to the hypothesis that skilled handicraft production was in the hands of occupational lineages (see ch. 8). Where no legal concept of individual rights existed, furthermore, it is more useful to characterize Shang labor in terms of degrees of dependency and privilege than in terms of slavery and freedom (see pp. 53 ff.).

Some work and service practices in Late Shang China appear to have been, in part, highly ritualized.² Warfare, to take one example of state service, involved a series of formalized, religiously sanctioned procedures. Study of the diviners' work schedules increasingly indicates that the ritualists at the royal Shang court had created a highly ordered situation in which sacrifices and announcements to the ancestors were divined and performed according to a strictly controlled schedule and in strictly controlled places (see, e.g., Keightley 2004:20–26).

There was an acceptance of the responsibility, shared generally by the king's subjects and diffused downward through the patrimonial and patriarchal political and social system, to serve the king and lineage heads; the word *shi* 事, it is worth recalling, meant both "work" and "service" in Zhou 周 texts.³ The Shang kings' service ethic helps to explain the strength of the state-service ethic of later times. These cultural expectations do much to explain the remarkable successes of early Chinese culture and its political institutions.

Efficient labor conscription in early China was both a sign of, and precondition for, a strong state; it made power possible and it made power desirable.⁴ The way in which Late Shang divination and kingship were linked is nowhere better demonstrated than in the mobilization and employment of the dynasty's manpower. Labor conscripts were the fundamental source of state power in ancient China. They served in armies, built city walls and temple-palaces, excavated tombs, hauled supplies, dug ditches, cleared and farmed the land in part, and worked at the sundry tasks of production and manufacture that their lord required.⁵

2. "I will restrict the term 'ritual' to formalized, communicative action that relates its performer in some way to a superhuman power" (Lewis 1997:73); cf. Rappaport 1967:1–2, 4; 1999:24–26; Parkin 2001; Robbins 2001.

3. Karlgren 1964, no. 871; see too Schuessler 1987:548.

4. "The Late Shang state probably controlled at most much of Henan and some parts of Hebei, Shandong, and Shanxi, all within the North China macroregion" (Thorp 2006:237).

5. On the Shang use of "organized large-scale exploitation of one group of people by another," see K. C. Chang (1976b:56–57).

TWO

The Work and the Workshops

Groups of highly skilled artisans labored in the workshops of Middle and Late Shang.

“Specialized production” has been defined at its most essential level as “the production of substantial quantities of goods and services well beyond local or personal need, and whose production is generally organized, standardized and carried out by persons *freed in part from subsistence pursuits*.”¹

The excavation of vast numbers of articles in bone, stone, shell, and jade, often intricately carved; of high-grade pottery; of patterned textiles; of ornate ritual bronzes; of light, elegant chariots and ornamental horse trappings; of a wide range of axes, halberds, arrowheads, bows, and other stone, bone, and bronze weapons and tools—all these finds indicate the existence not only of a skilled artisan corps serving the needs of the ruling elite but also of an efficient central management. A survey of the Late Shang handicraft industries will suggest the range of activities that the dynastic elites supported and coordinated.²

Bone Working

The Shang period was the golden age of Chinese bone working.³ Far more arrowheads were made of bone than of bronze or stone, and although bone

1. Flad (2004:30), citing Arnold and Munns 1994:475 (italics added). See too Barbieri-Low (in press): “Full time, attached craft specialization is one feature shared by all the centralized, hierarchal social formations known as *complex* or *state-level societies* to anthropologists and political scientists and as *civilizations* to historians and art historians.”

2. The following paragraphs represent an updated and considerably revised version of Keightley 1969:40–57. I attempt only a sketch; the archaeology of the Anyang site is extensive and rich. On the study of Shang archaeology in general, see Hu Houxuan 1955a; Li Chi 1977; Wang Wei 1999; Wilkinson 2000:341–55.

3. Cheng Te-k'un 1960:126–36; Liang Siyong and Gao Quxun 1970:105–26; Li Chi 1977: 204–05; Wen Shaofeng and Yuan Tingdong 1983:361–63; YXFX:382–403; Yang Xiaoneng

THREE

The Artisan Corps

The Status of the Artisans

The archaeological data indicate the existence of groups of highly skilled artisans, clustered around the royal house and ruling class. Their residences and workshops appear to have been of higher quality than the pit dwellings of other members of the society, and their high degree of technical skill must also have set them above the common people.¹ Presumably, the artisans or craftsmen were organized in such a way—either as occupational corporations, clans, or village units (see ch. 8)—that their skills could be handed on without loss. The archaeological evidence also suggests that some of the artisanate was at least semi-literate, another sign of high, “official,” status (see p. 25).

The status of the artisans was varied. As Li Liu has noted (2003:8), the traditional view in which “a sharp distinction” existed

between consumers and producers of prestige goods, represented by elite patrons and commoner artisans who were categorized as attached craftsmen (Costin 1991; Earle 1987), . . . has been challenged in recent years.

In the Neolithic, at least, she proposes (Li Liu 2003:14) that

it may have been the same elite groups who held the cosmological knowledge, had access to the raw material, and controlled the production and distribution of finished products.

The increasing specialization and even industrialization of Late Shang manufacturing, however, together with the increasing stratification of Bronze

1. For an early, and now dated, review of the evidence, see Keightley 1969:39–65. One may now consult Kwang-chih Chang 1980:95, 98; *YXFX*:439–41; Wang Yuxin and Yang Shengnan, eds., 1999:579–82; Shen Zhiyu 2001:283–93; Li Liu 2003; Yung-ti Li 2003; Underhill and Hui Fang 2004; Haapanen 2005.

FOUR

The *Zhong* 眾 and the *Ren* 人

The oracle-bone inscriptions refer to the dependent laborers of Late Shang as the *zhong* 眾 or *ren* 人 (see Glossary for *zhongren*).¹ If treated as descriptive, generic terms, they could be translated as “the many” and “the men.” But *zhong*, at least, served as a status term that designated a particular, and not especially numerous, class of people in Late Shang society. And it is not clear that *zhong* in the Shang yet had the sense of “many” (see Glossary for *zhong*). I prefer, accordingly, to leave *zhong* untranslated. The *zhong* in this view was not simply a social category but a Shang administrative rubric, “the *zhong*.” Raising the *zhong* (as in [68A], [70]–[72]) was comparable, say, to raising “the Archers” (as in [73AB] and [74]).

The Shang word *ren* 人, “man” or “person,” was a generic term that could be applied to a variety of statuses.² The king might use *ren* of himself, as in the phrase *yu yi ren* 余一人亡禍, “I the one man will have nothing ominous” (*Yingcang* 1923);³ it might be linked to the *zhong*, as in the term *zhongren* 眾人 (see later);⁴ *ren* was used of men serving in the royal armies,⁵ of enemy invaders,⁶ and of captives in battle.⁷ *Ren* was also a collective term, as it was in later Chinese texts, used to refer to the people, or at least to the *ren*, of a certain place.⁸ For all these reasons, I translate *ren* as

1. The term *zhong* was not recorded in the Shang bronze inscriptions (Li Lingpu et al. 2001:438).

2. Chao Lin (1982:117–18; also Zhao Lin 1982:135–36) makes the same point. The *ren* 人/仁-like behavior of Eastern Zhou — “to behave in a *ren*-like way” — was not yet in evidence (Gassmann 2000:359). The term *min* 民 was rarely, if ever, used in the oracle-bone inscriptions (S101.3; Y207.2; *Sōran*, no. 0462).

3. For other occurrences of the phrase, “I the one man,” see *Heji* 20328, 23721, 36181, 36514, 36966, 41028; *Yingcang* 1791. See also Hu Houxuan 1957; 1981; Li Xiangping 2003.

4. [25], [68AB], [79], [82], [231], [236].

5. [50], [229], [230], [242AB].

6. As in [322] and *Heji* 137b.

7. [39], [41AB], [179AB]. A few oracle bones, mainly from Period I, also refer to “prisoners” (*yu* 圉): Y1004.1; JGWD:1170–871; Wang Shenxing 1992:92–93; *Sōran*, no. 1257.

8. See, e.g., [29AB], [118], and the discussion at ch. 4, p. 61 below. Nylan (2001:154–55) gives the Zhou evolution of the terms for *ren* 人 and *min* 民.

Punishments, Human Sacrifice, and Accompanying-in-Death

Possible Punishments

The Late Shang inflicted a series of punishments and probably treated prisoners of war badly.¹ Some of those were enemies of the Shang and were only incidentally a part of Shang “slave economy” or “dependent labor.” The Shang certainly did not divine about punishments a great deal and certainly did not inflict punishments on the *zhong*.

There was a particular punishment that involved, in the view of many scholars, amputating one of the feet (*yue* 刖).² This is possible.

[30] 丁巳卜亘貞：刖若

Making cracks on *dingsi* (day 54), Xuan divined: “There will be an amputation (?); it will be approved.” (I. Bin) (*Heji* 6001)



[31] 戊午卜永貞：刖不蘊

Making cracks on *wuwu* (day 55), Yong divined: “There will be an amputation (?), but there will be no death (*yun*).” (I. Bin) (*Xucun* 1560)³



1. YXFX:174, 444–51; Sun Miao 1987:543–48; Yu Weichao, ed., 1997:119; Wang Yuxin and Yang Shengnan, eds., 1999:482–90. Qi Wenxin (1979) argues for the existence of the prisons, manacles, and other shackles; also see *Sōran*, no. 1257 for *yu* 圜; no. 1505 for *rong* 戎.

2. *Sōran*, no. 1639. E.g., Zhao Peixing 1961; Hu Houxuan 1973a; Vandermeersch 1980:182–84; YXFX:174; the commentary to *Tunnan* 857; Liu Yiman 1999:2–3.

3. *Xucun* 1560 appears at Hu Houxuan 1973a:113–14, no. 7.

Labor Mobilization

The Verbs for “Mobilize”

The verb for mobilization was recorded in the bone inscriptions by two graphs: 𠄎 (which I read as *gong* 共 [= *gong* 供]), “to give, present, supply, raise,” as in [47] and [50], and 登 (which I read as *deng* 登), “to make ascend, raise up” (as in [49] and [51]), a word that, in the sense of submitting or raising up the records of mobilization, was still being associated with raising men in the *Zhouli* (p. 4 above), both graphs being written with the two-hands element included. I use the English word “raise” (for *gong*) and “raise up” (for *deng*) to distinguish the two Shang terms, but the words were semantically and phonetically related (see Glossary entries for *gong* and *deng*), and the Shang used them interchangeably in contexts of mobilization,¹ as in:

[47] 癸巳卜設貞：𠄎人呼伐舌[方]受[𠄎又]

Making cracks on *guisi* (day 30), Que divined: “(We should) raise (*gong*) men and call upon (*hu*) them to attack (*fa*) the Gong[fang], (for We) will receive (abundant assistance [*shou you you*]).” (I. Bin) (**Heji* 6173)

[48A] 己[巳卜]賓貞：使人于𠄎

[Making cracks on] *ji[si]* . . . , Bin divined: “(We) will send the men to Cha.”

[48B] 己巳卜設貞：登千呼見𠄎

Making cracks on *jisi* (day 6), Que divined: “Raising up (*deng*) 1,000 (men), (we) call upon (*hu*) them to observe (?). . . .” (I. Bin) (**Heji* 7337)

1. See too the gloss to **Heji* 7350f.

SEVEN

Who Was Mobilized

Wu Ding frequently mobilized the *ren* but he more rarely mobilized the *zhong*. Of the Period I inscriptions that refer to Wu Ding's raising *ren*, some forty-five use the verb *gong* 𠄎 and forty-six use the verb *deng* 𠄎 (Y1.1–2.1). These ninety-some divinations include

[62A] 甲辰卜賓貞：我𠄎人

Making cracks on *jiachen* (day 41), Bin divined: “We should raise (*gong*) men.”

[62B] 貞：我勿𠄎人

“We should not raise men.”¹ (I. Bin) (*Heji* 9811f)



[63] 貞：令在北𠄎人

Divined: “Order that at North Gong (one) raise men.”
(I. Bin) (**Heji* 7294f)²



[64] 貞：呼𠄎在昧人

Divined: “Call out (*hu*) to raise (men) at Mei (?).”³ (I. Bin)
(*Heji* 8070)



1. I assume that Wo 我 was a reference to the royal Shang; it seems unlikely that Wu Ding would have been divining about another group or officer, named Wo (*Sōran*, no. 1526), “raising men.” See too Zhou Hongxiang 1969:133, 147, n. 23.

2. A similar charge appears on *Heji* 7295. Cai Zhemao (1999:331) rejoins them in an “exploded” rejoining.

3. On the strategic importance of Mei (*Sōran*, no. 4741), see Chen Mengjia 1956:267. Yan Yiping (1988) locates it in Shandong; Zheng Jiexiang (1994:33–34) locates it about 8 k to the south of Zhaoge 朝歌 in northern Henan; he gives the graph as *mei* 昧.

EIGHT

The Occupational Lineages

Very few divinations about Shang state manufacturing have been found.¹ The question of who the dynasty's laborers were, therefore, can be answered only by a series of careful inferences drawn from the objects they made, from archaeological finds like workshops and tools, and from our understanding of Shang society in general. Guo Moruo, for instance, had proposed that the bronzes of Late Shang and early Zhou had been made by slave labor (see pp. 53–54 above). Another approach is based on the evidence of the so-called "lineage names" incised on the oracle bones, bronzes, and pottery of Shang. Some of these names suggest specific occupations, and Satō Taketoshi (1962:14–20, 321–24), following the research of Ding Shan and Shirakawa Shizuka, had proposed that skilled handicraft production was in the hands of occupational lineages (*shokugyō shizoku* 職業氏族).

It should be stressed that no precision is implied by the use of the word "lineages." In the discussion that follows I use it simply to refer to a group of families bearing the same surname.² That the divinations refer to numerous such lineage groups and to various single *zu* 族 lineages (Y986.1–87.1), with many of the lineage names also appearing as insignia at the end of Shang bronze inscriptions,³ indicates that the Shang king

1. Some of the discussion that follows is taken from Keightley 1969:29–39.

2. Kwang-chih Chang (1963:168; cf. 1968:243; 1977:284) had suggested that, in Shang times, "the families of the Royal House, the nobility, and some of the craftsmen were of the extended family type, probably patrilineal. . . . Beyond the family, unilinear lineages may have been prevalent among the nobility and some of the craftsmen; there were possibly ramagelike kin groups based on patrilineality and primogeniture." "In tracing the distribution of individual emblems in bronze inscriptions, one finds that it did not follow political borders. The *ju* 𠄎 emblem, for example, occurs in bronzes known to have been unearthed in an area that stretches from Qishan [岐山] to Shandong and from Henan to Hunan" (Kwang-chih Chang 1980:253); see too Rao Zongyi 1985:302–03.

3. Hayashi (1968:34–43) identified 217 oracle-bone names—of Fang 方 countries, Hou 侯 and Bo 伯 rulers, and places and persons—which appear as lineage insignia on Shang and Western Zhou bronzes; the number has subsequently increased.

Numbers

The numbers of men that the Late Shang rulers mobilized are significant, as they bear on social status, and as an indicator of considerable powers of recruitment.¹ A good number of the mobilizations may simply be repeat divinations,² but they still serve as an impressive reminder of the ability of the Shang state to raise its forces.

When the *zhong* were numbered at all, for example, they were only numbered as one hundred or less:

[80] 𠄎之日𠄎喪𠄎雉十又一

“... this day³ ... lose (*sang*) [*zhong*?] ... lose (*zhi*) 11 (*zhong* [?]).” (I. Bin) (**Heji* 8659)



[81] 𠄎受夷眾百王弗悔

“... Shou,⁴ it should be the *zhong*, one hundred (of them), His Majesty will not have regret.” (III–IV. Nameless-Diviner) (*Heji* 26906)



By contrast, as we have already seen in [49]–[51], and [67], the *ren* were generally numbered in their thousands—in their 1,000,⁵ 3,000,⁶ 4,000,⁷ and

1. The Shang number system was fully developed, capable of recording relatively high numbers (Venture 2002:152, citing Djamouri 1994).

2. *Heji* 6639–43, for instance, are all divined on *yivei* (day 32) and on scapulas.

3. Anne O. Yue writes: “the function of *Zhi* [之] in the oracular texts is mainly deictic” (1998:246).

4. Shou was also a place-name (Zhang Bingquan 1967:694; *JGWD*:457).

5. [48B] and *Heji* 7330 (scapulas), both using the *deng* 登 verb.

6. For additional charges that refer to raising 3,000 *ren*, see, e.g., *Heji* 6167, 6170–72, 6639, 6640, 6641–43, 6990 (shell), 7318–24, 7326, 7329, 39863; *Yingcang* 150 (shell), 558, 559, 657—all using the *deng* verb, and all, except as indicated, on scapula—and *Heji* 6173, 6174, also on scapulas, where the verb is missing. *Heji* 6185, on a scapula, also refers to 3,000 men, but as the object of a verb (*Sōran*, no. 3695) that may have meant “inspect.”

7. *Heji* 6175, on scapula, refers to 4,000 men, but the verb is missing.

Work Schedule of the Diviners

The inscriptional information is too fragmentary for modern scholars to reconstruct the working schedules of the *zhong* and *ren*. They appear to have served at the pleasure of the king and his ancestors, but it is not possible to document the intensity of his demands. The divinations—with each charge usually addressed to a single, ad hoc event—would suggest that labor was mobilized irregularly, at the whim of the ruler. But it must be borne in mind that the primary function of the divinations was to ensure the approval of the Powers for the particular mobilization or other action being contemplated. The regular recruitment of statute labor—which, for example, was performed in theory for one month a year in the Qin-Han period (Hulsewé 1984:196)—might well have passed undivined, and would thus have been unrecorded in the inscriptions. We can see the system of recruitment in action, but it is harder to discern the customary expectations that supported it or the degree to which it was regularly invoked.

The activities of the diviners, however, do throw some light on actual work schedules at the end of the second millennium B.C. The Li 歷-group diviners, for example, practiced their scapulimancy in the temples of ritual units whose constituent ancestors had been given the temple name of a particular *gan* stem—*jia*, *yi*, *bing*, *ding*, and so on. This is demonstrated by the following sequence of postfaces (in italics) on a Li-group bone:

[94A] [甲寅貞：其大禦王]自上甲^𠄎用白豕九[中示^𠄎𠄎牛.]在大甲宗卜

[On *jiayin*(?) (day 51?) divined: “(We) will (*qi*) perform a Great Exorcism (*yu*) for His Majesty (to the ancestors)] from Shang Jia (P1) (on down); will sacrifice-in-blood-covenant (with the spirits) (*meng*) (?) white pigs (?), nine of them; [(to the) Middle Ancestors (*Xia Shi*) will cut up (and offer the blood of) (?) a cow.”] *Cracked in the temple of Da Jia* (K3).

Leadership

The king was the prime source of authority in leading the *zhong* and *ren* (see Table 1 on p. 246ff.), at least in the oracle-bone inscriptions. Divinations about performance of “His Majesty’s affairs” (see the Glossary for *gu* 固) were reserved for the royal retainers; the term was not usually used to dignify the activities of the labor force itself.¹ A study of the officers who were associated with the labor force shows they were frequently led by a named retainer or ally of the king. They might also be associated with some of the king’s official retinue, like the “Many Horse(-chariot officers)”:

[106] 𠄎多馬𠄎弭令𠄎眾𠄎

“... the Many Horse(-chariot officers) (*Ma*) ... should not order ... the *zhong*. . . .” (I) (**Tunnan* 4029)

𠄎

[107A] 𠄎馬呼取王弗悔

“It should be the Horse(-chariot officers) that (we) call upon (*hu*) to take (*qu*) (the *zhong*?); His Majesty will have no regrets.”

[107B] 以眾王弗悔

“If (the Horse[-chariot officers]?) take the *zhong*, His Majesty will have no regrets.” (III. He) (*Heji* 26901)

𠄎

It is plausible to suppose, on the basis of [106] and [107AB] (see too [117AB]), that the *zhong* might have served as the foot soldiers attached to the horse chariots led by the officers known as the *Duo Ma* or *Ma*.²

1. In only one case ([68A]) were the *zhongren* linked, through an officer, to His Majesty’s affairs.

2. See too Kolb 1991:36–42.

TWELVE

The Work: Agriculture

I turn now to a series of four chapters that describe the activities of the *zhong*, the *ren*, and the officers who led them in the strategic areas of agriculture, warfare, the hunt, and construction.

Many inhabitants of Shang China would have had little notion of the land that lay beyond their daily horizon. Travelling no further than their local fields and woods, many peasants would have felt themselves at the center of a small, familiar world that was intermittently and unpredictably invaded by external forces—like the king on hunt or campaign, marauding beasts, enemy raiders, voracious birds and insects, and, above all, the onslaughts of wind, rain, drought, and flood—that entered, often abruptly and unpredictably, from one horizon, left their mark on a settlement, and then passed out of its ken.

The frequent peregrinations of the king and his entourage, by contrast, combined with the reports, tribute payments, court visits, marriage alliances, and so on made by his dependents, officers, and allies, indicate that the Shang court's knowledge of a wider geography must have been extensive. The well over five hundred place-names that appear in the inscriptions (Song Zhenhao 1991:101) reveal Shang knowledge of a far-flung series of settlements and their human and spiritual inhabitants. But the basic peasant perception, that of the parochial inhabitant anxiously scrutinizing the surrounding borders, attempting to understand and control the irruptions of benevolent or hostile Powers that lurked beyond, may still be discerned in the diviner's cosmological conceptions. (Keightley 2000:55)

The intention is not to provide a comprehensive account of these topics. I am concerned, rather, to demonstrate the ways in which the Shang elites mobilized and organized their main labor force in four important areas of dynastic activity, the ways in which these activities were endowed with their own ritual significance, and, finally, the ways in which the various activities involved were inter-related. It is significant that most of the labor force is stipulated for military purposes (Table 1). Presumably the peasant

THIRTEEN

The Work: Warfare

Leadership in Warfare

Military alliances were central to the operations and very existence of the Late Shang state whose more distant zones were ruled by leaders identified in the inscriptions as Hou 侯 (“Archer Lords” [?]) and Bo 伯 (“Patrarch” [?]; Boodberg 1979:217). The Hou were more likely than the Bo to appear as allies of the Shang, sending in tribute and assisting the king’s affairs; they received in return military assistance from the king and benefited from his divinations about their harvests (Keightley 1979–80:28). Numerous divinations about whether the king should ally with various leaders suggest the problematic and changeable nature of these alliances.¹

[211] 癸丑卜亘貞：王隹望乘比伐下危

Making cracks on *guichou* (day 50), Xuan divined: “It should be Wang Cheng (Wang Cheng) whom His Majesty joins with to attack the Xiawei.”² (I. Bin) (*Heji* 811f) 

With regard to ideology, the Shang dynasty was often cruel as it lorded over the lesser tribes. For example, the *taotie* 饕餮, the “animal mask,” perhaps linked to the ancestors, was chilling, at least to the modern viewer:

To some it is a monster—a fearsome image that would scare away evil forces. Others imagine a dragon—an animal whose vast powers had more positive associations. Some hypothesize that it reflects masks used in rituals. Others that it carries over the face-like imagery on neolithic jades from the Liangzhu [良渚] area. Still others see these images as hardly more than designs. By tracing the evolution of the *taotie* over the course of the Shang, it is possible to show how the vivid, highly animal-like images of late Shang evolved from thin line and dot designs of early Shang. Perhaps the *taotie* came simply to be associated with the Shang

1. Y61.1–64.1, 106.1–08.1, 911.2–14.1. See too n. 77 below.

2. Also see [303AB], divined on day 52.

FOURTEEN

The Work: Hunting

The manpower mobilized by the king could also be used in hunting, an activity that was closely related both to military exercises—in which the prey to be taken on the field was animal rather than human—to land clearing, and to agriculture (see ch. 12).¹ Some 4,500 of the oracle-bone inscriptions were devoted to the hunt, mainly in Periods III to V.² As to the number of places listed in the oracle-bone inscriptions, they are over 150 listed by Chen Mengjia (1956:249–312) and 239 listed by Zhong Bosheng (1972, appendix [cited by Fiskesjö 2001:133, n. 416]). The same groups of conscripts or dependent laborers might have been involved in both warfare and hunting. The ability to command and deploy them effectively in one activity presumably bore fruit in the other.³

[245] 貞：呼眾人出麋克

Divined: “(We) call upon (*hu*) the *zhongren* to go out (to hunt) deer (at) Ke (?)” (I. Bin) (**Heji* 15)



1. For a comprehensive account of the cultural significance of Shang hunting, see Fiskesjö 2001. Fiskesjö (2001:106–13) deals with the five hunting terms: *tian* 田, *shou* 狩 or 獸, *bu* 步, *she* 射, and *ge* 逐 (Y866.2); see too Chou Hung-hsiang 1968:145; Childs-Johnson 1998:32–37, 57; Liu Huan 2005. *She* 射, “shoot (with bow-and-arrow)” (Y1011.2–13.1; *Sōran*, no. 0677), and *zhu* 逐, “pursue,” (Y328.1–30.2; *Sōran*, no. 1074) may also count as hunting terms. Fiskesjö (2001:145–46) deals with hunt as military training. See too Chen Mengjia 1956:552–57; Cheng Te-k’un 1963a:132; Tung Tso-pin 1964:82–84; Huang Ranwei 1964–65; Dong Zuobin 1965:92–94; Hsü Chin-hsiung 1977:xxxiii–vi; Yao Xiaosui 1981; Meng Shikai 1983; 1990; Wu Haokun and Pan You 1985:278–82; Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding 1985:150–96; Liu Huan 1989:68–79, 143–46; Zhong Bosheng 1992; Ding Su 1993:272–89; Chen Weizhan 1995; Lu Liancheng 1996:132–36; Qi Wenxin and Wang Guimin 1998:66–76; Wang Yuxin and Yang Shengnan, eds., 1999:542–69; Shen Zhiyu 2001:274–83; Zhao Cheng 2006:1096–115.

2. Fiskesjö 2001:105, nn. 276–77, but revising the III bones to III–IV (after Yang Yuyan 2005).

3. Hawkes, O’Connell, and Jones (2001:695) suggest “that an important benefit a man earns for himself by hunting big animals is favorable audience attention that affects his social standing relative to other men.”

The Work: Construction

Wall Construction

Early evidence of communal labor mobilization can be discerned in the earthen walls that surrounded Neolithic and early Bronze Age fortifications; more than fifty such settlements have now been found—such as those at Haojiatai 郝家台, Pingliangtai 平粮台, and Wangchenggang 王城岗 (all in Henan).¹ The encintes were often surrounded by moats (Xiaoneng Yang 2004a:117). One of the first known piled-earth walled encintes was in Li xian 禮縣 in Hunan; it formed an area 200 x 160 m, with the base at the foot of a wall as 6 m wide. It has been dated to 5540–5100 B.C.² “Building such ramparts and platforms required an immense labor force and high-level management, which suggests that the operative organization exceeded a clan or family unit.”³

1. For an introduction to these and related sites, and a discussion of their significance, see, e.g., Cao Guicun 1987; Chen Shaodi 1987; Huber 1988; Ma Shizhi 1988; Underhill 1989:229–31; 1992:174 (for Longshan sites); Zhong Bosheng 1991:132–34, 151, n. 59; Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo and Zhongguo lishi bowuyuan kaogubu 1992; Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1993; Li Feng 1994; Weisheu 1997:96–101; Li Liu 1996:254–77; Zhang Xuehai 1996; Yates 1997:77–78; Fang Yousheng 1998; Qi Wenxin and Wang Guimin 1998:30–34; Ren Shinan 1998; Zhang Chi and Okamura 1999; Kaizuka and Itō 2000:196–98; Shao Wangping 2000:203–06; Xiaoneng Yang 2000:174 (Yang Xiaoneng 2008:329–30); 2004a:103–37; 2004b:60–61, 64–66; Cohen 2001:107–12 (in Shandong and Henan); Wang Yi 2003 (in Sichuan); Lin Liugen 2004 (who notes that the board frame technique is limited to the Central Plains area); Yan Wenming 2004:60–64, 68–75; Shao Wangping 2005:108–11; Luan Fengshi 2006a (in the Haidai 海岱 area); *Kaogu* 2008:26; *Wenwu* 2008; Zhejiang sheng Wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2008. Zhang Yushi (2004) traces the development of the “board frame constructing technique (*banzhu jishu* 版筑技術).” Xiaoneng Yang (2004a:138–43) tabulates the Neolithic walled settlement with their dimensions and dates: 41 earthen-wall and 17 stone-wall settlements (16 of the 17 in Inner Mongolia); he also gives the plans of 32 Neolithic settlements. Also see Ma Yulin 1998:32. I draw upon Keightley (1969:126–40), but with some considerable revision.

2. Xiaoneng Yang 2004a:99, 102, 138. The “exceptional size of the middle Yangzi sites suggests that the elite leaders of these communities were able to command the labor power of a considerable number of people” (Yates 1997:78).

3. Xiaoneng Yang 2000:174 (Yang Xiaoneng 2008:330); he cites Cao Bingwu 1996. See also

Some Elements of Ritual Concern

The Shang court was impregnated with ritual, the *li* 禮 of Shang.¹ For Rappaport, a practitioner of ritual

is not merely transmitting messages encoded in the liturgy, he is also participating in—becoming part of—the order to which his own body and breath give life.²

As Bell observes,

norms and values, on the one hand, become saturated with emotion, while the gross and basic emotions become ennobled through contact with social values. The irksomeness of moral constraint is transformed into the “love of virtue.”³

Ritual, Lukes argues,

helps to define as authoritative certain ways of seeing society: it serves to specify what in society is of special significance, it draws people’s attention to certain forms of relationships and activity.⁴

1. The word *li* does not appear in the oracle-bone materials from Xiaotun or the Zhouyuan 周原. For the Zhouyuan materials, see e.g. Rawson 1980:91–92; Wang Yuxin 1984 (with index of *kaishu* 楷書 forms, pp. 349–72); *YXFX*:163–64. Li Xueqin 1992:133–35 concludes that the date of the oracle bones started with Wen Wang 文王 and go down to Kang Wang 康王 and Zhao Wang 昭王. Wang Hui (1998) reviews three differing hypotheses; the oracle bones were (1) made by Zhou hands, mainly of the time of Wen Wang, some from Cheng Wang 成王; (2) not of Zhou date, but of the Shang royal house, divined by the Shang king in the Shang temple; only a small number were Zhou in origin; (3) made by the Shang king who divined these rituals, but that the recorders were Zhou people. Wang Hui (1998:20) concludes that they were made by the Zhou. See too Liu Liang 1999; Qiu Xigui 2000:68–69; Xiaoneng Yang 2000:193 (Yang Xiaoneng 2008:366–67); Cao Wei 2002; Thorp 2006:228–30, 244–49. For another example of the Zhouyuan bones, see Zhang Weilian and Duan Hongzhen 2008:60–61.

2. Rappaport 1979:192, cited by Mayfair Yang 1994:225.

3. Bell 1992:172, citing Turner 1967:30.

4. Bell 1992:175, citing Lukes 1975:301–02.

The Role of Geopolitics and Culture

Ancestor Worship

What factors, then, in ancient China account for this routine and large-scale employment of human labor by a central, proto-bureaucratic Shang elite?¹ Certainly the Shang were well placed, in terms of agriculture and resources, but Wittfogel's vision of an agromanageerial despotism motivated by the need for large-scale water control works does not appear to fit the Shang evidence very well. The Shang had the manpower resources and technical skills to build fairly large-scale irrigation systems, but there is no evidence that they did so or that they needed to do so, for the North China Plain was, in terms of both temperature and rainfall, more hospitable to farming at the end of the second millennium B.C. than it is today.² The Shang may have built city walls—at Erlitou, Zhengzhou, and Huanbei (see, e.g., Dong Qi 2006:56–57)—but the walls were a one-time operation and, once built, required only maintenance. The employment of labor was far more extensive and in tune with the values of the society as whole.³ I would suggest that other factors influenced the development of Shang labor mobilization even more significantly.

1. The paragraphs that follow are based, in part, upon Keightley 1969:346–55; see too Li Chi 1977:247–54. Renfrew (1972:30, 37, 485) argues that we abandon the hope “for an independent variable,” urging that we concentrate upon “feedback loops” and “the multiplier effect.” Bradley (1998:66) notes that “this does not oblige us to think in terms of cause and effect, for the relationship between these processes was surely a reciprocal one. What it does suggest is that Neolithic ideologies and Neolithic economies were subtly intertwined and that both emerged after a period of gradual change.” Xiaoneng Yang (2000:189–93 [Yang Xiaoneng 2008:361–66]; 2004a:133–34) asks a series of good questions, with references. See too Haas 1982:209–17; Song Xinchao 1991:15–19, 93–97; Zhang Guoshuo 1995; Keightley 2004a.

2. YXFX:435–36; Li Liu 1996:245; Keightley 1999a:35–36; 1999b:277; 2000:1–2. The Shang may have built water control works locally (cf. Hommel 1937:49–54), but that was not a primary concern of the dynastic rulers.

3. Sivin (1972:113, 114) refers to “style defining choices . . . that reflect the continuous influence of social values and priorities.”

EIGHTEEN

The Legacies

Shang traditions were still vital a millennium after the fall of the dynasty. The sixty days still followed the *ganzhi* 干支 system (Chen Mengjia 1956:236) and, perhaps, even the yearly calendar.¹ The chariot was prized in both the Shang and Zhou.² Shang rituals and burial practices were followed in the Zhou and beyond.³ The Shang enemies continue to appear as “names of the ruling class” of Zhou (Průšek 1971:57, n. 18). The states of Lu 魯 and Song 宋 were regarded as repositories of Shang culture.⁴ The *Zhouli* 周禮 records the use of the *zhong* 眾 in the army, the hunt, and in corvée.⁵ Myths and legends about the Shang were preserved, some in the successor state of Song.⁶ If the particulars flourished in this way, so one may suppose did the ethos and worldview. Every idea, every pattern of thought, has its genealogy, and some of the mental habits central to Zhou, Qin, and Han culture can be traced back, as I have attempted to show, to the ideas and thought patterns of the Shang. “From a wealth and variety of literary evidence it is now recognised that divination and the consul-

1. Dong Zuobin 1945:II:3:34a–35b. Yabuuchi (1956) challenges this view in part.

2. Creel 1970:282; Barbieri-Low 2000:57–68.

3. E.g., Waterbury 1942:7–24; Karlgren 1950:55; 1950a:186; Dong Zuobin 1951:397; Itō 1956a:423; *Kaogu xuebao* 1978:319; Kwang-chih Chang 1976b:59; 1986:361–67; Maspero 1978:106; Kung-chuan Hsiao 1979:96, n. 40; Ray Huang 1981:117–21; Li Zizhi and Shang Zhiru 1986:10–14; *Kaogu* 1987:19–20; *Wenwu* 1988:39–48; 1989:60, fig. 2; 82, fig. 39; 83–84, figs. 40–44; Falkenhäusen 1993:319; 2006:177–200; Lu Liancheng 1993:824, 832, 836; Cook 1995:241–55, 270–71; Brooks and Brooks 1998:114, 304; Rawson 1999:31–32; Zhang Weilian 2008.

4. Du Erwei 1965:25–26; Blakeley 1970:330, 331. See too Falkenhäusen 2006:164–65.

5. Biot, tr., 1851:I:425–26; also see III:20.

6. See, e.g., Waterbury 1942:17–18; Allan 1991:25–56, esp. 39, 41. Confucius advocated riding in the state carriage of Yin 殷 (*Lunyu* 論語, 15.10). Both Wang Mang 王莽 and the Guang Wu 光武 emperor enfeoffed a Yin heir (Bielenstein 1967:36, 37). Sacrifices to Tang (K1), the dynasty founder, only ceased with the start of the Later Han (Shryock 1932:100). There are numerous references to Shang customs in *Liji* 禮記 and other classics. See Liu Fuqin 1955:1143.1–44.3; 1189.3–90.3.

APPENDIX ONE

Inscription Glosses

Inscriptions discussed in this section are marked with an asterisk in the main text. They are listed alphabetically and numerically. Each inscription discussed in this section can be found in the main text by consulting the “Key to the Inscriptions Translated” (p. 483).

Heji 1. Chen Mengjia (1956:606) and S25.2 both supply the *wang* 王 at the start of [143]; MZ and *Heshi* do not. I believe, however, that the bottom right corner of the *wang* graph can be seen in the rubbing. Furthermore, it may be safely supplied on the basis of *Heji* 5, 𠄎設貞: 王大令眾人曰 𠄎, “. . . Que divined: ‘If His Majesty will greatly order the *zhongren* saying . . .,’” engraved in a large calligraphic style and on a large scapula fragment similar to that of *Heji* 1.

Li Xueqin (1985:101), building on the arguments of Zhang Zhenglang 1983, has proposed that the *xie* 𠄎 (see Glossary) in this inscription referred to the name of a wind, so that the charge meant [143]: “His Majesty’s great order to the *zhongren* says: ‘It is the season of the Xie 𠄎 wind, the fields will receive a good harvest.’” (On Xi 析 as the name of the wind of the East Fang, see *Heji* 14295; e.g., Allan 1991:79–83; Keightley 2000:70–71; Aihe Wang 2000:35; Smith 2008:366–73.) Li notes that there are also charges of the form “𠄎受年”; this, he believes, indicates that the Shang recognized that when the Xie wind came at a certain season there would be a good crop. Li Xueqin (1985:99–101; 1989:104–110) and Aihe Wang (2000:29, 35–36, 50), among others, discuss the Four Winds and the Four Seasons. Such an interpretation cannot be excluded. Li Xueqin and Zhang Zhenglang (1983:1) punctuate by putting a comma before the *tian* of [143], thus 王大令眾人曰: 𠄎, 田其受年, but I know of no comparable case in which a charge ended with 田其受年, “the fields will receive harvest.” Nor am I comfortable that “His Majesty’s great order” to the *zhongren* would, in this view, turn out not to be an order at all but a comment on the weather. I would also note that, according to the records for 1951–

APPENDIX TWO

Glossary of Shang Terms and Phrases

For many years, the standard (although increasingly dated) source for identifying Shang graphs had been Li Xiaoding's *JGWZ* (introduced at Keightley 1977; 1978:60). Its reproduction of numerous scholarly discussions remains invaluable, and in this Glossary I generally avoid repeating what has already been discussed there. A more recent survey of scholarly opinion, which provides citations to a more extensive range of opinions, is Matsumaru and Takashima's *Sōran* (reviewed at Keightley 1997:513–17), “interpreted by 471 scholars around the world in their publications from 1904 through 1988 (including a few that appeared in 1989).” I generally give only the main reference; subsidiary references can be consulted in the index: *Sōran*: 648–68, 686–718. *JGWD*, *JGWJ*, Ma Rusen 1993, and Yu Xingwu 1996 may also be consulted as a guide to many of the issues involved.

The entries herein address the usage of the words as they appear in certain inscriptions translated in this book; the entries are not intended to serve as a comprehensive account of all Shang uses of a word. The English translations offered are sometimes “functional,” in the sense that they are based on a contextual understanding of the words in question rather than precise philological analysis. The resulting imprecision, as evident, for example, in the “disaster” words—*hai* 𠄎 (= *hai* 害), *huo* 禍, *jiu* 咎, *you* 尤, *zai* 戕 and 災¹—obscures our precise understanding of Shang theology (but see the Glossary entries).

The entries are arranged alphabetically (by modern pronunciation) and, when romanizations are identical, by the order of the traditional radicals. The first modern character in each entry generally represents the modern word(s), that in my view, best represents, graphically and semantically, the Shang word.

1. As Mickel (1976:63) noted, “very few persons have attempted to discern differences among the disaster graphs, and circular definitions . . . have been the rule.”

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