3 CAST IN BRONZE AND STONE: NARRATIVE

3.1 Studies of Bronze Inscriptions before 2000

Western studies of bronze and stone inscriptions, and especially of bronze inscriptions, underwent considerable progress from its earliest efforts through the last decades of the twentieth century. However, this progress was not always smooth. Research often seemed to take one step forward, only to be followed by a step backward. In all, one would have to say that especially the earliest stages of this progress were not very promising.

The first inscribed bronze vessel to attract the attention of western scholars was the *jin hou pan* 晉侯盤 (see Fig. 14), with an inscription of 538 characters. Stephen Wootton BUSHELL (1844-1908) purchased this vessel in Beijing in 1870, for which reason it was originally known in the West as the “Bushell Bowl.” According to Bushell’s own account, the vessel was originally in the collection of ZAIDUN 載敦 (1827-1890), a Manchu prince to whom Bushell was introduced by his friend the Mongolian nobleman YANG Lishan 楊立山 (1843?-1900).

Bushell had arrived in Beijing in 1868, serving as the doctor to the English embassy. He lived there for thirty years until his retirement in 1899, ostensibly due to ill health, at which time he returned home to Great Britain. During his time in Beijing, he developed a passion for Chinese culture, and in his spare time collected a great number of antiques. He was especially interested in Chinese ceramics, and even became interested in ancient Chinese inscriptions. As early as 1873, he published an article in the *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* on the Stone Drums of Qin (*Qin shi gu* 秦石鼓): “The Stone Drums of the Chou Dynasty” (300010). By this time, he had already collected quite a few bronze vessels. In 1874, he returned to England on home leave, and at that time gave thirty-five of his pieces as a loan to the then just established Victoria and Albert Museum, where they were put on display. According to Bushell’s account, the *Jin Hou pan* was the most important of these pieces. In 1898, the museum purchased Bushell’s entire collection of bronze vessels; the price was four hundred pounds.

After retiring from the British foreign service, Bushell devoted himself to the study of Chinese art, and in 1904 and 1906 published a sumptuous two-volume
study entitled simply *Chinese Art*.¹ *Chinese Art* was published by the Victoria and Albert Museum, and many of the pieces illustrated were in the collection of that museum. The second volume contained a chapter on bronze vessels, introducing the thirty-five pieces that Bushell had collected, including especially the *Jin Hou pan.*²

![Fig. 14a: Jin Hou pan 晉侯盤 Vessel](image1)

![Fig. 14b: Jin Hou pan 晉侯盤 Inscription](image2)

According to Bushell’s own description, the inscription on the *Jin Hou pan* commemorated an award to Lord Wen of Jin 晉文侯 (i.e., the famous prince Chong’er 重耳 of the state of Jin 晉) by King Xiang of Zhou 周襄王 (r. 650-619 B.C.), appointing him as hegemon (*ba* 霸) among all of the states. After *Chinese Art* was published, the famous French Sinologists Édouard CHAVANNES (1865-1918; see the biography appended to Chapter One) and Paul PELLIOT (1878-1945) both immediately wrote reviews of the book, both of them pointing out that they suspected that the *Jin Hou pan* was not authentic.³ They suggested two different reasons for this: first, the Chinese scholarly world had taken absolutely no notice of this piece, which would be very strange for a piece with such a lengthy inscription unless they regarded it as a forgery; second, in traditional Chinese literature, Chong’er was always referred to as Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636-628 B.C.),

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whereas Lord Wen of Jin (r. 780-746 B.C.) referred to the ruler of Jin at the time of
the transfer of the Zhou capital from the area of modern Xi’an 西安 to that of Luoyang 洛陽, the transition from Western Zhou to Eastern Zhou. Chavannes sug-
ggested that this sort of anachronism is impossible to reconcile. Pelliot, for his part,
stated that while he had never seen the piece, and so had no basis on which to
determine whether it was a forgery or not, the lack of interest in it by Chinese
scholars made him think that at least the inscription must have been added to the
vessel at some recent time. Chinese Art was reprinted in 1909. This second edition
carried Bushell’s own response to the criticisms of Chavannes and Pelliot. Bush-
ell recounted that after he had bought the piece in Beijing, he had shown it to
PAN Zuyin 潘祖蔭 (1830-1890), an expert paleographer of the time, and Pan had
not only not raised any doubts about the piece but even arranged to have a rubb-
ing made of the inscription.

Another western scholar who contributed to the discussion of the Jin Hou pan
was Edward H. PARKER (1849-1926). Parker had served at the British embassy
together with Bushell, though Parker was a foreign service officer. After returning
to England in 1895, he was appointed professor of Chinese at the University of
Manchester. In 1909, he published two separate articles discussing the Jin Hou
pan: “The Ancient Chinese Bowl in the South Kensington Museum (I)” (300030)
and “The Ancient Chinese Bowl in the South Kensington Museum (II)” 300040).
The “South Kensington Museum” in the title of these two articles refers to the
Victoria and Albert Museum, and the “Ancient Chinese Bowl” is none other than
the Jin Hou Pan or Bushell Bowl. In the articles, Parker provided a detailed account
of the history of the state of Jin, and argued as well that the historical account in
the inscription was more reasonable than that available in the Shi ji 史記 (Records
of the historian). From this, he concluded that the vessel and its inscription
should be authentic. Nevertheless, he argued that the “Jin Hou” 晉侯 of the in-
scription referred neither to Lord Wen of Jin nor to Duke Wen of Jin, but rather
very possibly referred to yet another lord of Jin: Duke Jing of Jin 晉景公 (r. 599-
581 B.C.). In addition, Parker provided a complete English translation of the in-
scription, and the first installment of the study also contained a Latin translation
done by Pierre HOANG (i.e., Huang Bolu 黃伯祿; 1830-1909), a missionary living
in Shanghai.

After Parker had published these two installments of his article, Lionel
Charles HOPKINS (1854-1952; see the biography appended to Chapter One), an-
other former British foreign service officer who had gone on to develop a passion
for Chinese paleography, published “Chinese Writing in the Chou Dynasty in the
Light of Recent Discoveries” (300060; 1911), which discussed the Jin Hou pan. In
the article, Hopkins recounts that he had personally inspected the vessel, on the
basis of which he had determined that the vessel was not made of bronze at all, but rather was pure copper. He also noted that the patina on the vessel was not natural, but rather had been added to it by someone recently. Nevertheless, Hopkins expressed no doubts at all about the authenticity of the inscription. In the same year (1911), Herbert Allen Giles (1845-1935), the professor of Chinese at the University of Cambridge, paid a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum to view the vessel, and then published an article that was completely at odds with that of Hopkins. Interestingly, Giles too had long been an English consular official, and had initially been on very good terms with Edward Parker. However, after the two men returned to England and took up professorships at different universities, their personal relations turned sour, which frequently manifested itself in scholarly attacks on each other. As had Hopkins, Giles also provided a description of the Jin Hou pan and its patina, and also noted that the inscription appeared to be incised into the metal, different from the inscriptions on most vessels, which are cast into the metal. Moreover, like Chavannes and Pelliot, Giles wondered why no Chinese scholar had paid attention to such an ostensibly important vessel, which he too regarded as highly suspicious. Based on this, he argued that the Jin Hou pan was a forgery. The following year, both Giles and Hopkins published new articles, Giles’s article entitled “The Chinese ‘Bronze Bowl’ in the Victoria and Albert Museum” (300070) and Hopkins’s article entitled “The Chinese Bronze Known as the ‘Bushell Bowl’ and Its Inscription” (300090), in which both men insisted on their previous views. In addition to providing a more or less detailed response to Giles’s earlier article, Hopkins also provided a hand-copy of the inscription and its 538 characters, all of which he identified also with kaishu 楷書 equivalents. He also presented a table in which, for each of the characters, he gave the shape of the character in such different scripts as small seal script, the Qin Stone Drums script, the Zhou script (Zhou wen 篆文; essentially the “large seal script”), the ancient script (guwen 古文), and oracle-bone inscription script (see Fig. 15). For his part, Giles further compared the shape of the vessel and its décor with authentic ancient Chinese bronze vessels, and pointing out the manifest differences insisted again that the vessel could be nothing more than a forgery of the Song or Ming period.
The debate over the authenticity of the *Jin Hou pan* vessel and its inscription eventually attracted the attention of John Calvin FERGUSON (1866-1945), whose study would bring at least this stage of the debate to a conclusion. Ferguson was
originally an American Protestant missionary, who went to China in 1887. However, shortly after arriving there, he gave up his missionary work, and went to work instead for the Chinese government, first that of the Qing dynasty, and thereafter for the Republican government. Ferguson was fluent in Chinese and was also very sociable, enjoying an easy rapport with numerous Chinese intellectuals and art collectors, including such important figures as the Manchu prince DUANFANG 端方 (1861-1911). He himself also developed a deep knowledge of the history of Chinese art. In 1915, he published an article entitled “The Bushell Platter or the Tsin Hou P’an” (300100), an objective discussion of the vessel in which he pointed out numerous suspicious points about the inscription. He also noted that many of the characters and expressions in the inscription resemble those in the famous San shi pan 散氏盤, which may have served as a model for the forger. Despite his doubts about the inscription, Ferguson still felt that the vessel itself may well be a genuine product of the Zhou dynasty.

Throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, the Jin Hou pan or Bushell Bowl was all but forgotten. However, recently Nicholas Pearce, presently professor in the Department of Art of the University of Glasgow revisited this early debate. As he points out, it is not the case that Chinese scholars had taken no notice of the Jin Hou pan. Already in the early Qing, FENG Hao 馮浩 (1719-1801) had already pointed out that both the vessel and its inscription were suspicious, pointing out as well that the opening phrase of the inscription, wei wang yi yue 隹王一月 (it was the king’s first month), is problematic, since the first month of the year is usually indicated in bronze inscriptions of the time as zheng yue 正月 and not as yi yue 一月. Later, NIU Shuyu 鈕樹玉 (1760-1827) also pointed out that the inscription includes characters of several different script styles, with characters even deriving from the “New Appendix” (Xin fu 新附) to the edition of the Shuo wen jie zi 說文解字 edited by XU Xuan 徐鉉 (916-991) in the Song dynasty.4 In 1933, well after the time of this debate in the western scholarly world, the Chinese scholar SHANG Chengzuo 商承祚 (1902-1991) remarked of the Jin Hou pan “that a forgery such as this could fool only a foreigner.”5

By the 1920s, western scholars and collectors had made considerable advances in their understanding of Chinese antiquities. In 1923, W. Percival YETTS (1878-1957) demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Jin Hou pan is a

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5 SHANG Chengzuo 商承祚, “Gudai yiqi weizi yanjiu” 古代彝器偽字研究, Jinling xuebao 金陵學報 3.2 (1933): 290.
forgery. In the 1980s, the Victoria and Albert Museum undertook a research project to determine how that piece had been produced. By now, this piece that had once excited such great interest among western scholars remains only as a historiographical curiosity. However, it bears noting that while Bushell, Parker and Hopkins were all mistaken about the authenticity of the piece, they were not at all ignorant regarding the reading of the inscription. In fact, already in his *Chinese Art* Bushell had quite a bit right to say about how to read it.

Shortly after the conclusion of this debate on the authenticity of the *Jin Hou pan*, the western scholarly world made manifest advances in the study of bronze inscriptions. 1916 saw the publication of two studies, both of which served as overviews of the field.

Léon WIEGER, S.J. (1856-1933) was a French Jesuit who was a long-time resident of the Jesuit community in present-day Hejian 河間 county, Hebei. He published numerous books on various topics in traditional Chinese culture, among which the most important may well have been *Caractères chinois: etymologie, graphies, lexiques* (100100; 1916). In the original French edition of this work, there is a chapter almost one hundred pages long that presents many of the bronze inscriptions included in the *Jigu zhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* 積古齋鐘鼎彝器款識 (Inscriptions on bronze vessels in the Studio of Collecting Antiquity) of RUAN Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849), each of which was paired with a translation into French. Unfortunately, Wieger’s understanding of the inscriptive language was not all that it should have been; even for the level of scholarship at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is hard to accept the sort of basic mistakes that mar many of his pages. To give just one example, consider his translation of the following perfectly standard inscription.

乍且乙寶尊彛
Moi fils encore armé du couteau, en présence de l’ancêtre, j’offre viande crue, libation, objets précieux, vin, filasse.7

We can overlook the impressionistic rendering of the name 乍 as “my son armed with a sword,” since that character has still today not been adequately explained. However, Wieger’s understanding of *zha* 乍 (i.e., *zuo* 作) as “in the presence of,” *yi* 乙 as “to offer,” *zun* 尊 as “wine,” and *yi* 彝 as “rami,” shows that he did not understand the basic structure of even the simplest bronze inscriptions, or the meanings of some of the most common words. Fortunately, this was not representative of the level of all western scholars at the time.

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7 WIEGER, *Caractères chinois*, p. 433.
In the same year of 1916, the influential French journal *Journal Asiatique* published a long article by M.R. PETRUCCI (1872-1917), entitled “L’épigraphie des bronzes rituels de la Chine ancienne” (300110). This article was also based on Ruan Yuan’s *Jigu zhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi*, from which it selected twenty-one important inscriptions from the Shang, Zhou, Qin and Han periods, including inscriptions on such vessels as the *Wuhui ding* 無惠鼎 and *Song ding* 頌鼎, for all of which Petrucci gave accurate translations into French and also provided copious notes to explain each expression and even many individual characters.

In the 1920s, western scholarship on bronze inscriptions once again took a great step forward. However, we have to admit that at the same time, it also took a step back. The initial progress was stimulated by an important archaeological discovery made at the beginning of the decade. Late in 1923, peasants in Xinzheng 新鄭 county, Henan opened a large ancient tomb, unearthing several tens of ancient bronzes. Although the initial reports identified this tomb as that of Duke Zhuang of Zheng 鄭莊公 (r. 743-701 B.C.), WANG Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927) subsequently demonstrated that the bronzes included pieces by YING Qi 嬰齊, who had been *lingyin* 令尹 of the state of Chu 楚, and thus that the tomb should date to the first half of the sixth century B.C. This discovery attracted great attention in the West as well as in China, prompting studies by Paul Pelliot and also Carl W. BISHOP (1881-1942), who would go on to be the director of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington.

Above in the discussion of the *Jin Hou pan*, we had occasion to mention John C. Ferguson. He also contributed to the study of the Xinzheng bronzes. Ferguson had developed very close relations with a number of Qing and Republican government officials through whose offices he was able regularly to purchase Chinese antiquities, including bronze vessels, for American museums. For instance, in 1912, he purchased on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum of New York the *Qi Hou pan* 齊侯盤 and *Qi Hou dui* 齊侯敦, as well as an *yi* 匜—ewer and a *ding* 鼎—caldron that had been unearthed in 1892 in Yixian 易縣, Hebei; these four pieces are still in the museum’s collection. In 1924, Ferguson also acquired for the Metropolitan Museum a set of twenty vessels, complete with an altar stand, that had belonged to Duanfang; these vessels, which had been unearthed in 1901 in Baoji 寶雞, Shaanxi, are among the most important early Western Zhou finds of all time. It bears noting that before Ferguson had these vessels sent to America, he published a catalog and description of them in Beijing: *A Bronze Table with Accompanying Vessels* (300130; 1924). All of these Zhou-dynasty bronzes attracted great attention from both collectors and scholars in the West.

If there was indeed a step backwards in bronze studies at this time, it was due to Henri MASPERO (1882-1945; see the biography appended to Chapter Four), by
this time the western scholarly world’s foremost authority on ancient China. After his teacher Édouard Chavannes had died in 1918, Maspero succeeded him at the Collège de France as professor of Chinese cultural history. The courses that Maspero offered in the 1920s centered on research that he was then doing for what would be his most famous book, *La Chine antique*, which was published in 1927. Indeed, after this book was published, Maspero was referred to as “*l’homme de Chine antique*.” Although the first chapter of that book introduced the history of the Shang dynasty, and Maspero cited the oracle-bone inscriptions, which at that time had only recently been discovered, his second and third chapters, on the Western Zhou period, made absolutely no use of bronze inscriptions from that period; indeed, he never mentioned them at all. This neglect of the inscriptive record was quite intentional on his part. In the same year that *La Chine antique* was published, Maspero wrote a lengthy review of paleographic work published by the Japanese Sinologist Takata Tadasuke 高田忠周 (1861-1946): Review of “Takata Tadasuke, *Kou Tcheou P’ian*” (300160; 1927). In his review, Maspero launched a critique of Takata’s use of bronze inscriptions. According to Maspero, the incidence of forgery among bronze vessels was extremely high, and therefore they should not be used as historical sources. It goes without saying that there are many forgeries among bronze vessels that have been transmitted from earlier times, as for instance, the *Shi Dan ding* 師旦鼎, given by Maspero as one such example. The *Shi Dan ding* was first illustrated in the *Zhong ding kuanzhi* (Inscriptions on bells and caldrons) of WANG Houzhi 王厚之 (1131-1204), and later was included in both Ruan Yuan’s *Jigu zhai zhong ding yiqi kuan zhi* and also the *Jungu lu jinwen* 攂古錄金文 (Bronze inscriptions in the Jungu [Studio]) of WU Shifen 吳式芬 (1796-1856). The inscription on the *Shi Dan ding* purports to be by the Duke of Zhou 周公, made for his mother Tai Si 太姒; Maspero pointed out that the piece is a forgery, but suggested that Chinese scholars express no suspicion about it. It is true that the *Shi Dan ding* is almost certainly a forgery. However, since the beginning of the twentieth century, very few Chinese scholars have ever regarded it as authentic.10 Maspero regarded a number of other vessels as suspicious as well, including such important inscribed vessels as the *Guoji Zibai pan* 虢季子白盤,

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10 As far as I know, only WU Qichang 吳其昌, *Jinwen lishuo shuzheng* 金文曆朔疏證 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 1.1 cites it as an authentic vessel, but no subsequent scholars cite it.
Wu Hui ding 無惠鼎 and Yuan pan 袁磐. He concluded by saying that without conducting in-depth studies of these vessels, none of them should ever be cited. Maspero’s insistence that bronze inscriptions ought not to be used for fear of making use of forgeries was clearly unreasonable. Even in the time Maspero was writing, the incidence of forgeries among the bronzes he cited was much lower than he suggested. However, it is also worth noting that due to Maspero’s authority among western scholars at the time, his skeptical attitude was quite influential.

Moving into the 1930s, western scholars’ study of Chinese bronzes and bronze inscriptions again advanced by at least one or two steps, but again also retreated by at least one small step. From the perspective of today, it is clear that the most important development of the period was the “International Exhibition of Chinese Art” held at Burlington House in London in 1935-36. That exhibition, often referred to simply as the Burlington Exhibition, exhibited pieces from throughout Chinese history, beginning with Neolithic pottery and extending down to Ming and Qing paintings. Many of the most important pieces had originally been in the collection of the Qing emperors, stored in the Forbidden City in Beijing, and were loaned to the exhibition by the Republican government. The first hall of the exhibition, labeled “Pre-History, Yin-Shang Dynasty, Early (Western) Chou [Zhou] Period, Ch’uun-ch’iu [Chunqiu] Period, and Warring States Period,” contained 376 pieces, most of which were bronzes (there were 5 Neolithic pottery pieces, about 250 bronzes, and about 125 jades). One hundred of these pieces had been loaned by the Chinese government, with another 150 or so on loan from various museums in the western world. Thus, this exhibition was truly an “international exhibition of Chinese art.” Since it was the first time that this art had been brought together in a single exhibition such as this, it was of very great importance to the western awareness of and understanding of Chinese art, opening a new window on to that art.

Not only did the Burlington Exhibition bring together thousands of Chinese artistic masterpieces for the first time in the West, but the organizers also arranged numerous scholarly activities to accompany it, including a series of lectures by noted scholars to comment on the pieces in the exhibition. The first such lecture, on 4 December 1935, was by the eminent Swedish Sinologist Bernhard KARLGREN (1889-1978; see the biography appended to this chapter), whose lecture title was “Yin and Chou in Chinese Bronzes.” In the scholarly world of that time, probably only Karlgren could match the renown of the French Sinologists Pelliot and Maspero. Since 1915, when he had presented his doctoral dissertation, Karlgren was universally recognized as the western world’s pre-eminent authority on the Chinese language. Although his early renown came from his work on phonology, by the 1930s his interests had already expanded to include ancient Chinese bronze vessels. The year before he went to London to present the Burlington Exhibition lecture, Karlgren had already published an article entitled “Early Chinese Mirror Inscriptions” (300240) in the Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. In this article, he presented carefully annotated translations of 257 bronze mirror inscriptions, dating from the Han through the Wei-Jin periods. Two years after he had returned to Stockholm from London, he published the formal version of the Burlington Exhibition lecture: “Yin and Chou in Chinese Bronzes” (300300), again in the Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. This article had a considerable influence on western studies of Chinese bronze vessels. It began from the premise that the first order of business in the study of ancient bronzes is to differentiate between Yin (i.e., Shang) and early Chou (i.e., Zhou) bronzes. Deeply skeptical of archaeological evidence (which he said was often unreliable), Karlgren suggested that only the inscriptions on the bronzes
could serve as definitive evidence. He insisted that vessels inscribed with the characters *ya* 亞 (or with a *ya*-shaped cartouche), *xi zi sun* 析子孫 and *ju* 舉 were definitely Shang bronzes, whereas only inscriptions that explicitly mentioned Zhou proper names (whether of persons or places) could be regarded as dating to the Zhou (i.e., prior to 900 B.C.). He suggested that aside from these criteria there was no certain way to differentiate between Shang and Zhou bronzes, for which reason, he dated the great majority of these bronzes simply as “Yin-Early Chou.” He also undertook a typological analysis of the décor on these “Yin-Early Chou” bronzes, dividing them into his well-known “A” and “B” types (also proposing a “C” type, which was transitional between these other two types, or which included aspects of both). In his view, this typology could not be used as a criterion of periodization, but rather reflected the styles of two different workshops that persisted for three or four hundred years.

From the great many articles that Karlgren published on this subject, it would seem that he never wavered in his own viewpoint, even though there were already at that time several other scholars who pointed out criticisms of it. It is worth noting that in his linguistic studies, Karlgren had always made use of a statistical methodology that others found particularly convincing, and so when he used a similar methodology in his study of bronze vessels scholars again viewed it as a scientific method. To cite just one example, in the 1960s, when Kwang-chih CHANG (1931-2001) formulated his famous theory of a dualistic social structure in the Shang dynasty, he was inspired to a very great extent by Karlgren’s bronze studies. However, just as this notion of Chang’s never gained the support of the great majority of scholars, so too did Karlgren’s “scientific” method leave room for doubts.

Actually, even in the same year that Karlgren published “Yin and Chou in Chinese Bronzes,” there were already two young scholars who published critical reviews of his methodology. The first was Max LOEHR (1903-1988). At that time,

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12 Karlgren later continued to publish a series of articles and catalogs; although he later changed some details, his basic viewpoint never wavered; see “The Dating of Chinese Bronzes” (300340; 1937), “New Studies on Chinese Bronzes” (300350; 1937), “Huai and Han” (300390; 1941), “Bronzes in the Hellström Collection” (300490; 1948), “Some Bronzes in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities” (300510; 1949), etc.

Loehr had just completed his doctoral dissertation at the Ludwig-Maxilians Universität in Munich, which he published in the *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* as “Beiträge zur Chronologie der älteren chinesischen Bronzen” (300320). Loehr employed an art historical methodology in his periodization of Chinese bronzes, for which reason it attracted Karlgren’s attention. The second young scholar was Herrlee Glessner CREEL (1905-1994; see the biography appended to this chapter). Creel had just completed three years of post-doctoral research in Beijing, where he had studied paleography with LIU Jie 劉節 (1901-1977), the director of the “Paleographic Section” of the National Library of Peiping. In 1936, Creel returned to the United States to take up a professorship in Chinese at the University of Chicago. In that same year, he published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* an article entitled “Notes on Professor Karlgren’s System for Dating Chinese Bronzes” (300290), in which he pointed out a number of counter-examples to the inscripational evidence that Karlgren had used in his dating of ancient bronzes. As pointed out above, Karlgren had argued that inscriptions in which the graphs ya 亞 (or which had a ya-shaped cartouche), xi zi sun 析子孫 and ju 舉 should all date to the Shang period. However, Creel noted that there are a few bronzes that are certainly Zhou vessels and in the inscriptions of which occur either ya (or a ya-shaped cartouche) or xi zi sun. For this reason, these terms ought not to be regarded as definitive criteria for periodization. Creel also pointed out that Shang and Zhou bronze inscriptions reflect a distinct development in terms of both linguistic usage and shapes of characters, and thus it is possible to make use of character shape to date bronze vessels. In response to Creel’s criticism, in 1937, Karlgren published, also in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, a biting response: “The Dating of Chinese Bronzes” (300340). He viewed with scorn Creel’s knowledge of paleography, concluding his response by saying “It is unnecessary to continue. Sufficient light has been shed on the nature and value of the remarks made by Mr. Herrlee Glessner Creel.”

In 1936, Creel also published a study entitled “Bronze Inscriptions of the Western Chou Dynasty as Historical Documents” (300280). At the beginning of this article, Creel singled out Karlgren for criticism for having said in his *Sound and Symbol in Chinese* (100170; 1923) that “A number of bronzes are preserved, but their inscriptions—where these exist—are meagre and unilluminating.”

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Creel argued that this under-estimation of the importance of bronze inscriptions as historical sources “puts the case much too strongly.” Noting that of the 219 bronze inscriptions that he used as historical sources, no fewer than 24 included more than one hundred characters, Creel argued that bronze inscriptions were very important historical sources in their own right. More than this, since they had not been subject to changes by later copyists, they could serve as well as an excellent yardstick for the linguistic uses seen in transmitted literature. Creel noted that although some scholars think that bronze inscriptions do not reflect the literary style of the time of their creation, he did not agree with this view. Instead, he argued that the inscriptions were the “command documents” (ming shu 命書) composed by scribes at the Zhou royal court, the originals of which were written on bamboo strips and which were presented to the patrons of the bronze vessels in the course of their investiture ceremonies; the inscriptions cast into the bronze vessels should be seen as quotations of these original command documents.16 New evidence that has come forth in recent decades shows that Creel’s view of the way in which bronze inscriptions were composed was quite right.

Coming to the war years of the 1940s, western studies of bronze inscriptions, just as so many other fields of western scholarship, essentially came to a standstill. During this time, the great French Sinologists Marcel GRANET (1884-1940), Paul Pelliot and Henri Maspero all passed away, Maspero dying in the Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald on March 17, 1945, just weeks before the end of the war. Herrlee Creel, then in the prime of his life, entered the American army, and did not return to his scholarship at Chicago until 1947.

Only Karlgren, living in the neutral Sweden, was able to avoid the worst of World War II. He devoted most of those years to his translations and commentaries on the Shi jing 詩經 (Classic of poetry) and Shang shu 尚書 (Elevated Scriptures), though he also continued his study of bronze vessels. In 1945, he published “Some Weapons and Tools of the Yin Dynasty” (300430). Although the title of this article would seem to have nothing to do with bronze inscriptions, in fact it had a very great impact on the study of ancient Chinese cultural history. There are two reasons for this. First, this was the first study in which Karlgren mentioned that “Northern”-style bronzes should derive from China proper, and that it was only after the Shang dynasty had fallen that they diffused to Siberia. Second, he spent the bulk of this article discussing the date of the Zhou conquest of Shang; relying on the so-called “Ancient Text” (Guben 古本) Bamboo Annals

16 Creel did not specify the name of this bronze vessel, merely citing it as being in Jungu lu jin-wen 擷古錄金文, and even his citation seems to be off by one page, but it seems clear that he intended the Song ding 頌鼎.
he argued that the date should be 1027 B.C. Both of these conclusions would exert a lasting influence over western scholarship on ancient China. In the same year, 1945, CHEN Mengjia 陳夢家 (1911-1966) published his own study of Western Zhou chronology: *Xi Zhou niandai kao* 西周年代考, which advanced the same conclusion as that of Karlsgren.17

The Chinese scholar Chen Mengjia merits discussion in this context because in late 1944, he left his wartime home in Kunming 昆明 to go to America, where he proposed to finish the editing of a major catalog of Chinese bronze vessels in collections outside of China: *Haiwai Zhongguo tongqi tulu* 海外中國銅器圖錄 (An illustrated catalog of Chinese bronze vessels overseas).18 Chen spent the next three years at the University of Chicago working on this catalog. Writing under the name Ch’en Meng-chia, he published three separate articles in English during his time at Chicago:

“Style of Chinese Bronzes” (300420; 1945)
“The Greatness of Chou (ca. 1027-ca. 221 B.C.)” (300440; 1946)
“Malcolm’s K’ang Hou Kuei and Its Set” (300480; 1948)

In addition, he also joined together with Charles Fabens KELLEY (1885-1960), curator of Asian Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, to publish a catalog of the bronzes in that collection: *Chinese Bronzes from the Buckingham Collection* (300460), published in 1946. Although Chen was active in this way in publishing scholarship, his main efforts were still focused on collecting materials for his major catalog of overseas Chinese bronzes. Having completed the draft of this catalog, together with a several-hundred page long introduction, which was really a handbook of bronze inscription studies in its own right, he submitted the draft to the Harvard-Yenching Institute in August 1947 just before leaving the United States to return to China; it was to be called *Chinese Bronzes in American Collections: A Catalogue and Comprehensive Study of Chinese Bronzes*. Unfortunately, although the Harvard-Yenching Institute had agreed to publish the catalog, due to various reasons not only was the catalog not published, but even Chen’s original draft copy submitted to the press was eventually lost. For more than sixty years, the only trace of Chen’s great work on this project was a truncated catalog published in 1962 as *Mei diguozhuyi jielüe*
de wo guo Yin Zhou tongqi jilu 美帝國主義劫掠的我國殷周青銅器集錄 (A collected catalog of our country’s Yin and Zhou bronzes stolen by the American imperialists), which did not even mention Chen’s name, the authorship being credited to Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. Not until about 2005, while collecting materials for the “Collected Works of Chen Mengjia” (Chen Mengjia zhuzuojí 陳夢家著作集), Chen having then been posthumously restored to the good graces of the communist state, did the Institute of Archaeology “accidentally” discover Chen’s own copy of the English draft of this great work. It is a bittersweet pleasure that we can now read Chen’s original work. Although at the time that he was writing in the 1940s, Chen set the scholarly standard for the study of bronze vessels and especially bronze inscriptions, by today’s standards, after more than sixty years of discovery of new vessels and progress in their study, his work has long since been superseded, now being of only historical interest. However, if Chen’s study had been published promptly when it was written, it surely would have spurred great advances in the field of bronze inscription studies. As it turned out, not only did the western scholarship of the immediately following years not advance, but in some ways it took a great step backwards.

Another loss of the 1940s occurred vis-à-vis Max Loehr. In 1940, just as World War II was erupting around the world, Loehr was stationed in Beijing as the head of the German Institute of Culture there. Although Beijing was then already occupied by the Japanese, since Germany was an ally of Japan, Loehr enjoyed relative freedom there until the end of the war. Unfortunately, there was very little culture to speak of in wartime Beijing, and since Loehr was not consumed with official duties, he could use the war years to continue his research on Shang and Zhou bronze vessels. In 1944 and 1946 he published a lengthy two-part study entitled “Bronzentexte der Chou-Zeit, Chou I” (300410, 300470). Each part of this article addressed five different early Zhou-dynasty bronze vessels, the first part taking up the Chen Chen he臣辰盉, Lü ding 旅鼎, Tai Bao gui 太保簋, Shen you 阏卣, and Zuoce Da ding 作册大鼎; the second part, in turn, took up bronzes associated with the figure Bo Maofu 伯懋父: the Lü Xing you 吕行壺, Shi Lü ding 師旅鼎, Xiaochen Lai gui 小臣來簋, Xiaochen Zhai gui 小臣宅簋, and Yuzheng Wei gui 御正衛簋. For all of these vessels, Loehr provided an historical analysis and complete annotated translations that reflected the highest standards of philology, in many ways suggestive of the studies that the Japanese scholar SHIRAKAWA Shizuka 白川靜 (1910-2006) would publish in the 1960s and 70s in his series Kimbun tsūshaku 金

19 Zhongguo Kexueyuan Kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所, Mei diguozhuyi jielüe de wo guo Yin Zhou qingtongqi jilu 美帝國主義劫掠的我國殷周青銅器集錄 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1962).
文通釋 (Comprehensive interpretations of bronze inscriptions). However, for two reasons Loehr’s studies did not have the impact that they deserved: first, the first part was published in occupied Beijing, and so did not enjoy international circulation; and second, although the second part was published in the internationally renowned journal Monumenta Serica, amidst the destruction of the war and the immediate post-war reconstruction, much scholarship went unnoticed. Moreover, Loehr’s two-part article was written in German. Even at that time, many western Sinologists were unable to read German, a situation which has only grown progressively worse. Because of this, Loehr’s article has never had the influence that it should have had. Seven years after the publication of the second installment of his article on Zhou bronzes, Loehr would finally find the readership that he deserved for his study of the typology of Shang dynasty bronzes,20 but he would never return to complete his earlier study, which he had entitled just as Part I.

Other than the continuation of Bernhard Karlgren’s studies of bronze vessels,21 the first part of the 1950s saw almost no scholarship devoted to bronze inscriptions. However, there was a pronounced change in this situation toward the end of the decade. In 1958 and 1959, Noel BARNARD (1922-2016; see the biography appended to this chapter) burst onto the scene, publishing three separate articles: “A Recently Excavated Inscribed Bronze of Western Chou Date” (300600; 1958), “New Approaches and Research Methods in Chin-Shih-Hsüeh” (300620; 1959), and “Some Remarks on the Authenticity of a Western Chou Style Inscribed Bronze” (300630; 1959). The first article was primarily a study of the Yi Hou Ze gui 宜侯夨簋 (Barnard referred to this vessel as Yi Hou Nieh Yi 亜侯夨簋),

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20 In 1953, Loehr published “The Bronze Styles of the Anyang Period,” Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America 7 (1953): 42-53. Although this article was very short, its influence has been considerable. The article completely overturned Karlgren’s “A” and “B” typology, and proposed its own quite reasonable developmental sequence. By the 1960s, with advances in Chinese archaeology, Loehr’s stylistic system was shown to be correct. In 1949, he had published the article “Weapons and Tools from Anyang, and Siberian Analogies,” American Journal of Archaeology 53.2 (1949): 126-44, in which he criticized Karlgren’s “Some Weapons and Tools of the Yin Dynasty” (300430*; 1945). Karlgren was of the view that bronzes with “Northern Style” characteristics should have been produced in China itself, and only subsequently exported to Siberia. Loehr argued that Karlgren had overlooked the Siberian archaeological evidence, which proves quite the opposite conclusion. The so-called “Northern Style” characteristics originally came from Siberia (or even further west), and were transmitted to China during the Yinxu period. This view was also subsequently confirmed with joint advances in both Chinese and Siberian archaeology.

which had been excavated just four years before, in 1954. The second article addressed inscriptions on two separate Xi Jia pan 兮甲盤 vessels, while the third article argued that one of the bronze vessels included in Bernhard Karlgren’s “Bronzes in the Hellström Collection” (300490) was a forgery. In fact, all three of these articles revolved around this topic of forgery, which would continue to be central to Barnard’s scholarship for the next fifty years. This was announced already with the opening sentences of the very first article:

Archaeological discovery in China during the last few years has progressed remarkably and accounts of the more important finds are gradually being published and are now becoming available to foreign students. Scientifically excavated inscriptions are slowly growing in numbers with the result that systematic research based on dependable documents will soon lead to a better understanding of ancient China while the sometimes fanciful accounts of forgers concealed amongst unattested materials will soon no longer be able to distort the picture. Hitherto, scholars have had to work with inscribed vessels the majority of which lack any record of provenance; the few with some sort of testimony are vaguely and insubstantially authenticated. With material of this kind reliable research has not been possible, while those who have studied the inscriptions have seldom considered the possibility that a serious proportion of the bronze texts they have consulted are merely the products of unscrupulous craftsmen of recent centuries.22

This viewpoint characterized much of Barnard’s scholarship. In 1959, Barnard also published two book reviews that were ostensibly on oracle-bone studies, but which in fact also touched on bronze inscriptions. The first of these was a review of Yin-Shang diwang benji 商殷帝王本紀 (The basic annals of the Yin-Shang kings) by CHOU Hung-hsiang (ZHOU Hongxiang 周鴻翔) (200900), while the second reviewed the Yindai zhenbu renwu tongkao 殷代貞卜人物通考 (A comprehensive examination of Yin dynasty diviners) by JAO Tsung-i 饒宗頤 (200910). In the review of Chou’s book, Barnard devoted a great deal of his discussion to the chronology of the Western Zhou, arguing that because the question was especially complicated and all of the proposals that had been put forward up to that time were problematic for various different reasons, the best policy would be simply to continue using the traditional chronology produced in the Han dynasty by LIU Xin 劉歆 (46 B.C.-A.D. 23), which held that the Zhou conquest of Shang took place in 1122 B.C. With respect to Jao’s book, Barnard concluded his review by espousing a methodology of his own related to forgery studies that we have already had occasion to explore in Chapter One above:

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I note that Jao occasionally seeks parallels, mainly in phraseology, between the oracle-bone texts and numbers of bronze inscriptions amongst which I have come across the Mao Kung Ting 毛公鼎, the San Shih P’an 散氏盤, and some others concerning which I shall present in a later paper what I believe to be substantial proofs of their being merely clever forgeries. The inscriptions concerned exhibit alarming evidence of ‘inconstancy’ in character structures and upon this basis alone they may be concluded spurious - there are, however, various other features which support the calligraphic proof.

Over the course of the 1960s, Barnard would go on to publish the “later paper(s)” that he promised in this conclusion. In 1965, he published a 150-page long review of the third volume of *Archaeology in China* by CHENG Te-k’un 鄭德坤 (1907-2001; 300710), and then followed this in 1968 with the article “The Incidence of Forgery amongst Archaic Chinese Bronzes: Some Preliminary Notes” (300770), which despite being billed as but “Preliminary Notes” still ran to over 70 pages. The review of Cheng Te-k’un’s book featured an in-depth discussion of Barnard’s theory of “constancy of character structure,” which he had only mentioned in previous scholarship. This theory has already been introduced in Chapter One above, and so need not detail us further here. “The Incidence of Forgery amongst Archaic Chinese Bronzes: Some Preliminary Notes” was not at all preliminary, but was, in fact, a very detailed presentation of his views on forgery. Barnard began with an overview of bronze vessels recorded in various traditional catalogs, concluding that more than half of the vessels recorded therein are fake. Then on the basis of his own translation of sections of the *Dong tian qing lu* 洞天清錄 by ZHAO Xigu 趙希鵠 (c. 1231) of the Song dynasty related to methods to determine the authenticity of ancient vessels, Barnard described styles of forgery in the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Barnard was especially suspicious of one of nineteenth-century China’s greatest collectors of and authorities on ancient bronze vessels—CHEN Jieqi 陳介祺 (1813-1884), accusing him of having arranged for the forgery of many vessels, including the famous *Mao Gong ding* 毛公鼎, which was in Chen’s possession. There can be no doubt that the *Mao Gong ding*, presently in the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, is an authentic Western Zhou vessel. That museum contains two other “treasures” among its bronze vessels: the *San shi pan* 散氏盤 and the *Zongzhou zhong* 宗周鐘 (now generally referred to as the

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24 Noel BARNARD, “The Incidence of Forgery amongst Archaic Chinese Bronzes,” p. 100. In this article, Barnard mistakenly refers to ZHAO Xigu 趙希鵠 as Chao Hsi-ku 趙希䳆, and also mis-writes *Dong tian qing lu* 洞天清錄 as *Dong tian qing lu* 洞天清錄集. Mistakes such as these do not interfere with the reader’s understanding, but I note them here because of Barnard’s own penchant for criticizing similar mistakes on the part of others. For instance, on the very page where these mistakes appear, he criticized Herbert A. GILES for committing a number of such mistakes.
Hu zhong (鼏鐘). Already in his earliest publications, Barnard had cast aspersions on all three of these “three treasures.” Especially in his 1965 review of Cheng Te-k’un’s Archaeology in China, he provided a lengthy and detailed discussion of his views on the authenticity of the Mao Gong ding, pointing out seven features of it that he regarded as suspicious.

1. “Character structures exhibit inconstancy”
2. “Name-title combination, Fu-Yin, is an impossible one”
3. “Faulty context and incorrect character usage”
4. “Copying from the ‘Wen-hou chih ming’ and the Shih P’ei kuei is obvious”
5. “Casting is very unsound, contraction cracking, numerous repairs and fillings of blow-holes and contraction cavities—latter occurring along mould-joins.”
6. “Relieve graphs at rears of legs—a feature unique to the Mao Kung Ting.”
7. “The Y-shaped pattern of relieve lines between the legs assumes a triangular form unique to this vessel and inconsistent with the function of this feature.”

Barnard’s suspicions regarding the authenticity of the Mao Gong ding and the other two treasures of the National Palace Museum elicited a resolute response from staff members at that museum; CHANG Kuang-yuan 張光遠, in particular, published an article entitled “Xi Zhou zhongqi Mao Gong ding” 西周重器毛公鼎 (The important Western Zhou vessel Mao Gong ding), in which he rebutted each of the seven points raised by Barnard. Barnard, in his turn, then published a still more detailed sur-rejoinder: his 1974 study Mao Kung Ting: A Major Western Chou Period Bronze Vessel—A Rebuttal of a Rebuttal and Further Evidence of the Questionable Aspects of Its Authenticity (300880). I do not propose to try to evaluate here all of the evidence that Barnard and Zhang Guangyuan gave in their various studies. For more than twenty years after publishing his sur-rejoinder, Barnard did not revisit this topic, shifting much of his research interests to the technology used in casting vessels.

However, in 1996, in a book that he co-authored with Alex CHEUNG Kwong-yue 張光裕, The Shan-fu Liang Ch’i Kuei and Associated Inscribed Vessels (301990), Barnard once again insisted upon his theory of “the constancy of character structure.” Not only this, but he again returned to the question of forgery among bronze vessels, arguing yet again that a great many of the most important Western Zhou inscribed vessels are in fact forgeries, including not only the “three treasures” Mao Gong ding, San shi pan and Hu zhong, but also such other vessels as Guoji Zibai pan 虢季子白盤, Shi Li gui 師釐簋, Ran fangding 冉方鼎 and Ming

Gong gui 明公簋, which the overwhelming majority of scholars who study bronze vessel have long accepted as authentic. Although he denied that he had ever said that many bronze vessels are forgeries, in an appendix to this book he listed at least forty-seven other vessels that he regarded as fake. I myself had occasion in 1991 to point out that one of these vessels, the Ran fangding, which is in the collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, reveals that it was cast with chaplets or “spacers,” a feature that proves that it was cast in a piece-mold and so could not be a forgery from the time when this casting method was unknown. In his book, Barnard added a long note, saying that he “probably” wouldn’t change his view that the Ran fangding is a forgery, but then at the end of the note added a postscript dated December 1995 saying that he had just received X-rays of the vessel from the Asian Art Museum and thus “I have since received copies of radiographs of the Jan Hsien-steamer; revision of certain of my earlier views may be needed; space is insufficient to detail here.”

Ever since 1958, when Barnard began to publish scholarship on bronze inscriptions, his contributions to the field cannot be denied. However, it also has to be said that his repeated attacks on the authenticity of vessels and other aspects of his scholarship had a negative effect on western progress in the field.

Fig. 17: X-ray of the Ran fangding 冉方鼎 in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco clearly showing spacers located around the inscription area

There was another western scholar publishing scholarship on bronze inscriptions in the 1960s, but unfortunately very few people know of him or his work

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outside of his native Germany. This was Ulrich UNGER (1930-2006; see the biog-
raphy appended to this chapter). Unger completed his habilitations dissertation in 1962, entitled “Prolegomena zur Datierung der West-Chou-Inschriften aufgrund formaler Kriterien,” this giant two-volume work displayed the highest standards of scholarship. Unfortunately, not only was it written in German, which by then increasingly fewer scholars were able to read, but even more important, the work was never formally published, and most scholars do not even know of its existence. Unger did publish two articles on bronze inscriptions in 1964 and 1965: “Chinesische epigraphische Studien” (300700; 1964) and “Chou-König oder Usurpator?” (300720; 1965), however after this time his only other formal publication on a bronze inscription was his 1976 article on the Tai Bao gui 太保簋 inscription: “Die t’ai-pao-kuei-Inschrift” (301010). After this time, Unger continued to pursue research on related topics, and wrote a great many articles, but he did not formally publish these, preferring instead to circulate mimeographed copies to his students and friends under the general title “Hao gu” 好古 (Love of antiquity); these studies were little known outside of this circle of friends.

Toward the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, there were several other notable works of scholarship related to bronze inscriptions. One of these was a formally published book, while several others were doctoral dissertations. The book was Herrlee Creel’s The Origins of Statecraft in China, Volume One: The Western Chou Empire (300800), published in 1970. As the title indicates, Creel intended this to be just the first volume in a multi-volume study of “statecraft” in China. In the Preface, he explained that his original plan called for the Western Zhou to be the topic of just the first chapter of his study. However, when he returned to the work that he had done on Western Zhou bronze inscriptions in the 1930s, he found it hard to restrain himself from going ever deeper into the subject, and ended up writing this substantial book which explores all aspects of the Western Zhou government. Although Creel had studied paleography with Liu Jie in the 1930s, he was neither a paleographer nor a scholar of bronze vessels, but rather was a historian, pure and simple. Nevertheless, his history of the Western Zhou was based to a very great extent on bronze inscriptions, most of his sources deriving from the Liang Zhou jinwen daxi tulu kaoshi 兩周金文辭大系圖錄考釋 (Great collection of bronze inscriptions from the two Zhou dynasties, illustrated and annotated) by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978), which had been published in 1935. Although Creel did take account of inscribed bronze vessels that had been discovered in the intervening years, especially the Yi Hou Ze gui, which was unearthed in 1954, and also Chen Mengjia’s monumental Xi-Zhou tongqi duandai 西周銅器斷代 (Periodization of Western Zhou bronze vessels), published in 1955
and 1956, nevertheless it has to be said that Creel’s scholarship was very much rooted in the 1930s. With respect to western scholarship on bronzes that had been published up to his time, he took account only of Noel Barnard’s discussions of authenticity. Expressing reservations about the far-reaching nature of Barnard’s claims, he suggested that even if a few of the inscriptions in his corpus turned out to be forgeries, it would not affect his over-all conclusions. This view was surely correct, but Creel did not present any research of his own on this topic, and his book did not play much of a role in developing the field of bronze inscription studies.

In 1969, David N. Keightley (1932-2017; see the biography appended to Chapter Two) submitted his doctoral dissertation “Public Work in Ancient China: A Study of Forced Labor in Shang and Western Chou” (201030). That dissertation was very influential vis-à-vis oracle-bone studies, and that aspect of it has already been introduced in Chapter Two above. It is less well known that the Western Zhou portion of the dissertation was based to a very great extent on bronze inscriptions. Nevertheless, since it did not have much of an impact on bronze studies, I will not say more about it here. The year after Keightley’s dissertation, 1970, Virginia C. Kane also completed her doctoral dissertation, “Chinese Bronze Vessels of the Shang and Western Chou Periods” (300810), at Harvard University. Although Kane was trained as an art historian (her teacher being Max Loehr), and mainly used artistic criteria in her periodizations of bronze vessels, still she emphasized the formal evolution of bronze inscriptions proper, and so made a real contribution to the study of bronze inscriptions. Both of these dissertations met the highest standards of scholarship in their day. However, both of them were deeply influenced by Noel Barnard’s skeptical attitude regarding the authenticity of bronze vessels, with both of them arguing that many important vessels were forgeries. After receiving his Ph.D., Keightley specialized on oracle-bone inscriptions, while Kane would go on to teach for thirty years (from 1969-1998) at the University of Michigan. Early in her career, she published two important articles regarding bronze inscriptions: “The Chronological Significance of the Inscribed Ancestor Dedication in the Periodization of Shang Dynasty Bronze Vessels” (300850), published in 1973, and “Aspects of Western Chou Appointment Inscriptions: The Charge, the Gifts, and the Response” (301210), published in 1982. The second of these articles in particular has attracted quite a bit of attention from western scholars for its discussion of the nature and significance of investiture inscriptions.

In 1973, Gilbert L. Mattos (1939-2002) submitted a dissertation at the University of Washington entitled “The Stone Drums of Ch’in” (300860). Mattos was
a student of Paul L-M SERRUYS (1912-1999; see the biography appended to Chapter Two), from whom he had received a solid foundation in paleography, especially with regard to Eastern Zhou bronze and stone inscriptions. Unfortunately, after his graduation, Mattos was not immediately able to find scholarly employment, and spent many years pursuing another career. However, in the first several years after completing his degree he did publish several articles: “Two Major Works on Bronze Vessels and Bronze Inscriptions” (301000; 1976), “Supplementary Data on the Bronze Inscriptions Cited in Chin-wen ku-lin” (301020; 1977), and “The Time of the Stone Drum Inscriptions: An Excursion in the Diachronic Analysis of Chou Script” (301030; 1977). Finally, in 1988, his doctoral dissertation was formally published as The Stone Drums of Ch’in (301490); this work will be discussed in the section on Stone Inscriptions below. Another student of Fr. Serruys was PANG Sunjoo 方善柱, a Korean national. Also in 1973, he submitted an M.A. thesis entitled “Tung-I Peoples According to the Shang-Chou Bronze Inscriptions” (300870). After this, he moved to Canada, where he completed his Ph.D. in 1977 at the University of Toronto with a dissertation entitled “A Study of Western Chou Chronology” (301050). This dissertation was full of stimulating ideas regarding the chronology of the Western Zhou dynasty, including the suggestion that the reign of King Xuan of Zhou 周宣王 did not begin in 827 B.C., as traditionally assumed, but rather began in 825 B.C. This suggestion has subsequently been corroborated—at least in part—by a whole series of discoveries of inscribed bronze vessels, including most importantly the 42-Year Qiu ding 四十二年逑鼎 and the 43rd-Year Qiu ding. Unfortunately, this Canadian dissertation was never formally published, nor was it readily available to the scholarly world, for which reason it is little known. Nevertheless, in 1975, Pang published an article in Chinese in the authoritative Taiwanese journal Dalu zazhi 大陸雜誌 (Continental magazine), in which he introduced some of the most important points of his dissertation: “Xi-Zhou niandai xue shang de jige wenti” 西周年代學上的幾個問題 (Some problems in the chronology of the Western Zhou period). Another insight of Pang, fully explored in this article, is that the “Tian zai dan yu Zheng” 天再旦于鄭 (The heavens dawned twice in Zheng) solar eclipse notation recorded in the Bamboo Annals for the first year of King Yih of Zhou 周懿王 should be identified with a solar eclipse that took place in 899 B.C. This suggestion was subsequently “corroborated” by the Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project. In the same year that he completed his dissertation, 1977, Pang also published an article “The Consorts of King Wu and King Wen in the Bronze Inscriptions of Early China” (301040) in

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the prestigious journal *Monumenta Serica*. However, after this time, Pang returned to his native South Korea and seems not to have published any further scholarship.

In sum, the doctoral dissertations of this decade held promise of opening a new path forward for the study of bronze inscriptions in the West. However, all four of the scholars introduced above, for various reasons, did not subsequently follow this path, and they were not able to achieve any breakthroughs in this field.

Throughout the whole of the 1970s, other than the scholarship by Noel Barnard, there was very little other scholarship formally published by western scholars. However, there were several articles written in English by Asian scholars. For instance, in 1971 CHOU Fa-kao 周法高 (1915-1994) published “Chronology of the Western Chou Dynasty” (300820) in the *Journal of Chinese Studies* of the Institute of Chinese Culture, Chinese University of Hong Kong, while in 1976 CHANG Kuang-yuan 張光遠, CHEUNG Kwong-yue 張光裕, and JAO Tsung-i 饒宗頤 all published essays in the volume *Ancient Chinese Bronzes and Southeast Asian Metal and Other Archaeological Artifacts* (300950) edited by Noel Barnard. This book of Barnard’s was a multi-disciplinary study of ancient bronzes that had a rather considerable impact on the scholarly world for its methodology.

![Fig. 18: The Great Bronze Age of China catalog](image-url)
1980 was a banner year for the western study of ancient Chinese bronze vessels. In this year, the Metropolitan Museum of Art organized a massive exhibition entitled “The Great Bronze Age of China: An Exhibition from the People’s Republic of China” that had much the same effect on the scholarship of its period as did the 1935-36 Burlington Exhibition on the scholarly world of the 1930s. This exhibition began in New York, then moved to the Field Museum of Chicago, and ended its tour at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It was accompanied by scholarly conferences at both the opening and closing venues as well as a catalog that was a major work of scholarship in its own right: *The Great Bronze Age of China: An Exhibition from the People’s Republic of China* (301130). This catalog, edited by the curator of Chinese art at the Metropolitan Museum Wen C. Fong 方聞, together with three other younger scholars: Robert W. Bagley, Jenny F. So and Maxwell K. Hearn, did much more than just illustrate the pieces in the exhibition; it provided an excellent description of the various stages of the cultural history of China’s Bronze Age. As the sub-title of the catalog makes clear, the exhibition on which it was based featured exclusively artifacts that had recently been discovered in China. The Chinese donors of the pieces dispatched four prominent scholars to participate in the conference that opened the exhibition in New York: Xia Nai 夏鼐 (1910-1985), Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 (1912-2005), Ma Chengyuan 马承源 (1927-2004) and Zhang Changshou 張長壽. On their return to China from New York, these four scholars, together with several of the other participants from the Metropolitan Museum conference, stopped in the San Francisco Bay Area, where they participated in another conference at the University of California, Berkeley, and also toured the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. This was the first time after the founding of the People’s Republic of China that Chinese scholars had participated in an American conference, an event that left a lasting impression on all of the participants, Chinese and western alike.
When “The Great Bronze Age of China” exhibition reached Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art organized another scholarly conference to mark the occasion. George Kuwayama, curator of Asian Art there, edited the papers from the conference in a volume entitled *The Great Bronze Age of China: A Symposium* (301270; 1983). This volume contained papers by ten of America and Canada’s leading scholars of all aspects of Chinese Bronze Age culture. The titles are suggestive, even if only one of the papers properly dealt with inscriptions.

K.C. Chang: “The Origin of Shang and the Problem of Xia in Chinese Archaeology”
Louisa G. Fitzgerald Huber: “Some Anyang Royal Bronzes: Remarks on Shang Bronze Décor”
David S. Nivison: “Western Zhou History Reconstructed from Bronze Inscriptions”
George Kuwayama: “The Cultural Renaissance of Late Zhou”
Jenny F. So: “*Hu* Vessels from Xinzeng: Toward a Definition of Chu Style”
Robert L. Thorp: “An Archaeological Reconstruction of the Lishan Necropolis”
Emma C. Bunker: “Sources of Foreign Elements in the Culture of Eastern Zhou”

Aside from the paper “Western Chou History Reconstructed from Bronze Inscriptions” (301290) by David S. NIVISON (1923-2014; see the biography appended to this chapter), the other nine papers all dealt with archaeological and technological topics, but they serve well to show the multi-faceted interest stimulated by “The Great Bronze Age of China” exhibition.

Nivison’s research on Western Zhou history essentially revolved around the chronology of the period. According to the Preface to his late-in-life book The Riddle of the Bamboo Annals (405060; 2009), one Sunday evening in November 1979, as he was preparing for a seminar to be held the following evening, he suddenly discovered evidence showing that the “Current Text” (Jinben 今本) Bamboo Annals (Zhushu jinian 竹書紀年), generally thought to be a Ming-dynasty forgery, could not be a forgery, at least not in its entirety, and that indeed at least a considerable portion of the work was based on reliable historical sources. According to this reminiscence, the seminar on the following day was scheduled to discuss the then recently excavated Wei 微-family bronzes. One of these bronzes, the Xing xu 盞簋 dated by Nivison to the latter part of mid-Western Zhou, contained the exact date “fourth year, second month, after the growing brightness, wuxu” (wei sinian eryue jishengba wuxu 隹四年二月既生霸戊戌), and also contained records that “the king was in the Zhou Captain Lu Palace” (wang zai Zhou Shi Lu gong 王才周師錄宮) and that a Sima Gong 司馬共 was serving as the youzhe 右者 (the guarantor standing to the right of the investee). In addition to this Xing xu, Nivison noted that three other late mid-Western Zhou vessels also contained records that the king was in the Zhou Captain Lu Palace and that Sima Gong was serving as youzhe. What is more, all three of these vessels also contained full date notations. These three vessels were the Shi Yu gui 師艅簋, with a date notation of “third year, third month, first auspiciousness, jiaxu”; the Shi Chen ding 師晨鼎, with the same date notation; and the Jian gui 諫簋, dated “fifth year, third month, first auspiciousness, gengyin.” Nivison determined that these four vessels should all have been produced during the same reign, the most likely candidate for which would be the reign of King Yi of Zhou 周夷王. He found that the dates of the Shi Yu gui, Shi Cheng ding and Jian gui could all be accommodated on the calendar of one such reign beginning in the year 867 B.C., and also that this calendar was consistent with the chronology given in the Bamboo Annals. However, this
left one major problem remaining. No matter how it might be interpreted, the date of the Xing xu was inconsistent with this regnal calendar, for which reason the Japanese scholar Shirakawa Shizuka had surmised that there must have been a mistake in the casting of the vessel. Nivison, on the other hand, posited what he later termed “a bold hypothesis”: that King Yi of Zhou had employed two different regnal calendars, one beginning in 867 B.C. and one beginning two years later, in 865 B.C. To explain this point, Nivison found considerable other evidence to show that such a “dual first-year” of reign was quite common throughout the Western Zhou. In sum, beginning on that Sunday evening, Nivison began his quest to unravel the chronology of ancient China. Aside from the article “Western Chou History Reconstructed from Bronze Inscriptions” mentioned above, about the same time he also published two other articles expressly discussing Western Zhou chronology: “The Dates of Western Chou” (301280; 1983) and “1040 as the Date of the Chou Conquest” (301230; 1982). Of course, all of his work on chronology was brought together in his 2009 book The Riddle of the Bamboo Annals.

In the 1980s, David Keightley, Paul Serruys, Noel Barnard and David Nivison, by then all senior scholars, remained the western world’s foremost authorities on Chinese paleography. However, for research on bronze inscriptions, this decade might be referred to as the “age of the students.” In the seminar that Nivison was teaching and for which he spent that Sunday evening preparing, there were only two students formally enrolled: David W. PANKENIER and Edward L. SHAUGHNESSY. Both of these students published the term papers that they prepared for that course, Shaughnessy’s “‘New’ Evidence on the Zhou Conquest” (301150; 1980) and Pankenier’s “Astronomical Dates in Shang and Western Zhou” (301170; 1981). Both of these papers were inspired in different ways by Nivison’s interest in Western Zhou chronology. After this time, Shaughnessy would continue to pursue research on bronze inscriptions, publishing his first paper in this field already in 1983: “The Date of the ‘Duo You Ding’ and Its Significance” (301300). Moreover, at almost the same time, a Chinese version of this article was published in the journal Kaogu yu wenwu 考古與文物.29

In 1982, Darrel Paul DOTY completed his doctoral dissertation entitled “The Bronze Inscriptions of Ch’i: An Interpretation” (301200), which as the title suggests was an exhaustive philological analysis of inscribed bronze vessels from the Eastern Zhou state of Qi 齊. Doty was a student of Paul Serruys, and his dissertation clearly reflects his teacher’s style. In 1984, Noel Barnard’s student

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YEUNG Ching-kong 楊靜剛 also completed his doctoral dissertation: “Some Aspects of Royal and Princely Administrative Interrelationship in Western Zhou: A Preliminary Investigation Based upon the Evidence as Recorded in Inscribed Bronzes of the Period” (301320), which made use of bronze inscriptions to study the history of the Western Zhou government. In 1985, Gilbert Mattos published both “The Restoration of the Stone Drum Inscriptions 石鼓文” (301350) and a review of CHOU Fa-kao’s, Chin-wen ku-lin-pu 金文詁林補 (301360). At this time, two other students of Max Loehr, Jenny SO 蘇芳淑 and Robert Bagley began to publish their research on ancient Chinese bronze vessels, with Bagley’s Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections (301430) being particularly noteworthy. In 1988, K.C. Chang’s foremost student Lothar von FALKENHAUSEN submitted his doctoral dissertation “Ritual Music in Bronze Age China” (301460). This 1600-page long dissertation explored every aspect of ancient Chinese bells, including the inscriptions found on many of them.

As far as studies of bronze vessels and their inscriptions are concerned, the 1990s got off to an auspicious start. In the first year of the decade, Constance Anne COOK, who had been a student of Paul Serruys, completed her doctoral dissertation “Auspicious Metals and Southern Spirits: An Analysis of the Chu Bronze Inscriptions” (301540; 1990), which provided a broad-based analysis of bronze vessels from the southern state of Chu 楚. In the same year, Jessica RAWSON’s major work Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections (301580) was published. This sumptuous catalog was divided into two volumes, the first a synoptic study of Western Zhou bronzes, and the second the catalog proper; it can truly be called the crowning glory of the preceding fifty or sixty years of western scholarship on Chinese bronzes. 1991 saw the appearance of Edward Shaughnessy’s Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels (301670). Both nominally and in actuality, that book was intended to be a sequel to David Keightley’s Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China (201490; 1978), this book providing a systematic introduction to Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. The book is divided into five chapters: “A Brief History of Bronze Inscription Studies,” “The Casting of an Inscribed Bronze Vessel, With Remarks on the Question of Authenticity,” “How to Read a Western Zhou Bronze Inscription,” “The Periodization of Inscribed Western Zhou Bronze Vessels,” and “Further Historiographical Questions Regarding Inscribed Western Zhou Bronze Vessels.” It also includes three lengthy appendices: “Textual Notes to the Translation of the Inscription on the ‘Shi Qiang Pan’,” “The ‘Ling Yi’ and the Question of the Kang Gong,” and “The Absolute Chronology of the Western Zhou Dynasty.”
In 1993, Rawson and Shaughnessy’s books were the subject of an 88-page long review article: Lothar von Falkenhausen’s “Issues in Western Zhou Studies: A Review Article” (301790). Falkenhausen’s review raised a great many points of methodology in the study of bronze vessels and their inscriptions, the first sentence of which stated: “It is refreshing to note that, after a half-century of comparative neglect, the classical basis of Chinese civilization is once again beginning to receive the attention it deserves from Western Sinologists.” His review featured an extremely clear organizational structure, divided into two major parts, the first devoted to Shaughnessy’s *Sources of Western Zhou History* and the second to Rawson’s *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*. Each of these major parts was divided into a great many topics, many of which were further sub-divided into yet more topics. The organizational structure will give some sense of the contents:

1. The Nature and Dating of Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions
   1.1 *Sources of Western Zhou History*: Appearance and Organization
   1.2 The Nature of Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions
      1.2.1 The Ritual Context
      1.2.2 The Structure of the Inscription Texts
      1.2.3 Modes of Announcements of Merit
1.2.3.1 The Documentary Mode
1.2.3.2 The Subjective Mode
1.2.3.3 Abbreviated Modes
1.2.3.4 Discussion

1.2.4 Recording Conventions
1.2.5 The Historical Value of Bronze Inscriptions

1.3 Dating the Inscriptions

1.3.1 Calendrics
1.3.2 Dating Based on Names

1.3.2.1 Royal Names
1.3.2.2 Genealogical Evidence
1.3.2.3 References to Dateable Historical Figures
1.3.2.4 Networks of Personal Names

1.3.3 Discussion

1.4 Deciphering and Translating the Inscriptions

2 Advances in the Study of Bronze Typology and Ornamentation

2.1 *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*: Characteristics and Orientation

2.1.1 Appearance
2.1.2 Nature and Orientation of the Work

2.2 Characterization of Western Zhou Bronzes

2.2.1 Early Western Zhou Flamboyant Styles
2.2.2 Middle Western Zhou Developments
2.2.3 The Late Western Zhou Transformation
2.2.4 Problems of Chronology

2.3 Reflections on the Nature of Stylistic Change
2.3.1 Changes Internal to the Production of the Bronzes
2.3.2 Extra-Artistic Influences

2.4 Non-Zhou Elements in Western Zhou Bronzes

2.4.1 The Impact of Earlier Traditions
2.4.2 Regional Cultures Contemporary with the Zhou

2.5 Describing and Dating the Bronze Vessels

2.5.1 The Scope of the Catalogue
2.5.2 Uses of Epigraphic Data
2.5.3 Stylistics and Typology
2.5.4 Dating by Archaeological Context

2.6 Final Reflections on Language and Format

As this structure shows, this “review” is extraordinarily rich, especially for its insights into the methodology of bronze studies. However, in the midst of all of these riches, it is section 1.2 “The Nature of Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions” and especially 1.2.1 “The Ritual Context,” with their pronounced anthropological perspective, that have attracted the most attention from western readers. Falkenhausen argues that bronze vessels were ritual artifacts, and their use was entirely intended for the ancestral temple; the inscriptions on them were likewise solely intended to seek good fortune from the ancestors. On the basis of this, Falkenhausen suggests that the content of the inscriptions reflects a distinct subjective viewpoint, and they were not originally intended as historical records. Because of this, Falkenhausen criticizes Shaughnessy’s use of the inscriptions as “historical sources,” arguing that the bronze vessels and their inscriptions can only be treated as religious sources. In the same year (1993), Falkenhausen’s doctoral dissertation was formally published as *Suspended Music: The Chime-Bells of the Chinese Bronze Age* (301800), providing a complete introduction to the cultural background of chime bells.

Aside from these two major works by Falkenhausen, 1993 brought several other studies of bronze vessels and their inscriptions. In that year, Noel Barnard also published a lengthy review (75 pages long) of Jessica Rawson’s *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (301750). Barnard used the first part of his review to point out a number of “short-comings” (including a lengthy note criticizing Rawson’s use of *pinyin* Romanization instead of Barnard’s
preferred Wade-Giles Romanization). The rest of the review revolved around three questions: bronze casting technique, how to read inscriptions, and the question of the authenticity of bronze vessels. The main focus was on the first of these questions, which had been the focus of Barnard’s research for much of the preceding two decades; since this discussion is only tangentially related to paleography, I will not enter into it here. With respect to the discussion of how to read inscriptions, this was essentially a recapitulation of Barnard’s theory of the constancy of character structure, first announced nearly forty years before. Nor was the discussion of authenticity much different from what he had published numerous times before. In a lengthy note appended to this review, Barnard said that when he was younger he had been much interested in the incidence of forgery among vessels that had long been known, but since the 1970s, when archaeologists in China scientifically excavated a great number of inscribed bronze vessels, his interest had begun to shift to these new vessels. As for his past views of forgery, he now said:

Taking up the challenge once more, the large corpus of unprovenanced inscribed bronzes, not unexpectedly, is seen to manifest many new and earlier unnoticed features of possible significance amongst individual inscriptions that may well have appreciable relevance when new assessments of their status as historical documents are more fully undertaken. Such undertakings will, nonetheless, still require strict application of the basic historical research methods as advocated, and practiced, throughout my writings.30

It is very hard to say whether this should be read as a negation or confirmation of his past studies.

For her part, Jessica Rawson published the article “Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronzes: The Evidence from Tombs and Hoards of the Shang (c. 1500-1050 B.C.) and Western Zhou (c. 1050-771 B.C.) Periods” (301830) in 1993. This article emphasizes the different roles played by vessels that were put into hoards (also referred to as caches) as opposed to those that had been put into tombs, with some anthropological considerations of their different values. Although this article is quite short, like so much of Rawson’s scholarship it is full of interesting insights. 1993 also saw publications by two younger scholars. Constance Cook published two articles: “Myth and Authenticity: Deciphering the Chu Gong Ni Bell Inscription” (301760) and “Ritual Feasting in Ancient China: Preliminary Study I” (301770). These two articles both combined studies of bronze inscriptions with anthropological theories to study ancient Chinese cultural history, in which Cook

presented many of her own ideas. She subsequently published several other similar articles, such as “Scribes, Cooks, and Artisans: Breaking Zhou Tradition” (301910), published in 1995, “Wealth and the Western Zhou” (302080; 1997), and “The Ideology of the Chu Ruling Class: Ritual Rhetoric and Bronze Inscriptions” (302190; 1999). Ten years after this 1999 article, she would also publish a study entitled “Ancestor Worship during the Eastern Zhou” (303210; 2009), which provided a comprehensive overview of all of these related issues. Returning to articles published in 1993, Ulrich LAU, originally of East Germany, published “Die Inschriften des Qiu Wei: Dokumente zur Wirtschafts- und Rechtsgeschichte Chinas” (301820). This was part of Lau’s doctoral dissertation, which was formally published in 1999 as Quellenstudien zur Landvergabe und Bodenübertragung in der westlichen Zhou-Dynastie (1045?-771 v. Chr.) (302240). This work, the fruit of a traditional German philological training, is largely devoted to the study of individual bronze inscriptions; it presents in-depth studies of thirty-one different inscriptions, including such important inscriptions as those on the Kang Hou gui 康侯簋, Yi Hou Ze gui 宜侯矢簋, Shi Qiang pan 史牆盤, Duo You ding 多友鼎, Fifth-Year Qiu Wei ding 五祀裘衛鼎, and Hu ding 昴鼎. Each of these inscriptions is furnished with an annotated translation, as well as a complete discussion of its historical significance.

In 1995, Jenny SO completed the project of publishing the bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler collection, with her volume Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections (301960). As with Robert Bagley’s volume on the Shang bronzes and Jessica Rawson’s volume on the Western Zhou bronzes, this third volume also meets the highest standards of scholarship and publication. These three volumes taken together mark the summa of late twentieth-century western scholarship on ancient Chinese bronze vessels. In the twenty years since its publication, no scholarship has superseded this volume.
The years 1994 and 1996 brought three more doctoral dissertations on topics relating to bronze inscriptions. Two of these were studies of Western Zhou law and legal thought as seen primarily in inscriptions: Lutz SCHUNK’s “Dokumente zur Rechtsgeschichte des alten China: Übersetzung und historisch-philologische Kommentierung juristischer Bronzeinschriften der West-Zhou-Zeit (1045-771 v. Chr.)” (301880; 1994), and Laura A. SKOSEY’s “The Legal System and Legal Tradition of the Western Zhou (1045 B.C.E.-771 B.C.E.)” (302030; 1996). Unfortunately, neither of these dissertations has ever been formally published, and neither scholar was able to continue to pursue scholarship in this field. The third of these dissertations was Wolfgang BEHR’s “Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Entstehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung” (302000; 1996). This work made use of phonological reconstructions to study the use of rhyme in bronze inscriptions. Not only did it provide phonological reconstructions of 115 Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and 82 Eastern Zhou bronze inscriptions, but it also provided complete translations of such important inscriptions as Li gui 利簋, He zun 何尊, Da Yu ding 大盂鼎, Ban gui 班簋, Ke xu 克盉, Liang Qi zhong 梁其鐘, Hu gui 虎簋, Yue Wang zhong 越王鐘, and Wangsun Yizhe zhong 王孫遺者鐘. For five more inscriptions, on the Tian Wang gui 天亡簋, Shu you 叔卣, Fu Ren xu 甫人卣, Luan Shu fou 瑆書缶 and Biao zhong 翊鐘, Behr added detailed notes and discussion to his complete translations. This study was formally published in 2009 as Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Entstehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung (303190).
In 1997, the volume *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts* (100970), edited by Edward Shaughnessy, included two different chapters devoted to bronze inscriptions: Shaughnessy’s own “Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions” (302140) and Gilbert Mattos’s “Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions” (302120). In addition, the book also included a chapter on stone inscriptions of the period: “The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian” by Susan R. Weld (302160). The chapters in this book provided comprehensive introductions to their respective sources, very convenient for use by students.

3.2 Studies of Stone Inscriptions

Above we have taken a simple look back at research results in the field of bronze inscription studies during the twentieth century. Below, we will turn our attention to work done by western scholars on ancient Chinese stone inscriptions. As noted in the Preface to this book, this study goes back to the earliest years of western contact with China; when the “Stele Commemorating the Entry Into China of the Greater Qin Outstanding Religion” (*Da Qin Jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo bei* 大秦国景教流行中國碑) stele was unearthed in 1625, during the Ming dynasty, it immediately attracted the attention of western missionaries in China. By 1628 the inscription on the stele had already been translated into Portuguese. When a Latin translation of the inscription was published in Rome in 1636, it was immediately circulated throughout Europe, and excited interest among intellectuals of all types there. Thereafter, many other European missionaries in China continued to be interested in stele inscriptions. However, since most of these steles date to after the Sui and Tang dynasties, and thus do not fall under the purview of the current book, I will not introduce studies of them here.

Ancient stone inscriptions also attracted the early interest of western Sinologists. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the very first western scholarly study in this field was Stephen Bushell’s “The Stone Drums of the Chou Dynasty” (300010), published as early as 1873 in the *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Bushell not only gave a detailed account of the history of the Qin Stone Drums (*Qin shi gu* 秦石鼓), but he also translated four of the inscriptions, those with the poems “Wu che” 吾車 (Our chariots), “Jian ye” 瑖殹 (The Jian River), “Tian che” 田車 (Hunting chariots), and “Luan che” 鑾車 (Belled chariots), the translations showing a definite scholarly standard. Unfortunately, the article did not attract much notice in the western scholarly world, and it would be more than a hundred years before we would see the publication of another article concerning these important inscriptions, Gilbert Mattos’s 1985 study
“The Restoration of the Stone Drum Inscriptions 石鼓文” (301350). Mattos’s study was based on his 1973 doctoral dissertation “The Stone Drums of Ch’in” (300860). In 1988, that dissertation was formally published as The Stone Drums of Ch’in (301490). It provides a comprehensive account of the Qin Stone Drums, divided into three major parts. The first part includes four chapters: “General Description,” “The Discovery and Transmission of the Stone Drums,” “The Stone Drum Inscriptions: Their Gradual Loss and Partial Recovery,” and “Dating of the Stone Drums: The Key Issues in Review.” The second part presents a systematic exploration of the inscriptions on the ten drums, including a history of the scholarship on each of them, reconstruction of the texts, transcriptions (both direct transcriptions and “exploded” transcriptions into modern Chinese), reconstructions of the ancient phonology, their rhymes, and annotated translations. The third part presents a detailed discussion of the date of the Qin Stone Drums. Based on comparisons with inscribed bronze vessels, and especially with the Qin Gong gui 秦公簋 and the Qin Wu Gong zhong 秦武公鐘, the latter of which was unearthed only in 1978, Mattos demonstrated that the drums should date to the latter part of the early Warring States period, roughly about 400 B.C. This conclusion is similar to that reached by TANG Lan 唐蘭 (1901-1979), and is now generally accepted by Chinese scholars working in this field. By the end of the twentieth century, with constant discoveries being made by Chinese archaeologists and given the great increase in unearthed texts, the Qin Stone Drums no longer excite much interest on the part of scholars, whether Chinese or western. However, Mattos’s The Stone Drums of Ch’in stands as a model for all future scholarship in this field.

The second western scholarly study of stone inscriptions after the publication of Bushell’s article on the Qin Stone Drums had much in common with that first study. This was by Édouard CHAVANNES. Chavannes arrived in China in 1889, serving in the French embassy in Beijing. Four years later he published his first scholarly paper: “Les inscriptions des Ts’in” (300020; 1893). This was a comprehensive study of the Zu Chu wen 訴楚文 (Imprecation against Chu), a Qin weight-measure (Qin quan 秦權), and six different stele inscriptions credited to Qin Shi huangdi, the First Emperor of Qin: the 28th-year Yishan 嶧山, the 28th-year Taishan 泰山, the 28th-year Langya 琅琊, the 29th-year Fushan 獬山, the 32nd-year

31 TANG Lan 唐蘭, “Guanyu Shiguwen de shidai da TONG Shuye xiansheng” 關於石鼓文的時代答童書業先生, Wenshi zhoukan 文史週刊 13 (1948.02.06); TANG Lan 唐蘭, “Shigu niandaikao” 石鼓年代考, Gugong bowuyuan yuankan 故宮博物院院刊 1 (1958): 4-34.
32 The Qin weight-measure cited by CHAVANNES is from RUAN Yuan 阮元, Jigu zhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi 積古齋鐘鼎彝器款識 (1804), j. 9.
Jieshimen 磁石門, and the 37th-year Kuaijishan 會稽山 inscription. This study provided both historical background to the eight inscriptions as well as complete translations, as well as also pointing out the rhymes used in the inscriptions. The latter half of the article also provided an introduction to Qin pottery inscriptions. As with all of Chavannes’ other scholarship, this study provided a systematic textual analysis grounded in a detailed study of the historical background.

There is another respect in which Chavannes’ study of the Qin Shi huangdi stele inscriptions is similar to Bushell’s study of the Qin Stone Drums inscriptions: in this case too, it would be more than one hundred years before another western scholar would publish research on these inscriptions. In this case, it was Martin KERN, who in the year 2000 published the monograph *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (302340). In the Preface to this book, Kern recounts that one day in the spring of 1997 he was chatting with the University of Washington professor David KNECHTGES, when Knechtges asked him whether the Qin stele inscriptions might not be the model for the early Western Han Anshi fangzhong ge 安世房中歌 and the Emperor Wu of Han-period Jiaosi ge 郊祀歌 songs; Kern admitted that he did not know of the Qin inscriptions, but thereafter devoted all of his energy to their research, and within several months completed the first draft of this book. The first half of the book presents complete and heavily annotated translations of the seven Qin stele inscriptions, while the second half of the book explores such earlier Qin inscriptions as those on the bronze *Qin Gong bo* 秦公鎛, *Qin Gong gui* 秦公簋 and *Qin Gong zhong* 秦公鐘, as well as the inscription on the stone chimes unearthed from a large Qin tomb in 1976, in all cases again providing annotated translations. On the basis of these translations, Kern also discussed the inscriptions’ rhymes as well as the ritual background behind their composition, suggesting that the rhymes reflect that the ritual activities were intimately connected with oral culture, the written form of the inscriptions being only secondary.33 This is a topic to which Kern would frequently return in subsequent publications addressing bronze inscriptions and other paleographic sources.

It should be noted that between the time of Bushell and Chavannes at the end of the nineteenth century and Mattos and Kern at the end of the twentieth century, western scholars did not abandon entirely research on ancient stone inscriptions. However, in general, this field remained relatively underdeveloped. As far as I am aware, the only related article published in the entire first half of the twentieth century was Hellmut WILHELM’s (1905-1990) 1948 very short study “Eine Chou-

Inschrift über Atem-technic” (300500), which provided a brief introduction to the *Xing qi yuban*行氣玉板 (Circulating breath jade-haft) inscription included in the *Sandai jijin wencun*三代吉金文存 (Repository of texts on auspicious bronzes of the three dynasties) of LUO Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940). Even after this, we would still have to wait another thirty years for the next article to appear; this was “An ‘Old Rubbing’ of the Later Han Chang Ch’ien pei” (301100; 1978) by Kenneth STARR (1922-2011).

Starr received his Ph.D. from the Department of Anthropology of Yale University in 1953, and then immediately began working at the Field Museum of Chicago, where he would continue to work for almost twenty years. In 1970, he was appointed director of the Milwaukee Museum of Art. While he was at the Field Museum, Starr discovered that the museum collection included almost 4000 rubbings of Chinese inscriptions, the great majority of these being from stone steles. Thereafter, his research to a great extent revolved around these inscriptions. In 1981, together with his Field Museum colleague Hoshien TCHEN 陳和銑 (1893-1988), Starr published 2014 of these rubbings in their *Catalogue of Chinese Rubbings from Field Museum* (301180), the first set of rubbings in the book being of none other than the Qin Stone Drums. The book includes a total of 14 Zhou-dynasty inscriptions (including stamps [fengni 封泥] and pottery inscriptions in addition to the complete set of the Qin Stone Drums inscriptions), 5 Qin inscriptions (including the Qin Shi huangdi Langya 琅琊 stele inscription, as well as inscriptions on tiles and bricks), and 213 Han-dynasty rubbings, including three complete sets of rubbings of the Wu Liang ci 武梁祠 shrine engravings; this is certainly the most important collection of Chinese rubbings outside of China. In 2008, Starr also published the book *Black Tigers: A Grammar of Chinese Rubbings* (303170), of which Michael Nylan professor of Chinese history at the University of California at Berkeley, began her review of the book by saying:

> In the case of truly spectacular books, reviewers can find it difficult to know how best to begin singing the requisite praise-songs. *Black Tigers* is one such book.34

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Since Starr was neither a paleographer nor a historian, it is natural that his interest in the rubbings was primarily in their form and in techniques for producing them, rather than in their historical content (though it was not the case that he was entirely uninterested in this). However, two historical studies based on Han-dynasty stele inscriptions were both published in 1980, just after Starr’s first article. These were “Eastern Han Inscriptions and Dynastic Biographies: A Historiographical Comparison” (301110) by Hans BIELENSTEIN (1920-2015), and “Later Han Stone Inscriptions” (301120) by Patricia EBREY. Ebrey’s article was particularly influential, since it was published in the prestigious Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies. In fact, a book that Ebrey published two years prior to this article, The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts’ui Family, had already made considerable use of stele inscriptions.35 After this time, she would continue to pursue this line of research, publishing “Local Cults: Three Stone Inscriptions Describing Shrines Erected to Honor Various Deities” (301780) in 1993. However, most of her research was on the period from the Tang to the Song dynasties, outside of the purview of the present book. Another renowned Sinologist who has also published a study of Han-dynasty inscriptions is Kristofer SCHIPPER, who in 1997 published the article “Une stèle taoïste des Han Orientaux récemment découverte” (302130). A few years after this, his student

Marianne Bujard followed this with the similar study “Célébration et promotion des cultes locaux: Six stèles des Han Orientaux” (302330; 2000).³⁶

During the last twenty years, more and more western scholars have made use of stele inscriptions in their research. Most encouraging is that many of these have been younger scholars, who have incorporated this work in their doctoral dissertations, as well as in some of the work that they have published thereafter. In this regard, we might note especially the work of Tiziana Lippiello, an Italian student of the renowned Sinologist Eric ZÜRCHER (1928-2008) at the University of Leiden; although the primary focus of her work is on the Six Dynasties, Sui and Tang periods, she has also looked at Han-dynasty stele inscriptions, as for instance in her 1995 article “Le pietre parlano: Il valore dell’epigrafia come fonte storica per lo studio della società Han orientale” (301940). This article appeared in a book entitled Atti del Convegno: Le fonti per lo Studio della Civiltà Cinese,³⁷ published by the University Cafoscari in Venice, where Lippiello now teaches. The same book also included the study “Epigrafia e storiografia: come le iscrizioni su pietra rivelino aspetti della società cinese antica ignorati dagli storigrafi di corte” (301950) by her Venice colleague Maurizio Scarpari.

In the section on bronze inscriptions above, I mentioned the book New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts, which was published in 1997. This book included a chapter by Susan Weld on “The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian” (302160), which was based to a great extent on her 1990 Harvard University doctoral dissertation “Covenant in Jin’s Walled Cities: The Discoveries at Houma and Wenxian” (301610). Weld was a student of K.C. Chang, and her dissertation includes archaeological and historical considerations, as well as paleographic studies. Crispin Williams also produced a doctoral dissertation on the covenant texts, though focusing in particular on those from Wenxian 溫縣, Henan: “Interpreting the Wenxian Covenant Texts: Methodological Procedure and Selected Analysis” (302880; 2005). This doctoral dissertation was submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, where Williams was a student of Sarah Allan (see the biography appended to Chapter Four). In the same year

³⁶ Note should also be taken of Bujard’s book Le Sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne: Théorie et pratique sous le Han Occidentaux. École française d’Extrême-Orient monographie, no. 187 (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2000), which surveys evidence for the jiao 郊 “suburban sacrifice” in Han-dynasty texts.

that he submitted his doctoral dissertation (2005), Williams also published the article “A Methodological Procedure for the Analysis of the Wenxian Covenant Texts” (302890). In the years since then, Williams, who is now a professor at the University of Kansas in the United States, has published several more articles on paleographic aspects of the covenant texts; these include “Ten Thousand Names: Rank and Lineage Affiliation in the Wenxian Covenant Texts” (303280; 2009), “Early References to Collective Punishment in an Excavated Chinese Text: Analysis and Discussion of an Imprecation from the Wenxian Covenant Texts” (303420; 2011), and “Dating the Houma Covenant Texts: The Significance of Recent Findings from the Wenxian Covenant Texts” (303490; 2012).

Another scholar whose doctoral dissertation focused on the covenant texts from Houma and Wenxian is Imre GALAMBOS. His 2002 dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley, was entitled “The Evolution of Chinese Writing: Evidence from Newly Excavated Texts (490–221 BC)” (101190). This dissertation used the covenant texts to draw more general conclusions regarding early Chinese paleography, for which reason it was already introduced in Chapter One above. Curiously, Galambos’s career track has been the reverse of that of Crispin Williams, who moved from England to the United States. For his part, after completing his degree in the United States, Galambos moved to England, working first at the British Library, where his research focused on the Dunhuang manuscripts in the library’s collection, and then moving on to the University of Cambridge, where he currently teaches.

A classmate of Galambos during his graduate study at the University of California, Berkeley was Miranda BROWN, who also in 2002 presented a doctoral dissertation on Han-dynasty stone inscriptions: “Men in Mourning: Ritual, Human Nature, and Politics in Warring States and Han China, 453 BC – AD 220” (302470). Brown, who is currently a professor of Chinese history at the University of Michigan, has also continued to publish related research, including the articles “Mothers and Sons in Warring States and Han China” (302570; 2003) and “Han Steles: How To Elicit What They Have to Tell Us” (303080; 2008), as well as her 2007 book The Politics of Mourning in Early China (303010).

Prior to Crispin Williams and Imre Galambos, there was another scholar who personified the special relationship between England and America. Despite being American, Kenneth BRASHIER did his graduate study at the University of Cambridge in England, where he too completed a doctoral dissertation focused primarily on Han-dynasty stele inscriptions: “Evoking the Ancestor: The Stele Hymn of the Eastern Han Dynasty” (302070). Like Miranda Brown, Brashier also used the stele inscriptions as source material for his more general interest in Han society and ritual. After completing his degree, he returned to the United States,
where he is professor of Chinese at Reed College in Oregon. Over the last fifteen years, he has become a leading scholar in this field, publishing several articles and two important books. A chronological listing of this scholarship will suffice to show its importance.

“The Spirit Lord of Baishi Mountain: Feeding the Deities or Heeding the Yinyang?” (302380; 2001)
“Symbolic Discourse in Eastern Han Memorial Art: The Case of the Birchleaf Pear” (302810; 2005)
“Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Stelae” (302820; 2005)
“Eastern Han Commemorative Stelae: Laying the Cornerstones of Public Memory” (303200; 2009)
Ancestral Memory in Early China (303360; 2011)
Public Memory in Early China (303550; 2014)

Although western scholarship on stone inscriptions still cannot be said to be sufficiently developed, nevertheless the present trends are encouraging. Under the leadership of these scholars, now reaching the prime of their scholarly careers, it can be anticipated that this field will see important developments in the future.

3.3 Studies of Bronze Inscriptions since 2000

In contrast to the late development of studies of stone inscriptions, by the year 2000 western scholarship on bronze inscriptions was already quite developed. Compared with the same field fifty years before, the progress is particularly clear. During the 1950s and 1960s, there was essentially only Noel Barnard undertaking research on bronze inscriptions, and although he published a great deal, his influence was in some ways counter-productive. Barnard’s insistence that a great many of the bronze vessels that had been known prior to the advent of modern archaeology were forgeries was a disincentive for scholars in such related fields as paleography and history to make use of bronze inscriptions as sources for research, concerned as they were about being misled by inauthentic evidence. By the 1970s, with the great advance in scientifically excavated bronze vessels, this situation changed dramatically, and studies of bronze inscriptions in the West became almost hot. By the 1990s, under the impetus of the “Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project,” bronze studies advanced still further. From the year 2000 on, almost every year was marked by new discoveries, and these stimulated ever
more research. In the following summary of western scholarship on bronzes during this period, it will be impossible to introduce all of the many studies; instead I will be able to introduce only the most representative results.

In the year 2000 itself, LI Feng 李峰 completed his doctoral dissertation “The Decline and Fall of the Western Zhou Dynasty: A Historical, Archaeological, and Geographical Study of China from the Tenth to the Eighth Centuries B.C.” (302350). After receiving an M.A. from the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Li, a native of Baoji 宝鸡, Shaanxi, went to Japan, where he studied for two years with the bronze inscription specialist MATSUMARU Michio 松丸道雄. After this, he then emigrated to the United States, studying at the University of Chicago. The sub-title of his dissertation describes well the contents of the dissertation: it is truly “a historical, archaeological, and geographical study of China from the tenth to the eighth centuries B.C.” Originally trained as an archaeologist, Li was personally also long interested in geography. After leaving China, he studied paleography with Matsumaru. By the time he arrived in America he was determined to add history to his skills. He has now combined all of these disciplines in his own work on Western Zhou cultural history, especially in his use of inscribed bronze vessels. After receiving his Ph.D., Li was appointed as professor of Chinese at Columbia University, where he established the “Early China Seminar,” which has served as a forum to foster scholarship on Early China throughout the East Coast of the United States. Since beginning his career at Columbia, he has published scholarship almost every year, in many years publishing more than one article. A chronological listing of just the most important of these during the first years that he taught there would include:

“‘Offices’ in Bronze Inscriptions and Western Zhou Government Administration” (302400; 2001)
“‘Feudalism’ and Western Zhou China: A Criticism” (302610; 2003)
“Succession and Promotion: Elite Mobility during the Western Zhou” (302690; 2004)
“Textual Criticism and Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions: The Example of the Mu Gui” (302700; 2004)

In 2006, Li’s doctoral dissertation was formally published as Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045-771 B.C. (302940). Two years later, he followed this with a second book entitled Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou (303130; 2008).
While his research centers on the cultural history of ancient China, he also often makes use of comparison with ancient Rome. This combination of a firm empirical basis with a strong comparative viewpoint has provoked considerable discussion within the western scholarly world. In 2010, the authoritative journal *Early China* organized a “Forum” to discuss his first book *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045-771 B.C.*, with Maria KHAYUTINA, Yuri PINES, Katheryn M. LINDUFF, Constance COOK, and CHEN Zhi 陳致 all contributing appraisals. In western scholarship, it is rare to see this sort of interest for a first book, reflective of the considerable stature that Li Feng has already achieved. In 2012, his student Paul Nicholas VOGT completed a doctoral dissertation entitled “Between Kin and King: Social Aspects of Western Zhou Ritual” (303480), making considerable use of inscribed bronze vessels to trace the evolution of ritual over the course of the Western Zhou period. Vogt is now a professor of Chinese at Indiana University in the United States.

Above, in Part One, I already mentioned Wolfgang BEHR’s doctoral dissertation “Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Entstehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung” (302000; 1996). However, it was not until 2005 and 2006 that Behr began to publish related scholarship: “The Extent of Tonal Irregularity in Pre-Qin Inscriptional Rhyming” (302800; 2005), and “Spiegelreflex: Reste einer Wu-Überlieferung der *Lieder* im Licht einer Bronzeinschrift der späten Han-Zeit” (302900; 2006). Although still to this day he has not formally published many articles, he has been extraordinarily active, especially presenting numerous important papers at scholarly conferences; as of November 18, 2016, his web-site at Academia.edu featured 8 books, 22 articles, and 133 conference presentations, most of them related to topics in linguistics and paleography. Currently the professor of Sinology at the University of Zurich, he has an important position within western Sinology, and is also well known both in China and in Russia within the fields of paleography and linguistics. In 2009, his doctoral dissertation was formally published as *Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Entstehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung* (303190).

Another European authority on Chinese paleography is Olivier VENTURE, who teaches at the École Pratique des Hautes Études of the Université Paris 7. In his doctoral dissertation, “Étude d’un employ ritual de l’écrit dans la Chine archaïque (XIIIe-VIIIe siècle avant notre ère)—Réflexion sur les matériaux épigraphiques des Shang et des Zhou occidentaux” (302540), completed at the same school in 2002, he provided a comprehensive analysis of both Shang oracle-bone inscriptions and Shang and Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Because of his teaching responsibilities, in recent years his research has tended toward War-
ring States, Qin and Han manuscripts, but he still pays attention to bronze inscriptions, as in his study “Le Shan ding: Un vase en bronze inscrit de l’époque des Zhou occidentaux (1050-771 av. notre ère)” (302760), published in 2004.

Chrystelle MARÉCHAL, another scholar working in Paris, is a researcher in the section on Linguistics of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). In 2001, she joined her teacher Shun-chiu YAU in editing *Actes du Colloque international commémorant le centenaire de la découverte des inscriptions sur os et carapaces* (203360), introduced in Chapter Two above. Her own work has included not only studies of oracle-bone inscriptions, but also several studies of bronze inscriptions, as in her contribution to that volume: “La conservation formationnelle des caractères chinois: Une source de vitalité de l’écriture révélée au travers de bao 寶 ‘précieux’” (302410), as well as the following articles: “Idiomatic Acceptability and Graphic Identification in Bronze Inscriptions of the Spring and Autumn Period” (302720; 2004 年) and “Graphic Modulation in the Ancient Chinese Writing System” (302950; 2006), all of which present interesting ideas concerning paleographic method.

Maria KHAYUTINA, mentioned in connection with the *Early China* “Forum” discussion of Li Feng’s book *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045-771 B.C.*, is a Russian scholar who now lives in Munich, Germany, though she writes primarily in English. Since 2002, she has published many articles on Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, Western Zhou history, and archaeology, many with a pronounced anthropological perspective:

“Studying the Private Sphere of the Ancient Chinese Nobility through the Inscriptions on Bronze Ritual Vessels” (302480; 2002)
“Host-Guest Opposition as a Model of Geo-Political Relations in Pre-Imperial China” (302490; 2002)
“The Sacred Space of an Aristocratic Clan in Zhou China (11th-3rd Centuries B.C.) under Transformation: An Attempt at Interpretation” (302590; 2003)
“Die Geschichte der Irrfahrt des Prinzen Chong’er und ihre Botschaft” (302930; 2006)
“Western ‘Capitals’ of the Western Zhou Dynasty: Historical Reality and Its Reflections Until the Time of Sima Qian” (303110; 2008)
“Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity” (303310; 2010)
“Marital Alliances and Affinal Relatives (Sheng and Hungou) in the Society and Politics of Zhou China in the Light of Bronze Inscriptions” (303580; 2014)
“King Wen, A Settler of Disputes or Judge? The Yu-Rui Case in the Historical Records and Its Historical Background” (303640; 2015)

From the titles of these articles, it is easy to see the pronounced anthropological perspective that Khayutina brings to her research.

There are two other mid-career scholars of early Chinese cultural history who were originally German but now work in the United States and who have made unique contributions to the study of bronze vessels and their inscriptions. Above I have already had occasion to discuss in some detail Lothar von Falkenhausen, the successor to K.C. Chang as the western world’s leading authority on Chinese archaeology. Falkenhausen is interested in all aspects of the Chinese Bronze Age. In 2006, he published Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence (302910). This book is a collection of articles that he had published over the years, slightly revised and woven together into an integral whole; its three sections address the Western Zhou, Springs and Autumns, and Warring States periods. The Western Zhou portion, in particular, makes use of bronze inscriptions. Falkenhausen has a rather unusual view of the Wei 微-family bronzes and its famous Shi Qiang pan 史牆盤, which is routinely dated to the reign of King Gong of Zhou 周共王. Instead, Falkenhausen argues that the vessels in this cache made for Xing 項 should date to the late Western Zhou, and since Xing was the son of Shi Qiang 史牆, the patron of the Shi Qiang pan, it stands to reason that the Shi Qiang pan cannot date any earlier than the reign of King Xiao of Zhou 周孝王, two kings later than the vessel’s generally accepted date. In the same year that he published this book (2006), he also published a similar analysis of the Shan 梁-family bronzes that had just been discovered at Yangjiacun 楊家村, Shaanxi three years before: “The Inscribed Bronzes from Yangjiacun: New Evidence on Social Structure and Historical Consciousness in Late Western Zhou China (c. 800 BC)” (302920). In this article, he suggested that the Qiu pan 逑盤 inscription, which like the Shi Qiang pan inscription carries a genealogy of both the Zhou royal family and also the patron’s family, is dubious, since there are only eight generations of ancestors in the Shan family as opposed to twelve generations of Zhou kings. Falkenhausen argues that from the time of King Wen of Zhou until that of King Xuan of Zhou, there was at least 250 years. For eight generations, this would give an average length of generation of 31.25 years, far longer than we might expect in antiquity, when the average life expectancy was much lower than it is today. For this reason, he suggests that the Shan-family genealogy presented in the inscription cannot possibly be complete, and
Indeed may well be partly or wholly fictional. It bears noting here that when Falkenhausen suggests that this inscriptive is fictional, he is not calling the vessel or its inscription a forgery in the sense used by Noel Barnard. Rather, Falkenhausen claims that the inscription is not a true account of the family’s history:

I cannot help but suggest, at this juncture, that the whole sequence of ancestors as given in the Qiu-pan—or at least its early portion down to Qiu’s “Subordinate Ancestor” Yi Zhong (Ancestor no. 6)—is a more or less arbitrary hodge-podge. This does not necessarily mean that the ancestors enumerated are non-historical; but it does seem distinctly possible that the inscription’s author, or authors, haphazardly placed various dimly remembered prestigious figures from different branches of the Shan lineage into a sequence without much regard for their actual genealogical relationships among one another.38

This suggests that by the end of the Western Zhou, a prominent family such as the Shans did not have an accurate memory of their own ancestors, and so essentially invented a genealogy to pair with that of the Zhou royal family.

In a subsequent article entitled “The Royal Audience and Its Reflections in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions” (303390; 2011), Falkenhausen presented yet another viewpoint regarding bronze inscriptions quite different from that commonly accepted. He suggested that the “command document” (ming shu 命書) that serves as the basis for most investiture inscriptions ought not to be regarded as deriving from the Zhou king or his royal court, but rather should have been written by the investee himself as a way of recounting his own accomplishments. Basing himself on a description of a court reception in the “Jin li” 見禮 (Rites of the Royal Audience) chapter of the Yi li 儀禮 (Ceremonies and rites), in which the investee enters into the court and then makes an oral report to the king, Falkenhausen suggests that when inscriptions such as those on the Qiu pan and Qiu zhong 逑鐘 begin by saying “Qiu said” (Qiu yue 逑曰), this is meant to introduce this oral report. When the inscription goes on to say “wang ruo yue” 王若曰, it means that the king approved of the investee’s report and grants him the command document. These suggestions of Falkenhausen’s vis-à-vis the historicity of bronze inscriptions command great respect in the western scholarly world.

Another scholar who often argues for the oral nature of ancient Chinese culture is Martin Kern, mentioned above for his book The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation (302340;)

Kern is also German by birth and training, but after receiving his Ph.D. degree there, he went to the United States, first to pursue post-doctoral research at the University of Washington in Seattle, and then staying on in the United States for work. He is currently professor of Chinese at Princeton University. In recent years, he has published several articles on bronze inscriptions, such as "The Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China" (303020; 2007) and "Bronze Inscriptions, the Shiijing and the Shangshu: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou" (303220; 2009). The title of the first of these articles emphasizes that rituals at the royal court were a type of performance, of which the bronze inscriptions are only a secondary record, an echo, so to speak.

Before concluding this survey of western studies of bronze inscriptions, I should like to point out some of my own views regarding the “Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project.” As noted above, beginning already in the late 1970s, David Nivison made studies of ancient chronology a central part of his research agenda, in 1983 publishing the seminal article “The Dates of Western Chou” (301280). Nivison’s students David PANKENIER and Edward SHAUGHNESSY both also published related scholarship around the same time. Most of these articles were translated into Chinese and are well known to the Chinese scholarly world. Somewhat later, the “Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project” drove forward new research on this topic, and attracted a great deal of notice at the time. The publication of that Project’s Brief Report in 2000 also prompted a considerable response in the West. For instance, in 2002 the Journal of East Asian Archaeology devoted a special issue to the topic, with articles by LI Xueqin (李學勤) (“The Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project: Methodology and Results”; 302510), David S. NIVISON (“The Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project: Two Approaches to Dating”; 302520) and SHAO Dongfang (邵東方) (“Controversy over the ‘Modern Text’ Bamboo Annals and Its Relation to Three Dynasties Chronology”; 302530) all evaluating the Chronology Project from different points of view. Ten years after the completion of the Project, Edward SHAUGHNESSY published “Chronologies of Ancient China: A Critique of the ‘Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project’” (303250; 2009), a Chinese version of which was subsequently published, vehemently criticizing the Chronology Project. Shaughnessy argued that the conclusions presented by the

Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project ought not to be regarded as final conclusions. That western scholars have contributed in important ways to this research is a sign of just how mature the western study of Chinese bronzes has become. On the basis of very careful research, western scholars have been able to present conclusions that differ from those of Chinese colleagues, many of these being quite influential in the related fields. This too reflects the high standards that western scholarship has now attained in the study of bronze vessels and their inscriptions.