SHI JING SONGS AS PERFORMANCE TEXTS:
A CASE STUDY OF "CHU CI" (THORNY CALTROP)*

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Studies of selected songs in the *ya* 雅 (Elegantiae) and *song* 頌 (Eulogia) sections of the *Shi jing* 詩經 (Book of songs) have exposed what can be called the essentially performative nature of these texts.[1] Even when commemorating significant historical events, these pieces were not simply recited but could be ritually enacted in dance, mimetically embodying what should not be forgotten; the most famous case is that of the dance *da wu* 大武 (Great martiality) which Wang Guowei and others after him have identified with a suite of six *Shi jing* ritual hymns, as a whole presumedly representing the Zhou conquest of the Shang.[2] Henri Maspero,

   1. See Wang Guowei 王國維, *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林 (Taipei: Shijie, 1975), 2.15a–24b; Zhou Cezong 周策縱, "Gu wu dui yuewu ji shige fazhan di gongxian" 古巫對樂舞及詩歌發展的貢獻, *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 n.s. 13.1–2 (1981), 1–25; C.H. Wang, *From Ritual to Allegory: Seven Essays in Early Chinese Poetry* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988), 1–51. See also, Shih-hsiang Ch'en, "The *Shih-ching*: Its Generic Significance in Chinese Literary History and Poetics," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 39 (1969), 371–413 (repr. in *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres*, ed. Cyril Birch [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974], 8–41). In addition to the religious hymns and banquet songs included in the *ya* and *song* sections, the pieces of the *guo feng* 國風 (Airs of the states) part have also been discussed as performance songs. Marcel Granet, in his *Fêtes et chansons anciennes de la Chine* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études, 1919), set out to reconstruct the folk rites embodied in the *guo feng* from an anthropological and sociological perspective; and C.H. Wang, in *The Bell and the Drum: Shih Ching as Formulaic Poetry in an Oral Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), tried to apply the Lord-Parry hypothesis of oral composition to the *Shi jing* in general. Both studies, each of them written strictly within a particular theoretical framework, are children of their times, and they have been aging together with their underlying methodological assumptions.
   2. Wang Guowei, *Guantang jilin*, 2.15b–17b; Sun Zuoyun 孫作雲, *Shi jing yu Zhou dai shehui yanjiu* 詩經與周代社會研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1966), 239–72; Edward L.

writing in general on the *Shi jing* hymns only a few years after Wang, has not only seen the specific rhythmical demands of dance and music as the reason that "the poetic value of these odes is not very high";[3] he also has read substantial parts of the *Shang shu* 尚書 (Book of documents) as "pantomime libretti" that furnish exact descriptions of the ritual dances.[4] Many sacrificial hymns from the *Shi jing*, as well as contemporaneous bronze inscriptions, routinely address the ancestors through prayers for blessings and longevity, employing the so-called "auspicious words" (*guci* 嘏辭) usually in the closing lines of the poem.[5] There is no evidence that would make us doubt the traditional reading, established by the Han commentators Mao 毛 and Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), according to which these songs were actually performed in the politico-religious ceremonies of Zhou ancestral sacrifices. The famous definition of the *song* as pieces that "praise the outward appearance (*xingrong* 形容) of flourishing virtuous power, in order to announce its accomplishments and merits towards the spirits" in the penultimate phrase of the "Da xu" 大序 (Great preface) may very well refer to the performance of dances.[6] Bound to music and dance, such ritual hymns were part of

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Shaughnessy, "From Liturgy to Literature: The Ritual Contexts of the Earliest Poems in the *Book of Poetry*," *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 13.1 (1994), 133–64. For a more skeptical assessment, see Shirakawa Shizuka 白川靜, *Shikyō kenkyū* 詩經研究 (Kyoto: Hōyū, 1981), 339–48.

3. Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, trans. Frank A. Kierman, Jr. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), 272.

4. Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, 274–76.

5. The term *guci*, very common in later commentarial writing, appears already twice in the *Li ji* 禮記, "Li yun" 禮運; see *Li ji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (*Shisan jing zhushu fu jiaokan ji* 十三經注疏附校勘記 ed., 1815; repr. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1987), 21.190a, 22.197c. The best study on the *guci* is still Xu Zhongshu's 徐中舒 seminal "Jinwen guci shili" 金文嘏辭釋例, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 6.1 (1936), 1–44; see also, Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies: A Review Article," *Early China* 18 (1993), 151–55, 166.

6. *Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (*Shisan jing zhushu* ed.), 1/1.4c. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), in his *Yan jing shi ji* 揅經室集 (in *Huang Qing jingjie* 皇清經解 [1829]; repr. Shanghai: Shanghai, 1988), 1068.249b–250a, has proposed the interchangeability of *song* / *zljongs 頌 and *rong* / *(l)jong 容 (phonetic reconstructions of Zhou Chinese follow William H. Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* [Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992]). In light of the assumed first century composition date for the "Great preface," Ruan Yuan's widely accepted hypothesis is sound; see Bernhard Karlgren, *Loan Characters in Pre-Han Texts* (Göteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1968), nos. 542 and 140. An early example of the interchangeability of *song* and *rong* can be found among the texts from the late fourth century B.C. tomb at Guodian 郭店 (Hubei): in slips 21 and 66 of the "Xing zi ming chu" 性自命出 manuscript, *song* is probably to be read as *rong*; see Jingmen shi bowuguan, *Guodian Chu mu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998), 179, 181. For other explanations of *song*, see Liu Yuqing 劉毓慶, "'Song' shi xinshuo: 'song' wei yuanshi zongjiao songci kao" 頌詩新

"multi-media happenings"[7] and contributed, through both the voices of the singers and the movement of the dancers, to the overall aesthetic structures of Zhou ancestral rites. The efficacy of the hymnic texts, simultaneously addressed to the ancestral spirits and to the narrowly restricted political public of these royal or aristocratic performances, was perceived not simply in the meaning of words and phrases but through the performance of the text as an integral part of the performance of dance and music.

On the other hand, many *Shi jing* ritual pieces are not only utterances directly from the early ancestral sacrifices, even though the received anthology is a "Zhou text in Han clothing."[8] Such pieces also furnish more or less comprehensive accounts on these very rituals, relating either their own situational context or an ideal prototype of ritual service. Providing what appear to be descriptive narratives from an outside perspective, they can easily be understood as commemorative or prescriptive accounts of early sacrificial and banquet scenes. This, indeed, may have been one of their original purposes, if we consider that the *Shi* as a whole served later generations as a unique repository of cultural memory from the early centuries of the Zhou dynasty; remarks attributed to Confucius that the student of the *Shi* will acquire social competence and also learn "the names of birds and beasts, plants and trees"[9] bespeak the function of the *Shi* as an encyclopedic storehouse of knowledge and paradigms.[10] Again we receive support from the Mao and Zheng commentaries, together with the so-called "Xiao xu" 小序 (Minor prefaces) to individual pieces (a perfect example of how an elaborate description of a sacrificial act is read as commemorative of times long ago will be discussed below).[11]

One may be tempted to divide the received songs of the *Shi jing* along these lines: here the pieces that were actually used in early performances,

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說: 頌為原始宗教誦辭考, *Jinyang xuekan* 晉陽學刊 1987.6, 76–83; and Shirakawa Shizuka, *Shikyō kenkyū*, 421–31.

7. Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Ritual Music in Bronze Age China: An Archaeological Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988), 693.

8. William H. Baxter, "Zhou and Han Phonology in the Shijing," in *Studies in the Historical Phonology of Asian Languages*, ed. William G. Boltz and Michael C. Shapiro (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1991), 30.

9. *Lun yu zhushu* 論語注疏 (*Shisan jing zhushu* ed.), 17.69b (*Lun yu* 17.10).

10. The same has been noted for the Homeric epics; see Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997), 276.

11. For the structure of the "Minor prefaces" and the related early exegetical tradition, see Steven Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 80–115.

there the ones that commemorate or prescribe ritual action from a position beyond the individual performance. In the following case study, however, I will try to suggest that these functions are not necessarily mutually exclusive; that the ritual act itself could have been the arena to perpetuate, actualize, and reinforce pre-existing normative patterns of speech and action; and that these ritual hymns indeed embody authentic accounts of an original ritual drama, composed of a multiplicity of voices and movements. In this understanding, the ephemeral nature of the individual performance becomes eternized in the continuous existence of the text that ultimately transcends any particular occasion.[12] The hypothesis of the polyvalent nature of the early ritual hymns arises directly from the texts themselves, and from problems in understanding them: in a number of apparently descriptive/prescriptive passages, one finds them to be not only abbreviated and fragmentary but also interwoven with intricate and dramatic textures of speech that resist integration into a straightforward narrative. As such, a ritual hymn presupposes more than it actually relates; instead of detailing a stage script (as it would later appear in the *Yi li* 儀禮), it embodies authentic and exemplary patterns of speech and action.

The most complex case of a ritual hymn that is both a descriptive/prescriptive account and a text to be performed in an ancestral sacrifice may be found in the song "Chu ci" 楚茨 (Thorny caltrop).[13] This hymn, arranged in six stanzas of twelve lines each, is one of the richest, most vivid, and therefore also most quoted sources on the Zhou ancestral ritual. Included in the *xiao ya* 小雅 (Minor elegantiae) section of the *Shi*, the hymn relates the preparations of the sacrificial grain, meat, and ale; moves through the various steps of the performance proper; and finally closes with a banquet scene. Although the *ya* and *song* sections contain dozens of ritual songs for both the ancestral temple and the banquet hall, none provides us with a comparable breadth of details about the activities in a Zhou period ancestral temple. As already noted by the Tang commentator Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648),[14] the hymn appears

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12. On the antagonism between eternal text and ephemeral performance, see Edward L. Shieffelin, "Problematizing Performance," in *Ritual, Performance, Media*, ed. Felicia Hughes-Freeland (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 198–99. As will become evident in the following discussion, this approach to the songs differs from the assumption of a historical development from liturgical to literary texts among the *Shi jing* ritual hymns; for this historical approach see Shaughnessy, "From Liturgy to Literature."

13. *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.199b–202b (Mao 209).

14. *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.199b.

to be directly related to the three songs that follow it in the Mao sequence, "Xin nan shan" 信南山, "Fu tian" 甫田, and "Da tian" 大田, that all deal with agriculture and sacrifices.[15] They differ, however, from "Chu ci" by elaborating more on the agricultural preparations for the sacrifice and in turn abbreviating the account of the ritual act proper. As is pointed out in the annotations to the "Chu ci" translation below, a number of the formulae employed in their brief passages on the sacrificial performance have parallels in "Chu ci."

According to the "Minor prefaces" to all four songs (as well as those to numerous other songs), they serve to criticize the degenerated rule of King You 幽王 (r. 781–771 B.C.).[16] For "Chu ci," the preface reads:

楚茨刺幽王也政煩賦重田萊多荒饑饉降喪民卒流亡祭祀不饗故
君子思古焉

"Thorny caltrop" is a criticism of King You. [His] government is vexatious, and taxes are heavy. Both cultivated and fallow fields are mostly waste, and famines inflict death. The common people are dispersed and fleeing, and the sacrifices are not consumed [by the spirits]. Therefore, the noble man longs for the days of old in this [song].[17]

In the view of the preface, the detailed descriptions in "Chu ci" recall the ideal world of the past when agriculture and sacrifice were in perfect order, in particular under the reign of King Cheng 成王 (r. 1042/35–1006 B.C.), to whom the "Minor preface" of "Xin nan shan" explicitly refers.[18] One certainly is not required to follow too closely this interpretation, which has been incorporated into the traditional commentaries to the hymn. Without paying any attention to this early reading guidance, modern accounts of Zhou ancestral sacrifice simply draw on "Chu ci" to illustrate concrete aspects of early sacrificial performances.[19] More

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15. *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.202b–14/1.210c. On the whole group, see Shirakawa Shizuka, *Shikyō kenkyū*, 310–19, 617–20; and Matsumoto Masaaki 松本雅明, *Shikyō shohen no seiritsu ni kansuru kenkyū* 詩經諸篇の成立に關する研究 (Tokyo: Kaimei, 1981–82), vol. 2, 792–805.

16. For Western Zhou dates I follow Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), xix.

17. *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.199b–c (including early commentaries).

18. *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.202b.

19. In English language scholarship, this is particularly true for broader or comparative accounts of early Chinese culture. See, for example, Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 49;

analytical, and more important, Lothar von Falkenhausen, in a careful reading that accounts for substantial aspects of the performative structure of the text, has on several occasions directed our attention to "Chu ci" as being "probably the hypotext for much if not all the 'systematizing' description of ancestral ritual" in the three traditional ritual canons (*Yi li*, *Zhou li* 周禮, and *Li ji* 禮記);[20] Qing commentators like Yao Jiheng 姚際恆 (b. 1647) and Fang Yurun 方玉潤 (1811–1883) have noted that specifically the *Yi li* draws most closely on the information given in the song.[21] Most notably, the song, although composed as a chronological narrative, contains a number of actual speeches uttered by the participants—both humans and spirits—in the performance of the sacrificial rite, a fact that has been insufficiently recognized in earlier translations.[22] As such, and very different from the systematic accounts that were subsequently derived from it in the ritual compendia, "Chu ci" resounds from within the sacrifical act itself. The song is both a part of the ritual proper and a normative account of it; thus, we should not dismiss too hastily the commemorative dimension as it is expressed in the Mao "Minor preface." Its double structure makes "Chu ci" a piece problematic to read and hence promising to analyze, with a rich array of formal linguistic markers granting insights into the nature and texture of early performance texts that cannot be obtained from less complex, single-layered writings.

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or Jordan Paper, *The Spirits are Drunk: Comparative Approaches to Chinese Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), the main title of which is a (simplified) translation of stanza five, line five of the hymn.

20. Falkenhausen, "Reflections on the Political Role of Spirit Mediums in Early China: The *Wu* Officials in the *Zhou Li*," *Early China* 20 (1995), 297; see also his "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 148–50, and *Suspended Music: Chime-Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 25–32. Henri Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, 150–54, also bases his reconstruction of a typical ancestral sacrifice on this hymn, "fleshed out with the aid of various chapters" (428–29n.46) from the three ritual canons. He was evidently not aware that he was essentially repeating what the compilers of the ritual canons appear to have done: "fleshing out" the contents of "Chu ci" with additional data from other sources.

21. Yao Jiheng, *Shi jing tonglun* 詩經通論 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1958), 11.231; Fang Yurun, *Shi jing yuanshi* 詩經原始 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 11.431.

22. This observation applies to the English translations by James Legge (*The Chinese Classics IV: The She King* [repr. Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1985], 368–73), Arthur Waley (*The Book of Songs* [New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1988], 209–11), and Bernhard Karlgren ("The Book of Odes, Kuo feng and Siao ya," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 16 [1944], 246–47), as well as to the widely read modern Japanese and Chinese versions.

The Performative Dimension of the Text

The Meaning of the Form

To call "Chu ci" a "performance text" immediately involves the notion of "ritual language" and implies a particular set of theoretical assumptions, methodological issues, and practical measures that are brought to its reading. First of all, we must recognize the formal characteristics of the text as meaningful and significant aspects that contribute to its efficacy. In ritual performance, form, including linguistic form, is not an arbitrary embellishment that may be omitted by the performers of the ritual or neglected by the interpreters (two groups of people who overlap substantially in the original performance act).[23] Form literally embodies meaning and serves in a rhetorical capacity: this is the reason why the highly ideological Warring States and early imperial discussions of "orthodox" (*zheng* 正, *ya* 雅) and "lascivious" (*yin* 淫) or "new" (*xin* 新) music are not about the wording of songs but entirely focused on tones, melodies, and rhythms;[24] it also explains a major part of the exalted status of the *Shi* as formalized and codified speech in Eastern Zhou diplomatic exchanges.[25] Moreover, following Suzanne Langer,

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23. The performer of ritual as its synchronical observer is implied in the widely accepted "social solidarity thesis" of ritual theory; on this, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 171–72, *passim*. Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 49, holds that "those systems which attained relative stability over a period of time and are called definite 'civilizations' on account of this owe their success, the maintenance of their identity, to group solidarity reinforced by ritual." Edmund R. Leach, *Culture and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 45, has coined the poignant formula that "we engage in rituals in order to transmit collective messages to ourselves."

24. The most comprehensive account of the early musical discourse may be found in Kurihara Keisuke 栗原圭介, *Chūgoku kodai gakuron no kenkyū* 中國古代樂論の研究 (Tokyo: Daitō bunka daigaku tōyōkenkyūsho, 1978). In addition, see Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music*, 23–66, 310–24; Kenneth DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1982), 29–98; DeWoskin, "Early Chinese Music and Origins of Aesthetic Terminology ," in *Theories of the Arts in China*, ed. Susan Bush and Christian Murck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 187–214; and my *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer: Literatur und Ritual in der politischen Repräsentation von der Han-Zeit bis zu den Sechs Dynastien* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997), 23–50.

25. A brilliant account of the early use of the *Shi* may be found in Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 155–76; see also, van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 38–44. The most comprehensive study of the use of the *Shi* in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 is Zeng Qinliang 曾勤良, *Zuo zhuan yinshi fushi zhi shijiao yanjiu* 左傳引詩賦詩之詩教研究 (Taipei: Wenjin, 1993).

when "words and music come together . . . music swallows words; not only mere words and literal sentences, but even literary word-structures, poetry"; here, music is the "commanding form," with words being "no longer prose or poetry" but "elements of the music," since "song is music"[26]—a common phenomenon that in early China seems to account for the initial reception of the *Shi* primarily as pieces of music.[27] Elsewhere, I have tried to demonstrate in detail that in the Eastern Zhou discourse of cultural representation, ritual form and demeanor hold primacy over textual proposition.[28]

In a Zhou ancestral sacrifice, all the diverse elements of ritual aesthetics—the decor of the bronze vessels and bells, textile patterns, musical sounds, the arrangement and movement of dancers, the fragrance of the offerings, and so forth—contribute to what Ernst H. Gombrich has called "the sense of order," identifying ornamental structures as powerfully expressive, even if their propositional "meaning" is not transparent.[29] Its very existence organizes modes of perception and constitutes an aesthetic surplus that cannot be balanced in the currency of propositional meaning. Several historians of early Chinese art have argued along the same lines with respect to ritual ornament (for example, on the bronzes) and concluded that ornament is not "mere ornament" but the emblematic expression of control over economical and technological resources (in the context of sumptuary rules, however artificially idealized).[30] Ornament overwhelms, probably even intimidates, as an indexical function of sheer power.[31] Ornament also implies, on an even

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26. Suzanne Langer, here quoted after Stanley J. Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 65 (1979/1981), 164.

27. See Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 28–51.

28. See my "Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon: Historical Transitions of *Wen* in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 87 (2001), 43–91.

29. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

30. See Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon* (London: British Museum Publications, 1984); Martin Powers, "The Figure in the Carpet: Reflections on the Discourse of Ornament in Zhou China," *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995), 211–33; Joseph Leo Koerner, "The Fate of the Thing: Ornament and Vessel in Chou Bronze Interlacery," *Res* 10 (1985), 28–46. In addition, the conference volume *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes*, ed. Roderick Whitfield (London: University of London, 1993), is dedicated to the issue, with Sarah Allan taking the opposite view that ornament, in particular on Shang bronzes, could, and should, be interpreted as primarily referential; see Allan, "Art and Meaning," in *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes*, 9–33, and "Epilogue," *ibid.*, 161–76. See also my discussion in *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer*, 11–22.

31. I am using the term "indexical" in the usual semiotic sense (as defined by Charles Sanders Peirce): the relation between the signifier and the signified is established

more fundamental and self-referential level, the very gesture of strongly conventionalized, ritualized, and thereby authoritative expression *per se*; in this sense, it asserts control over the cultural, especially the religious tradition. Thus meaning resides in form and is not confined to the communicative level of propositions and references. Ornament marks an object as something apart from the world of everyday artifacts, which is my understanding of Jessica Rawson's thesis that on the Shang bronzes, "[t]he primary purpose of the ornament seems to have been to denote a ritual vessel."[32] Robert Bagley, in a related discussion of Shang bronzes, notes that decoration "is the visible sign that an object is important, and the visible sign that the possessor of the object is important."[33] If this argument holds true for the partially zoomorphic and anthropomorphic Shang iconography, it is even more compelling for the abstract designs of late Western and then Eastern Zhou bronzes which follow what has been identified as the mid-Western Zhou ritual reform.[34]

In his "performative approach to ritual," the anthropologist Stanley Tambiah has proposed "one understanding of *meaning*, defined not in terms of 'information' but in terms of *pattern recognition* and *configura-*

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not by convention or resemblance but through causal association on the basis of experience.

32. Jessica Rawson, "Late Shang Bronze Design: Meaning and Purpose," in *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes*, 92.

33. Robert W. Bagley, "Meaning and Explanation," in *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes*, 44–45.

34. According to Rawson, a fundamental reform or even revolution in ritual practice (and possibly in the underlying belief system) in the early ninth century B.C. can be deduced from several observations: while wine vessels were mostly abandoned, food vessels grew larger not only in form but also in numbers, becoming arranged in extended sets; the ornament on these vessels was carried out no longer in minute detail but in larger patterns that could be fully recognized from a distance; and bronze bells were now introduced to the ensemble of ritual artifacts, adding the element of music to the ceremonies. These facts seem to indicate a development from a more private to a more public form of ancestral ritual, with larger numbers of participants perhaps standing at some distance. See Jessica Rawson, "Statesmen or Barbarians: The Western Zhou as Seen Through their Bronzes," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 75 (1989), 87–93; and Rawson, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), vol. 1, 102–10, *passim*; see also, Luo Tai 羅泰 (Lothar von Falkenhausen), "Youguan Xi Zhou wanqi lizhi gaige ji Zhuangbai Wei shi qingtongqi niandai de xin jiashe: cong shixi mingwen shuoqi" 有關西周晚期禮制改革及莊白微氏青銅器年代的新假設: 從世系銘文說起, in *Zhongguo kaogu-xue yu lishixue zhi zhenghe yanjiu* 中國考古學與歷史學之整合研究, ed. Tsang Cheng-hwa 臧振華 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of History and Philology, 1997), 651–76. Therefore, if the bronze artifacts of the ancestral temple were now produced to be displayed for a larger ritual—probably also diplomatic—public, their significance as manifestations of status and wealth may have substantially increased.

tional awareness" that in such diverse media as "poetry, painting, dancing, music, pottery and so on" is achieved through the complementary process of "reduction of the random by restraint" and the orchestrated use of "redundancy and recursive loops."[35] I will return to this point in the discussion of ritual language below; here, it may suffice to indicate the close coherence between principles of art and poetry on the one hand, and ritual performance on the other.

Self-reference in Early Chinese Ritual

Following these general observations, let me consider the performative dimension of ritual hymns from two perspectives that are closely related to one another: the notion of ritual performance and the notion of ritual language that is employed in this performance. "Ritual, as a form of communication, is a kind of language. It is natural, then, that verbalized language, man's most effective system of communication, should be associated with ritual."[36] Here, Walter Burkert, in a chapter on "Myth and Ritual," employs a commonplace in the study of ritual: that ritual in its very structure and function operates like a text of human language.[37] Reversely, and only consequentially, Edmund R. Leach has termed speech "a form of ritual" and proposed that the "uttering of words itself is a ritual."[38] My examination of the sacrificial hymn "Chu ci" does not pursue the "ritual is a form of language" thesis since it does not sufficiently account for the specific significance of *text within the ritual act*; instead, I follow a hint given by Jean-Louis Durand:

> The ritual itself, like the image, is a silent space, where regularly organized behaviors develop in groups of sequences that are more strict than those governing ordinary movements in which the programs for action are much more open. It is exactly this type of programmatic constraint that enables us to distinguish a rite from what is not a rite. It is impossible to understand the rite if we do not

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35. Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," 134.

36. Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, trans. Peter Bing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 29.

37. For some of the prominent statements of this analogy, as well as for its critique, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 43–46, 110–14.

38. Edmund R. Leach, "Ritualization in Man in Relation to Conceptual and Social Development," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, B, 251 (1966), 404, 407. Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 29, also seems to imply this reverse statement by pointing to the social function of speech: "In many cases, that which is said seems less important in everyday life than that something is in fact said. Being together in silence is almost unbearable."

know the names of the actions and the sequences: language is the first interpreter of the real.[39]

In other words, a performance text—being, first of all, a text performed within a ritual act—is fundamentally self-referential by naming the reality of the performance within, and synchronically to, the ritual act; as such, it also duplicates this very act on the linguistic level. Lending voice to action, the text addresses a question lingering subliminally in any performance: "what are we doing here?" Not by coincidence, some Zhou ritual hymns explicitly raise this question into consciousness, self-referentially bespeaking and in the same breath eliminating doubts concerning the ritual practice. "Since times of old, what have [we] done?" (*zi xi he wei* 自昔何爲) is the phrase in line three of "Chu ci";[40] "Truly—our sacrifices are like what?" (*dan wo si ru he* 誕我祀如何) is its equivalent in "Sheng min" 生民 (She bore the folk).[41] Both questions introduce a formulaic recital of the orderly agricultural preparations for the sacrifice; this description, then, leads to the account of the sacrifice proper, that is, the situational context of the text itself. As is discussed below, both hymns also perform a gesture of commemoration by invoking the mythic past to sanction the present; in the hymns as in the performance, past and present, mythical narrative and ritual practice are fused and expressed. Ritual self-reference, a feature common to many cultural traditions and the basis of ritually maintained "social solidarity," is a distinctive feature of Zhou bronze inscriptions, and is an essential aspect of early Chinese ritual ideology according to which "to change the customs and alter the manners, nothing excels music; to tranquilize the powers above and to govern the people, nothing excels ritual."[42] In this vision, ritual and music were conceived as both the expression and forces of cultural transformation; as a self-contained act, ritual performance became the basis for the actualization of exalted rulership. Moreover, through the words of its performance texts, ritual was ultimately self-fulfilling and self-interpreting, leaving no room for doubts as to the legitimacy of those sacrificing. The spirits, to conclude from their literally

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39. Jean-Louis Durand, "Ritual as Instrumentality," in *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, ed. Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, trans. Paula Wissing (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 120.

40. *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.199c.

41. *Mao shi zhengyi*, 17/1.263b (Mao 245); this phrase opens the penultimate stanza seven of the hymn.

42. *Xiao jing zhushu* 孝經注疏 (*Shisan jing zhushu* ed.), 6.18b; the phrase is a commonplace in Han literature. See also my *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2000), 140–47.

prescribed reactions as they are recorded in hymns like "Chu ci," were told what to say.[43]

In "Chu ci" and other hymns, the mediated textual re-presentation of the ritual not only infuses action with meaning, constituting and semanticizing the individual ritual steps as well as their sequence as a whole, it also contributes to the performative experience. This, precisely, is the difference between a poetic text like "Chu ci" and the *Yi li* prose accounts, even where the latter may include prescribed dialogues, and even where both texts seem to present a similar body of information.[44] A sacrificial hymn, beyond its propositional level, is organized through aesthetic structures that are embedded in, and contribute to, the syn-aesthetic whole of the multi-media performance. In a ritual context, formal features like rhythm, meter, rhyme, stanzic division, the use of onomatopoeia (especially rhymed and alliterative binomes and redupli-catives), and so on constitute an ornamental (in the above sense as "pow-erful ornament") pattern that effectively structures the perception of any propositional expression. These linguistic phenomena give the text its own sensual materiality, joining with music in providing for the ear what dance figures and bronze ornament give to the eye. Tambiah speaks of "the sense of total fused experience" that is created by the interplay of ritual language in which "poetic devices such as rhyme, metre, assonance, and alliteration generate an over-all quality of union and a blurring of grammatical boundaries."[45] Tambiah's "working defi-nition of ritual" accounts for the ritual act, the ritual text, and the inter-play of both:

> Ritual is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communica-
> tion. It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words
> and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and

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43. David Keightley, "Late Shang Divination: The Magico-Religious Legacy," in *Explorations in Early Chinese Cosmology*, ed. Henry Rosemont, Jr., *Journal of the American Academy of Religion Studies* 50.2 (1984), 13–14, has noted the rigorous control of how the spirits could possibly react as a salient feature already of the Shang divinations. For Zhou and early imperial times, see my *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer*, 17–22, and my *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, 140–47. In bronze inscriptions, the self-referential gesture is most explicit in what Falkenhausen has called the "state-ment of purpose"; see Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 154, and below, pp. 94–95.

44. See Wade T. Wheelock, "The Problem of Ritual Language: From Information to Situation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50.1 (1982), 50: "Ritual language is not just an instrument for conveying ideas, but is directly used in accomplishing the ends of the ritual operation. This basic fact gives ritual language a set of charac-teristics that distinguishes it from the discourses of mythology and theology."

45. Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," 164.

arrangement are characterized in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition).[46]

All of these features need to be understood as essentially self-referential; in the ritual act, they are not simply used as passive and static commodities but serve in the dynamic process of ritualization—they help to actively constitute the ritual situation and to distinguish it from everyday routines. In the same sense in which ornament contributes to ritual efficacy, Tambiah regards ritual "as a dramatic actualization whose distinctive structure including its stereotypy and redundancy has something to do with the production of a sense of heightened and intensified and fused communication."[47] These observations are remarkably close to the early Chinese notion of ritual and music as not just expressive means but transformative forces:

> These media [i.e., chants, songs, dance, music, verbal formulae, material gifts] may, according to cultural definitions, be considered to be "heated", "compelling", "forceful", and "pleasing" to demons and deities; and at the same time they may be considered to make certain kinds of impacts on the officiants and participants as both senders and receivers of the message.[48]

Yet for the process of ritualization in early China, the propositional role of ritual language is equally instrumental. In the Zhou ancestral temple, human language is the medium through which the spirits express themselves. This situation seems, at first glance, to contrast with the cosmic sacrifices of early imperial times, especially during the reign of Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 B.C.) when successful sacrifices—according to both the historiographical records and the texts of the hymns that accompanied the sacrifices—were followed by auspicious atmospheric phenomena.[49] Most of these omens are represented as instantaneous confirmations of ritual success in the sources: the emperor performed a sacrifice, and the cosmic spirits responded immediately or shortly after, usually through the appearance of numinous lights and clouds. Yet a closer examination reveals that even here, we are dealing with essentially the same phenomenon of self-reference: the sacrificial hymns, celebrating the synchronically appearing cosmic responses, were certainly not extemporized but were carefully composed in advance; and

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46. Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," 119.
47. Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," 140.
48. Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," 141.
49. For the hymns, see my *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer*, 174–303.

the historiographical records of these auspicious signs—preserved in the *Hanshu* 漢書 monographs on suburban sacrifices ("Jiao si zhi" 郊祀志; ch. 25) and on ritual and music ("Li yue zhi" 禮樂志; ch. 22)—can be directly traced back to reports and interpretations from those men who were in charge of Wudi's sacrificial system, the *fangshi* 方士 (masters of methods) mainly from the northeastern regions.[50] The extant set of Han Wudi's "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices" (*jiao si ge* 郊祀歌), which contain lavish descriptions of the sacrifice proper, were performed during the suburban sacrificial rituals—and not only on one singular occasion but continuously even in the sacrifices of subsequent rulers.[51] Thus, this parallel phenomenon from early imperial times provides valuable points of comparison with the *Shi* ritual hymns.

The Textual Construction of Ritual Reality

The evidence of Wudi's suburban sacrifices sheds light from yet another perspective on the significance of performance texts: constituting the ritual act, they create their own context—"text and context become manifest simultaneously."[52] This observation is informed by the theory of speech acts, proposed by Austin[53] and further developed by Searle,[54] which draws many of its examples from ceremonial acts and in turn has found a secure place in the study of ritual language.[55] Several authors

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50. I have analyzed all the omens mentioned for the Wudi period in "Religious Anxiety and Political Interest in Western Han Omen Interpretation: The Case of the Han Wudi Period (141–87 B.C.)," *Chūgoku shigaku* 中國史學 10 (2000), 1–31. In this paper I argue that the *Hanshu* contains different strata of omen records and interpretations for Wudi: while the auspicious records were immediately submitted by the *fangshi*, the calamitous ones are mostly much later retrospective interpretations. Significantly, a number of omens that were initially celebrated as auspicious were later—decades after Wudi's reign—redefined as highly unlucky and related to major political disasters; these critical retrospective interpretations are mainly preserved in the *Hanshu* "Monograph on the Five Phases" ("Wu xing zhi" 五行志; ch. 27).

51. Clear evidence for this comes from the initiative of Kuang Heng 匡衡 (chancellor 36–30 B.C.), who in 32 B.C. proposed to change the wording in two of the hymns; see *Hanshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1987), 22.1057–58. The hymns had been maintained together with the ritual structures, especially cosmic altars, of the Wudi reign; see my "Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon."

52. Wheelock, "The Problem of Ritual Language: From Information to Situation," 58.

53. John L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

54. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); and Searle, "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts," in *Language, Mind, and Knowledge*, ed. Keith Gunderson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), 344–69.

55. A substantial monograph on ritual speech acts is Iwar Werlen, *Ritual und Sprache: Zum Verhältnis von Sprechen und Handeln in Ritualen* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1984).

have noted the weak informational value of ritual speech; Anthony Wallace has proposed that ritual "may, perhaps, most succinctly be classified as communication without information: that is to say, each ritual is a particular sequence of signals which, once announced, allows no uncertainty, no choice, and hence, in the statistical sense of information theory, conveys no information from sender to receiver."[56] Tambiah states that "[b]y definition, the persons in communication must understand one another. In ritual, language appears to be used in ways that violate the communication function,"[57] referring in particular to sacred language (that would be considered unintelligible by the standards of daily speech) or hidden utterances. With respect to the latter, one immediately thinks of Han Wudi, who on the occasion of his first *feng* 封 sacrifice on Mt. Tai in 110 B.C. had a secretly inscribed jade tablet buried at the spot.[58]

Maurice Bloch has argued that the ritual language of religious ceremonies represents a "restricted code" or an artificially "impoverished" language that serves to exert authority.[59] According to Bloch:

> Formalised language, the language of traditional authority [is] a language where many of the options at all levels of language are abandoned so that choice of form, of style, of words and of syntax is less than in ordinary language. . . .The formalisation of speech therefore dramatically restricts what can be said so the speech acts are either all alike or all of a kind and thus if this mode of communication is adopted there is hardly any *choice* of what can be said.[60]

Bloch holds that "religion uses forms of communication which do not have propositional force" and that in a song, "no argument or reasoning

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56. Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), 233.

57. Stanley J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *MAN* n.s. 3.2 (1968), 179. See also his "A Performative Approach to Ritual," 132–33:

> The passage of new information as such from one person to another is only one aspect of social communication, and in ritual, which we have seen to be formalized and predictable, this aspect may be subordinate and of little relevance. . . . Social communication, of which ritual is a special kind, portrays many features that have little to do with the transmission of new information and everything to do with interpersonal orchestration and with social integration and continuity.

58. *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 12.475, 28.1398; *Hanshu*, 25A.1235.

59. Maurice Bloch, "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation: Is Religion an Extreme Form of Traditional Authority?" *European Journal of Sociology* 15.1 (1974), 55–81; and "Introduction," in *Political Language and Oratory in Traditional Society*, ed. Maurice Bloch (London: Academic Press, 1975), 1–28.

60. Bloch, "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation," 60–61.

can be communicated. . . . *You cannot argue with a song.*"[61] Similarly, Wheelock has noted:

> The language of ritual is most often a fixed and known text repeated verbatim for each performance, and the constituents of the immediate ritual setting, to which the language of the liturgy will make frequent reference, are generally standardized and thus familiar to the participants, not needing any verbal explication. Therefore, practically every utterance of a ritual is superfluous from the perspective of ordinary conversational principles.[62]

These observations all point in the same direction: ritual language serves to endorse what is already known; moreover, it is used to construct (usually reconstruct) a situational context of social order and communication. In such an environment, speech is as prescribed and as orderly as action, representing and reassuring social hierarchy through normative ritual expression. The centrality of social order and stratification in early Chinese ancestral rites, their orchestration through sumptuary rules, and their rationalization in discursive texts like the *Xunzi* 荀子 and the *Li ji* is already well known;[63] here, my point is simply to relate these phenomena to the performance not only of ritual acts but also of ritual speech acts. The language of ritual, and of early Chinese ritual in particular, is fundamentally status-oriented: as is shown by any number of examples from the *Shi jing* and the *Yi li*, what counts is the role, not the individual.[64] In the Chinese case, the strictly defined roles and positions of the ancestors, their legitimate descendants, and their guests constitute the very basis of the ancestral ritual. As a result, we hear of ranks and functions, not of individual names.[65] In "Chu ci,"

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61. Bloch, "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation," 71.

62. Wheelock, "From Information to Situation," 56.

63. While the *Yi li* reflects the centrality of role and status throughout its meticulous (and tedious) accounts of particular ritual acts, the *Li ji*, much in the tradition of the *Xunzi*, presents the underlying ideology of ritual as social stratification.

64. Compare Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," 153:

> [T]here is on the one hand an ontological and experiential constraint that leads to formalization and archaism through the performance of cosmological archetypes, and on the other hand, a social constraint that allocates to persons in ranked positions and relations of "power of solidarity" a differential access to and participation in a society's major rites, and a differential enjoyment of their benefits.

65. Hymns that explicitly praise a specific ancestor are exceptions. Yet even here, the ancestor is addressed not by his personal but by his temple name; that is, as a paradigmatic embodiment of those virtues that are expressed in this posthumous designation. See the "Shifa jie" 謚法解 chapter of the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書 (ch. 6 in the

none of the ritual participants is mentioned by his or her personal name. Instead, the personnel involved invariably appears according to, and is designated by, his or her assumed role, function, and status. In this sense, the ritual system is both empty and rigid: empty to be filled and actualized with concrete individuals, and rigid in assigning them to their positions. For reading a sacrificial hymn, this means that the formal designation of the ritual participants is ultimately serious. Operating on both the formal and the semantic level, formal designation deserves closest attention, and its understanding is a *sine qua non* for the reconstruction and understanding of the ritual act and its texts. As I argue below, the attempt to integrate every single instance of formal designation into the overall interpretation serves as a cornerstone in the formal analysis of a performance text.

To verbally express the status of the ritual participants within the ritual act is to constitute their social positions on both a sacral and official plane: "The utterance has indeed brought about the state of affairs it describes by the mere fact of its being spoken."[66] In a lucid discussion of what he calls "situating speech," Wheelock has carried this idea further and asks about the actual potency and necessity of a ritual language "creating and allowing participation in a situation, rather than conveying information."[67] While information—that is, something to be known and learned—can be summarized and would actually lose its force by tedious reiteration, situations, "because they also represent *being* or *action* rather than just knowing, must and can be concretely realized at every repetition." In this perspective, the formalized, repetitive, and redundant structure of ritual language is not something randomly chosen; literally embodying old and venerated patterns of expression, it preserves and enforces the stability and continuity of the religious and social tradition. Traditional (and traditionalizing), at times even archaic, language is the default choice in ritual contexts.

In a culture like early China which is, although literate, still defined by ritual coherence,[68] the endless repetition of the same rites is one of the most important means to perpetuate not only tradition but civilization *per se*, and this force of perpetuation not only connects the present ritual act with all the former ones, it also structures the single ritual act.

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principal editions, e.g., Lu Wenchao's 盧文弨 [1717–1796] collated *Yi Zhou shu* in the *Bao jing tang congshu* 抱經堂叢書 of 1786).

66. Wheelock, "From Information to Situation," 61.

67. Wheelock, "From Information to Situation," 63.

68. The term "ritual coherence," borrowed from the Egyptologist Jan Assmann (*Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 87–89, *passim*), refers to ritual as the key factor to bring about cultural continuity.

By definition, a ritual performance needs to be what it has always been, and it also needs to expose its nature of repetition.[69] On the propositional level, this is achieved by lines such as those quoted above ("Since times of old, what have [we] done?" or "Truly—our sacrifices are like what?"); yet more fundamentally, the very linguistic form of verbal ritual expression, in its ostentatiously repetitive rhythms, contains the same message: to speak in formulae is to speak tradition. This brings us back to the ideology of the early Chinese ancestral rites and their self-referential gestures. Its sacrificial hymns not only constitute the ritual situation and celebrate the core ideology of lineage continuity, they also, by their very linguistic structure, represent ritual coherence and continuity as such. The ubiquitious closing prayer of bronze inscriptions, "May sons and sons, grandsons and grandsons forever treasure and use [this vessel/ bell]" (*zizi sunsun yong bao yong* 子子孫孫永寶用), reflects the guiding ideological principle in a nutshell; transferred to the medium of ritual hymns, this means, in an unspoken message: "descendants, continue to sing this song as it embodies our continuous identity and existence." Ritual classicism translates Zhou political and religious ideology into performative structure. In my analysis of "Chu ci," I attempt to demonstrate how this ideological program directly rules the poetic diction, as a guiding force in the formal composition of the text.

The Cultural Memory

Commemoration and Prescription

Why do texts used in ritual performances describe their own ritual contexts, often in meticulous detail? The previous section has approached part of this issue as a relation between language and performance; even when entirely descriptive, poetically structured ritual texts are different from sober stage scripts or ritual handbooks. As performance texts, their accounts are not just descriptive, or prescriptive, but constitutive: (a) they generate and semanticize the very situation within which they play their part, (b) they enforce social hierarchies by naming the ritual participants in their proper roles, (c) they circulate collective messages within the ritual community, (d) they contribute to the sensual efficacy of the performance proper, (e) they emblematically express authoritative control over the tradition, and (f) they instantaneously

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69. This is even true for times of ritual reforms, for example, under Han Wudi when the *fangshi* also claimed to design the new rituals according to old writings and charts inherited from the Yellow Emperor. See my "Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon."

confirm the success of the ritual efforts. All of these (in the linguistic sense) pragmatic functions account for a mode of speech that structurally embodies those characteristics of formality, stereotypy, condensation, and redundancy which Tambiah has ascribed to ritual performance as a whole. The ritual context imposes its norms on the text as much as the text defines the ritual. Some theorists of ritual have argued that the nature of this "ritual language" is essentially exhausted in the pragmatic dimension. I propose to move beyond this idea. My principal thesis is: in addition to its pragmatic functions, the performance text generates and perpetuates normative cultural memory.

I employ the notion of "cultural memory" as it has been developed by Jan Assmann: "The cultural memory coincides to a high degree with what is circulating as meaning within the group."[70] The cultural memory in this sense is a social construction that comprises those parts of the past that are fundamentally meaningful to the present society, and it depends entirely on institutionalized mechanisms of communication. Not the past as such is preserved in this memory but a selective reconstruction and reorganization of events to be remembered now and in the future. As such, the cultural memory operates in both directions: backwards as selective and forwards as normative. Here:

> The past coagulates to symbolic figures to which remembrance attaches itself. . . . Myths also are figures of remembrance: the difference between myth and history becomes invalid here. For the cultural memory, not the factual but only the remembered history counts. One also could say that in the cultural memory, factual history becomes transformed into remembered history and hence into myth. Myth is a founding story, a story that is told to illuminate a present from its origins. . . . Through remembrance, history turns

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70. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 22–23: "Das kulturelle Gedächtnis deckt sich weitestgehend mit dem, was innerhalb der Gruppe an Sinn zirkuliert." The following discussion is intended to introduce the main aspects of Assmann's theory as they may be applied to the study of early Chinese ritual culture. This theory must not be confused with notions of the "collective unconscious" of the Jungian type; the cultural memory is neither biologically hereditary nor unconscious. Assmann develops his ideas from the work of Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist who in the first half of the twentieth century formulated a theory of "collective memory" (*mémoire collective*), that is, of memory as a social phenomenon; see his *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Halbwachs, a professor at the Collège de France since 1944, was murdered in the concentration camp of Buchenwald near Weimar on March 16, 1945, one day before Henri Maspero died there. One cannot help pausing for a moment to ponder how these two men, while together in Buchenwald for months, may have enriched each other's existence, or what they were able to maintain of it.

into myth. By this, it does not become unreal but, on the contrary and only then, reality in the sense of a continual normative and formative force.[71]

In this context, the distinction between fact and fiction is suspended; for a story of foundational and normative meaning—that is, a myth—this question is simply irrelevant. From these observations, substantiated by concrete examples of founding myths like that of the Israelite exodus which is commemorated in Passover, Assmann concludes that figures of remembrance have a genuinely religious meaning, and that their commemoration (Vergegenwärtigung) often has the character of the feast where the identity of the commemorating group is established by reference to the past. Such solemn collective identities transcend the daily routines, and they are communicated on ceremonial occasions where remembrance "coagulates into texts, dances, images, and rites."[72] The cultural memory does not just spread naturally; it needs conscious care, and it needs an institutional framework in which it is reconstructed, cultivated, and communicated by respected specialists of memory—the term "historian" is much too flat and also anachronistic here—who are often also specialists of religious practice, as is the case in early China.[73]

The Ritual Space of Memory

Where is the cultural memory, as a social construction of the past, located? In a text-centered culture, it can be preserved in a canon of writings of the sort that was gradually emerging in late Warring States and Han China.[74] In earlier centuries, however, despite the literary capacities of the elite, it seems difficult to identify a normative body of texts creating social unity and identity. It is an easy misconception to believe that the simple existence even of a relatively large amount of texts in itself defines a culture as text-centered. Both ancient Greece and Egypt are classical examples of literate cultures that for centuries remained focused on ritual practice alongside which the production, transmission, reception, and conservation of written texts were conducted.[75] To speak

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71. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 52; see also 75–78.
72. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 53.
73. For a summary of this thesis in connection with early China, incorporating the relevant scholarship, see Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 161–67.
74. See my "Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon."
75. There is a vast amount of scholarship on the highly complex issues of "orality" and "literacy" in ancient Greece. A perspicacious study is Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For Egypt, see Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 167–95, *passim*. In emphasizing the status

of a text-centered culture, the issue is not the existence or non-existence of written texts as such; more important are (a) that texts are regarded as superior in status to other forms of cultural expression, and (b) the development of an exegetical tradition, that is, the conscious formation of secondary texts around primary ones, creating a textual discourse. For Zhou China, although a culture satiated with texts, one would be hard pressed to substantiate either of these conditions. Instead, the classical formula on the civilizational core is still: "The great affairs of state reside in the temple sacrifices and in the war sacrifices."[76]

For a corpus of texts that could embody the cultural memory of early China, the songs of the *Shi* are a prime candidate, and they were communicated, according to our current evidence, not as a book to read but as a repertoire of pieces to quote and to perform. No doubt, the *Shi* were there as a textual body, yet even if we assume that pieces like those of the present *Shi jing* (probably being a selection of a much larger repertoire) were *as a demarcated canon* preserved in writing (for which we still lack definite pre-Han evidence) we still see them used primarily in specific contexts, most of them of ritual (diplomatic, sacrificial) nature.

The recently published Guodian 郭店 tomb 1 manuscripts suggest that by the late fourth century B.C., both the *Shi* and the *Shu* 書 (apparently not completely identical with the received *Shi jing* and *Shang shu*) were available as a textual repository of cultural memory. Slips 38–39 of the first "Yu cong" 語叢 manuscript read:

詩所以會古含 [今] 之恃 [志?] 也者
The *Shi* are what brings together the aspirations[?] of the past and the present.[77]

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of the written text in comparison to ritual performance, I wish to make it clear that I do not suggest that the songs of the *Shi* are essentially oral compositions, as claimed by C.H. Wang, *The Bell and the Drum*. It is impossible to transfer the Lord-Parry hypothesis of oral composition from the case of the Yugoslav bards to any early Chinese text. In a literate world like that of Eastern Zhou China (or of ancient Egypt and Greece), the question of oral composition must be distinguished from oral performance and oral transmission. On this distinction—which helps to guard against simplistic demarcations between "orality" and "literacy"—see Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 16–24.

76. *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 (*Shisan jing zhushu* ed.), 27.209b (Cheng 成 13). I quote here the translation given by Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Military Histories of Early China: A Review Article," *Early China* 21 (1996), 159. Shaughnessy's perspicacious translation of this sentence (and correction of the usual ". . . reside in sacrifice and war") is of utmost importance.

77. See Jingmen shi bowuguan, *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 194.

While the interpretation of the graph *shi* 恃 here is tentative,[78] the sentence clearly reflects the idea that the *Shi* would relate the present to its foundations in the past.[79] As such, the *Shi* match the historical records of the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and autumn annals), about which slips 40–41 of the same manuscript state:

> 春秋所以會古含 [今] 之事也
> The *Chunqiu* is what brings together the affairs of the past and the present.[80]

Following the same pattern of expression, slips 36–37 read:

> 易所以會天道人道也
> The *Yi* is what brings together the Way of Heaven and the Way of Man.[81]

The identical linguistic structure of these sentences suggests that *yi* 易, *shi* 詩, and *chunqiu* 春秋 here indeed refer to distinctive textual compilations.

Moreover, other Guodian manuscripts provide evidence that the group known from transmitted sources as the *liu yi* 六藝 (Six arts), encompassing the *Shi* (Songs), *Shu* (Documents), *Li* 禮 (Rites), *Yue* 樂 (Music), *Yi* (Changes), and *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn), was already recognized by the late fourth century B.C. Slips 24–25 of the "Liu de" 六德 manuscript mention all six terms together, while slips 15–16 of the "Xing zi ming chu" 性自命出 manuscript list the *Shi*, *Shu*, *Li*, and *Yue*.[82] It is uncertain whether the six terms refer to the actual texts of the *liu jing* 六經 (Six canons, including the presumably lost music canon); however, the "Zi yi" 緇衣 manuscript (which has a transmitted counterpart in the *Li ji*) quotes extensively from the *Shi* and the *Shu*, the "Cheng zhi wen zhi" 成之聞之 manuscript quotes the *Shu* in three instances, and the "Wu xing" 五行 manuscript (which has a counterpart among

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78. Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 suggests that the graph might be read as either *zhi* 志 or *shi* 詩; see Jingmen shi bowuguan, *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 200n.6. I doubt that *shi* 詩 is a meaningful option here; my choice of *zhi* 志 and its translation as "aspirations" is, of course, related to the early notion of *shi yan zhi* 詩言志 ("the songs express aspirations") that first appears in the "Yao dian" 堯典 chapter of the *Shang shu*; see *Shang shu zhengyi* 尚書正義 (*Shisan jing zhushu* ed.), 3.19c (here, in the "old text" *Shang shu*, in the "Shun dian" 舜典 chapter).

79. Jeffrey Riegel has characterized the early understanding of the *Shi* as "history told in verse"; see his "Eros, Introversion, and the Beginnings of *Shijing* Commentary," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57 (1997), 171.

80. Jingmen shi bowuguan, *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 195.

81. Jingmen shi bowuguan, *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 194.

82. Jingmen shi bowuguan, *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 188 and 179.

the Mawangdui 馬王堆 silk manuscripts) cites seven songs from the *Shi*.[83] Since the *Shu* quotations are introduced by their chapter titles and some of the *Shi* quotations refer to the *xiao ya* and *da ya* 大雅 (Major ele-gantiae) divisions, it is not implausible to assume the canonization of these chapters and sections in a form ancestral to their received versions.

However, we should not overstate the perception of the *liu yi* as texts clearly separated from ritual practice in the Eastern Zhou. The *Yi* was primarily a divination manual; the extremely terse *Chunqiu* seems more like a record to be presented for ritual than for documentary purposes; from the *Shi*, as reflected in their citation patterns, mostly ritual pieces for sacrifices and banquets were quoted;[84] the *Shu* included mainly ritual speeches of rulers; and while we are not certain about the contents of the *Li* and *Yue* in Eastern Zhou times, they surely addressed questions of ritual and musical practice. Therefore, the textual references to the *Shi* and the *Shu* as well as the mention of all the *liu yi* in the Guodian manuscripts do not preclude other contemporaneous experiences of the *Shi*, for example in formal recitations, nor do the quotations prove the general primacy of writing and reading of the *Shi* over their oral performance. In order to propose that the cultural memory was prima-rily preserved through the transmission of written texts, one would have to assume an enormous production and distribution of bamboo, silk, and wooden manuscripts all across the Zhou realm. Such an assumption is not supported by the archaeological record which includes thousands of pre-imperial tombs, only a handful of those containing texts. Also, the historical sources are suprisingly silent about the production and dissemination of texts were the manuscripts to have amounted to count-less wagonloads. Linguistically, the newly excavated manuscripts show not only a substantial degree of graphical variants but also an impressive phonological coherence with their counterparts in the received tradi-tion—which to me suggests a broad but primarily oral circulation of these texts, accompanied by a relatively limited, mutually independent,

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83. Jingmen shi bowuguan, *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 129–31, 167–68, and 149–51.

84. For example, of the twenty-three *Shi* quotations in the "Zi yi" manuscript, nine come from the *xiao ya*, nine from the *da ya*, two from the "Cao feng" 曹風 song "Shi jiu" 鳲鳩 (Mao 152), two from the "Zhou nan" 周南 section, and one from a song not included in the received text. This quotation pattern matches those in other *Li ji* chap-ters like "Zhong yong" 中庸 and "Da xue" 大學: the "Zhong yong" quotes twice from the *xiao ya*, eight times from the *da ya*, three times from the *Zhou song* 周頌, once from the *Shang song* 商頌, once from the *guo feng*, and once from a text that cannot be identified with certainty. The "Da xue" quotes four times from the *xiao ya*, three times from the *da ya*, once from the *Zhou song*, once from the *Shang song*, and three times from the *guo feng*.

and only slowly growing number of written copies.[85] With respect to the most prestigious collections of the *Shi* or the *Shu*, it should also be noted that to date, manuscripts of them have not been found in pre-imperial tombs. Where parts of these collections appear, as in the Guodian texts, only snippets are quoted as authoritative sayings in support of the embedding argument, just as they surface in transmitted texts as well as in *Zuo zhuan* diplomatic speeches, reflecting the practice known as *duan zhang qu yi* 斷章取義 ("breaking off [from its original context] an [isolated] paragraph to extract meaning").[86] Especially the latter practice of *ad hoc* recitation shows that to quote the *Shi*, one did not need a copy at hand; most likely, one did not even have to own one.

We may assume that over the centuries of the Eastern Zhou, early texts like those of the *Shi* and the *Shu* became gradually dissociated from their original ritual contexts until they finally were received not only in written form but also as isolated writings in their own right. Through such a long-term cultural process that froze a body of venerated songs and speeches in an increasingly archaic idiom, and at the same time removed them from their original contexts, the earlier "natural" intelligibility of these texts must have diminished dramatically. A literate society determined to maintain such writings as carriers of its cultural memory would at some point necessarily begin to generate an exegetical body of new writings that could bridge the distance between the earlier texts and their later readers. This, of course, is what happened in early imperial times when commentators like Mao or Zheng Xuan attempted to re-historicize and re-contextualize every single one of the 305 songs. At the time of the Guodian tomb, however, we do not have any evidence for such a process. In their straightforward appearance, the *Shi* quotations in the "Zi yi" and "Wu xing" manuscripts may well reflect the currency of an oral repertoire from which one could draw for both speeches and writings. In sum, the Guodian manuscripts do not furnish convincing evidence to propose the primacy of the *Shi* as written texts over their oral transmission and performance for the late fourth century B.C.

How, then, shall we imagine the role of texts like the *Shi* and the *Shu* in earlier centuries during which they had gradually assumed their high prestige as embodiment of cultural memory? How was this memory

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85. For a study of the *Shi* quotations in Warring States and early Han manuscripts, see my "The *Shi* in Excavated Manuscripts," a paper delivered at the conference "Text and Ritual in Early China," Princeton University, October 2000, and forthcoming in the conference volume of the same title.

86. For *duan zhang qu yi*, referring to the practice of taking isolated *Shi* lines out of their original context and quoting them according to one's own needs, see *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 38.298a (Xiang 襄 28).

kept alive and intelligible in pre-commentarial times? What was the locale in which the individual could participate in the society's cultural memory, could internalize it, and could carry it on? A probable answer is: through physical participation in ritual performances of various kinds. This suggestion refers not to a specifically Chinese phenomenon; it is the rule for all early cultures defined by ritual coherence, and it lies at the heart of modern theories on "myth and ritual." Assmann's notion of the cultural memory represents a significant move beyond these theories by clarifying what "myth" actually is: a past transformed into normative and formative memory. Not just "myth" (falsely opposed to "history") [87] is constructed and perpetuated in ritual but the memory of the past, and ultimately "the past" itself—precisely: those parts of the past that answer the question "What do we want to remember as the foundation of our future?" The highly formalized nature of both the *Shi* songs and the *Shu* speeches reflects not an early Chinese accident but the very norm of traditional cultural transmission. As Assmann observes:

> It can be taken as general knowledge that poetic formation serves primarily the mnemotechnical purpose of putting identity-securing knowledge into a durable form. We are by now equally familiar with the fact that this knowledge is usually performed in the form of a multi-media staging which embeds the linguistic text undetachably in voice, body, miming, gesture, dance, rhythm, and ritual act. . . . By the regularity of their recurrence, feasts and rites grant the imparting and transmission of identity-securing knowledge and hence the reproduction of cultural identity. Ritual repetition secures the coherence of the group in space and time.[88]

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87. As Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 75, has noted, the "fiction" (myth) / "reality" (history) antagonism "has been up for discharge for quite some time." Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 126, has made the same point: "We are no longer compelled . . . to believe—as historians in the post-Romantic period had to believe— that fiction is the antithesis of fact (in the way that superstition or magic is the antithesis of science) or that we can relate facts to one another without the aid of some enabling and generically fictional matrix." For the relevant discussion that substantiates this claim, see White, *Tropics of Discourse*, esp. 51–134; White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), esp. 1–57, 142–84; and White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

88. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 56–57; see also 143–44. Another excellent study that develops the same point is Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

This explains the structural unity and interplay of text and ritual according to Tambiah's criteria of formality, stereotypy, condensation, and redundancy. The mythical dimension of the *Shi* appears particularly strong in those hymns that celebrate the cultural origins of the Zhou dynasty. Read together as a sequence, a group of five *da ya* hymns celebrates an idealized Zhou history from its remote beginnings of the first ancestor Lord Millet (Hou Ji 后稷) down to the Shang conquest, constituting a text "to establish for the Chou an eternal *nomos* and *ethos* of the society by recording the traces of its founders."[89] This mythical account of Zhou origins is commemorative but not a prosaic story; it is a cycle of poetry, that is, it eulogizes Zhou rulership in an aesthetically intensified mode of speech. I believe that the poetic form of the five hymns—and similarly in the case of the dance suite *da wu* (Great Martiality) mentioned at the beginning of this study—is of utmost importance since it helps to transform a mythical story to be told into a sequence of mythical events to be celebrated in a performance of music, song, and dance. In order to become ritually enacted, the mythical stories of the cultural memory require the sublime beauty of poetic form, as in turn the evidence of such form suggests that these texts were not read as plain narratives. While earlier discussions of the five mythical *da ya* hymns have focused on restoring their presumed original order and on explaining their sequential contents, a careful linguistic analysis would allow us to trace some of their performative aspects, thus helping to recognize the songs as solemn expressions of commemoration, created to be performed in a ritual setting. This is precisely the purpose of my analysis of "Chu ci" below.

The cycle of the five *da ya* hymns demonstrates another element of the cultural memory: the "alliance of sovereignty and remembrance" in which sovereignty "legitimates itself retrospectively and eternalizes itself prospectively" because "sovereignty needs origin" (Herrschaft braucht Herkunft).[90] As Edward L. Shaughnessy has informed us, not

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89. Wang, *From Ritual to Allegory*, 75. These pieces are numbered 236 ("Da ming" 大明), 237 ("Mian" 緜), 241 ("Huang yi" 皇矣), 245 ("Sheng min" 生民), and 250 ("Gong Liu" 公劉) in the order of the *Mao shi*. Wang, aiming to reconstruct what he calls the *Weniad* (the epic of King Wen 文 of Zhou [r. 1099/56–1050 B.C.]), proposes that their logical order should be 245, 250, 237, 241, and 236 (see *From Ritual to Allegory*, 74). A similar logic is applied by those who have, as mentioned at the beginning of the present study, attempted to reconstruct the *da wu* suite. These re-orderings of texts which are not placed together in the received *Shi jing* text reveal an interesting assumption on the side of the modern scholars: if their well-reasoned rearrangement of the hymns should indeed restore "the original order" it would mean that the compiler(s) of the Mao version had missed the original coherence and significance of these hymns.

90. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 71.

one of the more than fifty Western Zhou bronze inscriptions referring to warfare "commemorates a defeat."[91] This observation is striking: sovereignty does not commemorate a defeat as such—unless it is transformed into something very different. In the alliance of sovereignty and remembrance, defeat is systematically forgotten.[92] The creation of memory in the ritual performances of early China, as set forth in both hymns and bronze inscriptions is therefore obviously related to the issue of authoritative control over history in both the retrospective and prospective sense.[93]

Let me now turn to a reconsideration of how a song like "Chu ci" embodies a rich descriptive and/or prescriptive account of the ritual act. In "Chu ci," this account is framed by two temporal references: the first, in line three, to the past ("Since times of old, what have [we] done?"); the second, in the closing couplet, to the future ("Sons and sons, grandsons and grandsons, / let them not fail to continue these [sacrifices]!"). Zhou ritual hymns were composed not for a singular occasion; very much like religious songs in other traditions, they represent part of an accumulating repertoire that is repeated as long as its particular contents is able to speak to the respective age—that is, as long as the group continues to cherish the inherited cultural memory. The modern observation that the accounts in later ritual handbooks, especially the Yi li, are probably based on "Chu ci" provides one basis for speculation that the descriptions furnished in the hymn were indeed regarded as a normative account, prescribing how the ideal sacrificial act should occur. Taken together with the "Minor preface," which interprets these descriptions as commemorative of the golden past when agricultural and sacrificial activities were still in perfect order, the hymn both bespeaks an attitude of deficiency vis-à-vis the superior times of old[94] and provides, in a prescriptive sense, the ultimate model for future ritual practice. Commemoration and prescription, the retrospective and the prospective gesture, are two complementary aspects of one and the same mental activity:

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91. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, 176–77.

92. This, again, is typical. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 71–72, 83–86, does not forget to mention the "alliance of sovereignty and oblivion" and the terror of dictatorship trying to eliminate memory; under the latter circumstances, memory turns into an instrument no longer of control but of resistance.

93. Based on the above discussion on material ornament and the pragmatic aspects of ritual language, I understand the inscriptions also as ritual performance texts. Even if we may be unable to prove that the contents of the inscriptions were recited during the ceremony, they still show all the paradigmatic characteristics outlined above.

94. On this aspect of the cultural memory, see Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 79–80.

the remembered model turns into the blueprint for the future. Ritual coherence depends on repetition and the tight control of variation; without repetition or at least close imitation, the transmission of rites collapses and with it the cultural memory. This fear of collapse is expressed over and over again by Eastern Zhou and early imperial writers when referring to the times of the decline of the Western Zhou:

> When the traces of the kings were extinguished, the [royal ritual] songs vanished.[95]

And:

> In the past, after Kings Cheng 成 and Kang 康 (r. 1005/3–978 B.C.) had passed away, the melodies of the *ya* had ceased; after the royal blessings had been exhausted, the *Shi* had no longer flourished.[96]

As we know from the archaeological record as well as from early imperial historiographical sources, ritual practice collapsed again during the Warring States, probably due to the deterioration of the old aristocratic order and the rise of new forms of cosmological speculation.[97] Against this background of cultural loss, the meticulous ritual descriptions of "Chu ci" were seen not only to faithfully preserve the ideal of antiquity in times of decay, they furthermore offered the option of return by adopting the very model that is laid out in the hymn. This model, however abbreviated, contains what must not fall into oblivion: the order of culture, as embodied in the order of the sacrifice. Cast in the form of a ritual hymn, the highly formalized description of the ritual act is not only a self-referential element of the performance, it also—by virtue of its authenticity as an embodiment of exemplary speech and action— serves as the normative prescription for all such ritual acts to follow. As such, a text like "Chu ci" on the one hand transcends any single sacrifice by being the blueprint for all sacrifices; and on the other hand, this blueprint becomes reality, again and again, only through the actual use of the hymn within the singular sacrificial act of ceremonial communication.

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95. *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 (*Shisan jing zhushu* ed.), 8A.63c. *Shi* 詩 here may be taken as a generic category, referring to the royal ritual hymns, rather than specifically to those hymns that are preserved in the *Shi jing*.

96. Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), in the preface to his "Liang du fu" 兩都賦 (Rhapsody on the two capitals); see (*Liu chen zhu* 六臣注) *Wen xuan* 文選 (*Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 ed.), 1.1b. Kings Cheng and Kang are eulogized together in "Zhi jing" 執競 (Mao 274); see *Mao shi zhengyi*, 19/2.321c.

97. See Henri Maspero, "Le Ming-t'ang et la crise religieuse avant les Han," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 9 (1951), 1–171.

Translation of "Chu ci"

"Chu ci" comprises seventy-two tetrasyllabic lines that are convention-ally divided into six stanzas of equal length. This division is to a certain degree supported by the rhyme changes: every new stanza except the fifth begins with a new rhyme, though there are additional rhyme changes within stanzas four, five, and six.[98] In the following represen-tation of the text, I indicate the rhymes by noting their respective rhyme categories in Old Chinese reconstruction in square brackets. Based on changes in rhyme, the tentatively reconstructed "voice" is indicated in small print above the lines that have the same rhyme. This arrange-ment reflects my basic hypothesis that changes of rhyme indicate actual shifts of voices in the ritual communication among the participants, or shifts in the direction or perspective of speech; the invocator, for example, can address either the offering descendant (the host proper of the sacrifice) or the impersonator(s) of the spirits. The formal analysis of the text that follows the translation focuses on these structures in conjunction with two other features pertinent to the reconstruction of "Chu ci" as a performance text: personal pronouns and the designations of the participants mentioned. Both types of words are emphasized by the use of italics in the translation. My translation draws on the early commentaries (Mao, Zheng Xuan, Kong Yingda), Qing philological scholarship, and Karlgren's glosses.[99] However, my reconstruction of the hymn as a sequence not only of ritual description but also of different speeches goes beyond traditional scholarship. My aim is to reconstruct the actual performance and the exchange of speeches within it. Although transcending the early commentaries by applying a linguistic method-

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98. In general, I follow the rhymes as identified in Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*, Appendix B, 584–743 (for "Chu ci" see 679–81), and note the few but signif-icant cases where I deviate from his order.

99. In addition to the *Shisan jing zhushu* edition, I use the following major works of Qing philological scholarship: Yao Jiheng, *Shi jing tonglun*, 11.229–31; Ma Ruichen 馬 瑞辰 (1782–1835), *Mao shi zhuan jian tongshi* 毛詩傳箋通釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), 21.698–708; Chen Huan 陳奐 (1786–1863), *Shi Mao shi zhuan shu* 詩毛氏傳疏 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1984), 20.26a–32b; Fang Yurun, *Shi jing yuanshi*, 11.430–433; and Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1917), *Shi sanjia yi jishu* 詩三家義集疏 (Beijing: Zhong-hua, 1987), 18.749–55. In addition to the Qing sources, I have consulted the most important Song commentary, Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) *Shi ji zhuan* 詩集傳 (*Sibu congkan* ed.), 13.6b–11a. Useful commentaries may also be conveniently found in Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shi jing quanshi* 詩經詮釋 (Taipei: Lianjing, 1984 [*Qu Wanli xiansheng quanji* 屈萬里先生全集 5]), 403–6; or in Gao Heng 高亨, *Shi jing jin zhu* 詩經今注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1987), 321–25. For Karlgren, see his "Glosses on the Siao Ya Odes," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 16 (1944), 132–38.

ology together with principles of ritual theory, my approach is highly
traditional, intended to complement rather than to call into question
the early commentators' untiring attempts to identify every piece of
information as narrowly referring to the details of the ritual performance.
Typically, the commentators quote extensively from the ritual canons
to clarify not only words but performative situations; what is semanti-
cally polyvalent in the song often appears precise and concrete in these
compendia. But as noted above, a text like "Chu ci" preceded the ritual
canons, the *San li* 三禮, and most likely in many details served as their
blueprint; and it is entirely possible that the strictly technical usages
and definitions of otherwise broader terms in the ritual canons were a
direct attempt to arrest the multiplicity of meanings in a text like "Chu
ci," which had come, together with other *Shi jing* songs, to serve as a
touchstone for the orthodox ritual tradition.[100] Even though one may
be tempted to question the validity of early scholarship that uses the
canons as seemingly independent references, the Han and Tang com-
mentaries still represent our earliest interpretations of and elaborations
on the condensed poetic accounts of the *Shi jing*. It would be exceed-
ingly difficult to approach a text like "Chu ci" without reference to both
the ritual canons and the early commentaries, which even if they cannot
be accepted as wholly independent sources remain invaluable witnesses
to the ritual tradition embedded in a piece like "Chu ci." In terms of the
hermeneutic tradition attached to the *Shi jing*, I would argue that the
ritual canons represent primary exegetical texts, and that Mao and
Zheng Xuan can already be regarded as a subcommentary to this ritual
exegesis. To justify this sympathetic approach to Mao, Zheng Xuan, and
the *San li*, and to corroborate their implicit hypothesis that "Chu ci"
represents a performance in a highly concrete sense, the linguistic evi-
dence—in particular regarding rhymes—is crucial. For methodological
and conceptual reasons, such evidence was not available to the early
commentarial tradition and therefore constitutes one type of indepen-
dent data. At present, we have no indication that a Han or Tang scholar
would have been able to reconstruct Zhou Chinese rhyme categories.
Moreover, I believe that William H. Baxter's refinement of these rhyme
categories, obtained from a purely technical and statistical analysis, is
substantiated by the correspondence between the rhyme data and a
reading of "Chu ci" along the lines of the performance hypothesis.

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100. I am most grateful to Donald Harper for alerting me to this issue as a crucial
problem in reading "Chu ci."

Thorny Caltrop ("Chu ci" 楚茨)

Stanza 1[101]

> Invocator addressing the impersonator on behalf of the descendant
>
> 楚楚者茨   "Thorny, thorny is the caltrop—[102]

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101. Beginning in Stanza 1, the recurrent first-person pronoun *wo* refers to the "host" (*zhuren* 主人) or principal descendant in charge of the offerings, and, by extension, to the ritual community he is representing. Zheng Xuan comments on the present stanza that "the invocator (*zhu* 祝) uses the host's phrases to urge him/them (i.e., the impersonator[s] of the spirit[s]), to assist the offering son (*xiao zi* 孝子) to receive great blessings." (On *xiao* as "offering" see below.) Kong Yingda accepts the reading, noting that "all the words of the host and the impersonator(s) are transmitted by the invocator" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.200a). This commentary is supported by the functional descriptions of the Great Invocator (*da zhu* 大祝) and the Minor Invocator (*xiao zhu* 小祝) in the *Zhou li*, according to which the impersonator (*shi* 尸) is ushered into the temple and seated at his position by these officials, and not by the host himself; see Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848–1908), *Zhou li zhengyi* 周禮正義 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1987), 49.2021–23 ("Da zhu" 大祝), 50.2034–35 ("Xiao zhu" 小祝). See also, *Yi li zhushu* 儀禮注疏 (*Shisan jing zhushu* ed.), 45.239c–240a ("Te sheng kui shi li" 特牲饋食禮), 48.257b ("Shao lao kui shi li" 少牢饋食禮); and *Li ji zhengyi*, 26.229c ("Jiao te sheng" 郊特牲). Chen Huan, *Shi Mao shi zhuan shu*, 20.26b, believes that the final lines of the stanza are the words from the spirits, as presented to the host by the invocator; I do not follow this interpretation but read the passage as a prayer directed towards the spirits, which is then matched by their answer at the end of the following stanza. It is important to recognize the tally-like match between prayer and answer as a structural feature of *guci* wording: it precludes any doubts about the efficacy of the descendant's efforts (see Xu Zhongshu, "Jinwen guci shili," 9).

102. *Ci* 茨 "caltrop" is Tribulus terrestris, L.; see Bernard E. Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants from the Pen Ts'ao Kang Mu A.D. 1596: 3rd Edition of a Botanical, Chemical and Pharmacological Reference List* (repr. Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1982), no. 364. *Chu chu* 楚楚 "thorny, thorny" is problematic; my translation follows the Mao commentary. Karlgren, "Glosses on the Kuo Feng Odes," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 14 (1942), 228 (no. 360), has argued against this reading on the basis of the only parallel case of *chu chu* in the *Shi* in "Fu you" 蜉蝣 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 7/3.116b [Mao 150]): *yi shang chu chu* 衣裳楚楚. There Mao glosses *chu chu* as "the appearance of freshness and brightness" (*xian ming mao* 鮮明貌). The issue of Chinese reduplicatives , and also the practice of translating them into repetitions of English words, requires some basic considerations. Reduplicatives (*chongdie* 重疊)—a linguistic device very common to both Eastern Zhou inscriptions and *Shi jing* songs—are a peculiar phenomenon primarily of poetically structured texts. For the *Shi jing*, see Zhou Fagao 周法高, *Zhongguo gudai yufa: gouci bian* 中國古代語法: 構詞編 (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1962), esp. 114–28, 154–60; and Zhou, "Reduplicatives in the Book of Odes," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 34 (1962/63), 661–98. For the *Chu ci* 楚辭, see Martha Wangliwen Gallagher, "A Study of Reduplicatives in the 'Chu Ci'" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993). In bronze bell inscriptions, reduplicatives are usually employed as onomatopoeia to convey the sound of the bells on the linguistic level; the same function as words expressing sounds

1.2　言抽其棘　so [we] remove its prickles.[103] [-ək]
　　　自昔何爲　Since times of old, what have [we] done?[104]
1.4　我藝黍稷　*We* plant the paniceled millet, the glutinous
　　　　　　　　　millet:[105] [-ək]

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can be identified in a number of *Shi jing* songs. George A. Kennedy has argued that reduplicatives are not constructed by duplicating a common word but that they are primary forms themselves, usually based on a rather rare or particular word; see his "A Note on Ode 220," in *Studia Serica Bernhard Karlgren Dedicata. Sinological Studies Dedicated to Bernhard Karlgren on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Søren Egerod and Else Glahn (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1959), 190–98. Kennedy's observation explains some of the trouble in glossing or translating these terms. Like rhyming or alliterative binomes in early Chinese literature, reduplicatives do not have a fixed meaning that they bring to the text; instead, they assume their meaning according to the specific context (see also the discussions in David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 2 [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987], 3–12; and my *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer*, 194). From this perspective, Karlgren's argument (which he tries to corroborate by references to the single use of *chu* elsewhere in the *Shi*) seems to lose much of its strength. Even if some reduplicatives appear to convey the meaning of the word that is written by the single character, I remain inclined to see the vast majority of them operating primarily on the aesthetical level of the text, especially as sounds. Knechtges (quoted above) has shown that graphic interpretations of reduplicatives can be very problematic. Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (179–117 B.C.) *fu* 賦—for some of which we are fortunate to have different versions—provide compelling evidence that (a) the writing of such words was not yet fixed in Western Han times and (b) they were conceived essentially as sounds in texts that were recited (i.e., performed); see Kamatani Takeshi 釜谷武志, "Fu ni nankai na ji ga ōi no wa naze ka: Zen-Kan ni okeru fu no yomarekata" 賦に難解な字が多いのはなぜか：前漢における賦の讀まれかた, *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 日本中國學會報 48 (1996), 16–30. This performative dimension leads me to translate the reduplicates into repetitions of English words although the representation of sound operates along different principles in the two languages. As such, my translations are hybrid: trying to catch both the meaning derived from the context and the very pattern of repeated sound (Knechtges, in his *Wen xuan* translation, has chosen a similar approach to rhyming and alliterative binomes). Sacrificing the latter dimension would be a high price to pay for a more "natural" reading.

103. Here, *yan* 言, which I translate as "so" in this line, functions like the conjunction *nai* 乃 "then"; see Pei Xuehai 裴學海, *Gu shu xuci jishi* 古書虛字集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), vol. 1, 434–35.

104. In accordance with the "Minor preface" to this hymn, Zheng Xuan understands this line as referring to the ancient kings; the recurrent first-person pronoun *wo* 我, beginning with line four, does not seem to support this reading.

105. For *ji* 稷 "paniceled millet" (Panicum miliaceum, L.) and *shu* 黍 "glutinous millet" (P. miliaceum, L. var. glutinosa, Bretsch.), see Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, nos. 751, 752. Complementing the sacrificial meat, the two species of millet are used for the principal offerings (including the alcoholic beverages) in Zhou ancestral rites; see, e.g., the sacrificial hymns "Xin nan shan," "Fu tian," and "Da tian" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.203a; 14/1.205b, 206b, 207c, 209b), as well as the sacrificial chapters of the *Yi li*, "Shao lao kui shi li" and "Te sheng kui shi li" (see *Yi li zhushu*, 45.239c–240c; 48.256c–257a, 257c, 259c).

我黍與與　　*our* panicled millet is abundant, abundant,

1.6　我稷翼翼　　*our* glutinous millet is orderly, orderly. [-ək]

我倉既盈　　*Our* granaries being full,

1.8　我庾維億　　*our* sheaves are in hundreds of thousands.[106] [-ək]

以爲酒食　　With them, [we] make ale and food: [-ək]

1.10　以享以祀　　to offer, to sacrifice, [-ək]

以妥以侑　　to assuage, to provision,[107] [-ək]

1.12　以介景福　　to pray for radiant blessings!"[108] [-ək]

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106. Mao glosses *yi* 億 as *wan wan* 萬萬 "one hundred million"; Zheng Xuan, whom I follow here, gives *shi wan* 十萬 "hundred-thousand"; either number represents fullness in an innumerable measure; see Wang Xianqian, *Shi san jia yi jishu*, 18.750, Ma Ruichen, *Mao shi zhuan jian tongshi*, 21.700–701.

107. Mao glosses *tuo* 妥 "to assuage" as *an zuo* 安坐 "to seat at ease," and *you* 侑 "to provision" as *quan* 勸 "to urge." Elaborating on these very concrete glosses of otherwise more general terms, Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda see the addressees of these actitvities as the ancestors and their impersonators who are led "to take places at their spirit positions" (*shi chu shen zuo* 使處神坐)—a reading that is supported by descriptions in several of the *San li* (see the passages mentioned in the introductory note to this stanza, n. 101).

108. *Jie* 介, often glossed as *da* 大 "great," is used as a verb here and could be understood as "to increase"; Zheng Xuan glosses the term here as *zhu* 助 "to assist." However, as Xu Zhongshu, "Jinwen guci shili," 6, has shown, *jie* is interchangeable (and almost homophonous) with *gai* 匄/丐/匃 "to pray"; both words are common in texts directed to the ancestral spirits. A parallel for *jie* in the meaning "to pray" (and again glossed as *zhu* by Zheng Xuan) may be found in the sacrificial hymn "Fu tian" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 14/1.206b [Mao 211]): 琴瑟擊鼓 / 以御田祖 / 以祈甘雨 / 以介我稷黍 / 以穀我士女 ("[We] play the zithers, strike the drums, / to invoke the Father of husbandry, / to beg for sweet rain; / to pray for our glutinous millet and panicled millet, / to request abundance for our men and women"). Zheng Xuan glosses *jing* 景 as *da* 大 but I am inclined to maintain the light metaphor implied in the primary meaning of the term. In Zhou ritual language, metaphors of light are most commonly associated with the ancestors and their blessings; for a discussion of epigraphic examples, see Constance A. Cook, "Auspicious Metals and Southern Spirits: An Analysis of the Chu Bronze Inscriptions" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1990), 218–37. According to the traditional commentaries, the whole stanza comprises three distinctive parts: an introduction ending with the rhetorical question of line three, an idealized account of the agricultural preparations for the sacrifice (ll. 4–8), and the ultimate purpose of these preparations (ll. 9–12). This semantic structure is enhanced by formal characteristics: all the lines of the middle part begin with the first-person pronoun *wo* 我, while all the lines of the final part begin with *yi* 以. In the middle part, lines five and six are syntactically identical, as are lines seven and eight. In the final part, lines ten and eleven are syntactically identical, and lines nine and twelve share a very similar structure with one another. The final portion is almost entirely composed of *gu ci* "auspicious words" formulae that also occur in other *Shi jing* hymns of the *ya* and *song* sections: line nine, *yi wei jiu shi* 以爲酒食 ("With them, [we] make ale and food") is again used in "Xin nan shan" 信南山 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.203a [Mao 210]). The final line, *yi jie jing fu* 以介景福 ("to pray for radiant blessings"), appears in four other

Stanza 2[109]

> Invocator addressing the descendant

	濟濟蹌蹌	"Dignified, dignified, processional, processional— [-ang]
2.2	絜爾牛羊	[you] purify *your* oxen and sheep, [-ang]
	以往烝嘗	proceeding to the winter sacrifice, the autumn sacrifice.[110] [-ang]
2.4	或剝或亨	Some flay, some boil, [-ang]
	或肆或將	some arrange, some present.[111] [-ang]

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hymns: "Da tian" 大田 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 14/1.209b [Mao 212]), "Han lu" 旱麓 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 16/3.248a [Mao 239]), "Hang wei" 行葦 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 17/2.267c [Mao 246]), and "Qian" 潜 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 19/3.327c [Mao 281]). In "Han lu," the formula appears at the end of stanza four, the only stanza (of altogether six stanzas) that deals directly with the sacrifice; in the three other hymns, "to pray for radiant blessings" is the very last line of the whole text. Moreover, in both "Han lu" and the *Zhou song* "Qian," the formula is preceded by *yi xiang yi si* 以享以祀 ("to offer, to sacrifice"), which is the formula of line ten in Stanza 1 of "Chu ci."

109. The perspective of speech in this stanza hinges mainly on the understanding of line two and lines ten to twelve. I follow Kong Yingda, who takes *jie* 絜 (= 潔) as a full verb, *er* 爾 as the personal pronoun "you," and "oxen and sheep" as the direct object of *jie*. See *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.200b: 乃鮮絜爾王者所祀之牛羊 ("[you] then purify the oxen and sheep that your king will sacrifice") where "you" refers to the dignitaries who are described in the preceding line. The translation of *er* as "you" necessarily transforms the text—probably the entire stanza—into a direct speech instead of a narrative description. Legge, *The She King*, 369, reads *er* as a modal auxiliary, rendering the preceding *jie* as "pure-like are," since with *er* "as the pronoun, the line is to me altogether out of connection." The speaker of the stanza, if it is a direct speech recapitulating the preparations for the sacrifice, seems to be a ritual official; since by the end of the stanza he utters "auspicious words" towards the descendant, he is most probably one of the invocators. (See also n. 101 above, quoting Kong Yingda that the words between the host and the impersonator[s] are always transmitted by the invocator.) I deviate from Kong Yingda's reading in assuming that "you" refers not to the dignitaries but to the host, i.e., the offering descendant mentioned in the congratulatory formula of line ten. Note that this line, "The offering descendant shall have benison," is parallel to a line in the hymn "Bi gong" 閟宮 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 20/2.347c [Mao 300]) where it is clearly addressed to the offering descendant (again according to the use of the pronoun *er* in the following lines).

110. *Zheng* 烝 "winter sacrifice" and *chang* 嘗 "autumn sacrifice" are standard technical terms of ancestral sacrifices, as identified by the commentators; see also, *Zhou li zhengyi*, 33.1330 ("Da zong bo" 大宗伯), and Zhang Hequan 張鶴泉, *Zhou dai jisi yanjiu* 周代祭祀研究 (Taipei: Wenjin, 1993), 148–53. The chronological inversion in the present line may be due to the need to fit the line into the sequence of *yang* 陽 (-ang) category rhymes.

111. The lines describing the preparations of the sacrificial meat represent the notion of order and division of labor that governs early Chinese ritualism, with every task

2.6 祝祭于祊 *The invocator* sacrifices inside the temple gate,[112]
[-ang]

祀事孔明 the sacrificial service is greatly shining.[113] [-ang]

2.8 先祖是皇 *The ancestor*, him [you] make to return,[114] [-ang]

神保是饗 *the divine protector*, him [you] feast.[115] [-ang]

———

being assigned to a particular specialist. According to the *Zhou li*, the *nei yong* 內饔 "palace chefs" are in charge of flaying and boiling at the ancestral sacrifices (*Zhou li zhengyi*, 8.274); the *peng ren* 亨人 "stove attendants" are in charge of cooking under the supervision of the *nei yong* (*Zhou li zhengyi*, 8.282).

112. According to Zheng Xuan, the spirits were thought to move around inside the gate of the ancestral temple; the offering descendant ordered the invocator to attract them by sacrificing to them near the gate.

113. Both this and the next line also occur in the hymn "Xin nan shan" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.203c [Mao 210]). In "Chu ci," Zheng Xuan glosses *ming* 明 "shining" as *bei* 備 "complete"; as in line twelve of Stanza 1, I prefer to maintain the light metaphor.

114. To bring out the dynamic nature of this line (see also the following line, as well as line ten of the Stanza 3), I translate *shi* 是 as strictly grammatical, i.e., as the resuming pronoun which refers back to the preposed object; see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar* (Vancouver: University of Bristish Columbia Press, 1996), 70. I reconstruct the subject as "you" (i.e., the offering descendant), who seems to be also the object of the congratulatory formula in line ten. The precise meaning of *xianzu* 先祖 "former ancestor(s)" is difficult to determine. It is not honorific in the sense of *huangzu* 皇祖 "august ancestor(s)" but can still be used both in narratives and also to address the ancestors directly; for the latter, see the hymn "Yun han" 雲漢 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 18/2.294b [Mao 258]). *Xianzu* seems to be a more generic term and interchangeable with *zukao* 祖考; neither term appears in the *Er ya* 爾雅 nomenclature of kin designations (see *Er ya zhushu*, 4.26b–27c). *Xianzu* may refer not to one specific ancestor but to the ancestors in general and could be taken both in the singular or in the plural. In the *Li ji*, *zukao* is in one instance defined as the first and highest of the seven ancestors to whom the Son of Heaven presents his sacrifices (*Li ji zhengyi*, 46.361a ["Ji fa" 祭法]), but the terminology used there is at odds with that of another *Li ji* passage (*Li ji zhengyi*, 12.107a ["Wang zhi" 王制]); see also Guo Songdao 郭嵩燾 (1818–1891), *Li ji zhiyi* 禮記質疑 (Changsha: Yuelu, 1992), 563–65. *Huang* 皇, glossed as *da* 大 "great" by Mao, has been read as *wang* 旺 by Zheng Xuan; *wang* needs to be read as a loan character for *wang* 往 "to return" (like *gui wang* 歸往); see Ma Ruichen, *Mao shi zhuan jian tongshi*, 21.702–3. Although Zheng's reading has been widely accepted, it has been rejected by Mou Ting 牟庭 (1759–1832), *Shi qie* 詩切 (Jinan: Qi Lu, 1983), vol. 3, 1567, and by Karlgren, "Glosses on the Kuo Feng Odes," 134 (no. 661).

115. The term *shenbao* 神保 "divine protector" has been a puzzling issue. Within the whole Confucian canon, the term appears only in the present hymn. While the earliest commentators, Mao and Zheng, take *bao* 保 as a verb meaning *an* 安 "peaceful," Zhu Xi, *Shi ji zhuan*, 13.8a, as well as more recently Wang Guowei 王國維, "Song Yuan xiqu kao" 宋元戲曲考 (in *Wang Guowei yishu* 王國維遺書 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1983], vol. 15), 2a–b, and Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書, *Guan zhui bian* 管錐編 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), vol. 1, 156–58, take *shenbao* as an honorific designation for the impersonator(s), *shi* 尸. Gao Heng, *Shi jing jin zhu*, 323, and Qu Wanli, *Shi jing*

2.10 孝孫有慶   *The offering descendant* shall have benison![116] [-ang]
      報以介福   [He will be] requited with great blessings—[117]
2.12 萬壽無疆   ten thousand years longevity without limit!"[118]
                 [-ang]

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quan shi, 404, take *shenbao* as referring to the spirits in general. (The most speculative interpretation has been offered by Mou Ting, *Shi qie*, vol. 3, 1567, who reads *bao* 保 as the feathered *bao* 葆 cover on the spirits' chariot.) All these assumptions lack concrete support from any early parallel passages (though Wang and Qian try to read *shenbao* as identical with *lingbao* 靈保, a term that appears in the *Chuci* 楚辭 anthology), and some of them (Zhu, Wang, Qian) clearly contradict the text as a whole. The most fruitful approach to the problem appears to be that by Kong Yingda (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.200c), who is followed by Yao Jiheng, *Shi jing tonglun*, 230, and Ma Ruichen, *Mao shi zhuan jian tongshi*, 21.703. According to these commentators, *shenbao* refers to the spirit(s) but in a particular way: while terms like *xianzu* 先祖 or *zukao* 祖考 denote the ancestors *as the deceased persons*, *shenbao* denotes their essence as ancestral spirit(s) in heaven. Following this interpretation (for which Ma furnishes textual support), I understand *shenbao* as the ancestral spirit(s) called down into the impersonator(s): the "divine protector(s)," as he or they appear in the text, would be the ancestral spirit(s) vis-à-vis the descendants. As for *xianzu* in the preceding line, I have no conclusive evidence whether *shenbao* should be taken in the singular or plural.

116. As noted above, this line occurs verbatim in the hymn "Bi gong" 閟宮. In pre-Confucian texts, there is no reason to translate *xiao sun* 孝孫 as "filial descendant"; instead, we have ample evidence that *xiao* 孝 means "to give offerings to one's ancestors" in early Zhou texts, and that the later transformation of the word to mean "filial piety" towards one's living parents represents a step from ritual practice to social ideology. For one recent assessment of the question, see Keith N. Knapp, "The *Ru* Reinterpretation of *Xiao*," *Early China* 20 (1995), 195–222. Knapp considers the possibility that *xiao* in early times also could refer to some concrete material support towards one's living parents, in contrast to the later notion of general filial piety. See also n. 131 to Stanza 4, line five, below.

117. Another possible reading would be "[The spirits] will requite [your] praying for blessings." However, in this line one may accept the common interpretation of *jie* as *da* "great," as it is given in the traditional commentaries.

118. Very similar to Stanzas 1 and 3, Stanza 2 closes with a typical *guci* formula. In Stanza 2, Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjia yi jishu*, 18.752, notes that the final three lines are "the words by which the invocator on behalf of the impersonator(s) conveys the blessings to the host" (Chen Huan, *Shi Mao shi zhuan shu*, 20.28a, is similar). I share this reading though I think the whole stanza is actually uttered by the invocator. As in Stanza 1, only the latter part and in particular the final couplet is highly formulaic in the sense that most of these lines can be found elsewhere in the *Shi jing*. The concluding couplet is identical with the final lines of "Xin nan shan" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.203c [Mao 210]) and "Fu tian" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 14/1.207c [Mao 211]). The final line of Stanza 2 appears again in "Qi yue" 七月 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 8/1.124b [Mao 154]), "Tian bao" 天保 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 9/3.144b [Mao 166]), and "Nan shan you tai" 南山有臺 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 10/1.151c [Mao 172]). Note that with the exception of "Qi yue," all verbatim parallels in the *Shi jing* to full lines of "Chu ci" are in the *ya* and *song* sections.

Stanza 3[119]

Invocator addressing the descendant

執爨踏踏   *"The furnace managers* are attentive, attentive,[120]
[-ak]

3.2   為俎孔碩   making the sacrificial stands grand and mag-
nificent:[121] [-ak]

或燔或炙   some [meat] is roasted, some is broiled.[122] [-ak]

3.4   君婦莫莫   *The noble wives* are solemn, solemn,[123] [-ak]

為豆孔庶   making the plates grand and numerous.[124] [-ak]

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119. There is no strong evidence to determine the speaker of Stanza 3. Since the concluding *guci* are almost identical with those of Stanza 2 and since Stanza 4 begins with a statement by the offering descendant, I assume that the speech of the present stanza—if it is a direct speech at all—is probably directed to the descendant as in Stanza 2. A key to the relation between Stanzas 2 and 3 may be found in the comparison of the ritual personnel mentioned. In both stanzas, the divine protector is necessary as the subject of the final "auspicious words," but with respect to all the other ritual participants, the two stanzas seem to represent distinctively different groups not of persons but of ritual roles: in Stanza 2, we meet the invocator, the ancestor, and the offering descendant; Stanza 3, by contrast, mentions the furnace managers, the noble wives, and the guests and visitors. Registering the communal efforts to perform the ancestral sacrifice, the two stanzas do not duplicate but complement each other, with Stanza 2 clearly representing the leading stratum of those involved in the spiritual exchange proper (including the spirits themselves; only the impersonator is missing) while Stanza 3 is confined to the lower auxiliary roles. As such, it is not unlikely that Stanza 3 may indeed continue the speech of Stanza 2; the redundancy in the almost identical words that close both stanzas can be seen as a typical element of rhythmic ritual litany.

120. The nominalizing reading of *zhi cuan* 執爨 as "furnace managers" follows Kong Yingda's commentary.

121. The line is exactly parallel to line five below. In both cases, *wei* 為 should be understood in the meaning "to prepare"; *kong* 孔, which I translate as "grand," referring to the offerings in the same way as *shuo* 碩 "magnificent" and *shu* 庶 "numerous", may also be taken as the modifying intensifier "very."

122. For the same line, see "Hang wei" 行葦 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 17/2.266b [Mao 246]).

123. According to several passages in the sacrificial chapters of the *Yi li*, the *zhufu* 主婦 "host's wife," leading the noble wives of other dignitaries as well as a group of female assistants, presents dishes of meat and millet (and later also drinks) during the ancestral sacrifice; see *Yi li zhushu*, 44.239b ("Te sheng kui shi li"), and 48.256c–257a ("Shao lao kui shi li"). On the role of the noble women to serve and to remove dishes during the sacrifice, see also *Zhou li zhengyi*, 14.554 ("Jiu pin" 九嬪), and *Li ji zhengyi*, 47.365a ("Ji yi" 祭義). In the entire Confucian canon, the term *junfu* 君婦 "noble wives" is used only in this hymn (again in Stanza 5).

124. Zheng Xuan glosses *shu* 庶 as *na* 脼 "fat meat" and explains that on the occasion of the sacrifice, the most delicious fat meat must be chosen both for the spirits and for the guests. In Zhu Xi's interpretation (*Shi ji zhuan*, 13.8b), *shu* is read as *duo* 多 "many": "preparing the sacrificial plates in great numbers." Both Ma Ruichen, *Mao shi zhuan jian tongshi*, 21.704, and Karlgren, "Glosses on the Siao Ya Odes," 134 (no.

3.6	爲賓爲客	With those who are *guests*, with those who are *visitors*,[125] [-ak]
	獻醻交錯	presentations and toasts are exchanged.[126] [-ak]
3.8	禮儀卒度	Rites and ceremony are perfectly to the rule, [-ak]
	笑語卒獲	laughter and talk are perfectly measured. [-ak]
3.10	神保是格	*The divine protector*, he is led to arrive, [-ak]
	報以介福	he will requite [you] with great blessings—
3.12	萬壽攸酢	ten thousand years longevity will be [your] reward!" [-ak]

Stanza 4[127]

Principal descendant

	我孔熯矣	*"We* are greatly reverential, [-an]
4.2	式禮莫愆	form and rites are without transgression." [-an]

Announcer (?)[128]

	工祝致告	*The officiating invocator* invokes the [spirits'] announcement,[129]

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663), argue explicitly against Zheng Xuan in favor of the common meaning "many, numerous." The modern commentators Qu Wanli, *Shi jing quanshi*, 405, and Gao Heng, *Shi jing jin zhu*, 323, also accept this reading.

125. The "guests" and "visitors" may be two different categories of participants, yet the commentators do not specify them. According to Mao's laconic note, the host "treats as guests" *bin* 賓 the impersonator(s) (*shi* 尸) and also the guests (*ke* 客): 賓尸及賓客. This, however, may not mean that Mao understands both to be included in this line of the hymn (that is, including the *shi* 尸 as *bin* 賓, as some later commentators have interpreted his note; see Huang Zhuo 黃焯, *Shi shu pingyi* 詩疏平議 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1985], 379).

126. For the complex ceremonial exchange of drinks between the host, the invocator, the impersonator(s), the host's wife, and the guests, see *Yi li zhushu*, 45.240c–247b ("Te sheng kui shi li"), and 48.258b–259b ("Shao lao kui shi li").

127. The multiple voices of Stanza 4 have already been noted by Zheng Xuan, who identifies the first two lines as the statement by the offering descendant and lines five through twelve as the "auspicious words" which the invocator, in response, invokes from the impersonator and delivers to the host. Zheng Xuan identifies the first-person pronoun *wo* 我 as referring to the offering descendant; as in Stanza 1, I take his voice to be speaking as a representative for the ritual community vis-à-vis the spirits. For the full argument on the structure of Stanzas 4 and 5 see the analysis following the translation.

128. One cannot determine the speaker of this purely narrative segment of two lines. It is entirely possible, however, that even this portion was spoken within the sacrificial act, probably by some minor official; yet note that the two lines are not rhymed (see the discussion in the analysis below).

129. Grammatically, the line may also be read "The officiating invocator delivers the [spirits'] announcement"; for *zhi* 致 "to cause to arrive," the direction of motion is not specified lexically and must be derived from the context. Since the announce-

4.4   徂賚孝孫   he goes and presents it to *the offering descendant*:[130]
         Invocator addressing the descendant on behalf of the spirits

         苾芬孝祀   "[You] have made fragrant and aromatic the
                     offering sacrifice,[131] [-ək]

---

ment is "presented" in the following line, I assume it is first "invoked." In the identical
line in Stanza 5 I translate *zhi*, again according to the context, as "to deliver." The
directional distinction is explicit only in the translation, not in the original. The reading
of *zhi* as "to invoke" is clear in Kong Yingda's commentary on the difference between
the two announcements (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 13/2.202a): "The invocator first [i.e., in Stanza
4] invokes the intention of the impersonator(s) to announce it to the host. Then in
turn [i.e., in Stanza 5] he invokes the intention of the host to make an announcement
to the impersonator(s)" (祝先致尸意告主人乃更致主人之意以告尸). See also n. 136
to Stanza 5, line four, below.

  130. The following lines are the "auspicious words" through which the spirits con-
firm their blessings; the perspective of speech is clear from (a) the introduction of
lines three and four, and (b) the use of the personal pronoun *er* 爾 in lines seven and
eleven. Kong Yingda, in a long note on this speech, has noted the close parallel between
Stanza 4 and a passage in the *Yi li*; see *Yi li zhushu*, 48.258c ("Shao lao kui shi li"), and
the translation of this passage below. However, Kong—following Mao and Zheng
Xuan—believes that "Chu ci" was performed at the royal Zhou court to commemo-
rate the ideal order of the past; he therefore concludes that the "auspicious words"
are abbreviated in this stanza, since at the royal court, they would have been longer
than those for the aristocrat in the *Yi li* account. Despite the early claim of the "Minor
preface," there is no evidence that "Chu ci" was indeed a royal hymn. It may very
well have been performed in the rituals of an Eastern Zhou aristrocrat; one therefore
does not need to follow those parts of his commentary where Kong tries to recon-
struct the present hymn as representing royal sacrificial rites, as opposed to the rites
of an aristocrat.

  131. As noted above (n. 116), *xiao* is not "filial" in the later Confucian sense of the
word but a technical term meaning "to offer" or "offering" in the ancestral sacrifice;
see also Huang Zhuo 黃焯, *Mao shi Zheng jian pingyi* 毛詩鄭箋平議 (Shanghai: Shang-
hai guji, 1985), 6.253, and Ma Ruichen, *Mao shi zhuan jian tongshi*, 21.706. The com-
pound *xiao si* 孝祀 is probably equivalent to *xiang si* 享祀 (as in line ten of Stanza 1:
以享以祀) and may be taken as "offering sacrifice"; see Chen Huan, *Shi Mao shi zhuan
shu*, 20.30b. The *Er ya* (*Er ya zhushu*, 2.11a) defines: 享, 孝也. Bronze inscriptions fre-
quently include the compound *xiaoxiang* 孝亯 (享); see *Jinwen gulin* 金文詁林, ed.
Zhou Fagao 周法高 et al. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1975), vol. 10,
5289–92. Even *Lun yu* 8.21 still employs *xiao* in this sense, juxtaposing "offering" to
"drinking and eating": "With Yu, I do not find fault. He was frugal in drinking and
eating but offered (*xiao*) to the utmost to the ghosts and spirits" (see *Lun yu zhushu*, 8.
32a–b). For studies on the pre-Confucian meaning and use of *xiao*, see Ikezawa Masaru
池澤優, "Chūgoku kodai no 'kō' shisō no shisōteki imi: 'kō' no shūkyōgaku, sono go,
" 中國古代の「孝」思想の思想的意味:「孝」の宗教學, その五, *Shakai bunka
shigaku* 社會文化史學 31 (1993), 12–26; Nomura Shigeo 野村茂夫, "Jukyōteki 'kō'
no seiritsu izen: *Shōsho* o tegakari toshite" 儒教的孝の成立以前: 尚書を手がかり
として, *Aichi kyōiku daigaku kenkyū hōkoku (jinbun, shakai)* 愛知教育大學研究報告
(人文, 社會) 23.1 (1974), 17–28; and Zha Changguo 查昌國, "Xi Zhou 'xiao' yi shi
tan" 西周孝義試探, *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 中國史研究 1993.2, 143–51.

4.6	神嗜飲食	*the spirits* enjoy the drink and food; [-ək]
	卜爾百福	[they] predict for *you* a hundred blessings. [-ək]
4.8	如幾如式	According to the [proper] quantities, according to the [proper] rules,[132] [-ək]
	既齊既稷	[you] have brought sacrificial grain, [you] have brought glutinous millet,[133] [-ək]
4.10	既匡既敕	[you] have put them in baskets, [you] have arranged them. [-ək]
	永錫爾極	Forever [the spirits] bestow on *you* the utmost, [-ək]
4.12	時萬時億	this ten-thousandfold, this hundred-thousandfold!" [-ək]

Stanza 5[134]

Principal descendant (?)

| | 禮儀既備 | "Rites and ceremony are completed,[135] [-ək] |
| 5.2 | 鐘鼓既戒 | bells and drums have given their warning." [-ək] |

Announcer (?)

| | 孝孫徂位 | *The offering descendant* goes to his place, |
| 5.4 | 工祝致告 | *the officiating invocator* delivers the announcement:[136] |

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132. It is difficult to decide whether line eight refers to the preceding line or to the following ones. I accept Karlgren's arguments (against Mao and others); see "Glosses on the Siao Ya Odes," 136 (no. 668).

133. Reading, with Karlgren, "Glosses on the Siao Ya Odes," 136–37 (no. 669), *qi* 齊 as *zi* 齋 "sacrificial grain." In the following line I again follow Karlgren, "Glosses on Siao Ya Odes," 137 (no. 670).

134. In the first four lines of Stanza 5, I reconstruct the two different perspectives as parallel to the preceding stanza. There is no other indication regarding the speaker of the first two lines; note, however, that lines three and four are again without rhyme.

135. This line occurs also in a speech delivered at a capping ceremony, as it is preserved in *Yi li zhushu*, 3.13c ("Shi guan li").

136. Zheng Xuan understands the following announcement as given to the impersonator. This reading is strongly suggested by the honorific term *huangshi* 皇尸 in line six; both Zheng and Kong Yingda read *huang* 皇 as equivalent to the honorific *jun* 君, which Kong identifies as a direct form of address. (See the discussion in the analysis below.) Kong adds that "the invocator thereupon invokes the intention of the offering son and announces to the impersonator(s) that the beneficial [rites] are completed" (於是致孝子之意告尸以利成也). Kong's commentary in *Yi li zhushu*, 46.246c ("Te sheng kuei shi li"), on the following passage which describes the particular ritual situation is also parallel: "The host leaves and takes his position outside southwest of the door. The invocator faces east and announces the completion of the beneficial [rites]. The impersonator rises, the invocator goes in front, and the host descends [the stairs]." For a parallel passage see also *Yi li zhushu*, 48.259c ("Shao lao kui shi li").

Invocator addressing the impersonator on behalf of the descendant

神具醉止　　*"The spirits* are all drunk—[137] [-ə]

5.6　皇尸載起　　*the august impersonator* may now rise!" [-ə]

Announcer (?)

鼓鐘送尸　　Drums and bells escort *the impersonator* away;

5.8　神保聿歸　　and so *the divine protector* returns back.[138] [-əj]

諸宰君婦　　*The many attendants* and *the noble wives*

5.10　廢徹不遲　　clear and remove [the dishes] without delay.[139]
　　　　　　　　　　　　[-əj]

諸父兄弟　　*The many fathers and the brothers*

5.12　備言燕私　　all together banquet among themselves.[140] [-əj]

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137. Zheng Xuan reads *ju* 具 (= *ju* 俱) as *jie* 皆 "all," which would refer to the whole group of spirits. Chen Huan, *Shi Mao shi zhuan shu*, 20.30b, relates this to the traditional notion that the king had the prerogative to sacrifice to seven ancestors; see, e.g., *Li ji zhengyi*, 12.107b ("Wang zhi" 王制), and 23.203c ("Li qi" 禮器). I take *zhi* 止 as the common particle of perfect aspect, equivalent to *yi* 矣; see Pei Xuehai, *Gu shu xuci jishi*, vol. 2, 778. In the invocator's announcement, *zhi* seems to emphasize that the spirits' desired state of appropriate intoxication has been accomplished; as a result, the impersonator(s), who had been dutifully drinking on the behalf of the spirits, could now leave (for the drinking of the impersonator[s], see *Li ji zhengyi*, 49. 377b ["Ji tong" 祭通]; Paper, *The Spirits are Drunk*, 113–14). According to Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*, 809, *zhi* 止 in many cases is part of the rhyme pattern, even as a final particle (though not in all of these instances). Ken-ichi Takashima, "The So-called 'Third'-Person Possessive Pronoun *Jue* 厥 (= 氒) in Classical Chinese," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.3 (1999), 418, has explicitly argued that in the *Shi jing*, "one does . . . find grammatical particles and deictic pronouns in the rhyme position; there are numerous examples of 矣 and 之 where this is evident."

138. The divine protector(s) (the ancestral spirit[s]), return(s) to heaven as the sacrifice is completed and the impersonator(s) is/are led out of the hall; see Kong Yingda's commentary.

139. The removal of the dishes is another fixed element in the process of an ancestral sacrifice. According to the *Zhou li* and *Yi li*, the invocator gives the order to remove the dishes once the sacrifice is finished; see *Zhou li zhengyi*, 49.2024 ("Da zhu" 大祝); *Yi li zhushu*, 46.246c, 247b ("Te sheng kui shi li"), 48.259c ("Shao lao kui shi li"). For the women and officials involved, see also *Zhou li zhengyi*, 7.251 ("Shan fu" 膳夫), 14.538 ("Nei wai chen" 內外臣), 14.554 ("Jiu pin" 九嬪), 35.1408 ("Da zong bo" 大宗伯), and 41.1692 ("Wai zong" 外宗).

140. In this line, I understand *yan* 言 as an adverbial marker, attached to *bei* 備 "complete, altogether"; see Pei Xuehai, *Gu shu xuci jishi*, vol. 1, 433. According to Zheng Xuan, the male participants of the same clan-name (*tongxing* 同姓) stay for the private banquet after the other guests have left.

Stanza 6[141]

    Announcer (?)

    樂具入奏   *The musicians* all come in to perform, [-ok]
6.2 以綏後祿   to secure the subsequent fortune.[142] [-ok]

    Invocator (?) addressing the descendant

    爾殽既將   "*Your* viands have been set forth,[143] [-ang]
6.4 莫怨具慶   without resentment, all are happy!" [-ang]

    Male clan members addressing the descendant

    既醉既飽   "[We] are drunk, [we] are satiated,[144] [-u]
6.6 小大稽首   *young and old*, [we] bow [our] heads. [-u]
    神嗜飲食   *The spirits* have enjoyed the drink and food,
6.8 使君壽考   they cause *you, the lord* to live long!"[145] [-u]

    Invocator addressing the descendant

    孔惠孔時   "Greatly compliant, greatly timely
6.10 維其盡之   is how you complete [the rites]!"[146] [-in]

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141. Stanza 6 implies a shift of location, from the main hall of the ancestral temple to the inner (repose) apartment (*qin* 寢), still within the temple complex, where the private banquet is held; see Kong Yingda's commentary here and also on "Qiao yan" 巧言 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 12/3.186b [Mao 198]). There is no conclusive evidence on the perspectives of the different speeches. The stanza contains four different rhymes and thus is much livelier than the preceding ones. The speech of lines three and four contains the personal pronoun *er*, which can refer to either the descendant or the spirits. The following speech in lines five through eight contains the direct and honorific address form *jun* 君 "lord." The final speech is partly parallel to a *guci* formula in the *Yi li* issued by the invocator; see *Yi li zhushu*, 46.247a–c ("Te sheng kui shi li"). Because of this parallel, I assume the voice of the invocator also in the closing lines of Stanza 6. Note that the invocator is present at the banquet, giving announcements and commands. Seen as a whole, the final stanza appears to comprise a sequence of "auspicious words" (*guci*, ultimately from the spirits) and "congratulatory words" (*qingci* 慶辭, offered by the relatives).

142. According to Kong Yingda, *hou lu* 後祿 "subsequent fortune" is the continuous fortune that will result from the successful sacrifice. In his "congratulatory words" (*qingci* 慶辭, the term used by Zheng Xuan in *Yi li zhushu*, 48.260a ["Shao lao kui shi li"]), the principal guest states: "May the host receive the blessings from the sacrifice. May he with extensive longevity protect and sustain his lineage house."

143. For the same line, addressed to the host during the feast that follows the sacrifice proper, see "Ji zui" 既醉 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 17/2.268a [Mao 247]).

144. For the same line which is, according to Zheng Xuan's commentary, also in the voice of the guests, see "Zhi jing" 執競 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 19/2.321c [Mao 274]).

145. According to Zheng Xuan, these are the "congratulatory words" (*qingci*) offered by the guests; cf. n. 142 above.

146. The translation takes Zheng Xuan's paraphrase (維君德能盡之) as its point of departure. I read *qi* 其 here in the function of a second-person possessive pronoun; literally, the line then reads: "is your completing the rites." Takashima, "The So-called

子子孫孫   *Sons and sons, grandsons and grandsons,*
6.12   勿替引之   let them not fail to continue these [rites]!"[147] [-in]

Analysis

Formal Coherence in the *Shi jing*

"Chu ci" exhibits a number of formal structures that distinguish the text aesthetically from any prose account of early Chinese ancestral rites. In the received tradition, the text has been structured in six stanzas of twelve lines each. In fact, the closing *guci* formulae at the end of Stanzas 1, 2, 3, and 4 strongly suggest that a regular division into stanzas (*zhang* 章) was original to the composition of the text. Rhymes are densely employed: fifty-six out of the seventy-two lines are rhyming. Other features of the aesthetic structure include the use of reduplicatives, repetitive syntactical patterns, and personal pronouns. None of these features is exclusive to the ritual hymns in the *Shi jing* in contrast to the *guo feng* 國風 (Airs of the states). Moreover, in the light of the early, usually ritual use of the *Shi*, as it is documented in the *Zuo zhuan*, formalized speech is a characteristic of the entire collection and it is inaccurate to distinguish the *ya* and *song* on the one hand,[148] and the *guo feng* on the other, on the basis of ritual versus non-ritual speech. Perhaps related to their use in diplomatic and other rituals, or to their function as a repertoire of knowledge and paradigms, the *guo feng* are also texts in a formalized language different from daily speech.

Thus, all of the songs of the *Shi* display conventional aesthetic structures that are not essential to the propositional meaning of the text. These structures do not convey plain information and so, in turn, must fulfill purposes that are not fulfilled by plain speech. In their linguistic appearance, even the *guo feng* are, to use the critical word here, ritualized speech; and in their use, they contributed to the ritualization of a situational context of religious and/or social significance. This is not to say that all

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'Third'-Person Possessive Pronoun *Jue*," 426–27, argues that *qi*, compared to *zhi* 之 or *jue* 厥, is more "distal" (as opposed to "proximal"). This seems to fit well a usage equivalent to an honorific like *jun* 君 (as Zheng Xuan reads it): honorific expressions, in their basic psychological function, are formal means to generate distance; see also the discussion in the analysis below. I am grateful to Ken-ichi Takashima (personal communication) for clarifying these issues in relation to the present line.

147. The final line is verbatim the closing formula of a *guci* passage in *Yi li zhushu*, 48.258c ("Shao lao kui shi li"), issued by the invocator.

148. Grouping the *ya* and *song* together has textual support since Eastern Zhou times when the formula *ya song* (Elegantiae and Eulogia) became a fixed expression. See, e.g., *Lun yu zhushu* 9.35a (*Lun yu* 9.15); Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1917), *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (*Zhuzi jicheng* 諸子集成 ed.), 14.252.

Shi songs were employed equally in the same kinds of rituals. Yet there is a clear connection between the efficacious elements of royal or aristocratic speech delivered towards the spirits and of speech in communal settings at a lower social level in all manner of social and religious rituals.[149] In addition, the notion of ritual language employed in this article is not specific to particular rituals, but rather is grounded in ideas developed mainly by linguists and anthropologists that incorporate interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives; it explains characteristics and functions of speech that operate through similar formal devices across very different contexts. It is therefore important to note that the *guo feng* do not differ from the *ya* and *song* in formal features like fixed metrical structures, densely employed rhymes, reduplicatives, onomatopoeia, and so on;[150] and further, that these elements, where they appear in the *guo feng*, cannot be attributed to an essentially "folk" nature of these songs, or to an oral mode of composition in an essentially illiterate environment. I would argue that what primarily distinguishes the *guo feng* from the *ya* and *song* is not so much poetic form but a different scope of themes, motives, and, as a result, vocabulary—which are very likely the elements that may have suffered least from early imperial editorship.[151] It is therefore possible to identify various linguistic features of the sacrificial hymn "Chu ci" as elements of ritual language, and to acknowledge the presence of some (though not all) of these features in the *guo feng*, without confusing the obviously very different situations of ritual speech.[152]

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149. At the same time, one can also imagine how the royal and aristocratic songs, as written texts, might have served as models in the writing of the *guo feng*. In any case, given the later Han redaction of the received text (see Baxter, "Zhou and Han Phonology in the Shijing"), one may have some doubts about attempts to identify the strata and date the different sections of the *Shi jing*; the divergences between even the most careful attempts are indicative of how inconclusive the evidence is. Compare, for example, Matsumoto, *Shikyō shohen no seiritsu ni kansuru kenkyū*, vol. 2, 471–638, with the conventional scheme given by Shih-hsiang Ch'en, "The *Shih-ching*: Its Generic Significance in Chinese Literary History and Poetics," 16, according to which the *Zhou song* were first, followed by the *ya* (together with the *Lu song* 魯頌 and *Shang song*), and finally by the *guo feng*.

150. Note that some of these—notably rhyme, stanza structure, and metrical regularity—are much less developed in the *Zhou song*, probably the oldest layer not only of sacrificial hymns but of the whole anthology. Wang Guowei has interpreted this lack of formalization as an expression of "melodic *sostenuto*" (*sheng huan* 聲緩); see *Guantang jilin*, 2.19a–20a.

151. On the vocabulary, see Dobson, *The Language of the Book of Songs*; and Xiang Xi 向熹, *Shi jing yuyan yanjiu* 詩經語言研究 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin, 1987), 228–44.

152. However, see below, "Syntactical Patterns of Ritual Speech," pp. 106–9, for discussion of one distinctive formal pattern of rhythmic speech that is indeed specific to the ritual hymns, compared to the *guo feng*; and thus serves to qualify any general "rule" of shared ritual speech across the *Shi*.

The Reconstruction of Voices and
Perspectives of Speech in "Chu ci"

The use of rhyme is a strong and continuous formal element in the
six stanzas of "Chu ci." My hypothesis that rhyme changes within a
given stanza indicate shifts of voices or perspectives is based on the
rhymes themselves as well as on their concurrence with the use of per-
sonal pronouns and formal designations of the ritual participants. In
no case do these elements, richly employed as they are, contradict each
other with respect to my basic hypothesis regarding voices or perspec-
tives. In some cases, my hypothesis provides what is in my judgement
the key to an intelligible reading; and the coherence of this reading
then provides strong support for imposing the same analysis on remain-
ing cases that otherwise might be read according to a different arrange-
ment of the text. The complexity of the rhymes and their coherence
with the use of other elements of formalized speech suggests that rhyme
is consciously employed to structure the text. However, because we
cannot determine the exact time when the *Shi jing* rhymes were unified,
it is uncertain whether rhyme constituted an original structuring device
at the time the hymn was composed. Some evidence suggests that the
rhyming patterns in the received *Shi jing* do not all belong to the initial
composition but were in many instances the result of later redactional
work, possibly on the basis of an earlier, less regular use of rhymes. The
fact that this later redaction may have postdated the original *Shi* by
centuries[153] bears directly on the role of rhyme in the reconstruction of

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153. See my argument in *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer*, 112–13, 161–68,
and *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, 126–29, that the *Shi jing* rhymes, even in
what we now recognize as their irregularities, are in perfect accord with the rhymes
of both the Qin imperial stele inscriptions and the seventeen hymns for the ancestral
sacrifices from the early Western Han reign of Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 202–195 B.C.).
Note that the irregularities between categories of rhymes (not individual words) prove
the living tradition here. I believe they exclude a mere imitation of the venerated
model: no one in Qin or Han times would have been able to conceptualize in abstract
categories the old rhyme system to the extent of even taking the deviations into
account. The coherence with the *Shi jing* gradually vanishes during Western and espe-
cially Eastern Han times, and this raises a problem: if during the relatively short time
of two hundred years of the Western Han, under the stabilizing conditions of a rela-
tively centralized state and its imperial court, phonological changes and regionaldiffer-
ences resulted in increasingly diverging rhyming practices, how can we assume that
the *Shi jing* rhymes remained perfectly constant from the tenth through the early
second century B.C., through eight long centuries of political and cultural diversity?
Also, although Zhou bronze inscriptions indicate that the validity of *Shi jing* rhyme
categories can be traced with some coherence as far back as the Western Zhou, it is
clear that rhyme in these inscriptions, even in the latter half of the Eastern Zhou, is
much less consistent and regular than in the received *Shi jing*. For the rhymes of the
bronze inscriptions, see Wolfgang Behr, "Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Ent-

"Chu ci" as a performance text. I would argue that it is not necessary to assume that the original voices or perspectives of speech had to have been marked by different rhymes since the ritual participants were, of course, able to recognize and differentiate the various voices they were actually listening to. Conceivably, the strict distribution of rhymes may have been enforced when the *Shi jing* was edited as a *written* canon of cultural memory—though at a moment when the living memory or at least vivid imagination of the actual ceremony had not yet vanished. It may have been the textual mode of commemoration that necessitated additional markers of speech and perspective, transforming ritual into textual practice. This question cannot and ultimately need not to be decided; it is equally plausible that the formal markers, including rhymes, were indeed part of the original text.

Each of the first three stanzas is unified by a single rhyme. There is no evidence that would indicate shifts of voices or perspectives of speech within these stanzas. Stanza 1 is the least problematic: I read the recurrent first-person pronoun *wo* as referring to the host—as the impersonator represents the ancestral spirits, the host represents his clan, the ritual community. According to the Zheng and Kong commentaries, this speech, addressed to the impersonator, is delivered by the invocator who serves as the intermediary between host and impersonator. This mediated communication structure between the clan and the spirits is itself a ritual device of control: the living and the dead remain carefully separated from each other. For the living, ritual form thus creates distance and probably also a certain security in dealing with the spirits.[154]

The recurrent use of the particle *yi* 以 in lines nine to twelve links the final part both syntactically and semantically to the preceding description. Having presented his careful preparations to his ancestors, the host's speech, in a "statement of purpose,"[155] finally turns into a prayer "to pray for radiant blessings!" This type of *guci* formula self-consciously enunciates the reciprocal relation between offerings presented to and

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stehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung" (Ph.D. diss., Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, 1996). Skeptical opinions about the actual age of the *Shi jing* rhymes have been advanced by Paul L.-M. Serruys, *The Chinese Dialects of Han Time According to Fang Yen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 21–22, 53–54; Noel Barnard, *The Chu Silk Manuscript: Translation and Commentary* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 213; and Galal LeRoy Walker, "Towards a Formal History of the Chuci" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1982), 412, *passim*.

154. One is immediately reminded of Confucius's statement according to which one should "venerate the spirits and keep them at a distance" (敬鬼神而遠之); see *Lun yu zhushu*, 6.23b (*Lun yu* 6.22).

155. I borrow this technical term from Falkenhausen's discussion of the structure of Zhou bronze inscriptions; see his "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 154.

blessings expected from the spirits. In Zhou bronze inscriptions, the statement of purpose and closing prayer, wherever they appear (routinely in the form "I have made this vessel / bell . . . to pray for . . ."), invariably constitute the final portion of the text. In Stanza 1, one can easily recognize, and maybe not as a mere coincidence, a tripartite past-present-future pattern that Falkenhausen has identified as the standard structure of Zhou bronze inscriptions:[156] the stanza begins with a gesture of commemoration, then praises the descendant's agricultural and ritual efforts, and from there legitimates his prayer for future blessings. The stanza, unified by the single rhyme, appears as a perfectly self-contained text, certainly uttered by a single voice.

The reconstruction of the invocator's voice addressing the host in Stanzas 2 and 3 is more tentative due to the almost complete lack of direct forms of address. Even if in Stanza 2 we agree on reading *er* 爾 as the personal pronoun "you," we cannot be sure that the speech is actually directed to the descendant; one could also assume that *er* addresses the spirits. In this case, Stanzas 2 and 3 would still appear as extensive reports about the correct sacrificial activities, but now directed to the spirits. Both stanzas, then, would close with a prayer, rather than with a promise. Although relatively rare (compared to *er* as referring to the descendant), there are examples of this usage among the sacrificial hymns in the *Shi jing*;[157] a hemerological manuscript from Chu tomb 56 at Jiudian 九店, Hubei, probably dating from the late fourth century B.C., also uses the pronoun *er* to address a spirit.[158] There is no conclusive evidence to decide the case of Stanzas 2 and 3 of the present hymn, despite Kong Yingda's commentary which takes *er* as referring to the king's dignitaries.[159] My decision to choose the perspective of the invocator addressing the descendant is based on the fact that (a) in the great majority of cases in the *Shi jing* hymns, *er* is clearly employed in this direction, and (b) line ten of Stanza 3 is identical with another line from the hymn "Bi gong" 閟宮; there, *er* is used in the subsequent line and unambiguously addresses the descendant.[160] However, the ambiguity

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156. See Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 152–56.

157. See the three *song* of the *Zhou song* 周頌 section: "Si wen" 思文 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 19/2.322a [Mao 275]), "Wu" 武 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 19/3.329c [Mao 285]), and "Zhuo" 酌 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 19/4.336b [Mao 293]).

158. See Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Jiangling Jiudian Dong Zhou mu* 江陵九店東周墓 (Beijing: Kexue, 1995), 508; and Donald Harper, "A Warring States Prayer for Men who Die by Weapons" (unpubl. manuscript), 3.

159. I am not aware of any commentary that understands *er* as referring to the spirits.

160. See n. 109 to Stanza 2 above.

of the text is less of a problem when we consider that although the invocator may address the descendant, the audience for this speech is not restricted to this one person. On the contrary, by publicly announcing and acknowledging the efforts and achievements of the descendant, his relatives, and his ritual officials, the invocator performs a declarative speech act by which the whole ritual community, including first and foremost the spirits, is informed that everything is indeed in proper order and perfect form. In this sense, the invocator speaks as much to the spirits as he speaks to their descendant, stating—and in fact constituting—the correctness of the ritual situation. Thus, this speech, if one may speculate further, is not uttered on behalf of the spirits, but emanates from the invocator himself as the presiding ritual authority. The spirits' response to the descendant is obtained only in the following stanza where it is explicitly separated from other speeches by an introductory couplet. The powerful ancestral spirits, we may further assume, did not randomly and redundantly speak at any moment of the ceremony; their solemn speech constitutes the climax of the successful sacrificial act.

In my reading, Stanzas 2 and 3 respond to Stanza 1, with the invocator praising the descendant's efforts, affirming that the spirits are well taken care of, and finally, in a typical *guci* formula, assuring the descendant of his anticipated blessings in response to the prayer of the first stanza. This type of dialogical structure is not uncommon in *Shi jing* hymns and has been proposed even for whole hymns that respond to other hymns.[161] If my hypothesis is valid that within a stanza, continuous rhyme marks a continuous voice, both Stanza 2 and Stanza 3 should each be consistent in their direction of speech.[162] In their narrative structure, acknowledging the various ritual participants each acting in his or her proper role, the stanzas represent an interlude between the actual prayer of Stanza 1 and the later answer by the spirits in Stanza 4.

With Stanza 4, the hymn turns into a much more vivid and clearly multivocal text; the increasing intensity and urgency of ritual action is

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161. See Zhu Xi, *Shi ji zhuan*, 9.13a, 17.9a, for "Tian bao" 天保 (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 9/3. 144a–c [Mao 166]) as responding to the preceding five hymns; and for "Hang Wei" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 17/2.266a–67c [Mao 246]) as responding to "Ji zui" (*Mao shi zhengyi*, 17/2.267c–69b [Mao 247]).

162. The change of rhyme between Stanzas 2 and 3 is probably irrelevant for the issue of voices and perspectives of speech since the individual stanzas, by means of their closing *guci* formulae, are clearly demarcated and relatively self-contained textual units. In my understanding, the issue of rhyme changes becomes significant only within a single stanza.

now reflected in rapid changes of voices and perspectives of speech. The first two lines, as recognized by Zheng Xuan, are again in the voice of the offering descendant, marked by his emphatic "we," and they are in their own distinct rhyme. The following two lines do not rhyme; I suspect that the absence of rhyme indicates a non-formalized narrative that introduces what follows. The absence of rhyme cannot be merely accidental since the hymn includes only two passages in which two succeeding lines lack rhyme, and these passages are clearly parallel in their structure and function: in both Stanza 4 and Stanza 5, they are lines three and four.[163] There is no concrete evidence to identify the voice of these brief narratives; we do not know whether the "announcer," as I call this anonymous *textual* voice, may actually have been a *ritual* voice—that is, a speaking role during the performance. The perspective of the following speech, however, is unambiguous: in addition to the information given in the two introductory lines, the following sequence, unified by a new rhyme on every single line, employs the personal pronoun *er* both in lines seven and eleven. The speaker is the invocator who announces to the descendant what has been obtained from the spirits through their medium, the impersonator. His words are the "auspicious words" proper, marking the climax of the sacrificial act. The *Yi li*, in one of the two sacrificial chapters that to some extent seem to be modelled on "Chu ci," contains a vivid description of this ritual step; the text begins in prose and ends with four tetrasyllabic rhyming lines:

以嘏于主人曰皇尸命工祝承致多福無疆于女孝孫來女孝孫使女
[The invocator] delivers the blessings (*gu* 嘏) to the host (*zhuren* 主人): "The august impersonator (*huangshi* 皇尸) has commanded the officiating invocator (*gongzhu* 工祝) to present and proffer multifold blessings without limit on you, the offering descendant (*xiaosun* 孝孫): Come, you, the offering descendant! [The spirits] let you

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163. I propose to simplify the rhyme scheme of the present stanza compared to Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*, 680. Baxter includes the "-un" final in the last word of line four (*sun* 孫) in a "combined rhyme" (*he yun* 和韻) with the "-an" finals of the rhyme words in lines one and two (*han* 漢, *qian* 愆). However, "combined rhymes" serve as a last resort only where the overall rhyme pattern requires inclusion of words that usually would not rhyme. By definition, "combined rhymes" are exceptions to and violations of the rule, and are proposed only out of sheer necessity. Yet Stanza 4—and in a curious parallel also Stanza 5—provides enough independent semantic and formal evidence to eliminate the necessity of the "combined rhyme" in line four, leaving lines three and four without any rhyme. Needless to say, removing a troublesome "combined rhyme" only corroborates the validity of Baxter's rigorous system.

受祿于天	receive the fortune from heaven [-in]
宜稼于田	and enjoy the grains from the fields! [-in]
眉壽萬年	Extended longevity for ten thousand years— [-in]
勿替引之	do not fail to continue these [sacrifices!]"[164] [-in]

In perfect accordance with this account, the invocator in Stanza 4 confirms the blessings from the spirits towards the descendant through the lines "[they] predict for you a hundred blessings" and "Forever [the spirits] bestow on you the utmost, this ten-thousandfold, this hundred-thousandfold." In both the hymn and the *Yi li* speech, a second-person pronoun (*er* 爾 in the hymn, *ru* 女 in the *Yi li*) is employed to address the descendant not only explicitly but with the sacrosanct force of a ritual speech act. The invocator is not just delivering a message: he declares himself to be acting under the command of the "august impersonator" (to use the *Yi li* designation), he formally calls upon the descendant, and he solemnly and authoritatively transmits the blessings from the spirits to the offering descendant with a rhythmic and rhymed speech. It may be more than mere coincidence that the personal pronoun *er* is used precisely in those lines (seven and eleven) through which the blessings are bestowed.

Following the climax of the spirits' bestowal of blessings, Stanza 5 presents the concluding gestures of the various participants. I reconstruct the voice of the first two rhymed lines as parallel to the corresponding lines of Stanza 4. As noted above, line one of Stanza 5 also occurs in the *Yi li*, in a speech that the host (*zhuren*) addresses to his son during the capping ceremony. I propose that this parallel, fragile as it may appear, nevertheless sheds light on the coherence of ritual speech and helps to determine the speaker of Stanza 5, line one: the use of a formula was not restricted to any particular type of ritual but could be applied at very different ceremonies. As can be demonstrated with respect to the ritual music, even after the proliferation of ritual forms in later imperial times, the ritual system was perceived, or idealized, as coherent in both diachronical and synchronical perspectives: diachronically through historical continuity; synchronically through tight correspondences between different rites, in particular with respect to the social status and ritual roles of the participants.[165] The "horizontal" permeability of forms

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164. *Yi li zhushu*, 48.258c ("Shao lao kui shi li"). The last line rhymes on the penultimate word.

165. For the early (however idealized) coherence of ritual music see *Zhou li zhengyi*, 43.1781 ("Da si yue" 大司樂) on the musical program of Zhou sacrifices and banquets: "At the great banquets, one does not lead in the sacrificial victim [and does not perform the corresponding music for this ritual step, "Zhao xia" 昭夏]. Everything else is like in the sacrifices." Again *Zhou li zhengyi*, 46.1892 ("Zhong shi" 鍾師): "At all sacrifices

between different rituals necessarily implies the "vertical" stability of the aristocratic social order that operates, and is reinforced, in all of these rituals. Ultimately, a capping ceremony, transforming the youth into an adult, is meaningful only as part of the same ritual and ideological system within which the deceased is transformed into an ancestor; even the congratulatory addresses and good wishes are essentially identical at the capping ceremony and the ancestral ritual.[166] It is in view of this coherence that one may tentatively transfer the subject of a line in the *Yi li* to that of the same line in Stanza 5.

The rhymeless narrative of lines three and four is almost identical to that in the preceding stanza, with the "officiating invocator's" performance related by the same words.[167] This narrative is followed by a rhymed sequence of only two lines before the concluding six lines are again unified by another rhyme. Following the hypothesis that changes of rhyme mark shifts of voices in this text, I reconstruct both lines five and six of Stanza 5 as the message that the invocator conveys from the descendant to the impersonator. In two crucial details, this conclusion goes against most traditional and modern scholarship. First, for the direction of speech I follow Zheng Xuan's reading, also accepted by Kong Yingda, that the impersonator is the addressee of the announcement; by contrast, Zhu Xi and most later scholars believe that the message is obtained from the spirits and delivered from the impersonator to the descendant. Second, perhaps again originating with Zhu Xi, commentators identify only line five, "The spirits are all drunk," as the actual announcement; line six is then attached to the narrative that follows. This reading has been adopted throughout modern scholarship.

However, two independent pieces of formal evidence suggest that on both issues, the generally accepted understanding is incorrect. First, there is the rhyme evidence already mentioned, which gains weight from the fact that it can be shown to apply to all other shifts of voices within Stanzas 4 and 5. Second, there is the formal designation of the impersonator: in line six, the impersonator is named as "the august impersonator" (*huangshi* 皇尸), but in line seven he is just "the impersonator" (*shi* 尸). Reading both lines together on the same level of the narrative would give "The august impersonator then rises, / drums and bells escort

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and feasts, one performs the banquet music." See also, Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music*, 29. For later imperial times, see my *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer*, 77–95.

166. For the congratulatory formulae at the capping ceremony, see *Yi li zhushu*, 3. 13b–c.

167. Reasons for the difference in translations are explained in n. 129 above. As in Stanza 4, Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*, 680, proposes a "combined rhyme" that would link line four ("-uk"; *gao* 告) to lines one and two ("-ək"; *bei* 備, *jie* 戒). For reasons given in n. 163 above, I remove this irregularity.

the impersonator away." This is not only a clumsily redundant narra-
tive—more importantly, it violates one of the most fundamental rules
of ritual speech concerning the normative formal designation of the
participants within the ritual act. To apply the rule of formal designation
as I have briefly outlined it above (pp. 64–65) to the concrete case here:
within the ritual performance, the voice uttering *huangshi* is in all prob-
ability not the same voice that utters *shi*; *huangshi* is honorific, *shi* is
neutral.[168]

Weighed against the coherence of rhyme and formal designation here,
and considered from the perspective of principles of ritual speech, the
conventional reading that reduces the announcement only to line five
is unconvincing. Instead, lines five and six together form the announce-
ment, delivering first a report on the state of the spirits and then respectfully
addressing the impersonator by acknowledging that he has appropri-
ately fulfilled his duties and should now leave his position. It is only
with line seven that the general narrative begins, using the neutral narra-
tive designation *shi* for the impersonator. One might think that the speaker
of this narrative is still the invocator but then he would have shifted
from the voice of the spirits to his own voice as the leading ritual official.[169]
Or, one might associate the second speech with another, probably lower,
ritual official who may or may not be identical with the "announcer"
above.[170] There is no evidence and no need to decide this question; the
important distinction is between lines five and six on the one hand,
and lines seven to twelve on the other. While the distinctive use of both
the rhymes and the formal designation of the impersonator suggests
that lines five and six should be understood as a single speech, the use
of *huangshi* also indicates the direction of this speech. Again, I follow
the early commentators Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda who understand
this term as an honorific expression of direct address. Here as elsewhere,
it appears that Zheng Xuan was far more inclined to recognize linguistic
structures of dramatic performance in the corpus of the *Shi* than *Song*
and later scholars of the textual tradition were willing to acknowledge.[171]

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168. Compare also the speech quoted above from the *Yi li* where the impersonator
reverently refers to the "august impersonator" under whose command he is acting.

169. Anyone familiar with the Roman Catholic Mass will recognize the possibility
of such a shift of perspective in ritual speech from the central juncture in the Catholic
liturgy when the priest performs the speech act of transubstantiation while at the
same time commemorating, in a narrative voice, the Last Supper.

170. Perhaps, for example, the Minor Invocator (*xiao zhu* 小祝), who according to
the *Zhou li* assists the Great Invocator (*da zhu* 大祝); see n. 101 above.

171. I suspect that this particular quality of Zheng's exegesis—which was eclipsed
by Zhu Xi's influential *Shi ji zhuan* throughout late imperial times and has also been

According to the commentaries, the transition to Stanza 6 implies the shift from the sacrificial hall to the inner apartment of the temple where the male clan members celebrate the concluding banquet. The final stanza comprises four different rhyme sequences, hence my division into four sections. While both the voice and the immediate addressee (if there is any) of the couplet in the first section are impossible to determine, the following three sections are direct speeches addressed to the descendant who now hosts the banquet. The second section includes the second-person pronoun *er* in line three, the third section has the honorific *jun* 君 ("you, the lord") in line eight, and the final section has the prohibitive negative *wu* 勿 (line twelve) that is used in a direct address. Furthermore, in the phrase *wei qi jin zhi* 維其盡之 of line ten, paraphrased by Zheng Xuan as *wei jun de neng jin zhi* 維君德能 盡之 ("it is how your, the lord's virtuous power, has been able to complete them"), *qi* 其 functions as a personal pronoun if we follow the commentary and read it as equivalent to the honorific *jun*. The internal evidence for assigning the speech in these three sections to specific voices is weak, but we may recognize several details. The final speech, concluding with the exhortation that also appears in the *Yi li* passage quoted above, is a classic *guci* statement; curiously enough, the formula *zizi sunsun* 子子孫孫 ("sons and sons, grandsons and grandsons"), ubiquitous as it is in the penultimate line of Zhou bronze inscriptions, is unique in the *Shi jing* and occurs only once in the *Shang shu*.[172] From both the inscriptions and the *Yi li* passage, I conclude that the final four lines were most probably uttered by the invocator. Lines five through eight, with the honorific *jun* to address the host, can be assigned to the guests; additional confirmation comes from the fact that line five occurs in exactly this context elsewhere in the *Shi jing*. The voice of lines three and four is difficult to determine; the parallel line in the *Shi jing* hymn "Ji zui" would again point to the guests, but I am reluctant to assume that the same guests who address the host with the honorific *jun* would also use the less formal pronoun *er*. One possible explanation might be that the two speeches are delivered by different groups of kin, namely the *bin* 賓 and the *ke* 客 mentioned in Stanza 3, line six, whom I have tentatively called "guests" and "visitors." In this case, the distinction between *er* and *jun* in addressing the host could reflect differences in status or

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widely rejected by modern scholars who propose to free the *Shi* from their Han political interpretation—is directly related to his intimate knowledge of early Chinese ritual, manifest in his formative and authoritative commentaries on the three ritual canons.

172. See *Shang shu zhengyi*, 14.97a ("Zi cai" 梓材).

kinship, with the socially higher (or more closely related) *bin* using *er*, and the lower (or more distantly related) *ke* using *jun*. But we do not need to resolve this uncertainty—even if the paucity of explicit references and parallel texts forces us to leave some questions open, we still can identify different direct speeches marked by formal devices. On the whole, the multiplicity of congratulatory and auspicious voices in Stanza 6 can be safely established, and they all resound with the same message: everything has been done properly, and both spirits and kin are satisfied.

The Problem of the Pronouns

In the preceding discussion, I have drawn on the distribution of pronouns to identify different ritual voices. Although it has allowed me to reconstruct a multivocal text where all pronouns and formal designations have their integral place and function, this procedure, which relies heavily on the early ritual canons and commentaries, is not without problems. My reconstruction finds support, however, in the "ritual" significance of the use of personal pronouns, noted by Wheelock:

> One of the first things that strikes one about liturgical utterances is the heavy usage of pronouns, adverbs, ellipses and the like that make reference to the immediate environment of the speaker and depend upon that context for their meaning. For example, the first-person pronouns "I" or "we" and the second-person pronoun "you" are commonly used in ritual discourse without introduction or explanation of their referents, since those would be the ritual participants themselves, who are sharing the same immediate situation as the speaker making the utterance.[173]

In other words, the sudden appearance of pronouns without any previously introduced referent is characteristic of the language of ritual performance precisely because here, the text does not stand on its own but is embedded into a framework of action. The ritual action is semanticized by the text, while it also provides meaning to the text: the "we" in Stanza 1 of "Chu ci" is self-evident in the performance, and only there.

The use of pronouns without referents as we encounter them in "Chu ci" distinguishes a genuine performance text from a mere ritual script: linguistically, the "we" (*wo* 我) in a *Shi jing* hymn differs from the "so-and-so" (*mou* 某) in the *Yi li* in being a deictic word, that is, in pointing to either another textual element or an extralinguistic phenomenon of

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173. Wheelock, "The Problem of Ritual Language," 50.

the situational context. In the strict sense of information theory, lines four through eight of Stanza 1, repetitiously opening with the first-person pronoun *wo*, are meaningless as long as they are not performed in a context that identifies the referent. What appears as a problem in interpreting the text—to reconstruct this identification—can be regarded as a particularly strong sign of the text's performative nature. Even were we to be completely unable to assign referents to the pronouns and terms of direct address like *jun* 君—and in several cases in "Chu ci," the evidence is quite tenuous—their very appearance as deictic words without referents in the same text requires the assumption of an actual context of ritual performance where these linguistic features become intelligible by being attached to actual persons and activities. They are, therefore, an element of ritual language.

The Formularity of the *guci* "Auspicious Phrases"

Returning to the question of ritual language, special attention is due to the "auspicious" (*gu* 嘏) and "congratulatory" (*qing* 慶) phrases that can be found in all stanzas except the fifth. Like the *Yi li* passage quoted above, these direct speeches are invariably speech acts that constitute their own ritual context as a reality: the prayer does not relate the descendant's thoughts but constitutes his claim to be the legitimate descendant towards his ancestors. By the same token, the blessings that follow in response are not described or narrated, they are conferred: within the ritual act, they exist only as they are being uttered. Moreover, their solemn utterance not only confers *future* blessings on the descendant but first and foremost acknowledges the *present* legitimacy of his sacrifice and prayer in a double sense: he is the legitimate descendant,[174] and he has virtuous power (*de* 德).[175] This seems to fundamentally distinguish the prayers in the ancestral temple from prayers in late Eastern Zhou hemerological manuscripts such as those from the Jiudian burial (ca. 316 B.C.)[176] and Shuihudi 睡虎地 burial (ca. 217 B.C.),[177] the "Zu Chu

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174. Note the two famous *Zuo zhuan* passages according to which the spirits accept sacrifices only from their own legitimate descendants; see *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 13.99c (Xi 10), 17.130a (Xi 31).

175. See *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 12.93c (Xi 5), quoting the *Shu* for the statement that ultimately, the spirits do not respond to the sacrificial offerings but to the offering descendant's shining virtuous power. In the received text of the *Shu*, this sentence occurs in "Jun chen" 君陳 (*Shang shu zhengyi*, 18.125a), one of the forged "old text" (*guwen* 古文) chapters.

176. For references, see n. 158 above.

177. See Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozʋ, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* 睡虎地秦墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1990), 179–255. There are two types of prayer texts in the

wen" 詛楚文 (Imprecations against Chu, 313/312 B.C.),[178] the incantations of the "Jiu ge" 九歌 (Nine songs) of the *Chuci* 楚辭 anthology,[179] or the Han imperial "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices."[180] The texts of the ancestral sacrifice not only present a request towards the spirits but in one breath also rigorously channel and arrest the spirits' response. This aspect of self-reference, as outlined above, should be extended to the descriptions of ritual activities, yet not as an inherent characteristic; it is generated only through the attachment of the *guci* phrases that transform the preceding descriptive or narrative account into performative speech.[181] The *guci* are "closing formulae" in two senses: they comprise the final lines of the text or stanza, and they turn it into a self-referential and relatively self-contained unit of speech that constitutes the confirmed outcome of what it only seems to request. The instantaneous and explicit *guci* "statements of success," a salient feature of Zhou ritual expression, are in any respect prescriptive: assuming that a hymn like "Chu ci" was composed prior to the sacrificial act proper, it is evident that neither the spirits nor the guests enjoyed many options. Their messages of gratitude and acknowledgement were predictable, and they were literally pre-scribed. As constituted in the language of the sacrificial hymns and bronze inscriptions—and, most importantly, through this language—the ancestral sacrifice was a guaranteed success, leaving no question unanswered and no room for failure.

Shuihudi burial: one is to be chanted in a ritual for the protection of a horse, the other is a dream incantation for relief from a nightmare; see Roel Sterckx, "An Ancient Chinese Horse Ritual," *Early China* 21 (1996), 47–79; Donald Harper, "Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (1997), 270–71; Harper, "A Note on Nightmare Magic in Ancient and Medieval China," *T'ang Studies* 6 (1988), 72–75.

178. For the two earliest received versions of the text, allegedly recarved according to the original stones that were still extant in Song times, see Rong Geng 容庚, *Gu shike lingshi* 古石刻零拾 (Peiping: privately published, 1934); Guo Moruo 郭沫若, "Zu Chu wen kaoshi" 詛楚文考釋, in his *Tiandi xuanhuang* 天地玄黃 (Shanghai: Dafu, 1947), 606–25; Édouard Chavannes, "Les inscriptions des *Ts'in*," *Journal Asiatique, Neuvième Série* 1 (1893), 475–82; and Chavannes, *Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895–1905), vol. 2, 544–49.

179. If we accept these as incantations to individual spirits, following David Hawkes and others before him. See his *The Songs of the South* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 95–101, *passim*; and Hawkes, "The Quest of the Goddess," in *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres*, ed. Cyril Birch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 42–68.

180. As noted above (p. 61), these hymns also record responses from cosmic spirits. In contrast to the Zhou ancestral hymns, these responses are not given as speeches but take the form of auspicious atmospherical phenomena.

181. Falkenhausen has proposed that for the Zhou bronze inscriptions the *guci* were appended to existing archival texts at the time when these were "transferred from its wooden or bamboo slip version onto bronze" (Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 166).

Not surprisingly, it is in the *guci* where we encounter the highest degree of linguistic formularity, both in bronze inscriptions and in *Shi jing* hymns. As Xu Zhongshu has noted, the quest for longevity and permanence dominates the concluding lines of 70–80% of the bronze inscriptions.[182] This central concern occurs throughout the *Shi jing* sacrificial and banquet hymns as well as in the imperial Qin stele inscriptions and the early Western Han ancestral hymns.[183] The ubiquity of formulae related to longevity and permanence, together with their narrow terminological scope, accounts for the numerous instances of identical phrases or lines. In these prayers and conferments of blessings, we recognize the interplay of ritual language and cultural memory: structurally, they are formalized, stereotyped, and redundant, fulfilling three of the four elements Tambiah has noted as characteristic of ritual performances; semantically, they represent participation in and contribution to the cultural norm that transcends any individual text. In both senses, it is through the *guci* that a hymn or inscription is integrated into the common cultural context of values and their linguistic expression. Moreover, the very ideology of lineage permanence itself turns the reciprocity of giving and taking between the descendant and his ancestral spirits into something that may be called, for want of a better expression, "prospectively commemorative": as the descendant serves his ancestors and in return receives their blessings and protection, he presents himself as the potential model ancestor for his own descendants towards whom he addresses his exhortation for the future.[184]

The above line of speculation is amply supported by the concrete evidence from "Chu ci." In the latter parts of Stanzas 1, 2, 3, and 6, most lines are identical word for word to others elsewhere in the *ya* and *song* sections or in other ritual texts: in Stanza 1, three of the final four lines; in the second half of Stanza 2, five of six lines (with line eleven being identical with the corresponding line of the Stanza 3); in Stanza 3, three of the final five lines; in Stanza 6, five of the ten "auspicious" or "congratulatory" lines. By contrast, the remaining parts of these stanzas are

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182. Xu, "Jinwen guci shili," 43. Longevity and permanence are two different albeit related issues: longevity is invoked for the offering descendant, permanence for the survival and ritual continuity of his lineage. In "Chu ci," the "ten thousand years" of Stanzas 2 and 3 refer to the former, while the final exhortation refers to the latter.

183. See my *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, ch. 4, and my *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer*, 151–52.

184. The same idea of continuity is expressed in the famous *Li ji* passage on the function of tripod inscriptions (*Li ji zhengyi*, 49.378c–379a ["Ji tong" 祭統]), employing the pun *ming* 銘/*ming* 名: by commemorating and inscribing (銘) his ancestor's achievments the descendant creates a name (名) for himself. Through the inscription, future generations will therefore recognize and praise both him and his ancestor.

almost completely devoid of line-length formulae with parallels in other
Shi jing texts; the only instance to be noted is line three of Stanza 3. Stanza 4
includes only two cases (lines three and six) that occur elsewhere in
"Chu ci": the narrative phrase *gong zhu zhi gao* 工祝致告 appears again
in Stanza 5 while the line *shen shi yin shi* 神嗜飲食 is repeated in Stanza 6.
The mostly narrative Stanza 5, which describes the transition from the
sacrificial ritual to the banquet, shows only a single line (apart from
gong zhu zhi gao 工祝致告) for which I could find a parallel occurence
in a speech in the *Yi li*. The number of shared lines that are *guci* far
exceeds other instances of shared lines. The conclusion to be drawn from
this distribution of shared lines seems self-evident: the *guci* aggregate
passages of formulaic speech that are taken from a common and clearly
demarcated pool of ritual language. It also must be emphasized that
with one exception, "Chu ci" does not share a single line with a *guo feng*
song.[185] The intertextuality of the *guci* portions is as intense as it is strictly
defined, corroborating earlier observations on the language of the *ya*
and *song* in general;[186] the "Chu ci" hymn shares lines with ritual speeches
in the *Shang shu* and the *Yi li* rather than with any *guo feng* piece.

Syntactical Patterns of Ritual Speech

The fact that full-line parallels with other *Shi jing* hymns occur almost
exclusively in the *guci* sections does not mean that the remainder of "Chu
ci" is devoid of linguistic patterns that can be identified as elements of
ritual speech. Two syntactical structures are noteworthy, and both serve
rhythmic purposes: reduplicatives and duplicate syntax patterns. "Chu
ci" includes the following reduplicatives: 楚楚, 與與, 翼翼 (Stanza 1);
濟濟, 蹌蹌 (Stanza 2); 踖踖, 莫莫 (Stanza 3); 子子, 孫孫 (Stanza 6). The
reduplicatives of Stanza 6, as already noted, together constitute a com-
mon element of a typical *guci* formula. The reduplicatives of Stanzas 2
and 3 all refer to the correct demeanor of the ritual personnel. In Stanza 1,
the first reduplicative occurs at the beginning of the hymn while the
following two describe the sacrificial grain. There is nothing restrictive
about the use of reduplicatives in the *Shi jing*; they occur throughout

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185. As observed above (n. 118), the last line of Stanza 2 is the only shared line that
occurs in the *guo feng*. Note, however, that this line occurs not only in numerous
bronze inscriptions but also in two other *Shi jing* hymns. It is clear that in this case the
guo feng song borrows a stock phrase from the language of the ancestral cult, not vice
versa.

186. See W.A.C.H. Dobson, *The Language of the Book of Songs* (Toronto: University
of Toronto Press, 1968), 247–55; Lu Kanru 陸侃如 and Feng Yuanjun 馮沅君, *Zhongguo
shishi* 中國詩史 (Beijing: Zuojia, 1956), vol. 1, 45–46; Xiang Xi, *Shi jing yuyan yanjiu*,
228–44.

Table 1: *The syntactical pattern "A / X / A / Y" in "Chu ci" and its parallels in other* Shi jing *songs, according to* Shi jing suoyin 詩經索引, *ed. Chen Hongtian 陳宏天 and Lü Lan 呂嵐 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian, 1984). Where the same pattern occurs more than once in a song, the number of repetitions is noted in parentheses after the Mao number.*

Pattern	guo feng	ya and song	Mao numbers
以⋯以⋯	1	14	26, 190 (2), 208, 209, 211, 212, 239, 246 (2), 252, 281, 283, 291, 302
或⋯或⋯	0	15	180, 190, 195 (3), 209 (3), 211, 214, 220, 245 (2), 246 (2)
爲⋯爲⋯	1	8	2, 173, 192, 199, 209, 257, 264, 279, 290
如⋯如⋯	9	21	35, 47, 55 (4), 132 (3), 166 (2), 177, 178, 209, 211 (2), 223, 252, 254 (3), 255 (2), 257, 258, 263 (4), 300
既⋯既⋯	1	15	35, 180, 191, 203, 209 (3), 210 (2), 212 (2), 250 (2), 263, 274, 302
時⋯時⋯ᵃ	0 (1)	1 (15)	2, 161, 164, 209, 210 (2), 241 (4), 245 (2), 257, 300 (3), 305
孔⋯孔⋯ᵇ	1	1	10, 209

a. This structure appears only in the present hymn. However, I take it as equivalent to 是⋯是⋯; the numbers in parentheses indicate the instances of the latter as given in column 4.

b. Strictly speaking, *kong* is not a particle but an adverb here. I include it in this list since it constitutes the same rhythmic pattern.

the anthology, and are especially prominent at the beginning of a song. In "Chu ci," however, it should be noted that except the initial 楚楚 reduplicative and the final 子子孫孫 *guci* formula, all reduplicatives describe either the sacrificial offerings or the ritual personnel. According to my reconstruction of the text, they all appear in direct speeches that are transmitted by the invocator. None occurs in either Stanza 4 or Stanza 5.

The second element that generates a particular rhythm of speech is the repetition of a grammatical particle in the first and third position of the line. We have the following examples:

Stanza 1: 以享以祀; 以妥以侑
Stanza 2: 或剝或亨; 或肆或將
Stanza 3: 或燔或炙; 爲賓爲客
Stanza 4: 如幾如式; 既齊既稷; 既匡既敕; 時萬時億
Stanza 6: 既醉既飽; 孔惠孔時

Tracing these syntactic structures through the entire *Shi jing* produces a very consistent distributional pattern. As shown in Table 1, the use of the repetitive pattern "A / X / A / Y" can be identified as a typical element

Table 2: *Other examples of the syntactical pattern "A / X / A / Y" in the* Shi jing, *according to* Shi jing suoyin, *ed. Chen Hongtian and Lü Lan.*

Pattern	*guo feng*	*ya* and *song*	Mao numbers
有 … 有 …	3	23	35, 130 (2), 177, 192, 220, 252 (2), 260, 261 (2), 280, 281, 284 (2), 297 (8), 298, 300 (2),
不 … 不 …	7	23	66, 112 (6), 166, 190, 192 (2), 193, 212, 215, 245, 249, 256, 263 (2), 264, 266, 292, 299, 300 (2), 304 (4), 305
載 … 載 …	5	20	39, 54, 58, 128, 154, 162 (2), 163 (3), 167 (2), 183 (3), 196, 204, 220, 222, 245 (4), 290, 299
匪 … 匪 …	0	11	169, 204 (2), 218, 234, 250, 262 (3), 263, 264
弗 … 弗 …	4	4	115 (4), 191 (2), 194, 257
乃/迺 … 乃/迺 …	0	7	189, 237 (4), 250 (2)
侯 … 侯 …	0	6	192, 204, 255, 290 (3)
于 … 于 …	0	5	236, 245, 250, 259, 262
爰 … 爰 …	1	4	31, 189, 237, 241, 250
來 … 來 …	0	5	248, 252, 262, 276, 302
無 … 無 …	3	11	136 (2), 154, 189, 193, 198 (2), 235, 249, 255 (2), 299, 300 (2)
靡 … 靡 …	0	4	167, 255 (2), 258

of *ya* and *song* language. At the same time, it is relatively rare among the *guo feng*. Additional tests on the same structure with other words produce the same result (see Table 2). To be sure, this repetitive structure is not confined to ritual hymns for use in ancestral sacrifices and banquets. However, the structure is employed with a much higher frequency in ritual hymns where it intensifies the rhythm of speech; and it is probably not overly speculative to relate the resulting effects of formality and redundancy to the specific rhythms of ritual music. The distribution of the repetitive structure within "Chu ci" supports the observation that it enhances speeches of particular dignity: it appears twice in the *guci* of Stanza 1 and four times in the speech of the spirits in Stanza 4. The density of its usage in Stanza 4 explains the absence of reduplicatives here: within a single line, the two rhythmic patterns are mutually exclusive, and apparently they are also avoided in alternating lines. In clear contrast to all other stanzas, Stanza 5, which is dominated by plain narrative structures, does not employ either of the two patterns (coincid-

ing with the virtual absence in Stanza 5 of full-line formulae with paral-
lels in other texts). Following the climax of the sacrifice in Stanza 4 and
serving as a transition to the congratulatory and auspicious phrases in
Stanza 6, Stanza 5 is almost prosaic.

Conclusion

"Who is speaking and in which role?" This is one of the fundamental
questions in ritual performances; my study of "Chu ci" shows that it
must also be critical to the analysis of this *Shi jing* hymn and others like
it. Since Zheng Xuan's commentary, "Chu ci" has been recognized as a
piece that encapsulates early Chinese cultural memory, serving the dual
purpose of commemoration and normative prescription, and embody-
ing the most complete authentic account of Zhou ancestral sacrifices.
As argued by Qing scholars and recently again by Falkenhausen, "Chu
ci" very likely served as the hypotext for later *San li* accounts of Zhou
ancestral rites, especially for the sacrificial chapters of the *Yi li*. In addi-
tion to this role as a source for later ritual accounts, however, a string of
deictic expressions that lack text-internal referents, rhythmic elements
of redundant, stereotyped, and formalized speech, and the unquestion-
able presence of different voices all point to the nature of "Chu ci" as a
genuine performance text. The primary problem of understanding the
performance embedded in the text is imposed by the deictic words: in
order to reconstruct the meaning of any one of these words, one must
(a) determine its extra-textual referent in the situational context of the
ritual act and (b) integrate it into the complete sequence of deictic words
within the text. The hymn, which condenses the speech and action of a
full ceremony into seventy-two lines, may appear fragmentary in places,
but it cannot be self-contradictory. It is the inconsistency in dealing with
the deictic problems that flaws both the standard Western translations
and their counterparts in modern Japanese and Chinese.[187]

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187. Karlgren's translation of Stanza 4 illustrates the problem:

We are very respectful, our rules and rites have no error, the officiating invoker
makes the announcement, he goes and presents it to the pious descendant;
fragrant is the pious sacrifice, the spirits enjoy the wine and food; they predict
for you a hundred blessings; according to the (how much =) proper quantities,
according to the (proper) rules, you have brought sacrificial grain, you have
brought millet, you have brought baskets, you have arranged them; forever
they will give you the utmost (blessings); those will be in myriads, in myriads
of myriads.

See Bernhard Karlgren, "The Book of Odes, Kuo feng and Siao ya," *Bulletin of the
Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 16 (1944), 246–47. The main defect in Karlgren's

As I have shown in the present study, any solution to the deictic problems must be grounded in anthropological and linguistic theories of ritual language that have been developed from interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives. Such a theoretically informed analysis cannot be confined to a single text. Though unique in its cultural centrality and linguistic complexity, "Chu ci" should be seen not as an isolated case but rather as exemplary. In addition to the coherent system of deictic expressions in the hymn, the evidence that rhyme changes indicate shifts of voices or perspectives of speech is consistent enough to assume an underlying principle of textual composition that most likely was also employed in other texts. Given the normativity and rigidity of ritual performance, in particular on the solemn level of Zhou ancestral rites, there is every reason to believe that formal linguistic devices were employed with precise intent. The intensity of rhymes in "Chu ci," the relative prominence of the rhythmic "A/X/A/Y" pattern, and the coherence of formulaic language in the *guci* sections all suggest that the textual composition was guided by conscious choices of formal patterns that were conceived as separate from the level of everyday usage, as euphonic, and thus as particularly efficacious language with which to address the spirits and the ritual public.[188] Not only through its contents and prayer formulae but also in its texture of acoustical patterns and shifting perspectives, "Chu ci" is manifestly a performance text according to the criteria given in the introductory historical and conceptual considerations that precede my translation.

When analyzing other texts as potential performance texts according to the principles of ritual language identified in "Chu ci," we must acknowledge the significant variation that occurs throughout the corpus of *Shi jing* hymns, especially in the use of pronouns and formal designations. The formal markers that help us to structure "Chu ci" (and to reconstruct it as a performance text) were not needed within the actual performance: to the ritual participants, the identity of the different voices was obvious and transparent. The text becomes opaque only in its artificial isolation from this primary performance context; the secondary context of being collected in the *Shi jing* along with other, equally isolated hymns of a similar nature provides only limited compensation. The deictic elements that indicated specific referents in the original perfor-

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translation, which completely obscures the structure of the original, is obvious: since the two direct speeches are not identified, the relation between "we" and "you" remains unclear.

188. It is significant that my textual analysis provides independent support for Baxter's reconstruction of the *Shi jing* rhyme system, thus underscoring the importance of historical phonology for the study of Zhou texts.

mance context are rendered literally meaningless once this connection is cut off. Stray boulders in a seemingly plain description, they come to resist integration into a straightforward, prosaic reading. Yet, as is often the case with language, what appear to be obstacles to understanding are the key to discovering a more complex textual structure—in the case under discussion, that of a multivocal performance hymn. The fundamental problem in extending the performance text hypothesis to other *Shi jing* hymns lies in the fact that one can easily imagine a performance text with only a few of these useful "obstacles"—perhaps, without any of them—that was nevertheless originally composed in exactly the same way as "Chu ci." For example, the ritual conferment of blessings, when phrased in the economic and potentially highly elliptic diction of classical and pre-classical Chinese, would not have needed the second-person pronoun. Consequently, we must allow for the gnawing doubt that some of the ritual texts that on their surface "make perfect sense" as plain descriptions or narratives may hide their genuine multivocality behind this surface opacity. Yet before proceeding to speculate on the most difficult cases let us look carefully for the stray textual "boulders"—in both the *Shi jing* hymns and bronze inscriptions—and be grateful for every one of them.