

# Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy

*Studies in the Composition and Thought of the  
Shangshu (Classic of Documents)*

*Edited by*

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## The “Harangues” (*Shi* 誓) in the *Shangshu*

*Martin Kern*

Of the various speeches made either when war was imminent or in the course of the war itself, it has been hard to reproduce the exact words used either when I heard them myself or when they were reported to me by other sources. My method in this book has been to make each speaker say broadly what I supposed would have been needed on any given occasion, while keeping as closely as I could to the overall intent of what was actually said.

THUCYDIDES, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.22<sup>1</sup>



On Wednesday, March 19, 2003, on the eve of the Iraq War, Colonel Tim Collins gave a rousing prebattle speech to some eight hundred men of the First Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment stationed in Kuwait, twenty miles south of the Iraqi border:

We go to Iraq to liberate, not to conquer. We will not fly our flags in their country. We are entering Iraq to free a people and the only flag which will be flown in that ancient land is their own. Show respect for them. There are some who are alive at this moment who will not be alive shortly. Those who do not wish to go on that journey, we will not send. As for the others, I expect you to rock their world. Wipe them out if that is what they choose. But if you are ferocious in battle remember to be magnanimous in victory. ... Don't treat [the Iraqi people] as refugees for they are in their own country. Their children will be poor, in years to come they will know that the light of liberation in their lives was brought by you. ... Allow them dignity in death. Bury them properly and mark their graves. ...

The enemy should be in no doubt that we are his nemesis and that we are bringing about his rightful destruction. ... [Saddam] and his forces

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides 2009: 12.

will be destroyed by this coalition for what they have done. As they die they will know their deeds have brought them to this place. Show them no pity.

It is a big step to take another human life. It is not to be done lightly. I know of men who have taken life needlessly in other conflicts, I can assure you they live with the mark of Cain upon them. If someone surrenders to you then remember they have that right in international law and ensure that one day they go home to their family. ... If you harm the regiment or its history by overenthusiasm in killing or in cowardice, know it is your family who will suffer. You will be shunned unless your conduct is of the highest for your deeds will follow you down through history. We will bring shame on neither our uniform nor our nation. ...<sup>2</sup>

As Collins explained in April 2004 on the occasion of being named Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) at Buckingham Palace, “[I]t’s an interesting reflection on modern times: because the speech was written down by a journalist in shorthand, only one version exists. There’s no recording or film of it, so it can’t be corrupted or changed, and that’s what has given it longevity.”<sup>3</sup> According to Wikipedia, “The ‘Mark of Cain’ line from the speech inspired the title of the 2007 Film4 Productions drama *The Mark of Cain*. In the film a commanding officer makes a speech based on Collins’ to his men. The last episode of the 2008 television series *10 Days to War* features a version of the speech performed by Kenneth Branagh as Collins....<sup>4</sup> In the video game *Modern Warfare 3*, Tim Collins’s inspirational speech is quoted when you die.”<sup>5</sup>

The rousing battle speeches are a genre to themselves that—as in Major Collins’s case—can materialize in repeated iterations across various media; as such, they also are a stock element of contemporary films featuring monumental battles.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the most stirring example in European literature is the Saint Crispin’s Day Speech on the eve of the battle of Agincourt (1415), as

2 For the full speech, see “UK Troops Told: Be Just and Strong,” *BBC News*, March 20, 2003, accessed May 8, 2013 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/2866581.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2866581.stm)>.

3 “Iraq War Colonel Awarded OBE,” *BBC News*, April 7, 2004, accessed May 8, 2013 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/3608181.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/3608181.stm)>.

4 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpdeNcH1H8A>>, accessed May 10, 2014.

5 *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Tim Collins (British Army officer),” accessed May 8, 2013 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim\\_Collins\\_\(British\\_Army\\_officer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Collins_(British_Army_officer))>.

6 See the entry “Top 10 Movie Battle Speeches” as ranked by the website WatchMojo.com <<http://watchmojo.com/video/id/11896/>>; also <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oal2YYEXp20>>; both accessed February 15, 2014.

imagined in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, written in about 1599.<sup>7</sup> This speech has been enacted not only in uncounted stagings of the play but also in film, such as in Kenneth Branagh’s highly decorated performance in 1989<sup>8</sup> and, even more famously, by Laurence Olivier (1944).<sup>9</sup> This latter example is particularly poignant: while historically set in the Hundred Years’ War with France, the film—subsidized by the British government—was released in November 1944 just months after the D-Day invasion of France and was dedicated to the “Commandos and Airborne Troops of Great Britain the spirit of whose ancestors it has been humbly attempted to recapture.”<sup>10</sup> It is precisely in such instances of the historical imagination, ever available to become transposed to the present and actualized with intense urgency, that a harangue survives the iconic battle branded into a nation’s cultural memory. We do not know the words King Henry V spoke on the eve of the battle of Agincourt, but Shakespeare—like Thucydides long before him—found the words that “would have been needed” on the occasion. These words have remained true in the profound sense that myth is true and as such could be called upon to make sense of the present. In Jan Assmann’s formulation:

What counts for cultural memory is not factual but remembered history. One might even say that cultural memory transforms factual into remembered history, thus turning it into myth. Myth is foundational history that is narrated in order to illuminate the present from the standpoint of its origins.... Through memory, history becomes myth. This does not make it unreal—on the contrary, this is what makes it real, in the sense that it becomes a lasting, normative, and formative power.<sup>11</sup>

It is from this perspective of “cultural memory” that I examine the battle harangues (*shi* 誓) in the *Shangshu* 尚書 in order to understand the *raison d’être* of these speeches in the early Chinese historical imagination. In other words,

7 <<http://poetry.about.com/library/weekly/blshakespearewar.htm>>; accessed February 15, 2014.

8 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-yZNMWFqvM>>; <[http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1029042-henry\\_v/](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1029042-henry_v/)>; <[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0097499/?ref=fn\\_al\\_tt\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0097499/?ref=fn_al_tt_1)>; all accessed February 15, 2014.

9 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9fa3HFRo2E>>; <[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036910/?ref=nr\\_sr\\_3](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036910/?ref=nr_sr_3)>; <[http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1009505-henry\\_v/](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1009505-henry_v/)>; all accessed February 15, 2014.

10 *Wikipedia*, s.v. “*Henry V* (1944 film),” accessed February 15, 2014 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_V\\_\(1944\\_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_V_(1944_film))>.

11 Assmann 2011: 37–38.

I consider them not to be the actual words spoken but those that were retrospectively imagined; they remember and mythologize the past to serve the needs of the present for a foundational narrative of origin.<sup>12</sup> As such, the purportedly earliest speeches were created as idealized artifacts to literally overwrite the actual historical events and to make history conform to the moral norms of a later age.

In terms of their composition, I envision a process of several stages that largely conforms with Dirk Meyer's notion of "framing":<sup>13</sup>

- a. the (possible) original speech that may or may not have been given on the occasion;
- b. the subsequent imagination or reimagination of the speech at some later point, possibly centuries removed from the occasion, and quite likely for performance purposes;
- c. the framing of the speech as an integral part of a collection and repertoire of speeches that *taken together* marked some of the defining moments in the construction of historical memory;
- d. the integration of the speech into the circumscribed anthology of the *Shangshu*, in whatever form that anthology may have been first created;
- e. the subsequent reorganization of the anthology into its received form, which itself was likely a process of several stages stretching across several centuries.<sup>14</sup>

While the very first of these stages may be purely imaginary, the subsequent four, certainly extending into the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE) and beyond, all involved various interventions of editing, reorganizing, and possibly rewriting, the extent of which has become invisible to our eyes. Most importantly, the repeated integration of the speeches into new textual frameworks must be viewed as recurrent acts of reframing within a continuously evolving intellectual and political history of early China—acts that were always contingent on their own historical contexts and during which the speeches only gradually attained the shape in which we have them today. Except for some extremely brief quotations or references, we have no information regarding the speeches' possible textual transmission outside the anthology of the *Shangshu*. As a

12 For the same conclusion regarding records of divination in the *Shangshu*, see the coda to the present chapter.

13 See Dirk Meyer's chapter 3 in the present volume.

14 For a succinct survey of the complicated history of the received text, see Shaughnessy 1993; also Nylan 2001: 120–167.

matter of fact, we know nothing about their transmission before they entered the anthology.

The resulting texts in the received tradition are overtly ideological. As C. H. Wang noted many years ago, most early Chinese texts do not dwell on the details of heroic valor or the clash of arms.<sup>15</sup> In what Wang calls the “ellipsis of the battle,” the actual acts of war are rendered largely invisible. The battle speeches discussed below show the military leaders as political paragons of morality and restraint, but never as warriors. This is particularly true of the “Harangue at Mu” attributed to King Wu of Zhou 周武王, who in 1046 BCE conquered the Shang dynasty by military force and who in his speech urges his troops—like Colonel Collins before invading Iraq—to act both fiercely and humanely and to “not press and assault those who flee” (弗迓克奔). Yet as Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893–1980) and more recently Edward L. Shaughnessy have demonstrated compellingly,<sup>16</sup> we do have a separate document—“Great Capture” (“Shifu” 世俘) in the *Remnant Zhou Documents* (*Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書)<sup>17</sup>—that shows the battle as a bloodbath of epic proportions and King Wu as a man without mercy. On close linguistic and historical analysis, both Gu and Shaughnessy conclude that “Great Capture” is a document chronologically very close to—if not contemporary with—the conquest; it also is most likely some version of an earlier text titled “Accomplishment of Martiality” (“Wu cheng” 武成) that for its depiction of violence was rejected as spurious in the *Mengzi* 孟子, “whose idealized view of history came to prevail.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, what is successfully inscribed into the cultural memory is not the “realistic account” (Shaughnessy) of the mass-scale slaughter, preserved in a collection of “remnant” documents, but the canonical and almost certainly retrospectively imagined speech that shows King Wu not only as fierce but also as regal and humane. As discussed below, this redacted version of the events matches the other accounts of the conquest and its aftermath—which is to say that all of these should be considered not as documentary accounts but as idealizing constructions of “remembered history.”

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15 C. H. Wang 1988: 53–72. While one may think of the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 as a major exception to this rule, its descriptions of actual fighting are nowhere comparable to, say, those of the *Iliad*.

16 Gu Jiegang 1963; Shaughnessy 1997: 31–67.

17 Huang Huaixin 2007: 410–446.

18 Shaughnessy 1997: 40. This “Wu cheng” text is not to be confused with the ancient-script *Shangshu* chapter of the same name.



The *Shangshu* contains a series of speeches that are labeled “harangues” (*shi* 誓):

1. “Harangue at Gan” (“Gan shi” 甘誓), attributed to the Xia 夏 king Qi 啟, given to the royal troops before battling rebel forces;
2. “Harangue of Tang” (“Tang shi” 湯誓), attributed to the first Shang 商 king, Lü 履, given to his troops before attacking the army of the last Xia king, Jie 桀, a battle that resulted in the establishment of the Shang dynasty;
3. “Great Harangue” (“Tai shi” 泰誓), in three parts, attributed to King Wu of Zhou before attacking the Shang, given to the Zhou nobles and troops before embarking on the attack against the troops of the last Shang king, Zhouxin 紂辛;
4. “Harangue at Mu”, again attributed to King Wu, given at dawn before attacking the Shang troops, a battle that resulted in the establishment of the Zhou dynasty;
5. “Harangue at Bi” (“Bi shi” 費誓 [also 肸誓 or 柴誓]), attributed to the Lord of Lu 魯, *bo* Qin 伯禽, oldest son of the Duke of Zhou 周公, given to his troops before battling rebel forces;<sup>19</sup>
6. “Harangue of Qin” (“Qin shi” 秦誓), attributed to Lord Mu 穆 of Qin, given to his officers *after* a battle at Zheng 鄭 in 627 BCE, from which Qin had withdrawn while leaving behind three officers who then were captured by the Jin 晉 army.

In addition, another text titled “harangue” is found in the *Remnant Zhou Documents*, the “Harangue to Shang” (“Shang shi” 商誓). This text presents a speech that King Wu purportedly gave to the captured Shang officers after the Zhou conquest;<sup>20</sup> as such, it is not a battle speech but rather is similar to the “Many Officers” (“Duo shi” 多士) and “Many Regions” (“Duo fang” 多方) chapters in the *Shangshu*.<sup>21</sup>

What is a “harangue”? Early dictionaries and commentaries explain the verb *shi* 誓 as “to bind and oblige” (*yueshu* 約束; from which derives the other principal meaning of *shi* as “oath”), “to exhort” (*jie* 誡), and “to proclaim a command” (*xuan haoling* 宣號令), all in the context of addressing one’s troops before leading them into battle. In this sense, both the “Harangue of Qin” and the “Harangue to Shang” are anomalous titles. The origins of these titles are

19 For a study, see Maria Khayutina’s chapter 12 in this volume.

20 See Huang Huaixin 2007: 449–464.

21 For a study of these texts, see Joachim Gentz’s chapter 4 in this volume.

unclear, though the opening of the “Harangue of Qin” includes the phrase *yu shi gao ru* 予誓告汝 (I proclaim to you as an exhortation) where *shi* is used adverbially to *gao* 告, “to proclaim”; verbatim the same phrase appears in the opening of the “Harangue at Gan.” *Shi* further appears in the closing line of the “Harangue of Tang” (“if you do not obey the words of [this] harangue” [*er bu cong shi yan* 爾不從誓言]), in the openings of all three parts of the “Great Harangue” (“listen clearly to [this] harangue” [*ming ting shi* 明聽誓]; “[the king] harangued” [*shi* 誓]; “[the king] clearly harangued the multitude of officers” [*ming shi zhong shi* 明誓眾士]), and twice in the opening paragraphs of the “Harangue at Mu” (“[the king] harangued” [*shi* 誓]; “I shall make a harangue” [*yu qi shi* 予其誓])—but neither in the “Harangue at Bi” nor in the “Harangue to Shang.” In addition, across the *Shangshu* the term *shi* appears once in the spurious ancient-script (*guwen* 古文) chapter “Counsels of the Great Yu” (“Da Yu mo” 大禹謨), where Yu “harangues the troops” (*shi yu shi* 誓于師),<sup>22</sup> and once in “Testamentary Charge” (“Gu ming” 顧命),<sup>23</sup> where the word is used adverbially in the sense of “bindingly” or “as an exhortation” toward the king’s descendent (“speak bindingly to [my] successor” [*shi yan si* 誓言嗣]). In short, while *shi* in most cases refers to a prebattle harangue, it also is used twice—both times in its adverbial function—to denote a solemn, binding, or exhortative quality of speech. Either way, “harangues,” just like “commands” (*ming* 命) or “proclamations” (*gao* 誥), are invariably issued by a leader to those below him. Through their circumscribed diction and lexicon—including the self-referential use of the word *shi*—they were doubly marked: as royal speech and as the speech that “would have been needed” (Thucydides) for the occasion. Conversely, “harangues” marked both the speaker’s superior status and the unique importance of the occasion. Taken together as a sequence in their retrospective framing, they created the ideal history of dynasties by staging the very moments when these dynasties were brought into being (or were defended against disaster); and they created the ideal sequence of founding kings by staging them as speakers and agents of superior authority and commitment who through the mere force of their virtue and words determined the course of history. At one point in the early history of the *Shangshu*, they were assembled into a repository of speeches, speakers, and events that all were defined through one another.

22 Here, Emperor Yu 禹 “harangues the troops” to indict the Miao 苗 rebels and rally his troops to “punish their crimes” (*fa zui* 伐罪); see Legge 1991: 64–65. This passage is clearly modeled on the various harangues discussed in the present essay.

23 Legge 1991: 546. For a study of the chapter, see Dirk Meyer’s chapter 3 in this volume.

The historical framings of the harangues noted above are, of course, the ones received from tradition—and most of them are questionable. First, there is general (though not unanimous) agreement that the “Harangue at Gan” and the “Harangue of Tang” postdate their purported speakers by many centuries.<sup>24</sup> Next, while part of the “Great Harangue” is included in Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 85 BCE) *Shiji* 史記 and quoted in a considerable range of Warring States (453–221 BCE) and early imperial texts,<sup>25</sup> it is not part of the received modern-script (*jinwen* 今文) recension of the *Shangshu* but included only in the ancient-script version, which was likely compiled in the early fourth century CE; its early history seems extraordinarily complex—possibly involving no fewer than six different versions from different periods—and the text must be treated with great caution.<sup>26</sup> Third, philological arguments have been advanced against the received “Harangue at Mu” as a text from the time of King Wu; most modern scholars believe it to postdate the Western Zhou by centuries, and its early reception does not appear to have begun before the Han dynasty.<sup>27</sup> Fourth, the “Harangue at Bi” likewise does not fit other early Western Zhou texts and is generally regarded as coming from a somewhat later period; it has no reception history before the early empire and is barely referred to even in the received Han literature.<sup>28</sup> While most chapters from the *Shangshu* have few echoes in the received Warring States literature—indicating their generally limited availability to pre-imperial intellectual communities—the lack of resonance of the “Harangue at Bi” even in Han times surprises; either the text was not widely available, or it could not rival the status of the speeches

24 See, e.g., Jiang Shanguo 1988: 200–203; Chen Mengjia 1985: 112; Zhang Xitang 1958: 185–186; Shaughnessy 1993: 378. Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu (2005: vol. 2, 875, 889), by contrast, believe that the “Harangue at Gan” may be from the Shang dynasty (while including some later phrases) and that the “Harangue of Tang” likewise reflects the realities of the early Shang but that the text then underwent further rephrasing during the Eastern Zhou.

25 See the discussion in Jiang Shanguo 1988: 213–225; for citations of “Great Harangue” in other early texts, see Chan Hung Kan and Ho Che Wah 2003: 160–169. Judging from citation patterns, the original “Great Harangue” was the most widely quoted harangue in Warring States and Han times, being invoked by a particularly broad range of texts, including the *Mozi* 墨子, the *Mengzi* 孟子, the *Guoyu* 國語, the *Zuo zhuan*, and the *Guanzi* 管子. It also shares language with more Han texts than any other of the harangues. To some extent, this may be a function of its sheer length: in its received version, the tripartite “Great Harangue” is about three times as long as “Harangue at Mu,” which in turn is the longest of all the other harangues.

26 See Chen Mengjia 1985: 53–68; Matsumoto 1988: 65–172; Jiang Shanguo 1988: 213–225.

27 For the early reception history, see Chan Hung Kan and Ho Che Wah 2003: 170–173.

28 Jiang Shanguo 1988: 250–251. For the early reception history, see Chan Hung Kan and Ho Che Wah 2003: 285–286.

attributed to much more ancient paragons. Finally, as noted above, the single “harangue” that in the traditional narrative is placed into the Spring and Autumn era (770–453 BCE), the “Harangue of Qin” attributed to Lord Mu of Qin, differs strikingly from the other five; unlike these, it is not a prebattle harangue to prepare the speaker’s troops for an attack. The “Harangue of Qin” also has a unique early reception history: it is repeatedly invoked in the *Liji* 禮記 (*Records of Ritual*) chapter “Great Learning” (“Da xue” 大學) and furthermore shares language with the *Gongyang Tradition* (公羊傳) but not with any other pre-Han text.<sup>29</sup> Another unique feature of the “Harangue of Qin” is its repeated use of reduplicatives—a linguistic phenomenon almost entirely absent from all the other harangues and quite possibly a reflection of its relatively late date of composition when reduplicatives had become a much more common feature of Zhou ritual language (which, of course, does not make the other harangues necessarily earlier just because they largely lack reduplicatives).<sup>30</sup>

In the following, I will focus on the “Harangue at Gan,” the “Harangue of Tang,” and the “Harangue at Mu,” which together form a consistent set of texts. They share a repertoire of conspicuous features and constitute what one may call a specific “genre”—and a coherent repository—of prebattle harangues among the royal speeches of antiquity. Some but not all of their elements are also present in the “Harangue at Bi” and the “Harangue of Qin.” These latter two texts, however, are altogether different in structure, outlook, and diction, as are the three parts of the received “Great Harangue,” which represent three separate speeches that are largely devoted to the indictment of the last ruler of Shang.

### The Structure and Rhetorical Features of the “Harangue at Gan,” “Harangue of Tang,” and “Harangue at Mu”

The three prebattle harangues under discussion are all fairly short, ranging from 88 (“Harangue at Gan”) to 245 (“Harangue at Mu”) characters. The principal structure and main rhetorical features are visible already in the short “Harangue at Gan”:<sup>31</sup>

29 See Chan Hung Kan and Ho Che Wah 2003: 287–289.

30 “Harangue at Gan,” “Harangue of Tang,” and “Harangue at Bi” do not contain a single reduplicative; “Harangue at Mu” contains one; and the tripartite “Great Harangue” contains two. “Harangue of Qin,” a text of 248 characters with a considerable number of repeated phrases, contains six different ones.

31 For my translations of the different harangues in the present essay, I have used

[For] the great battle at Gan, [the king] summoned the six [military] dignitaries. The king said: “Ah! Men of the six services, I proclaim to you as an exhortation:

大戰于甘，乃召六卿。王曰：嗟！六事之人，予誓告汝：

The Lord of Hu violates and despises the five moving forces,  
and he neglects and discards the three standards.<sup>32</sup>

On this account, Heaven destroys him and severs his Mandate.

Now, I, indeed,<sup>33</sup> respectfully execute the punishment appointed by  
Heaven.

有扈氏威侮五行，\*-aj

怠棄三正。\*-ej

天用勦絕其命。\*-ej

今予惟恭行天之罰。

If [you] on the left do not perform the duty of the left, you do not honor  
the Mandate.<sup>34</sup>

If [you] on the right do not perform the duty of the right, you do not  
honor the Mandate.

If [you] charioteers go against the correct way of managing the horses,  
you do not honor the Mandate.

左不攻于左，汝不恭命。\*-ej

右不攻于右，汝不恭命。\*-ej

御非其馬之正 (\*-ej)，汝不恭命。\*-ej

Those who fulfill the Mandate will be rewarded in front of the ancestors;  
those who do not fulfill the Mandate will be killed at the altar of the soil.  
Thus, I will kill you together with your wives and children.”

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the following principal editions, translations, and commentaries: Sun Xingyan 1986; Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005; Pi Xirui 2004; Karlgren 1970; Legge 1991. In many cases (especially with “Harangue of Tang”), the language is obscure and open to multiple interpretations. Readers interested in the philological arguments will easily find detailed discussions in the sources just mentioned. While my own readings of particular words and phrases are based on these discussions, they are by no means self-evident; still, in general, I decided against overburdening the text with very extensive philological notes.

32 There is considerable (and inconclusive) discussion about what *wu xing* 五行 (five moving forces) and *san zheng* 三正 (three standards) may signify; see Sun Xingyan 1986: 210–211; Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: vol. 2, 868–873; Karlgren 1970: 167–169 (glosses 1398–1399). I have no opinion one way or the other and leave the terms as abstract as possible.

33 Here and below, I consistently translate the emphatic copula *wei* 惟 as “indeed.”

34 The word translated as “Mandate” here is *ming* 命, which also means “my command” or “my orders”; for the rationale behind translating it as “Mandate,” see below. Ultimately, the king’s “orders” are the extension of his “Mandate” received from Heaven.

用命 (*-eŋ) 賞于祖，	*-a
弗用命 (*-eŋ) 戮于社。	*-a
予則孥戮汝。 <sup>35</sup>	*-a

The text is constructed as a fixed sequence of elements: a brief prose introduction that sets the scene; the king’s speech beginning with an exclamation; the king explicitly addressing his troops; the indictment of the enemy; the assertion that Heaven has withdrawn its support from the enemy; the claim that the king will now execute the punishment appointed by Heaven; the exhortation of his troops to fulfill their duties; and, finally, a violent threat to exterminate those who do not obey the king’s command. Not all these elements are present in every “harangue”: both the “Harangue of Tang” and the “Harangue at Bi” lack the prose introduction, while the “Harangue at Mu” contains a significantly longer one; the initial exclamation (*jie* 嗟)—in the *Shangshu*, a word largely confined to the harangues and similar texts—is missing only in the “Harangue of Tang”;<sup>36</sup> and the indictment of the enemy and the role of Heaven are much abbreviated in the “Harangue at Bi.” However, while each text may lack one or two features, it still contains all the rest. Moreover, the sequence of these features is followed exactly in each of the “Harangues.”

Rhetorically, the “Harangue at Gan” uses a series of patterns that recur in the other harangues as well. In addition to the initial exclamation, the harangue is marked by the intense use of first- and second-person personal pronouns; distinct sequences of rhyme; the performative self-reference to the “harangue” (“I proclaim to you as an exhortation”); catalogs and repetitions (“you on the left... you on the right... you do not honor the Mandate... you do not honor the Mandate...”); and positive and negative alternatives and their consequences (“those who fulfill the Mandate... those who do not fulfill the Mandate...”). Of particular interest is the use of the word “now” (*jin* 今) for its double function to mark both time and contrast. First, the harangue is situated as a dramatic performance at a specific historical point, the moment before the battle. But second, it serves as the speech’s discursive pivot: what is before “now” describes the terrible status quo that is going to be resolved by the battle (“On this

35 Sun Xingyan 1986: 208–214. The harangue is also included in *Shiji* 史記 2.84 (“Xia benji” 夏本紀), as well as in *Mozi*, “Ming gui xia” 明鬼下, where it is quoted as “Harangue of Yu” 禹誓 and at one point is slightly expanded; see Sun Yirang 2001: 240–242.

36 The exclamation *jie* occurs in “Harangue at Gan,” “Harangue at Mu,” “Great Harangue,” “Harangue of Qin,” “Harangue at Bi,” and, in the *Remnant Zhou Documents*, “Harangue to Shang.” It also appears in the *Shangshu* chapter “Punishments of Lü” (“Lü xing” 呂刑) and in the ancient-script chapters “Punitive Expedition of Yin” (“Yin zheng” 胤征) and “Proclamation of Tang” (“Tang gao” 湯誥).

account, Heaven destroys him and severs his Mandate”); what follows “now” is the application of just force that will lead to the world as it should be (“Now, I, indeed, respectfully execute the punishment appointed by Heaven”). In this, the battle speech is not merely a preparation for the actual battle. In a reversal of significance, the battle is the inevitable result of what is laid out compellingly in the speech. Inscribed into the cultural memory are not the acts of war but the acts of speech: in the remembrance of war as the necessary means for the execution of justice, it is the battle that provides the occasion for the speech, and for the representation of the idealized speaker, not the other way around. Rhetorically, this is highlighted in the dual meaning of the pivotal “now” that stages—in the text but likely also in reenactments of the “harangue” (see below)—the speaker as a dramatic performer and that focuses the attention on the speech itself. In turn, the battle itself, as well as its outcome, is certain and contributes nothing to the historical imagination.

The various elements noted here all serve to intensify the speech, to give it the rhythm of force and inevitability, and to present the king as a charismatic and intensely personal speaker—who, however, by way of speaking in prescribed patterns, is not expressing himself arbitrarily. In the same way as he justifies his imminent attack on the enemy as “executing the punishment appointed by Heaven,” he also speaks to his troops in highly formalized patterns that mark his speech as commensurate with his task. His own appointment is fundamentally religious, as is shown by how he deals with his troops: those who obey him will be rewarded in front of the ancestors; those who disobey him will be killed before the spirits of the soil.

As can be seen in the arrangement of the text above, the word “Mandate” (*ming* 命) is at the very center of the “Harangue at Gan”: it appears six times, and in four of these instances it is in the rhyme position at the end of the line. Even in the remaining two cases, it marks the end of a syntactic unit (“Those who fulfill / do not fulfill the Mandate...”), that is, in front of another caesura; literally, *ming* punctuates the larger part of the speech. The word has two dimensions and a clear direction from Heaven to the king and from there to the audience: it is Heaven’s “Mandate” to the king, from where it extends in the form of “commands” (also *ming*) to his troops. As anyone who disobeys the king’s commands ultimately disobeys the Heavenly Mandate, and consequentially will be killed in front of the spirits, the king himself does not act out of his own volition either. Mandated by Heaven, he must act.

Remarkably, the word *ming* appears just once, now as a verb, in the “Harangue of Tang.” Otherwise, the structural, rhetorical, and ideological perspectives identified in the “Harangue at Gan” are also found here, but now embedded into a more complex speech:

The king said:<sup>37</sup> “Come, you multitudes, and listen completely to my words! It is not that I, the young son,<sup>38</sup> have the temerity to move forward and rise up in rebellion. The ruler of Xia has many crimes, and Heaven has mandated that he be killed.

王曰：格爾眾庶，悉聽朕言。非台小子，敢行稱亂。有夏多罪，天命殛之。

Now, you are in multitudes; you say: ‘Our lord has no compassion for us multitudes. He causes us to cast aside our husbandry and to bring disaster on the correct Xia [way of government].’

今爾有眾。汝曰：我后不恤我眾，舍我穡事，而割正夏。

I, indeed, hear the words of you multitudes. The house of Xia has crimes. I am fearful of the God-on-High and do not have the temerity not to be correct.<sup>39</sup>

予惟聞汝眾言。夏氏有罪，予畏上帝，不敢不正。

Now you may say:

‘The crimes of Xia—what can be done about them!’<sup>40</sup>

The king of Xia in everything obstructs the efforts of the multitudes, in everything brings disaster upon the City of Xia; the multitudes are in peril and not harmonized.<sup>41</sup>

今汝其曰：

夏罪其如台。	*-ə
夏王率遏眾力，	*-ək
率割夏邑。	*-əp
有眾率怠弗協。	*-ep

[I] say:

‘Will we expire on this day?’<sup>42</sup>

37 Note that here and also in “Harangue at Mu” below, the king is not at all king at the time of his speech; he is the king only retrospectively, after the conquest.

38 “The young son” or “the little one” (*xiao zi* 小子) is the king’s self-designation vis-à-vis his ancestors.

39 Another possibility is to read *zheng* 正 as 征 (to march against [Xia]).

40 I follow the early interpretation suggested by the parallel passage in *Shiji* 3.95 (有罪，其奈何？); see also the discussions in Sun Xingyan 1986: 218; Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: vol. 2, 883; Pi Xirui 2004: 199. For different interpretations see Karlgren 1970: 172–173 (gloss 1405); Legge 1991: 175.

41 Reading *dai* 怠 as 殆; see Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: vol. 2, 883.

42 The line 時日曷喪 is highly controversial among commentators; see Karlgren 1970: 174 (gloss 1407). *Shiji* 3.95 is more explicit: 是日何時喪? (When will this sun expire?). Here,



[Then] I and you will all perish!  
 Since the virtue of Xia is [deficient] like this,  
 today I must move forward.

曰：

時日曷喪。 \* -aŋ

予及汝皆亡。 \* -aŋ

夏德若茲， \* -ə

今朕必往。 \* -aŋ

May you support me, the solitary man,  
 to deliver the punishment appointed by Heaven!

I will then greatly reward you.

Among you, may there be none who does not trust me!

爾尚輔予一人， \* -in

致天之罰。 \* -at

予其大賚汝。 \* -a

爾無不信， \* -in

I shall not eat my words!

If you do not obey the words of [this] harangue,  
 I will kill you together with your wives and children,  
 and there will be none who will be pardoned.”

朕不食言。 \* -əŋ

爾不從誓言， \* -əŋ

予則孥戮汝， \* -a

罔有攸赦。<sup>43</sup> \* -ak

While the text lacks both the introductory narrative and the king's exclamation, almost all the other structural, rhetorical, and ideological elements of the “Harangue at Gan” are also present here. But there is much more. Even though the text does not mention the ancestral spirits or the altar of the soil, the king's speech is marked as religious by his self-designation “I, the young son” (*yi xiao zi* 台小子), a standard formula used by a ruler to position himself toward both Heaven and his ancestral spirits; in addition, the king declares himself to be “fearful of the God-on-High.” Rhetorically, the text is less repetitive while being far more rhythmic; most of its lines are tetrasyllabic and as such represent a

the fifth-century commentator Pei Yin 裴駟 quotes *Shangshu dazhuan* 尚書大傳 2.13a: “[The Xia king] Jie said: “The sky having the sun is like me having the people. Does the sun perish? If the sun perishes, then I will perish” (天之有日，猶吾之有民。日有亡哉？日亡吾乃亡矣；Pei Yin quotes the last phrase as 日亡吾亦亡矣).

43 Sun Xingyan 1986: 215–220; *Shiji* 3.95 (“Yin benji” 殷本紀).

strong sense of order, authority, and adherence to prescribed form. It is also remarkable that the text speaks of “the king”—which Tang is not at the time of his rebellion. This—just like the claim for the Mandate both here and in the “Harangue at Gan”—reflects the retrospective view of the successful rebellion and of the new dynasty that Tang founded as its first king; furthermore, it gives a sense of both dignity and inevitability to the future king *while he still speaks as a rebel*.<sup>44</sup>

Of particular interest are the repeated passages where the king anticipates the speeches of the multitudes—or rather their leaders—who are still the subjects of the soon-to-be-overthrown king of Xia. In trying to marshal his troops, Tang speaks to an elite he wants to win over for what he claims is *not* a (lawless) rebellion. These leaders of the multitudes now face a choice of loyalty: to the rebel or to their ruler, the king of Xia; to the old regime or to the possible future one. It is, seemingly, to these functionaries that Tang declares “It is not that I, the young son, have the temerity to move forward and rise up in rebellion.” As he begins the indictment of the king of Xia, he recognizes the multitudes and lets *them* make the case for killing their ruler. To this indictment *by the people* he then responds with a dual claim in favor of the military attack: he “hears” the multitudes, and he is “fearful” of the high god. Having thus received the Mandate from both the powers above and the folk below, rising against the king of Xia is not his choice but his inescapable duty, according to which he “does not have the temerity not to be correct.”

This rhetorical move is then followed by another quotation of the multitudes: “The crimes of Xia—what can be done about them!” While this sentence is open to different interpretations, all commentators agree that the quotation itself is limited to just this phrase, with the next three lines then again being spoken by Tang. This is not certain at all; instead, the rhyme scheme, comprising three \*-ə rhymes (including the two *rusheng* 入聲 rhymes \*-ək and \*-əp) and the assonating \*-ep rhyme in the final line, may suggest a single speech. Either way, the four rhymed lines are then followed by a second *yue* 曰 (“[I] say”) that marks the following as another speech, which I take as comprising only two lines (that are highly disputed in their meaning): “Will we expire on this day? / Then I and you will all perish!” Depending on the interpretation, there are different ways to determine the speaker; in my reading, this rhymed couplet begins Tang’s final response to the multitudes. The couplet is quoted in

44 Assuming that “Harangue of Tang” is a Zhou invention, the rhetoric here is transparently based on the Zhou’s own view of themselves and projected from there back to Tang: when King Wu rises in rebellion (see “Harangue at Mu” below), he already is portrayed as “the king,” complete with an entire bureaucracy of officials in his service.

*Mengzi* 1A.2 and could thus be seen as isolated, or even as an independent proverb, but its rhyme continues:

Will we expire on this day?	時日曷喪。	*-aŋ
[Then] I and you will all perish!	予及汝皆亡。	*-aŋ
Since the virtue of Xia is [deficient] like this,	夏德若茲，	*-ə
today I must move forward.	今朕必往。	*-aŋ

In formal terms, nothing suggests ending the quotation after the first two lines. Instead, this passage of four lines is followed by two others of the same length, each with its own rhyme pattern: the first shows an embracing (or “envelope”) rhyme of \*-in around \*-at/\*-a, while the second contains two couplet rhymes of \*-ən and \*-a/\*-ak. Each of these three passages has a clearly demarcated theme: the first quatrain offers Tang’s determination to march against Xia, no matter the risk; the second is an appeal to the multitudes to support and trust him, combined with the promise of great rewards; and the third is the concluding threat that he will not retreat (“I will not eat my words!”) and will kill anyone who is not with him. In sum, the speech in its received form is a highly patterned, carefully constructed artifact, with its sequence of individual sections consistently and coherently marked in both form and content.

Tang’s is the voice of the classic rebel, but one who rejects the label of rebellion (*luan* 亂) in order to define his actions as legitimate. His argument is classically Mencian: if the ruler makes his people suffer, it is morally legitimate (or even imperative, in Tang’s rhetoric) to remove him—an axiom underlying both the “Harangue of Tang” and the “Harangue at Mu.”<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, within the *Mengzi*, the clearest statement on the legitimacy of killing a tyrannical ruler is in *Mengzi* 1B.8, which raises the examples of Tang killing Jie (the last Xia king) and King Wu killing Zhouxin (the last Shang king). The same rationale, once again with allusions to Jie and Zhouxin, is elaborated upon in *Xunzi* 荀子<sup>46</sup> and *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋,<sup>47</sup> both of which depict war and rebellion against tyrannical rule as not only justified but also as necessarily successful. Nowhere do these texts, or any of the harangues, argue in favor of aggression merely out of a sense of moral superiority (let alone less noble motives). Instead, the justification for war and rebellion derives exclusively from the misdeeds of a ruler toward his own people, for which Heaven then ap-

45 For a convenient summary of this point, see Lau 2003: xxxix–xlii.

46 Chapter 15, “Yi bing” 議兵.

47 Books 7 and 8 with its various subchapters on warfare.

points the ultimate punishment. In summoning and exhorting his troops, no speaker of the early harangues is portrayed as acting on his own volition.

Of course, the seemingly dialogical structure of the “Harangue of Tang,” where the future king responds to the plaint of the suffering folk, is a rhetorical construction. The multitudes, after all, do not speak; their voices are created within Tang’s own speech. Unlike King Qi in the “Harangue at Gan,” Tang does not simply command his troops; instead, he “hears” and responds and only then gives his own tripartite speech marked by rhyme, rhythm, and meter. As the “Harangue of Tang” is without a doubt a Zhou text and hence an artifact of retrospective imagination, the true audience addressed by Tang is not that of the “multitudes” but the political public of a much later time. In its own sophisticated way, the “Harangue of Tang” incorporates the entire discourse on the justification of regicide, claiming the legitimacy of overthrowing the doomed king of Xia as endowed by both Heaven and the common folk. If anything, this complexity of argumentation marks the text not as an early prototype of a “harangue” but as a rather late refinement of the genre.

Among the elements that speak decisively for a Zhou date for the “Harangue of Tang” is the implied use of the Mandate of Heaven, which here is more meaningfully employed than in the “Harangue at Gan,” even if asserted, on the surface, less forcefully. In strictly historical terms, for both texts the Zhou notion of the Mandate of Heaven is an anachronistic projection; but for the “Harangue at Gan,” it further is a misguided transposition of the concept of dynastic change to the suppression of a local rebel. Accordingly, when later texts discuss the legitimacy of regicide in conjunction with the Mandate of Heaven, the “Harangue at Gan” is not among their points of reference.<sup>48</sup> These are, instead, the “Harangue of Tang” and the “Harangue at Mu,” as both are given by rebel leaders on the verge of overthrowing an existing dynasty and establishing their own.

In their received form, the two texts are similar in ideology, reflecting a political discourse that seems far more at home in the fourth or third centuries BCE than at any earlier time. For one, no Western Zhou bronze inscription comes close to the discursive sophistication displayed in these powerful speeches; and equally importantly, the idealizing “ellipsis of the battle” (C. H. Wang) common to both harangues is forcefully contradicted by the “Great Capture” as well as by the inscriptional record from Western Zhou times through the Spring and Autumn period.<sup>49</sup> While the “Harangue at Mu” and

48 For a discussion of the issue, see Pines 2008.

49 See Shaughnessy 1997: 31–67 and especially the essay by Joachim Gentz in this volume (chapter 4), both citing “Great Capture” together with the inscriptional evidence.

“Harangue of Tang” share their ideological underpinnings, their rhetorically sophisticated formal structures are distinct from one another. (This fact alone speaks against the idea that the “Harangue of Tang” followed the blueprint of the “Harangue at Mu.”) Of these two texts, the “Harangue at Mu” is the significantly longer one (of 245 vs. 144 characters) and contains an expansive range of different rhetorical elements:

The time was the *jiazi* day at dawn. In the morning, the king arrived in the open fields of Mu in the outskirts of [the City of] Shang and made a harangue. The king in his left wielded the yellow battle-ax, in his right held up the white banner, which he brandished. He said: “From far away you are, men of the western lands.”

時甲子昧爽。王朝至于商郊牧野乃誓。王左杖黃鉞，右秉白旄以麾。曰：逖矣西土之人。

The king said: “Ah! Great officers of my friendly states, manager of affairs, minister of the multitudes, minister of the horses, minister of public words, secondary officers, instructors, captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, and further men of Yang, Shu, Qiang, Mao, Wei, Lu, Peng, and Pu: lift up your dagger-axes, join your shields, raise your lances—I shall make a harangue.”

王曰：嗟我友邦冢君、御事、司徒、司馬、司空、亞旅、師氏、千夫長、百夫長、及庸、蜀、羌、髳、微、盧、彭、濮人。稱爾戈，比爾干，立爾矛。予其誓。

The king said: “The ancients had a saying: ‘The hen should not call the morning. If the hen calls the morning, the house will come to an end.’ Now for Shou, the king of Shang, it is indeed the words of his wife that he follows. He blindly discards the sacrifices he should present and fails to respond [to the blessings he has received from the spirits]. He blindly discards his paternal and maternal uncles who are still alive and fails to employ them. Thus, indeed, the vagabonds of the four quarters, loaded with crimes—these he honors, these he exalts, these he trusts, these he enlists, these he takes as high officials and dignitaries, to let them oppress and tyrannize the people and bring villainy and treachery upon the City of Shang.

王曰：古人有言曰：牝雞無晨。牝雞之晨，惟家之索。今商王受，惟婦言是用，昏棄厥肆祀弗荅。昏棄厥遺王父母弟不迪。乃惟四方之多罪逋逃。是崇是長，是信是使，是以為大夫卿士，俾暴虐于百姓，以茲宄于商邑。

Now, I, Fa, indeed respectfully execute the punishment appointed by Heaven. In today’s affair, do not exceed six steps, seven steps; then stop and adjust [your ranks]. Officers, exert yourselves! Do not exceed four attacks, five attacks, six attacks, seven attacks; then stop and adjust [your ranks]. Exert yourselves, officers—you shall be martial and imposing! Be like tigers, like leopards, like black bears, like brown bears! In the outskirts of Shang, do not press and assault those who flee, but make them serve the western lands. Exert yourself, officers! You who do not exert yourselves will face personal destruction!

今予發，惟恭行天之罰。今日之事，不愆于六步、七步乃止齊焉。夫子勛哉，不愆于四伐、五伐、六伐、七伐乃止齊焉。勛哉夫子，尚桓桓。如虎、如貔、如熊、如羆。于商郊，弗迓克奔，以役西土。勛哉夫子。爾所弗勛，其于爾躬有戮。<sup>50</sup>

The first distinguishing feature of the “Harangue at Mu” is a tripartite introduction, a contextualizing narrative of thirty-three characters that stages the king: first, it provides the (auspicious) date and the location and states that the king “made a harangue”; next, it presents the king in his regal gear; and third, it identifies his troops: “From far away you are, men of the western lands.” Remarkably, this introduction is given to a text that already contains its own historical context: it calls King Wu, the speaker, by his personal name Fa 發; it indicts at great length the last Shang ruler; and it identifies the location of the speech as “in the outskirts of Shang.” In short, compared with the other speeches, the initial framing seems extraneous and might be a retrospective addition to the “harangue” proper, even if the latter itself postdates the purported event by centuries already. But if this is the case, why would this framing have been considered helpful or even necessary when other speeches in the *Shangshu* that include much less historical detail could stand on their own?

The answer may be found in the middle section of the introduction: “The king in his left wielded the yellow battle-ax, in his right held up the white banner, which he brandished.” The ornate paraphernalia do not mark the appearance of a warrior; they are the ritual insignia of a ruler who solemnly assumes the warrior’s posture. The “yellow” battle-ax, likely “yellow with gold,”<sup>51</sup> is not a weapon but an iconic attribute of intrinsic value and prestige. It is indexical of a commitment to traditional ritual, of the future king’s sheer wealth and control over material resources, and, anachronistically, of its royal status at the moment of his imminent rebellion. Whether or not the “white” banner sig-

50 Sun Xingyan 1986: 282–290; *Shiji* 4.122–123 (“Zhou benji” 周本紀).

51 Legge 1991: 300; see also the early gloss in *Shiji* 4.123.

nified the geographical origin of the Zhou,<sup>52</sup> the combination of “yellow battle-ax” (*huang yue* 黃鉞) and “white banner” (*bai mao* 白旄) is never associated with any other historical figure of early China. By Han times, at the latest, the two items combined had become the single defining feature of King Wu’s iconography even as his speeches, including the “Great Harangue,” were contextualized in different and inconsistent ways.<sup>53</sup> It is very possible that this colorful iconography of King Wu wielding his yellow ax and brandishing his white banner had entered the historical imagination via an early performance tradition. This tradition may have developed in the choreography of the Zhou ancestral sacrifices (see below)—whether before the fall of the Western Zhou in 771 BCE or between 771 and 256 BCE, the year when the Zhou state was formally vanquished—from where it became recalled in the various literary accounts of the Zhou conquest, including, at some point, by being attached to the “Harangue at Mu.”

Following the introductory frame, the “harangue” proper begins in typical fashion with the standard opening of Zhou royal speeches, “the king said” (*wang yue* 王曰); this formula then launches an extensive catalog of officers and tribes before stating “I shall make a harangue” (*yu qi shi* 予其誓). The remaining two-thirds of the text are again divided into two sections of almost equal length: the first, once again opened with “the king said,” is an extensive indictment of the king of Shang, while the second—now with the king identifying himself by his personal name Fa—rouses the troops to exert themselves. The concluding threat, another standard feature, is brief: “You who do not exert yourselves will face personal destruction!”

The “Harangue at Mu” employs the same rhetorical features as observed before: the initial exclamation, the performative self-reference to the “harangue” as well as to the occasion, and the use of first- and second-person personal pronouns (with the latter, however, now restricted to the final formulaic threat). On the other hand, the features of rhyme and meter that figure so prominently in the “Harangue of Tang” are virtually absent. What stand out most, however, are the catalogs and repetitions, beginning with the two extensive catalogs of functionaries and tribes. Through these totalizing lists, the king demonstrates not just overwhelming military power but the comprehensive coalition that he has assembled in his support. Thus, the “Harangue at Mu” legitimates King Wu’s conquest as the deed not of a single man but of the true

52 In Warring States correlative cosmology, white is the color of the west, which would then suggest a Warring States date for the introductory frame.

53 See *Shiji* 4.122, 32.1479 (“Qi Taigong shijia” 齊太公世家); Liu Wendian 1988: 6.192 (“Lan ming” 覽冥) and 20.687 (“Taizu” 秦族); Major 2010: 215, 826.

leader of the people from all quarters—just like the “Harangue of Tang” is addressed to, and spoken on behalf of, the “multitudes.” Possibly anachronistic, however, is King Wu’s catalog of dignitaries: among other officials, the future king already has the “minister of the multitudes, minister of the horses, minister of public words,” all of whom would be among the highest officials of a developed Zhou state.<sup>54</sup> Just as he assembles the various tribes, displaying his all-inclusive command of the multitudes, he also brings to the battle an already complete bureaucracy that is similar to bureaucracies cataloged elsewhere, such as in “The Establishment of Government” (“Li zheng” 立政),<sup>55</sup> in a considerable number of mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, and, on the largest scale, in the *Rituals of Zhou* (*Zhou li* 周禮).

An additional element is the rhetorical use of an ancient saying introduced by “The ancients had a saying...” (*guren you yan yue* 古人有言曰). The same formula appears verbatim also in the third part of the “Great Harangue” and in the “Harangue of Qin” and, further, in the “Proclamation about Alcohol” (“Jiu gao” 酒誥).<sup>56</sup> Rhetorically, it is a claim for tradition and authority: ready to overthrow the current dynasty, the future king appeals to a piece of common wisdom that precedes the corrupt ruler of the present and that can be invoked to judge him. In other words, the current rule is perverted not merely by current standards but by the agreed-upon standards of old, or of all time; in addition, the saying invokes a “natural” and therefore unquestionable analogy (“The hen should not call the morning”) to judge the behavior of the ruler.

All three harangues discussed above present their speakers as charismatic leaders (in the Weberian sense) who speak in an intense, forceful voice to rouse—and also threaten—their people. The repeated use of first- and second-person pronouns, the catalogs, the exclamations, and the self-reference to the speech as a “harangue,” spoken with the urgency of “now,” all signify the drama of the moment, the exceptional personality of the speaker, and the pivotal turning point of history.<sup>57</sup>

Yet the “Harangue at Mu,” in staging the king in his regal gear and invoking the comprehensive order of good government, also shows this charisma as less

54 For other anachronistic elements in “Harangue at Mu,” see Matsumoto 1988: 167–169; Zhang Xitang 1958: 186–187. While such titles can be found in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, we do not know whether the Zhou had employed them before the conquest of 1046 BCE.

55 Legge 1991: 515–516.

56 Legge 1991: 296, 627, 409.

57 I have dwelled on the figure of the charismatic leader more extensively in my essay on the “Canon of Yao” (“Yao dian” 堯典), where the sage-king Yao is portrayed in precisely this way; see chapter 1 in the present volume.



personal than institutional. Its codified, ritualized, and formulaic idiom is also unmistakable in entire phrases that are shared among the harangues and related texts. These include the initial exclamations *jie* 嗟, the indictments of the enemy, and the expressions of the king's violence. The single word *jie* is largely confined to the harangues and so is the language enumerating the crimes of the enemy. As shown above, these catalogs appear briefly in the "Harangue at Gan" and the "Harangue of Tang," but it is only in the context of the Zhou conquest that the indictment takes up a large part of the battle speech, reflecting the Zhou's intense demand for political legitimacy either immediately after the conquest or at a later time of crisis, when the conquest was recalled as foundational memory.<sup>58</sup> This is true for the "Harangue at Mu" and for all three parts of the "Great Harangue"; it is also true for the "Harangue to Shang" chapter of the *Remnant Zhou Documents* and for the *Shangshu* chapters "Many Officers" and "Many Regions," where the rulers of Zhou speak to the former officers of Shang. The latter three speeches are the counterparts to the harangues: they are given not before but sometime after the battle, and then not to the Zhou troops but to the captured officers.<sup>59</sup> Rhetorically, they complete the conquest by addressing the conquered. In all these texts, the two most frequently repeated terms to indict the Shang are *yin* 淫 (excessive) and *bao* 暴 (violent) that together mark the loss of ritual propriety and the oppressive rule imposed on the common folk.

The harangues use equally formulaic language for their announcement of violence toward the enemy and the threat of punishment toward their own troops. "I respectfully execute the punishment appointed by Heaven" (予惟恭行天之罰) appears in the "Harangue at Gan" and the "Harangue at Mu," as well as, slightly abbreviated (as 致天之罰), in the "Harangue of Tang" and twice in the "Great Harangue." With minor rephrasing it also appears twice in the ancient-script chapter "The Punitive Expedition of Yin" ("Yin zheng" 胤征) as well as in the three speeches to the captured Shang officers, "Harangue to Shang," "Many Officers," and "Many Regions." Likewise, "I will kill you together with your wives and children" (予則孥戮汝) is shared by the "Harangue at Gan" and the "Harangue of Tang," while the "Harangue at Mu" threatens the troops with "personal destruction" (于爾躬有戮), and the "Harangue at Bi" warns of

58 In the *Shijing*, the indictment of the Shang is advanced most forcefully in the "Daya" 大雅 hymn "Dang" 蕩 (Mao 255).

59 In a similar double move, the *Shangshu* mentions divinations that predict the success of the Zhou conquest first to the doomed last Shang king (in "The Chief of the West Killed Li" ["Xi bo kan Li" 西伯戡黎]) and then to the future Zhou king Wu (in "Great Harangue"); see the coda to the present chapter.

“great punishment” (大刑). While other *Shangshu* chapters devoted to the Zhou such as “Against Luxurious Ease” (“Wu yi” 無逸), “Establishment of Government,” “Proclamation about Alcohol,” “Proclamation to Kang” (“Kang gao” 康誥), “Punishments of Lü” (“Lü xing” 呂刑), and “The Chief of the West Killed Li” (“Xi bo kan Li” 西伯戡黎) also invoke the misdeeds of the Shang and their just and Heaven-ordained punishment, these notions are not part of the structural core of the text there.

A remarkable feature of the three harangues discussed here, and another striking instance of an “institutional voice,” is the idiom of rhyme, meter, and poetic structure. As seen above, the “Harangue at Gan” and the “Harangue of Tang” contain sustained rhymed and largely tetrasyllabic passages; the same is true of the “Great Harangue,” including in its passages that are quoted in the *Mozi* and the *Mengzi*.<sup>60</sup> This is the idiom of the ritual hymns of the *Shijing* 詩經. The “Harangue at Mu” also contains a particular syntactic pattern typical of ancient poetic language, namely, in the sequence “these he honors, these he exalts, these he trusts, these he enlists” (是崇是長，是信是使). Here again, we are facing not some idiosyncratic choice (even though the pattern is unique among the harangues) but a fixed pattern of institutional language use.<sup>61</sup>

### Reflections on the Harangues in Early Chinese Cultural History

At some point during the Zhou dynasty, there existed a blueprint for prebattle harangues. We do not know when exactly these speeches were composed or how they changed over time. In his analysis of parallels between the “Great Harangue” and the “Harangue at Mu,” and how the former is quoted (also under different titles) in Warring States texts, Nomura Shigeo 野村茂夫 has argued that “Great Harangue” was not so much the title of a particular text but rather encompassed an entire range of texts concerned with the founding of the Zhou dynasty; that these texts were originally orally transmitted; and that only late in the Warring States, a text such as the “Harangue at Mu” was extracted and isolated from the surrounding “Great Harangue” material.<sup>62</sup>

60 Consider, e.g., the quotations in *Mengzi* 3B.5 and *Mozi*, “Fei ming xia” (Sun Yirang 2001: 255–256).

61 See Kern 2000a: 106–109.

62 Nomura 1965. By contrast, Matsumoto (1988: 165–167) insists that despite their overlap, the two “harangues” were two separate texts; he speculates that after the original (Warring States period) “Great Harangue” was lost, its later versions were inspired by “Harangue at Mu.”

Based on Nomura's discussion of textual parallels, the linguistic features of the texts, and the way they are quoted in various Warring States writings, this is an eminently attractive hypothesis. It frees us from the traditional—and methodologically unsustainable—assumption that the received texts are discrete entities that in some inexplicable way survived over centuries in more or less pristine form and that therefore can be dated individually on the basis of their linguistic properties.<sup>63</sup> Nomura's view of the "Great Harangue" material as a textual repertoire that changed over time and only gradually sedimented into isolated texts removes the traditional concerns with strict textual identity in favor of a more capacious and more flexible scenario where different parts of the textual material could be invoked on different occasions and in different texts. Such a scenario fits the available evidence of quotations from what eventually was to become the *Shangshu*, considering how unevenly—indeed poorly—these passages match the received text in the great majority of cases. Moreover, it asks us to rethink what we mean by the canonization of the written anthology: most likely, this canonization, which took place only in late Warring States and early imperial times, was not merely an act of collecting and preserving preexisting texts but, as a far more invasive procedure, constituted and isolated these texts out of a larger repertoire of material from different periods. Such an act of *textual formation* would further be the best explanation for the remarkable structural and ideological coherence between the various harangues no matter to which historical period they are attributed individually. After all, the purported speakers of the different harangues were separated by centuries, and it would be adventurous to suggest that King Wu carried with him copies of the earlier speeches. Few modern scholars would consider the "Harangue at Gan" and the "Harangue of Tang" historical documents dating from the time of their purported occasions. Their language is Zhou language of various layers, ranging from Western Zhou through early imperial times.

As described above, the transmitted harangues share a basic structure, a common ideology, and a diction and vocabulary that even included entire phrases repeated verbatim. In their accumulation, these shared features connect the harangues with one another as much as they set them apart from all other texts. At the same time, in their exclamations, self-references to the speech proper ("I shall make a harangue") as well as to their dramatic occasions, their emphatic use of first- and second-person personal pronouns, and their adoption of poetic structures shared with the ritual hymns of the *Shijing*,

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63 See also the discussions by Vogelsang (chapter 2) and Meyer (chapters 3 and 6) in this volume.

they display unmistakable instances of performative speech. Even more, the harangues present themselves as extemporized speech, delivered impromptu at the moment before the attack and referring to the here and now. This, evidently, is a construction, clearly revealed by the phenomenon of shared lines and other formulaic structures that are best understood as instances of an artificially “impoverished” language<sup>64</sup> or the “restricted code” of traditional authority.<sup>65</sup>

But what does this mean for the nature and purpose of these texts, in particular of those attributed to the much earlier Xia and Shang rulers? If they were Zhou fabrications, why were they fabricated? What was their use in Zhou times? A common argument for the production of the “Harangue of Tang” is that “since the text justifies the Shang conquest of Hsia, it could have been created by the Chou founders to justify their own conquest of Shang.”<sup>66</sup> This is a plausible suggestion except for seemingly implying that the “Harangue at Mu,” and then also the presumed “Great Harangue,” could be attributed to the “founders” (presumably King Wu) of the Western Zhou. This presumption is dubious, as argued by Herrlee G. Creel, who declared the “Harangue at Mu” “almost certainly not what it purports to be, a speech by King Wu.”<sup>67</sup> The same conclusion was shared by Chen Mengjia, Zhang Xitang, and Matsumoto Masaaki, who all suspected the text to date from the Warring States;<sup>68</sup> Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu argued that the text shows clear linguistic evidence of post-Western Zhou editing or rewriting;<sup>69</sup> Jiang Shanguo, on the other hand, opted for an earlier, and possibly Western Zhou, date.<sup>70</sup> Yet all these hypotheses are largely moot as soon as we adopt the scenario of a diachronically layered textual repertoire from which a text like the “Harangue of Mu” was isolated, just like the received version of the “Great Harangue,” with which it shares enough similar lines to make the two texts cognate and yet not identical.<sup>71</sup> Beyond the “Harangue at Mu” itself, the issue at stake is this: if the Zhou

64 Bloch 1974: 60.

65 Ahern 1981: 54–55. For further discussion, see Kern 2000a: 58–66; 2000b: 148–154.

66 Shaughnessy 1993: 378.

67 Creel 1970: 456.

68 Chen Mengjia 1985: 112; Zhang Xitang 1958: 186–187; Matsumoto 1988: 167–169.

69 Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: vol. 3, 1140–1142.

70 Jiang Shanguo 1988: 226–227.

71 Beyond the harangues and the *Shangshu*, I consider the notion of “repertoire” or textual “material”—first advanced by Stephen Owen (2006: 73–138) for the formation of early medieval Chinese poetry—a fruitful contribution toward a general theory of Chinese textuality. To cite just one of any number of examples where “repertoire” may be the best explanation to make sense of a relationship between texts: the poem “Xishuai” 蟋蟀

founders did not create their own prebattle harangues, then they also did not create something like the “Harangue at Gan” or the “Harangue of Tang.” Instead, all these texts were part of a common repertoire, or possibly of several separate such repertoires,<sup>72</sup> that at some point during the late Warring States gave rise to the formation of the texts in a form recognizably related to their received versions.

To my mind, the three harangues discussed in the present essay, together with the overall “Great Harangue” repertoire of which the received tripartite version is only one actualization, are *imagined* speeches, or, in the words of Thucydides, expressions of what “would have been needed on any given occasion.” Henri Maspero, in his magisterial 1927 book *La Chine antique*, included the harangues among the pieces he considered “libretti” to be performed with the dance reenactments of historical events at the early Chinese ancestral sacrifices.<sup>73</sup> None of the harangues offers a historical account of a battle or conquest; instead, through its strongly performative features of speech, each mimetically stages the conquering hero as a *dramatis persona*.<sup>74</sup> If there is any

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(“Cricket”) in the received *Shijing* now has a parallel in the Qinghua University manuscript “Qi ye” 耆夜 (perhaps dating from around 300 BCE). The manuscript version of the poem is clearly related to the received text, with which it shares the same title and a considerable number of (sometimes slightly variant) phrases; see Li Xueqin 2010: 150, and pls. 67–68. Clearly, the two texts are not mutually independent, but neither are they the same text. Unfortunately, much of the discussion so far has centered on how these particular two texts are somehow directly related to one another; thus, Li Feng (2013), Huang Huaixin (2012), and Li Xueqin (2011) all believe the manuscript to be the earlier version of the subsequently redacted poem in the received anthology (meaning, these show two different stages in the formation of the same poem). Cao Jianguo (2011) sees it exactly the other way around, taking the manuscript poem as an “imitation” of the one in the *Shijing*. While all this may be possible, nothing suggests that there was any kind of direct relationship between them in terms of one being recomposed on the basis of the other. I find it much more plausible that the two poems are just two (of potentially many more) separate actualizations of material from a common repertoire. For a similar case (and a similar conclusion), see also the insightful discussion of the two “Wu xing” 五行 (“Five Aspects of Virtuous Conduct”) manuscripts from Guodian 郭店 and Mawangdui 馬王堆 in Meyer 2012: 77–130.

72 As has often been noted, the Mohists appear to have had their own body of “documents,” though it is by no means certain what was included there and how this material may have overlapped with that held by other intellectual communities. See, e.g., Lewis 1999: 106–108; Matsumoto 1988: 153–158, 405–456.

73 Maspero 1978: 274–275.

74 Another case of a ritually staged speech may be that of the *Shangshu* chapter “Testamentary Charge” (“Gu ming” 顧命) together with several of the early ritual hymns from the *Shijing*; see Fu Sinian 1980: vol. 1, 204–233; Shaughnessy 1997: 169–174; see also C. H. Wang

truth to the “Great Harangue” as originally including several successive situations on the march to war, each with its own speech by the future King Wu and possibly including a text like the “Harangue at Mu,” the entire buildup before the battle consists of a continuous representation of its protagonist *as a speaker*. We do not need to wonder who was there to copy in shorthand (as was done with Colonel Collins’s speech in March 2003) the words of the future king. As revealed by their generic features, modular structure, and restricted idiom, these speeches do not preserve the words of just their respective individual occasions, nor can they be viewed as individual texts created in mutual isolation. Much like the pronouncements in the Qin First Emperor’s seven stele inscriptions that were erected in the aftermath of the imperial unification of 221 BCE, the harangues and their related texts must be seen as individual selections from, or actualizations of, a common underlying hypotext.<sup>75</sup> Built from modular units of intertextual selection, they preserve “what would have been needed,” what should be remembered by future generations, and, most importantly, what defined the idealized figure of a dynastic founder.

From this perspective, the harangues constructed a series of historical paragons as *dramatis personae* and endowed them with charismatic, if institutional, voices to express their motivations and justifications. Taking the speeches as products of the retrospective imagination, that is, as successive, historically contingent framings, we can resolve their contradiction between the restricted, shared, and hence institutional idiom, on the one hand, and the seemingly impromptu expression of the individual persona, on the other. Within the anthology of the *Shangshu*, the harangues are provided with brief prefaces that situate each of them historically and, as a sequence, create the order of dynastic founders and other political heroes significant to the cultural memory. Yet this final instance of selective framing is still transparent to a more ancient one that had shaped, contained, and preserved the speeches over time long before the anthology was formed: the performance tradition likely centered in the institution of the Zhou ancestral sacrifice. In this context of dramatic enactment, *le roi mise en scène* was given his space to speak in a voice that was at once his own and that of the ritual institution and its memory, and through which successive generations commemorated the defining moments of history as morally right and inevitable. At least for the Zhou conquest, if not for

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1988: 18–20. As noted above, in “Testamentary Charge,” the dying King Cheng 成 (1042/1035–1006 BCE) refers to his own testamentary instruction to his son as to “speak bindingly” (*shiyán* 誓言). See Legge 1991: 546.

75 For a detailed analysis, see Kern 2000b: 119–154. For a more general perspective on the principle of modular composition in Chinese texts and artifacts, see Ledderose 2000.

even earlier dynasties that set the models for the Zhou, the (long-deceased) heroic king was represented in the most compelling form possible—by his own words, spoken at the foundational moment that made him king and that brought his dynasty into existence. Cast in this symbolic form, the moment of origin could forever be repeated in every new performance of the king's own words and awe-inspiring appearance—choreographed as wielding the yellow battle-ax and brandishing the white banner—just as the foundational myths of other civilizations, week after week and year after year, are performed and re-performed, binding together the religious and political communities that perpetuate themselves by way of their shared cultural memory.<sup>76</sup> In the Zhou ancestral temple, every such reperformance of King Wu's speech evoked the imagined original harangue as the dynasty's primordial call into being: the act of speech that constituted the scenario of war and mandated the troops to fight. To the cultural memory and its choreography, it was evidently important to overwrite the bloody reality of war—vividly detailed in “Great Capture” as well as in the epigraphic record—with an idealized account that effaced all mention of the actual violence. This idealized vision of the conquest extended further to “Many Officers” and “Many Regions,” which portray the early Zhou rulers in their humane lenience toward the captured leaders of Shang. In “Great Capture,” those officers are slaughtered on an epic scale; in the *Shangshu*, they are warned and instructed through royal speech.

The received early literature includes at least two passages indicating not only the continuous knowledge of a repertoire of earlier speeches, including the “harangue” of King Wu,<sup>77</sup> but indeed their ritual performances. The first is a passage in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳. In the fourth year of Duke Zhao 昭公 (537 BCE), the Chu 楚 minister Jiao Ju 椒舉 addressed his ruler, King Ling of Chu 楚靈王 (r. 540–529 BCE), on the occasion of hosting the regional lords:

“I have learned that ritual is the only thing that the regional lords submit themselves to. Now, you receive the regional lords for the first time, and thus you must be cautious about ritual. Whether or not you will achieve hegemony will depend on this meeting. [King] Qi of Xia held the banquet at the Terrace of Jun, [King] Tang of Shang claimed the Mandate at the grand capital of Bo, [King] Wu of Zhou performed the harangue at the

76 As thoroughly theorized by Assmann 2011; see also Assmann 2006. For a fuller discussion of the royal speeches as texts of early Chinese cultural memory and performance, see Kern 2009: 182–188.

77 The “harangue” referred to here is traditionally believed to be the first part of “Great Harangue.”

Ford of Meng, [King Cheng] reviewed his troops at the southern slope of Mount Qi, [King] Kang gave audience at the Palace of Feng, [King] Mu held his assembly at Mount Tu, [Lord] Huan of Qi marshaled his troops at Shaoling, and [Lord] Wen of Jin issued the covenant at Jiantu. Which of these ceremonies will you use? Xiang Xu of Song and Gonsun Qiao of Zheng are there, the finest men of the regional lords. You shall make your choice.” The king said: “I will use [the ceremony] of [Lord] Huan of Qi.” The king sent out to inquire about ritual from the Master of the Left and Zichan. The Master of the Left said: “A small country practices it, a large country uses it, how would I have the temerity not to submit what I have learned?” He then presented six types of ritual by which a ruler united the regional lords. Zichan said: “A small state offers up its duties, how would I have the temerity not to submit what one is obliged to?” He then presented six types of ritual for the different ranks of nobility when meeting with a ruler.

臣聞諸侯無歸，禮以為歸。今君始得諸侯，其慎禮矣。霸之濟否，在此會也。夏啟有鈞臺之享，商湯有景亳之命，周武有孟津之誓，成有岐陽之搜，康有鄴宮之朝，穆有涂山之會，齊桓有召陵之師，晉文有踐土之盟。君其何用？宋向戌、鄭公孫僑在，諸侯之良也，君其選焉。」王曰：「吾用齊桓。」王使問禮於左師與子產。左師曰：「小國習之，大國用之，敢不薦聞？」獻公合諸侯之禮六。子產曰：「小國共職，敢不薦守？」獻伯子男會公之禮六。<sup>78</sup>

This passage shows that the enactments of earlier military rituals were preserved (real or imagined) and available (“Which of these ceremonies will you choose?”) for reenactment: they could be “presented” (*xian* 獻), that is, performed. The text refers explicitly to King Wu’s harangue at the Ford of Meng, which is part of the “Great Harangue” in its gradual move toward the decisive battle at Mu. In addition, the text invokes the Xia king Qi and the Shang king Lü (Tang), the speakers of the two earlier “harangues.” From this evidence, there can be little doubt that a text like the “Harangue at Mu”—or any other part of the larger “Great Harangue” repertoire—could be staged as liturgical ritual, most likely in the Zhou ancestral temple. In fact, in the “Records of Music” (“Yueji” 樂記) in the *Liji*, Confucius himself offers a detailed account of how the ritual dance suite “Wu” 武 (“Martiality”; also “Da wu” 大武, “Great Martiality”) was performed as a pantomime, enacting King Wu’s conquest of the Shang; and immediately following this description of the individual dance movements, Confucius asks his interlocutor, “Have you alone not heard the

78 Yang Bojun 1995: 1250–1251 (Zhao 4.3).



Verbalization of Muye?” (且女獨未聞牧野之語乎). Muye, the “Wilderness of Mu,” is where King Wu is said to have delivered his harangue. Following this question, Confucius delivers a vivid account of how King Wu—visualized in his ceremonial garb and demeanor—invested the descendants of the former kings, abandoned his weapons and chariots, established the regional lords, and set up the various social norms and ritual practices. “So did the Way of Zhou reach throughout the four quarters,” Confucius concludes, “as ritual and music were communicated and penetrated the realm—is it not appropriate that ‘Martiality’ was performed in slow, long-lasting moves?” (若此，則周道四達，禮樂交通。則夫《武》之遲久，不亦宜乎).<sup>79</sup>

The account of the “Records of Music,” of course, is better considered a late (possibly even Han dynasty) idealization than as reliable historical information. But from the perspective of cultural memory, this distinction is beside the point. What matters is that from the Western Zhou period all the way to the early empire, there existed a continuous tradition—amply attested in the transmitted literature as well as in the archeological record—where ritual and music were performed in the context of the ancestral sacrifice and other court ceremonies to commemorate and perpetuate the past. Whether or not the “Verbalization of Muye” (牧野之語) was itself the title of a particular recitation,<sup>80</sup> it is clear that King Wu’s “Harangue at Mu” was part and parcel of this commemorative practice and as such closely connected with the music and dance suite “Martiality.” It is in this context of the ancestral sacrifice and larger system of court ritual that the archive of memory—whether or not it existed in writing—was continuously performed, reimagined, communicated, and perpetuated. This, quite simply, is what ritual *does* in premodern societies, and the above-cited passages from *Zuo zhuan* and *Liji* tell us just as much.<sup>81</sup>

How shall we then imagine the original performance of a text like the “Harangue at Mu”? Where should it be placed historically? And how did the knowledge of it—real or imagined—survive through centuries until it entered texts such as *Zuo zhuan* and *Liji*? It is certainly possible that the “Harangue at Mu,” or the entire repertoire of the “Great Harangue” altogether, was already part of the commemorative culture of the late Western Zhou when in the face of tangible dynastic decline, the political concept of the Mandate of Heaven,

79 See Sun Xidan 1989: 1023–1029; Legge 1967: vol. 2, 121–125. On the song and dance suite “Martiality,” see Wang Guowei 1975: 2.15b–17b; Sun Zuoyun 1996: 239–272; C. H. Wang 1988: 8–25; Shaughnessy 1997: 165–195; Du Xiaolin 2013.

80 As argued in Eno 2000, with additional examples for the use of *yu* 語 in the possible sense of “recitation.”

81 Connerton 1989; Assmann 2006, 2011; Tambiah 1985: 123–166; Kern 2000a.

together with the remembrance of Kings Wen and Wu as a joint pair, emerged in full force and with unprecedented urgency.<sup>82</sup> It is even possible that King Wu *did* deliver a rousing battle speech on the eve of the conquest, which was then, in whatever form, either transmitted or reimagined at some later point. Whatever the case, from the fact that Warring States and Han authors knew about both a “Great Harangue” and a “Harangue at Mu,” it appears that more than a single version of King Wu’s battle speech existed, and that these different versions gradually found their way into different written accounts. It is also possible that to the very end of the Zhou state, until 256 BCE, the conquest of 1046 BCE was still remembered in performance. At the same time—judging from texts like *Zuo zhuan* and *Liji*—it is also clear that knowledge not only of the harangues but also of their presence in performances of music, dance, and speech had spread beyond the Zhou ancestral temple: certainly to Confucius’s home state of Lu but apparently also to the whole Chinese realm, where, finally, the liturgical repertoire became gradually transposed into the repository of the textualized philosophical tradition. It is in this tradition that the *Mengzi* quotes the “Great Harangue” to argue that it is Heaven, together with its people, that establishes a ruler: “Heaven sees as its people see; Heaven listens as its people listen” (天視自我民視，天聽自我民聽).<sup>83</sup>

### Coda

Elsewhere I have discussed records of divination in the *Shangshu*.<sup>84</sup> The following table lists all instances of such records throughout the text.

From the vast number of late Shang (ca. 1250–1046 BCE) oracle bones and from further records of milfoil and other divinatory practices in various historical sources, it appears that divination was a constant and integral element of early Chinese rulership. It is therefore curious that only ten chapters of the *Shangshu* contain any records of it, including two ancient-script chapters.<sup>85</sup> Two of these records refer to specific historical moments in high antiquity (“Counsels of the Great Yu”) or mid-Shang times (“Pan

82 See Kern 2009: 148–151.

83 *Mengzi* 5A.5. The same idea is also expressed at the end of the *Shangshu* chapter “Counsels of Gao Yao” (“Gao Yao mo” 皋陶謨); see Legge 1991: 74.

84 The present discussion is an abbreviated and revised version of Kern, forthcoming.

85 Here, the distinction between ancient- and modern-script chapters is not relevant, as the pertinent passages of the two ancient-script chapters “Counsels of the Great Yu” and “Great Harangue” are also attested in other pre-Qin sources. In the case of “Great Harangue,” the *Guoyu* 國語 even invokes the chapter title; see Xu Yuanhao 2002: 91 (“Zhouyu, xia” 周語下).

Geng”),<sup>86</sup> while the remaining eight are all related to the early Zhou rulers. Among the Zhou chapters, “The Great Plan” (“Hong fan” 洪範) purports to contain a “divine Great Plan of governance”<sup>87</sup> delivered to King Wu. As such, the “Great Plan” systematically maps out the place of divination in governance without reference to any particular historical event.<sup>88</sup> In similarly unspecific terms, in “Lord Shi” (“Jun Shi” 君奭) the Duke of Zhou mentions how, since high antiquity, virtuous ministers have assisted their rulers by always heeding the divinations of the tortoise and the milfoil stalks (故一人有事于四方，若卜筮，罔不是孚),<sup>89</sup> reminding us again of the constant presence of divination in governance.

The remaining six instances of divination records in the *Shangshu* rhetorically define the critical moments in early Zhou history:

1. In “The Chief of the West Killed Li” (“Xi bo kan Li” 西伯戡黎), the high minister Zu Yi 祖伊 warns the last Shang king, Zhouxin: “Son of Heaven, Heaven has already ended the Mandate of our Yin [dynasty]; the perfected [wise] men and the great tortoise have not dared to foresee auspiciousness! It is not that the former kings do not aid us latter men; it is only that the king has become lascivious and dissolute and by this brings the end upon himself. Thus, Heaven has abandoned us” (天子，天既訖我殷命。格人元龜，罔敢知吉。非先王不相我後人，惟王淫戲用自絕。故天棄我).<sup>90</sup> In both language and ideology—from the term “Son of Heaven” (*tianzi* 天子) to the indictment of the Shang king—this account is part of the overall “Great Harangue” (“Tai shi” 泰誓) and “Harangue at Mu” (“Mu shi” 牧誓) conquest narrative: a work of Zhou imagination and political propaganda.<sup>91</sup>
2. The complementary record to this purported Shang divination announcing the dynastic collapse is included in “Great Harangue.” Here, after listing the crimes of Shang, King Wu announces the conquest: “Heaven is about to rule the people by using me. My dreams concur with my divination, doubling the blessed auspicious portent. The attack on Shang must succeed” (天其以予乂民。朕夢協朕卜，襲于休祥。戎商必克).<sup>92</sup> The passage appears verbatim in *Guoyu* (from where it is probably taken). In addition, King Wu’s divination is mentioned in the *Gui cang* 歸藏 divination manual excavated at Wangjiatai 王家台

86 Legge 1991: 63, 246.

87 Nylan 2001: 139. For a study of the entire chapter, see Nylan 1992.

88 Legge 1991: 334–338.

89 Legge 1991: 479.

90 Legge 1991: 268–271.

91 See Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: vol. 2, 1067–1070.

92 Legge 1991: 291.

TABLE 8.1 *Divination in the ancient- and modern-script chapters of the Shangshu*

Chapter title	Ancient- or modern-script	Historical period referenced
“Da Yu mo” 大禹謨	Ancient	High antiquity
“Pan Geng” 盤庚	Modern	Mid-Shang
“Xi bo kan Li” 西伯戡黎	Modern	Fall of Shang/Rise of Zhou
“Tai shi” 泰誓	Ancient	Zhou
“Hong fan” 洪範	Modern	Zhou
“Jin teng” 金縢	Modern	Zhou
“Da gao” 大誥	Modern	Zhou
“Shao gao” 召誥	Modern	Zhou
“Luo gao” 洛誥	Modern	Zhou
“Jun Shi” 君奭	Modern	Zhou

(Hubei).<sup>93</sup> Warring States texts thus affirm that King Wu launched the conquest only after having his dreams divined and the tortoise consulted.<sup>94</sup> Altogether, the accounts in “The Chief of the West Killed Li” and “Great Harangue” are mutually complementary, with the first predicting the fall of Shang and the second the rise of Zhou.

3. In “Metal-Bound Coffin” (“Jin teng” 金縢), the Great Duke 太公 and the Duke of Shao 召公 suggest to “respectfully divine” (*mu bu* 穆卜) after King Wu has fallen ill, while the Duke of Zhou objects. Instead, he decides to offer the ancestral spirits his life in exchange for King Wu’s, writing his prayer and commitment on a set of bamboo slips. In his prayer, he announces to the spirits that “now I will present my inquiry to the great tortoise” (今我即命于元龜).<sup>95</sup> After divining with “the three tortoises,” he finds all of them auspicious (乃卜三龜，一習吉); thereafter, he opens “the bamboo receptacles to look at the (oracular) writings” and finds them “likewise auspicious,” concluding that “according to the configurations, the king will suffer no harm” (啟籥見書，

93 See Shaughnessy 2002: 98 (slip 198); now much revised and expanded in Shaughnessy 2014: chapters 4 and 5.

94 The *Gui cang* is believed to predate the Warring States, though we do not know to what extent the third-century BCE manuscript from Wangjiatai may reflect a more ancient text.

95 Following Karlgren 1970: 254 (gloss 1573).

乃并是吉。公曰：體，王其罔害).<sup>96</sup> The “Metal-Bound Coffer” narrative is thus of crucial significance in two respects: first, it depicts the critical moment when the dynasty was endangered merely three years after its founding; and second, it establishes the selfless virtue of the Duke of Zhou. Remarkably, the Qinghua bamboo manuscript version of the story does not present the duke in this way<sup>97</sup>—nor does it record any act of divination. If genuine, the unprovenanced manuscript reflects a strikingly different version of the story and shows that the *Shangshu*'s record of divination was not universally shared across competing versions.

4. “Great Announcement” (“Da gao” 大誥) presents the most emphatic account of divination in the *Shangshu*. First, the Duke of Zhou states that the “tranquilizing king”<sup>98</sup> has left him the great precious tortoise, which the duke then uses to divine about military action against an insurrection that threatens the young dynasty. Claiming that “my divinations have all been auspicious” (朕卜并吉) and that “I have obtained the auspicious divination!” (予得吉卜), he insists: “I, being the young son, do not dare to discard the Mandate from God-on-High! Heaven bestowed blessings on the tranquilizing king and gave rise to our small state of Zhou. It was the tranquilizing king who acted on the result of divination and thus was able to calmly receive this Mandate! Now, as Heaven shall assist the people, how much more must I divine and act on it!” (予惟小子，不敢替上帝命。天休于寧王，興我小邦周。寧王惟卜用，克綏受茲命。今天其相民，矧亦惟卜用). He then concludes emphatically: “Now that I have explored the divination to the utmost, how could I dare not follow it? If I were to follow the tranquilizing man in having these fine territories, how much more so now that the divinations are all auspicious! And so with you, I will grandly march eastward. Heaven's Mandate is unerring: what the divination displays is indeed like this!” (予曷其極卜，敢弗于從。率寧人有指疆土，矧今卜并吉。肆朕誕以爾東征。天命不僭。卜陳惟若茲).<sup>99</sup> Just like the speakers of the various harangues, the duke claims to have no choice but to obey Heaven's will in taking military action.
5. “Announcement of the Duke of Shao” (“Shao gao” 召誥) contains only a brief account of divination. As the Grand Protector 太保 (the Duke of Shao) inspects the eastern localities for the site of a new capital, he finally arrives at Luo 洛,

96 Legge 1991: 355–356.

97 See chapters 5 and 6 in this volume.

98 According to Qiu Xigui (1992: 73–80), *ning* 寧 was an early miswriting for *wen* 文, which leads to the reading of *ningwang* 寧王 (the tranquilizing king) as “King Wen”; likewise, see Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: vol. 3, 1266–1267.

99 Legge 1991: 365–374.

obtains a positive divination about settling there, and begins to lay out the new city (太保朝至于洛，卜宅，厥既得卜，則經營).<sup>100</sup>

6. In the immediately following chapter, “Announcement about Luo” (“Luo gao” 洛誥), the Duke of Zhou performs extensive divinations about the locale; and having obtained positive results, he sends a messenger to the king to present them (朝至于洛師。我卜河朔黎水，我乃卜澗水東，灑水西，惟洛食。我又卜灑水東，亦惟洛食。佻來以圖，及獻卜). The duke’s efforts are then acknowledged by the young King Cheng: “The duke did not dare not to revere Heaven’s blessings; he came and inspected the locality for residence. May he establish [the new capital of] Zhou to accord with the blessings! Having settled the locality, he sent a messenger to come here; and [the messenger] came here to show me how the divinations and blessings were constantly auspicious” (王拜手稽首曰：公不敢不敬天之休，來相宅。其作周匹休。公既定宅，佻來。來視予卜休恆吉).<sup>101</sup> After suppressing the rebellion mentioned in “Great Announcement,” establishing the new capital was the duke’s second major accomplishment—and once again he is portrayed as acting only according to Heaven’s intent.

Taken together, these six records of divination all focus on the four most critical moments in the early years of Western Zhou rule: (a) the initial conquest; (b) the illness and demise of the dynastic founder, King Wu, connected to the rise of the Duke of Zhou and the resolution of the first succession crisis in Chinese history; (c) the suppression of the rebellion that threatened the young dynasty; and (d) the establishment of the new capital. In each case, divination is used to determine the right course of action, which is then pursued without hesitation; the proposed course of action is found to be auspicious, and so is the eventual outcome. There is no instance of an inauspicious divination (other than the one conducted by the Shang, foretelling their imminent defeat, of course), nor is there any case where the action affirmed by divination turns out to be ill-fated. Twice—for the conquest and for the founding of the new capital—we find not one but two complementary divinations, both confirming the same course of action and both claiming Heaven’s Mandate: first, those in “The Chief of the West Killed Li” and “Great Harangue” that foretell the fall of Shang and rise of Zhou; and second, those in “Announcement of the Duke of Shao” and “Announcement about Luo” that confirm Luo as the site of the new capital.

From what we know about Shang and Western Zhou history, we would indeed expect that such major political and military moves required careful divinations—just as the oracle would have been consulted for various other purposes. But the

100 Legge 1991: 421–422.

101 Legge 1991: 436–438.

representation of divination in the *Shangshu* is strictly selective and formulaic. Each time, the narrative follows the same pattern: the protagonist decides on a course of action; he then divines about its auspiciousness; and the auspicious result is claimed as Heaven's Mandate, which must be followed. In this tripartite rhetorical structure, the act of divination transforms a military or political task into the inescapable execution of the Mandate: the ruler's action is no longer his own original initiative but an obedient response to Heaven itself.

In their logic of inevitability and their moral imperative, these records of divination thus dovetail precisely with the harangues. Beginning with "The Chief of the West Killed Li," it is obvious that they are retrospective rhetorical constructions: each divination predicts the Zhou's proposed course of action as auspicious, and the prediction is then unfailingly fulfilled. In other words, the future foretold in the *Shangshu* divinations lay already in the past by the time their records were composed. That divinations are mentioned for only very few occasions reinforces the purpose of their records: to highlight the decisive moments of early Zhou rule, to claim this rule as heavenly mandated, and to show the Zhou rulers' most significant actions—first among them the conquest told in "Great Harangue" and "Harangue at Mu"—as tightly connected and unified in their single moral imperative and political justification.

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