

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Colonialism and Diaspora in Early China

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Abstract

The fall of the Western Zhou Dynasty “left behind” the regional states of China’s central plain, creating a situation perhaps unique in history: the near-erasure of a colonizing power while its colonies continued to thrive. That the Western Zhou regime, despite its loose authority in the Guanzhong, can be considered a “colonizing” entity is here argued both in light of archaeological and textual evidence. Over time its destruction became re-imagined as a kind of traumatic inciting incident of the sort that many diasporic groups recall as the cause of their diasporic status. Just as with other diasporic groups, existing traditions and gaps in memory are filled in by re-imagined accounts and moral lessons displaying clear concern for the preservation of identity and discomfort with “outsiders.” This new reading of the Zhou period opens up a new angle by which Warring States texts—especially those including the Confucian canon—must be re-read, explaining such things as Confucian concerns about traditionalism as absolutely understandable given the wider diasporic discourse that emerged in the Eastern Zhou period.

Keywords: Western Zhou Dynasty; Spring and Autumn China; Warring States China; diaspora studies; postcolonialism

Introduction

Following their defeat of the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600–c. 1045 BCE¹) of Early China, the royal clan of the Zhou established the Zhou Dynasty—the longest dynastic period in Chinese history. Lasting from the eleventh to the third centuries BCE, it saw the

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¹All following dates are BCE unless otherwise noted.

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establishment of key pillars of what would later become known as “Chinese” identity and culture—including the birth of concepts like the Mandate of Heaven, the philosophies of Ruism (Confucianism) and Daoism, and the rise of state structures which would grow into the Chinese imperial system—persisting in some form or other until its collapse in the early twentieth century. While each of these factors has been and continues to be extensively studied, one particular factor of Zhou history remains undervalued in the magnitude of its influence on later developments. The collapse of Zhou royal power in the eighth century BCE and the ensuing collapse of the religious and political world order they embodied subsequently resulted in a political, social, and cultural situation that is, to my knowledge, nearly unique in history and which has serious implications for how we ought to interpret the period. Acknowledging the fraught discourse around the term “colonial” in the study of Early China, I label this unique situation as a “colonizer’s diaspora.” By this I mean that the foundations of the “Western” Zhou state (~1045–771), the regional statelets of China’s Central Plain located east of the Zhou heartland, suddenly found themselves cut off from their colonial motherland.² Postcolonial and diasporic perspectives applied to understanding the conditions of these states can help to explain the cultural development of these polities. Following the terminological categories established by Robin Cohen, the experience of many of the Central Plain polities initially fit the category of having been an “Imperial Diaspora” (diasporas such as white Canadians in the British Empire, where a powerful polity sends out settlers to acquire lands outside of a homeland) before suddenly taking on key dynamics of “Victim Diaspora” (such as the Jewish Diaspora, wherein communities are scattered and forced to reckon with a kind of cultural dispossession) without the communities involved actually moving anywhere.³ In this article, I will show how several transmitted texts and inscriptions of Early China’s Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (collectively spanning from 771–221 BCE, with the transition from one period to the other occurring in the fifth century) display both the concerns of colonizers and those associated with disruptive events that create victim diasporas. In so doing, I will open a new avenue for the study of Early China by the application of sociological theories long developed and applied in other areas, allowing greater insight into the concerns that are reflected in received texts from the Zhou Dynasty. This will allow for revisions to the interpretations of philosophical texts and provide further factors for understanding interstate behavior, though the examples I provide in this article merely outline the possibilities of this new interpretation of Zhou history. As a secondary result, this new reading will add

²That these communities do indeed constitute “colonies” is a contested claim, and I will explore the applicability of the term to this article below. I am not the first to recognize these communities as constituting a diaspora, though recognition of the situation as such is rare, uninterrogated, and comes from outside the purview of ancient China studies; an example is Cangbai Wang, “The Stamp of Identities: Negotiating Diasporic Chinese Subjectivity in Philatelic Spaces,” *Modern Languages Open* (2016), 7, which briefly notes Shang and Zhou emigration policies inside of a larger work on modern Chinese diasporic communities. Such roundabout observations of a diasporic identity, entailing no real analysis, constitute the effective limit of scholarly attention towards the matter up to now.

³Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 2–4, 39–57, and 68–80.

complexity to Cohen's categories of diasporic experience by demonstrating a case whereby one form of diaspora partially transitions into another form.

To do this, I will first go over the relevant theoretical framework of postcolonial theory and diaspora studies to establish known patterns of cultures in diasporic situations. I will clarify exactly how one can conceive of the Zhou politics in the Central Plain as "colonies." I will outline features of cultural disruption apparent in the creation of known victim diasporas, and will then show how the Western Zhou collapse can be conceived of as a cultural disruption of comparable significance for those politics which experienced it. I will then point out numerous cases wherein Zhou literary expressions contained signs and indicators of a diasporic mentality of the shared culture producing those works. Lastly, I will briefly explain what the consequences of this new reading of Eastern Zhou (771–256) texts entail for understanding the works of the period.

Postcolonial Theory and Diaspora Studies

Diaspora studies have come a long way from their origins. The word "diaspora," a Greek term derived from a word meaning "scattering," was first attested in the third century BCE in the Septuagint (the earliest extant Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) to describe a divinely ordained scattering of a people across the world as punishment. From its origin onwards, it was used virtually exclusively to describe the situation of contemporary/modern Jewish communities scattered far and wide and separated from their homeland.⁴ From this point until the twentieth century CE, the term was primarily religious.⁵ With the rise of postcolonial frameworks of analysis, the inherent link between colonialism and diasporic identities entailed a constituent growth of diasporic studies in the second half of the twentieth century.⁶ The term "diaspora" itself was generally expanded in these studies, firstly to Greeks, then Armenians, the Irish, Africans, and Palestinians—all groups with scattered populations due to highly disruptive and traumatic historical events.⁷ The interplay between imperial activities and the subjugation and scattering of ethnic groups and the consequences of such dynamics for group identities provided the impetus for numerous and continuing studies of empire and imperial consequences in the last several centuries.⁸

⁴Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 1; Stéphane Dufoix, "Diaspora Before It Became a Concept" in *Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies*, ed. Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer (London: Routledge, 2019), 13.

⁵Dufoix, "Diaspora Before It Became a Concept" 13–16.

⁶Michelle Keown, David Murphy, and James Procter, eds., *Comparing Postcolonial Diasporas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1 noted the two as being "parallel fields"; see also David Chariandy, "Postcolonial Diasporas" *Postcolonial Text* 2.1 (2006) for a longer description of the necessarily postcolonial dynamics inherent in Diaspora Studies.

⁷Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer, "Diaspora Studies: An Introduction," in *Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies*, eds. Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer (London: Routledge, 2019), 3; Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 1.

⁸The literature on this is far too vast to list here. For a select few examples, see Chariandy, "Postcolonial Diasporas"; Keown et al., *Comparing Postcolonial Diasporas*; Eric Mourier-Genoud and Michel Cahen, *Imperial Migrations. Colonial Communities and Diaspora in the Portuguese World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Anna Accettola, "Tracing Trade: Economies, Institutions, and Diaspora in the Hellenistic Mediterranean" Ph.D. dissertation (University of California, Los Angeles, 2021).

In the last thirty years, however, the “diasporic concept” has exploded in relevance with the expansion of the concept to include all scattered peoples for a much wider variety of reasons, including mercantile or colonial diasporas.⁹ Significantly for our purposes, certain forms of diaspora de-emphasize a supposed homeland, maintaining features of diasporic identity but largely without the spatial focuses of other diasporic types.¹⁰ For purposes of clarity, this article makes use of Brubaker’s three core criteria of defining a diaspora—the fact of dispersion, cultural orientation towards home, and an emphasis on maintaining group coherency in the face of forces acting to erode it.¹¹

What is relevant about such a definition for the study of Zhou history as diasporic? This category is quite broad, and I will demonstrate below how each of those factors were in play in Zhou Dynasty China, but it may be helpful to continue to specify and delineate forms of diaspora before proceeding. Robin Cohen has subcategorized diasporic communities into five ideal types, of which two are relevant for the purposes of this study and must be here introduced: the diasporic modes known as “victim” and “imperial.”¹² As noted above, the origins of diaspora studies constitute what are now understood as “victim diasporas.” That is to say, populations were—and are—moved largely or entirely against their will to new locations they may or may not have had any hand in choosing. Victim diasporas have several features in common, summarized by Cohen as consisting of the recollection of being forced from home becoming deeply embedded in the folk memory of the diasporic group, such that “restoring the homeland or even returning there becomes an important focus for social mobilization,” i.e., the loss of connection to home creates a dynamic within cultural discourse centered around that loss being made whole or made good.¹³ The second such category of diaspora relevant to our study is that of the “imperial diaspora.” The term essentially refers to settlement colonization, or as Cohen summarized it: “Diasporas by design.”¹⁴ For instance, British emigration to colonial territories was largely facilitated by the state or organizations closely adjunct to the state. People moved largely but often not entirely voluntarily to lands formerly held by others.¹⁵ Many modern European colonial efforts effected this kind of diaspora, leading to diasporic populations of Europeans with clear homeward facing links and strong conceptions of the self against the native other. It must be pointed out that homeward facing links in cases of such detachment were emphatically *not* restricted to individual expressions of

⁹See, for example, the remark of Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, xv, which pointed out that the body of academic literature on diasporic topics exploded from a few hundred pieces in the mid-1990s, to now several tens of thousands listed by Google Scholar when Cohen checked the keyword “diaspora” in 2007.

¹⁰This involves the so-called “deterritorialized diaspora,” explored below.

¹¹Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28.1 (2005), 1–19, esp. 5–7; see also the similar list in Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 161–62.

¹²Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 18.

¹³Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 4. Compare the view of William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return” *Diaspora* 1.1 (1991), 83–84 on what a diaspora was, focusing on a distinct subgroup of people in a society with claimed origins elsewhere who maintain(ed) an idealized image of an original ancestral home. Safran wrote at the beginning of the massive conceptual expansion of what entailed a diaspora.

¹⁴Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 164.

¹⁵Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 68–74.

“longing for home,” but could often be seen at the institutional level.¹⁶ These diasporic populations displayed not just cultural, but explicitly political and economic orientations firmly directed towards the colonizing motherland. Cohen notes that the British imperial diaspora is gradually fading away in tandem with Britain’s greatly diminishing role in maintaining the motherland–colony structures required for imperial diasporic cultures to exist.¹⁷ In this and most modern European cases of imperial diaspora, one finds a gradual rather than sudden decrease in intensity of colonially charged diasporic links, fading gradually as the institutions of empire that drove them diminish in potency. Elements of both of these models apply to the experience of Zhou regional states to differing degrees and at different times.

It is important to note, accordingly, that just as the notion of diaspora is now understood as broad, with varying classifications and features, it is equally the case that diagnosing a society as diasporic is not a matter of finding a singular ‘silver bullet’ in their practices or rhetoric. Indeed, nearly every single piece of evidence that I will raise in this work can be individually isolated and shown to be present in non-diasporic societies as well. However, one does not diagnose a diaspora from multiple elements devoid of context; other than the fact of dispersion, there is no single factor that is intrinsic to diasporic identities and found in no other kind of cultural identity. Like diagnosing an ailment, one works with the symptoms as a collection, because any individual symptom may be evidence of several disparate conditions.¹⁸ It is the presence of multiple different symptoms together that makes the diagnosis clearer. Thus, where hostility to “foreign” influence may arise from diasporic cultural concern over a cultural identity’s self-preservation, it may equally indicate nativism, or even racism, however motivated.¹⁹ That a culture has endured catastrophe and shows signs of that catastrophe in its textual remains does not necessarily make it diasporic either—the scars of World War II run deep in Russia, but trauma is not intrinsically diasporic. Golden-age thinking and nostalgia are apparent in many diasporas pining for earlier states of being, but longing for a real or imagined state of being of the past is not only to be found in diasporic societies: the cliché of American pining for the 1950s is proof enough of this.²⁰ However, the Jewish diaspora, the concept’s Ur-example, is generally identified by the mixture of these features.²¹ To aid in clarity, I have attached footnotes to the discussions

¹⁶Armin Selbitschka, “The Pitfalls of Second-Hand Information: On the Traditionalist Dogma in Chinese Excavation Reports,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 79/80 (2018), 32, points out how even the construction of knowledge in the form of archaeological inquiry was deployed to help build ideas of colonist/imperialist superiority over colonized peoples, and thereby reinforce colonial control over an area; see also Bruce Trigger, “Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist” *Man* 19.3 (1984), 355–70.

¹⁷Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 79. As mentioned above, homeward-facing sentiments in imperial diasporas are institutionally supported affairs—as the institutions supporting them wither, the sentiment gradually fades as generations have less of a tie to a homeland and stronger senses of local identity.

¹⁸This is not at all to say that a society being “diasporic” is akin to it being somehow “sick.”

¹⁹As discussed below regarding Xunzi.

²⁰This issue is summarized effectively in Nancy Foner, “Nativism and Nostalgia American Style” *Appartenances & Altérités* 2 (2022), 1–15.

²¹And because of the notion’s primary standing in the history of diaspora studies, and its chronological proximity to the Zhou experience, the Jewish experience of Exile will be brought into frequent comparison in this work.

wherein objections may be raised as to whether or not a given cultural dynamic is diasporic. Dispersion is a necessary precondition, but diaspora is to be recognized by its manifestations taken collectively. The specifics of these manifestations, their contexts, and the unique nuance of their expressions, allow one to classify which kind of diaspora one is actually dealing with. As I show in this article, the boundaries between different kinds of diasporas are at times blurred, and it is precisely the blurred lines of the Zhou diasporic experience that I posit has led to this experience being overlooked as diasporic in the first place. The Zhou cultural practices I identify as diasporic reflect attachment to an identity and a time rather than being entirely predicated on a lost homeland, aligning with Avtar Brah's idea that for some diasporic communities, "home" can be a mythic and desired place where the state of being associated with it is more prominent than geographic location.²² Robin Cohen's concept of deterritorialized diasporas, seen in groups like the Afro-Caribbeans and Roma, highlights how cultural identity can persist without a direct connection to a homeland.²³

As I will now show, the diaspora experienced by the Zhou regional states was such that an imperial diaspora was established in the Western Zhou period, which saw state authority send rulers and settler groups that were, in effect, colonists, into the Central Plain of northern China. This imperial diaspora then took on qualities and dynamics of victim diaspora after the collapse of Zhou royal power at the end of the Western Zhou period. This transition in circumstances resulted in a unique admixture of power, culture, and identity essential in the development of Eastern Zhou, and by extension, later Chinese civilization.²⁴

Before proving the diasporic nature of Eastern Zhou culture, I will first show how the Central Plain states existed in a colonial relationship with their government. Before even that, however, a clear definition of "colonialism" must be provided. It is not the aim of this article to dive into the fraught disputes as to the exact definition of "colonialism," which would require a much larger study across a wide variety of cultures and time periods. Accordingly, I will base my approach on Ronald Horvarth's definitional work, whereby, for our purposes, colonialism is a form of intergroup domination in which a significant number of settlers migrate permanently from a colonizing homeland to a colony, with "domination" being the control of one group over the territory and/or behavior of another group.²⁵

²²Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 180–92.

²³Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 123–39.

²⁴Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 74–80 specifically highlights the potential of diasporas to change: he shows how diasporas can dissolve when conditions supporting such community identities change. His example, that of the British imperial diaspora fading along with the British Empire, is similar enough to the case in Early China to warrant further study. However, the nature of imperial collapse being different in these two cases moves them on very different trajectories: the British Empire declined while Britain remained. One could always examine one's own circumstances, identity, and interests against peers in the homeland. The Zhou, having *lost* the homeland, with the king having been driven out, experienced a kind of sudden failure that the United Kingdom has not yet seen. Moreover, some of Cohen's categories, like that of a "deterritorialized diaspora," (Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 123–39) appear in some cases to coincide within more traditional "victim" diasporas. The potential of imperial diasporas to be merged with victim diasporas in this way is not explored, but given that these diasporic types have clearly fluid boundaries, conceptually mixing the two seems to produce the best descriptor of Zhou experience.

²⁵Ronald J. Horvarth, "A Definition of Colonialism" *Current Anthropology* 13.1 (1972), 45–51.

(How) Was the Western Zhou a Colonial Regime?

This article is not the first to argue that the Western Zhou state was a colonizing power—this point has been made elsewhere, though as yet has failed to garner significant traction as a means of understanding Early China.²⁶ However, in spite of numerous observations and remarks as to its colonial activities, postcolonial-studies-informed approaches to the Zhou Dynasty have remained few and far between.²⁷ The aim of what follows is merely to show that colonialism is a valid framework to understand the Zhou regime in the Central Plain, in order to demonstrate that an imperial diaspora is itself a valid framework for understanding the Zhou settlements throughout that region. In so doing, I aim not to propose a complete alternative to the extensive list of conceptions of Western Zhou state structure, but to provide a further angle by which their “state” activities may be seen.²⁸

The conquest of the Shang polity by King Wu of Zhou (r. 1046–1043) was rapidly followed by the breakout and suppression of the Wu Geng Rebellion 武庚之亂 of 1042–1039, causing a tremendous shift in strategy for the newly conquered territories of the nascent Zhou state.²⁹ To solve the problem of controlling the eastern conquests, the Zhou authorities decided on what is known as the *fengjian* 封建 system. In this system, royal clan members and worthy vassals were recognized by the Zhou king and

²⁶For example, see Yan Sun, “Colonizing China’s Northern Frontier: Yan and Her Neighbors During the Early Western Zhou Period” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 10.2 (2006), 159–77; Yan Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven: Material Culture, Identity, and Power in the Northern Frontiers of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 BCE* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021); Yitzchak Jaffe, “Colonialism in the Time of Globalization: The Western Zhou Yan State Revisited,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization*, ed. Tamar Hodos (New York: Routledge, 2017), 450; Katheryn M. Linduff, Yan Sun, Wei Cao, and Yuanqing Liu, *Ancient China and its Eurasian Neighbors: Artifacts, Identity, and Death in the Frontier, 3000–700 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Dingxin Zhao, *The Confucian-Legalist State: A New Theory of Chinese History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Maria Khayutina, “The Tombs of the Rulers of Peng and Relationships between Zhou and Northern Non-Zhou Lineages (Until the Early Ninth Century B.C.)” in *Imprints of Kingship: Studies of Recently Discovered Bronze Inscriptions from Ancient China*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2017), 87, identifies Zhou settlers in the Central Plain as “colonists,” and both Feng Li, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 43, and Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 311, use the term “colonialism” (the former in quotation marks), without really interrogating the term. Yung-ti Li and Ming-chorng Hwang, “Archaeology of Shanxi During the Yinxu Period,” in *A Companion to Chinese Archaeology*, ed. Anne P. Underhill (Malden: Blackwell, 2013), 383, speaks of the necessity of introduction of concepts like colonialism to describe archaeological finds of the Shang period prior to the Zhou, lamenting the fact that these concepts are so rarely introduced into the analytical discourse around Early China. That the Zhou are explicitly a colonizing power is recognized and discussed at length in Chinese-language scholarship, most notably Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, *Zhou dai cheng bang* 周代城邦 (Taipei: Lianjing xueshu, 1979), 21–46, which thoroughly engages the dynamics and consequences of military-colonialism (*wu zhuang zhi min* 武裝殖民) in the Western Zhou period. It is of course the case that there are significant differences between Shang/Zhou and early modern European colonial projects, but the frameworks by which one understands the latter can be meaningfully brought to bear on the former, as this article shows.

²⁷With the noted exception of Yan Sun’s “Colonizing China’s Northern Frontier” and *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, and Jaffe’s “Colonialism in the Time of Globalization,” all of which focus on the northern state of Yan.

²⁸These various conceptions are surveyed in Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 271–99.

²⁹Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 310–11.

sent out to conquered lands with populations of Zhou subjects who were given to the enfeoffed individual as part of the land award, made subservient to that individual and their progeny in perpetuity unless the Zhou king decreed otherwise.³⁰ As Li Feng has argued, it is important to note that it was only *after* a serious revolt against Zhou authority in conquered lands that colonies were introduced.³¹ The specific contexts of each colonial foundation likely saw varying approaches to the task of control and extent of domination, but, in Yan, for example, the colonial population remained materially distinguishable from local groups it controlled through marriages and selective cultural integration.³² Some local groups even resisted violently.³³ Moreover, some of the colonial populations sent out included traditional allies of the defeated Shang regime; the impetus of sending them to distant locales under the control of loyal Zhou-aligned lineages and mixed into groups of colonists including Zhou-aligned peoples suggests a mentality wherein colonial foundations reinforced Zhou domination of both colonized *and* colonist alike.³⁴

With this, it is already clear that the Zhou were a colonizing people according to the definition of colonialism stated above: the Zhou conquered some peoples and lands, and, in an effort to dominate them more effectively, sent out a large number of settlers and loyalist elites into the newly conquered lands. However, for the purpose of arguing for diasporic impacts of the severing of this colonial relationship, we must still seek to understand the nature of the colonial relationship between the Zhou government and their colonial states.

At the elite level, then, this distribution of land allotments paired with administrative authority can be seen as a process of extending the geographic reach of the Zhou royal household. Many of these settlements, given to direct relatives of the king,

³⁰*Zuo zhuan*, Xi 24 (636 BCE), ed. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990), 420–21; translation found in Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg, eds. and trans., *Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan: Commentary on the “Spring and Autumn Annals”* 3 vols. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 381. See also Edwin Pulleyblank, “Ji 姬 and Jiang 姜: The Role of Exogamic Clans in the Organization of the Zhou Polity” *Early China* 25 (2000), 7–8; Feng Li, *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou 1045–771 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 66. This is not to say that *all* Zhou polities were colonial foundations, a non-trivial number were pre-existing polities that the Zhou king merely confirmed in his new order. On these polities, see, for example, Maria Khayutina, “Shang mo Zhou chu Jiang, He zhijian jiaotongxian shang de jiazhu zhengt: yi Xibang wei li” 商末周初江、河之間交通線上的家族政體：以息邦為例, in *Chu wenhua yu Changjiang zhongyou zaoqi kaifa guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 楚文化與長江中游早期開發國際學術研討會論文集, ed. Xu Shaohua 徐少華, Taniguchi Mitsuru 谷口滿, and Luo Tai 羅泰 [Lothar von Falkenhausen] (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2021), 415–29. The question of these polities and their experience with the Zhou cultural and political hegemony is a separate issue from the experience of Zhou colonial foundations and thus not explored in this work.

³¹Li, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 31–33. See also Olivia Milburn, “The Xinian: An Ancient Historical Text from the Qinghua University Collection of Bamboo Books,” *Early China* 39 (2016), 71, on the issue of the nature of this revolt.

³²Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 169, 194 and 204.

³³Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 201.

³⁴Note also the inscription on the Mai fangzun, discussed and translated in Paul Nicholas Vogt, *Kingship, Ritual, and Royal Ideology in Western Zhou China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 155–64, which details how the Zhou king recalled a noble from one region and sent him to govern another, potentially representing Zhou efforts to break local bonds of elites and maintain the dominance of the King over the colonial structures. I thank my anonymous reviewer for bringing this to my attention.

thus can be understood as an extension of royal clan power to new lands. Despite the fact that exact population demographics of the Central Plain in this period are unknown, it is clear that settlements of Zhou transplants existed alongside numbers of settlements of local non-Zhou natives.³⁵ The rulers of these colonial establishments and the people taken with them as settlers together formed the *guoren* 國人, or “people of the capital.” They were distinguished from the *yeren* 野人, “people of the countryside,” who lacked the close ritual ties that bound the colonial settlement to the Zhou regime and accordingly were cultural outsiders.³⁶

In 771, a people identified in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as the Xianyun 狝狁 invaded the Zhou homeland in league with some rebellious vassals.³⁷ Their alliance defeated the Zhou army, killed King You of Zhou (r. 781–771), and drove out his heir, King Ping of Zhou (r. 770–720) as well as numbers of his more loyal vassals, and overran the Guanzhong plains, the heartland of the Zhou culture and royal authority.³⁸ The military and political power of the Zhou king was effectively shattered

³⁵On this matter, see Li, *Landscape and Power*, 76 and 78–82, wherein Li notes the distinct non-Zhou pottery traditions that contrast against the uniform elite material culture discovered in these settlements. Li explains the gradual erosion of this distinction as a sign of cultural integration, but the manner of how this would have occurred (whether in harmonious mutual acceptance, or a change in population balance between indigenous populations and colonial Zhou populations as a result of birth rate differentials, displacement, or worse) is unspecified. See also Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 153–211 and Feng Li, “Constructing a Frontier Culture: Ceramic Analysis in Guicheng,” in *Guicheng: An Archaeological Study of the Formation of States on the Jiaodong Peninsula in Late*

Bronze-Age China, 1000–500 BCE, ed. Feng Li and Zhonghe Liang (Beijing: Kexue, 2018), 727–76. Note also that these indigenous groups have been routinely anachronized and euphemized in ways conducive to modern Chinese political interests, for which see Hyun-Jin Kim, *Ethnicity and Foreigners in Ancient Greece and China* (London: Duckworth, 2009), 31–35.

³⁶On these two groups, see Yuri Pines, “Bodies, Lineages, Citizens, and Regions: A Review of Mark Edward Lewis’ ‘The Construction of Space in Early China’” *Early China* 30 (2005–2006), 183–84 and n64; Tian Changwu 田昌五 and Zang Zhifei 臧知非, *Zhou-Qin shehui jigou yanjiu* 周秦社會結構研究 (Xi’an: Xibei Daxue, 1996), 52–53 and 167–72. See also Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 201, and Sun, “Colonizing China’s Northern Frontier,” 162. In some areas, there was intense resistance to Zhou settlement, like in Qi, where the local people, identified as the *Yi* made it difficult even to establish a strong foothold for the Zhou colonial polity in the area. Sun also notes that, in other cases such as the conditions around the early Yan polity, cooperation with locals was initially the norm, though she suggests that tensions with local groups played a role in a chaotic undermining of Yan power and stability towards the latter Western Zhou period; and Linduff et al., *Ancient China and its Eurasian Neighbors*, 65, expands the notion, claiming that “increased production and use of local style bronze implements, including weapons, was surely inspired by resistance to the colonizing efforts of well-armed Zhou personnel.” Unfortunately, given that the nature of our evidence focuses primarily on elites, we can say little about the experiences or dispositions of the non-elite Zhou settler groups sent along with nobility. The best one can come towards an understanding of these individuals would be in studying the dynamics of the *guoren* in later periods where they make occasional appearances in texts such as the *Zuo zhuan*. On this matter, see Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought in the Warring States System* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 192–97 especially n22.

³⁷“Xianyun” appears more often in Western Zhou texts, but later texts (such as the *Shi ji*) tend towards the use of variant forms of “Rong 戎.” The identification of the Xianyun with the Rong is now commonplace. On this, see Li, *Landscape and Power*, 142–45 and 343–46 as well as Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 350. Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 107 views them as separate peoples, however.

³⁸On the fall of the Western Zhou, see Li, *Landscape and Power*, 193–232; Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 342–51.

and, as I will now show, the impact of this event greatly shifted the cultural developments of the Zhou colonial settlement-states in the Central Plains.³⁹ The fall of Zhou rendered these polities, in effect, colonies of a suddenly evaporated power, constituted a sudden, disruptive and severe injury to the body of state and society that transmitted texts described in terms of severe emotional distress. Admittedly, it is correct that the central states *were* gradually moving away from Zhou royal control, and that 771 did not necessarily mark an immediate change in day-to-day occurrence for the courts of the Zhou settlements of the Central Plain. However, this should not be overstated: these states clearly saw value in their identity attachments to the Zhou court, even—or perhaps especially—when it was no longer capable of marshalling hard power to protect them or meddle in their affairs directly.⁴⁰ To gauge the impact of this sudden homeland collapse on these colonial Zhou states, their prior relations to the royal realm of the Zhou domain in the Guanzhong plain must be properly understood, or else the depth of consequence of this disruptive experience will not be fully appreciated. One immediately runs into the problem, however, that evidence for the Western Zhou period is generally poor, and outside of bronze inscriptions, subject to potentially significant emendation and alteration in later eras. Working around these limitations insofar as possible, I will show in specific dynamics how colonial discourse is in fact appropriate to describing these polities and their relations with the Western Zhou central government.

First, I will note that the colonial dynamics between settler and indigenous groups in the Western Zhou context have been studied already by Yan Sun.⁴¹ My own article, in focusing on the relationship of colonist groups to the homeland, does not engage the question of the colonial relationship to the colonized natives, but it is important to note that such relations were maintained. Sun has examined various sectors of the Zhou northern frontier through analysis of archaeological evidence and has shown how local groups cooperated with or resisted Zhou colonization.⁴² The Zhou colonial population of Yan, meanwhile, asserted its Zhou ancestry in material culture over the centuries of the Western Zhou and early Spring and Autumn period, even when political contact appears to have been severed for a time between Yan and the Zhou court.⁴³ Sun, writing on Yan's fate after its rescue at the hands of Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643) in 664, observes that, for Yan at least, “the aggression of the Rong and Di prompted the formation of a shared identity among Zhou regional states and

³⁹Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” 351, claimed that for the regional states, 771 was “just another year,” and while it is likely that not much changed in the day-to-day affairs of the regional states, the catastrophic experiences of the fall of the court I explore below ultimately become embedded in the cultural discourse, producing serious consequences even if at the time of the collapse, these consequences would not have yet manifested.

⁴⁰For example, this is evident in the request of Duke Huan of Qi for Yan to resume tributary relations to the Zhou court in the Spring and Autumn period. For sources, see Chen Ping 陳平, *Yanshi jishi biannian hui'an* 燕史紀事編年會按 (Beijing: Beida, 1995), 200–216. See also, Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 209.

⁴¹Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*.

⁴²Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, esp. 153–211. Sun points out, for example, how Yan integrated certain populations and not others, as evidenced through tomb finds demonstrating the selective adoption of local and distinctly non-Zhou ornaments and assemblages.

⁴³Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 208–9.

the acceptance of Yan into the newly formed Huaxia cultural and political circle.⁴⁴ This is to say, the cultural disruptor that caused the Western Zhou collapse (foreign invasions) led to the tightening of a group identity involving the colonial states of the central plain. The unique dynamics of this colonial identity-tightening are what I identify as diasporic and discuss below. But before that, I suggest that Sun's work, based primarily in archaeological interpretation and mostly around the northern Zhou state of Yan, can be supplemented. We can go further in drawing out the paradigms of colonial relationships and structures in the Western Zhou.

First, Lei Jinhao has recently reconstructed the route and features of the so-called "Zhou Dao" 周道, a royal road supposedly built during the Western Zhou period to facilitate military and aristocratic access to the capital from their holdings and colonial settlements in the Central Plain, and maintained at the expense of local vassal settlements.⁴⁵ Admittedly, Lei's specific reconstruction is based primarily in close reading of later textual evidence from sources like the *Zuo zhuan*, and archaeological evidence for the road is scant, though sufficient to confirm its existence and at least loosely correlated with how it is described in later texts.⁴⁶ However, beyond transmitted texts, that the Western Zhou government took care in the use of road networks is clear even from excavated bronze inscriptions.⁴⁷ If Lei's reconstruction of its functionality and features (based admittedly on later texts like the *Zuo zhuan*) is at all close to correct, then the system should be distinguished from well-known Roman roadworks in that the former was never intended for a mass "public" use.⁴⁸ Lei argues

⁴⁴Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 209. For sources discussing the battle, see Chen, *Yanshi jishi biannian hui'an*, 200–216.

⁴⁵Lei Jinhao 雷晉豪, *Zhou Dao: Fengjian shidai de guan dao* 周道: 封建時代的官道 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian, 2011), esp. 56; Shang Yantao 商豔濤 and Li Xiaohua 李小華, "Xi Zhou jinwen suojian yu zhengfa xiangguan de ji zhong huodong" 西周金文所見與征伐相關的幾種活動, *Journal of Oriental Studies* 43.1/2 (2010), 59–75; Yang Shengnan 楊升南, "Shuo 'Zhou hang' 'Zhou dao'—Xi Zhou shiqi de jiaotong chutan" 說《周行》,《周道》——西周時期的交通初探, in *Xi Zhou shi yanjiu* 西周史研究, ed. Renwen zazhi bianji bu (Xi'an: Shaanxi Renmin, 1984); Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, "Zhou Dao yu Zhou Hang" 周道與周行 in *Shilin zazhi* 史林雜識 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1963), 121–24. This road system is alluded to but unnamed in Li, *Landscape and Power*, 89. See also Michael Hunter, *The Poetics of Early Chinese Thought: How the Shijing Shaped the Chinese Philosophical Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 88–90 and *Shi jing*, Mao 237, 758–64, indicating that the construction of roads was understood to be a component of conquest; all *Shi jing* pagination refers to Cheng Junying 程俊英 and Jiang Jianyuan 蔣見元, eds., *Shi jing zhuxi* 詩經注析 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1991).

⁴⁶Lei, *Zhou Dao*, 46; a segment of what is considered to be the Zhou Dao was excavated in the 1999 at Qijia 齊家. It measured about 10 meters across, with eight parallel track ruts discovered. On the excavation, see Lei, *Zhou Dao*, 37 and Ding Yan 丁巖, "Qi, Feng, 'Zhou Dao' ji xiangguan wenti" 岐, 豐《周道》及相關問題, *Wenbo* (April 2003). As noted in Shang and Li, "Xi Zhou jinwen suojian," 62, it syncs up well with accounts such as that of *Shi jing*, Mao 203, 629–35 that indicate the great wideness and smoothness of the road. Ding, "Qi, Feng, 'Zhou Dao,'" 8, lists textual descriptions of the road.

⁴⁷On these, see Shang and Li, "Xi Zhou jinwen suojian," 60–64, whose analysis focuses on Jicheng 3.949, 5.2751–52, and 2.357. With the archaeological evidence noted above and these inscriptional referents, I go with Lei, *Zhou Dao*, 47, holding that roads, like all geographical alterations, are such that one should be open to a wider time span of historical evidence as "reliable" than with instances of such things as wars or coups—geographical alterations when built do not easily change. As such, I accept the use of transmitted evidence in discussion of the road and thus Lei's reconstruction of its features as at least loosely accurate.

⁴⁸Lei, *Zhou Dao*, 2011, 36–38, 164, 208–19, 319, and 346. The *Zuo zhuan* is a key source for the following argument, as it purports to recount a commentarial history of events between the eighth and

that the road incorporated ferry systems and rest stops which were intended only for the use of Zhou elites, who were expected to return at times to the Zhou capital.⁴⁹ This road should not, however, be thought of as *primarily* a tool of economic extraction, for, as Maria Khayutina has pointed out, “the larger Western Zhou polity embracing the territories of the regional states never represented an integral economic entity.”⁵⁰ Economic considerations in Zhou colonial frameworks are nevertheless indicated in copper and salt extractions from colonized regions for the benefit of the royal household.⁵¹ These extractions may have formed a kind of tribute brought to the Zhou king in the Guanzhong.⁵²

However, beyond economic colonialism, the Zhou were much more clearly involved in military colonialism. This is in itself not unique; military colonialism involving directed settlement of politically or militarily sensitive locations was practiced elsewhere in other times, such as the activities of Alexander the Great (356–323) and his successors in Asia.⁵³ Regional rulers were expected to return to the presence of the king for confirmations of their loyalty and to report on the execution of instructed tasks.⁵⁴ Khayutina has pointed out a transition that occurred over the

fifth centuries BCE. As David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 315–24, points out, while it is usually held that the text was compiled around the fourth century BCE, it is likely that significant orally transmitted interpretations and accounts from earlier periods were swept up in the circumstances of its compilation, making it a valid, though difficult, source to rely on for the period.

⁴⁹Lei, *Zhou Dao*, 2011, 8–9 and 139; Li, *Landscape and Power*, 138. Whatever facilities may have existed on the road, whether permanent as Lei believes, or temporary as Shang and Li, “Xi Zhou jinwen suojian,” suggest, these would have been intended primarily for the use of the Zhou aristocracy and not a larger clientele. Further, the later evolution of Chinese roadworks such that checkpoints and restricted lanes were introduced suggests that the Chinese mentality of transport was only ever rooted in granting access for “authorized” personnel.

⁵⁰Maria Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality and Geopolitical Constitution of the Western Zhou Polity” *T’oung Pao* 96 (2010), 11.

⁵¹Suggested by Hubeisheng Bowuguan et al., *Suizhou Yejiashan—Xizhou zaoqi Zengguo mudi* 隨州葉家山—西周早期曾國墓地 (Beijing: Wenwu, 2013), 113, and Li Chunyan 李春豔, “Shilun baguo dui Xi Zhou yanye de gongxian” 試論霸國對西周鹽業的貢獻, *Yanye shi yanjiu* 2 (2023), 2. I thank Yan Sun for pointing this out to me.

⁵²Described in the *Shang shu*, “Luogao”; Wang Shishun 王世舜 and Wang Cuiye 王翠葉 eds., *Shang shu* 尚書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2012), 233–34. The extractive aspects of the road should be balanced against the widespread view that tributary visits to the Zhou court were often financially unprofitable for the court—gifts given to visitors were intended to be more valuable than gifts brought to court by those same visitors leading some scholars to argue that the entire tributary system of China was a mask for foreign trade. On this stance, see John K. Fairbank and Ssu-yu Teng, “On the Ch’ing Tributary System” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6.2 (1941), 135–246; Ying-shih Yü, *Trade and Expansion in Han China: A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967). The entire tributary system as being *not* based in economic concerns has been argued by Armin Selbitschka, “Early Chinese Diplomacy: ‘Realpolitik’ Versus the So-called Tributary System” *Asia Major* 28.1 (2015), 61–114. Either way, if a valued resource was extracted, brought to court, then either used directly or redistributed to the prominent lineages in the immediate vicinity to “buy” loyalty, it makes little difference if the practice was “profitable” for the Zhou court, as it would have been a venture worthy of subsidization.

⁵³On this dynamic, and how it compares to Chinese settlement practices, see Jordan Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin: A Triumph of the Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025), 173–83.

⁵⁴Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality,” 24–28.

course of the Western Zhou, whereby Zhou kings began to travel *themselves* on tours to visit rulers of the regional states.⁵⁵ The justification for these expensive trips was that meetings with regional rulers functioned as confirmations of the king's authority in circumstances where the regional lords may have been increasingly hesitant to make the trip to the Guanzhong themselves. In effect, elite trips of this sort whether *to* the king or *by* the king acted as confirmations of the political hierarchy in conditions where regional rulers were effectively autonomous. In a colonialist reading of the Western Zhou, these visits facilitated the maintenance of the colonial hierarchy, and it is *not* necessarily the case that the *homeland* was the legitimating source of power, but rather, the person of the king themselves.⁵⁶ This is not actually the obstacle to a colonial reading that it may appear to be; comparison with cases contemporary and modern reveals that colonialism could very much be based around (and emanate from) the figure of a singular monarch. Alexander's settler colonialism, though on a smaller scale, functioned similarly.⁵⁷ While not based on settler-colonialism, the Congo was legally understood as a colony in the personal possession of Leopold II of Belgium.⁵⁸ Conceiving of the Zhou Dao along similar lines allows us to understand it as a kind of colonial infrastructure, in that it facilitated the colonial relationship of its constructors and users. Indeed, when the power of the Zhou king collapsed and these regional states were left to their own devices, the royal road lost its integrity—where once there had been a universal carriage gauge, this universality was abandoned, and access to segments of road became politicized.⁵⁹ In effect, what had been previously more like a circulatory system of arteries became more akin to a link of chains.

Secondly, the primary engine of the elite memory culture of these regional states was located in the Zhou heartland. Much work has been done on the significance of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, whereby elite Zhou individuals would commemorate decrees of the Zhou king through the commissioning expensive ritual bronzeware inscribed with the words or context of the royal decree.⁶⁰ What is

⁵⁵Khayutina, "Royal Hospitality," 25. This can also be seen as a return to earlier Shang modes of rulership.

⁵⁶Khayutina, "Royal Hospitality," 1–11. Khayutina even points out that there does not appear to be a singular capital city which played primary host to Zhou rituals or political meetings, but rather, these seemed to occur in several locations depending on where the king was at that time.

⁵⁷Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin*, 173–83. All throughout that work, however, the centrality of the figure of Alexander in all Macedonian policies of his era is highlighted as a key difference from policies pursued by Qin, which was more institutionally (and thus, "homeland") oriented in its colonialism. That said, Christopher points out (155) that earlier Zhou societal structures closely resemble Macedonian practices of noble personages driving "state" policy, with larger conceptions of a political society (in Macedon's case, commonly found in discourse in the poleis of Greece), effectively absent from discourse.

⁵⁸On this, see Jan Vandersmissen, "The King's Most Eloquent Campaigner ... Emile de Laveleye, Leopold II and the Creation of the Congo Free State," *Journal of Belgian History* 41.1–2 (2011), 7–57.

⁵⁹Lei, *Zhou Dao*, 278–89 and 348–52; Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 4: Physics and Physical Technology: Part III: Civil Engineering and Nautics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 5; Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 6.239, translation available in William H. Nienhauser Jr. ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 137.

⁶⁰See, for instance, Ondřej Škrabal, "Writing Before Inscripting: On the Use of Manuscripts in the Production of Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions" *Early China* 42 (2019), 273–332; Maria Khayutina, "The Beginning of Cultural Memory Production in China and the Memory Policy of the Zhou Royal House During the Western Zhou Period" *Early China* 44 (2021), 19–108.

significant here, however, is that these bronzes were so uniform in their craftsmanship that formerly it was thought that they may have all come from a single casting hub in the Zhou capital region.⁶¹ While this view has been updated, many bronzes indicate an intense coordination of elite material cultural production between regional states and the capital area.⁶² This would mean that Zhou elites commemorated their achievements through interaction with the capital and its workshops, confirming a kind of homeland connection for distant Zhou elites in the Central Plain. These vessels must also be seen as socio-political tools which bound servants to the Zhou king through the central role played by capital workshops in their casting.⁶³ While the majority of bronzes were not inscribed, the addition of inscriptions would have been another layer binding production to the king's court. These commemorations in the form of ritual vessels were generally placed in lineage shrines at the heart of a Zhou-aligned polity and in tombs as burial items.⁶⁴ Of the inscribed bronzes, several are unlikely to have been intended to be read by humans (as opposed to spirits), with inscriptions cast on the interior and thus illegible as far as an observer would be concerned, though others, like the *San shi pan* 散氏盤, with its inscription prominent on the face of an open

⁶¹Jessica Rawson, "Western Zhou Archaeology," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 365–66.

⁶²Feng Li, "Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders: Evidence from the Bronze Inscriptions of the Western Zhou Period (1045–771 B.C.)," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002), recognized that some bronze casting did occur outside the capital—a fact resoundingly supported by the Yejiashan cemetery finds of 2010, which are of a distinct style to bronzes of the Zhou royal domain' discussed in Changping Zhang, "The Production Context of the Zeng State Bronzes from Yejiashan Cemetery of the Western Zhou Dynasty," *Chinese Archaeology* 15.1 (2015), 183–87. Before these finds, it appeared that bronzes cast "locally" were largely insignificant, which is no longer a tenable stance. Still, the fact remains that a great deal of known Zhou bronzes were indeed cast in the royal domain and distributed, or at minimum the similarity of these bronzes is proof of an intense level of coordination between royal domain and colonial state in order to maintain consistency across casting sites; Li, *Landscape and Power*, 77. See also Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 110–12. Regardless, it is further clear that the capital played a key role in the distribution of metals, especially bronze, for these casts as well. For more, see Maxim Korolkov, *Institutions and Environments in Ancient Southern East Asia (3000 BCE to 300 CE)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025), 27. The newly appreciated depth of expertise in southern bronze casting may be understood in the context of this article's argumentation to represent the kind of foreign cultural forces acting on Zhou proto-states and causing a deviation from imagined Zhou norms. Certainly, fear of the southern culture plays a role in the demonization of the state of Chu.

⁶³Khayutina, "The Beginning of Cultural Memory Production," explores these bronzes as a form of elite memory production tied to (but always negotiating with) the Zhou royal line, see also Vogt, *Kingship, Ritual, and Royal Ideology*. Not all bronzes were centrally controlled or cast in their design, even in the Western Zhou, as evidenced by finds of the Tianma-Qucun bronzes; see the study of Haichao Li, Jianli Chen, Jianfeng Cui, Xiaohong Wu, Yingliang Yang, Fengchun Huang, and Tianjin Xu, "Production and Circulation of Bronzes Among the Regional States in the Western Zhou Dynasty" *Journal of Archaeological Science* 121 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2020.105191>, for these and other mixed cases.

⁶⁴Haicheng Wang, *Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 185; *Zuo zhuan*, Huan 2 (710 BCE): Yang, *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan*, 89–90; Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 79. Vogt, *Kingship, Ritual, and Royal Ideology*, 200 and n7, highlights ongoing uncertainty as to the usual placement of these bronzes, as the majority of bronze finds derive from tombs rather than excavated hoards. This is not a problem for my argument, as I find no reason to believe that a clan's bronzes would be generally in their temple, with a few committed in burials, and others carried off as prizes of war or other intrigues.

plate-like shape, clearly are meant to be displayed and read by the living.⁶⁵ Further, the possession of and access to these vessels was a matter of no small ritual importance in the ensuing Spring and Autumn Period, where improper possession of these items was seen as an affront to the normative order of the aristocratic hierarchy.⁶⁶ In effect, these cast objects confirmed elite linkage to the royal house, and in cases where inscriptions were legible, these functioned similarly to inscriptions in Greek temples.⁶⁷ However, the mere possession and display of one of these items, regardless of the visibility of an inscription, should be considered as a kind of creation of elite memory culture, as its mere existence implies key links of the holder to the elite world of the Zhou royalty. The loss of access to this central hub for the production of elite cultural memory and hierarchical legitimization led to regional deviations in the forms of bronzes throughout the regional states.⁶⁸ Moreover, it entailed that a key form of ritual activity (going to the capital and casting bronzes) for Zhou elites had been interrupted, and that the king's power (expressed in the act of giving out bronze to be cast) had been significantly diminished.

There may even have been a Zhou cultural-political preference for individuals from the Zhou homeland over those who had origins in the Central Plain. The *Shi jing* poem “Da dong” 大東 (The Great East), part of the Court Songs (*Ya* 雅) usually dated to the later part of the Western Zhou period, recounts the condition of abusive exploitation that the central government in the west wielded over the eastern states.⁶⁹ Taking an aggrieved tone, the author of the poem writes in first person of weeping (潛焉出涕 “weepingly flow out tears”) and heartache (使我心疚 “causes my heart desolation”), noting the resource poverty of eastern states connected with higher standards of living and ingratitude on the part of those from the west, before bluntly exclaiming:

⁶⁵The *San Shi Pan* is catalogued as Jinwen W 428. The legibility of inscriptions is, however, complicated by arguments such as that in Jessica Rawson, “Statesmen or Barbarians? The Western Zhou as Seen Through Their Bronzes,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 75 (1989), 91, as well as Martin Kern, “The Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China,” in *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign*, ed. Sergio La Porta and David Shulman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 190, who suggested that bronzes were usually only meant to be seen from a distance, with Joern Peter Grundmann, “The Question of Literariness in the Composition of Western Zhou Bronze Bell Inscriptions,” *Rao Zongyi guo xueyuan yuankan* 饒宗頤國學院院刊 7 (2020), 128 suggesting that legible inscriptions were ultimately *intended* for the perusal of later generations for whom the events justifying an inscription were no longer recent history. However, even if the text was meant for later generations, their function as objects of elite memory is not in dispute. I also here acknowledge the contrasting view of my anonymous reviewer that at least *some* semi-illegible text may have been made so intentionally to force a viewer into some discomfort in order to attempt to read it, as a way to draw attention to the inscription.

⁶⁶*Zuo zhuan*, Huan 2 (710 BCE): Yang, *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan*, 89–90; Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 79.

⁶⁷Jordan Christopher, “Landscapes Fixed and Fluid: Political Communities, Religious Practices, and the Birth of Territoriality in Early China and Ancient Greece,” *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung*, forthcoming.

⁶⁸Xigui Qiu, *Chinese Writing*, trans. Gilbert Mattos and Jerry Norman (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2000), 71–76.

⁶⁹On the dating of the poem, see Cheng Junying 程俊英, *Shi jing zhuxi* 詩經注析 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1991), 629–36; Ma Yinqin 馬銀琴, *Liang Zhou shi shi* 兩周詩史 (Beijing: Shehui kexue, 2006), 256–57.

東人之子、
 職勞不來。
 西人之子、
 粲粲衣服。
 舟人之子、
 熊羆是裘。
 私人之子、
 百僚是試。

The sons of the men of the East,
 they only toil and are not encouraged.
 The sons of the men of the West,
 they have beautiful clothes.
 The sons of the men of Zhou,
 have furs of bearskin.
 The sons of their petty henchmen
 are in possession of all the offices.⁷⁰

The poem expresses deep dissatisfaction as it elaborates on the lopsided economic relationship between the east and west from an eastern perspective. The extent of the exploitation described in this poem can be read in two ways. First, the author of the poem no doubt believed that the eastern states were suffering economic hardship linked to the demands of their distant western government.⁷¹ The echoes of this situation with other settler-colonial conditions are clear: a distant region has been filled with settlers who are culturally akin to the population of a homeland, but their well-being is seen as less important than populations of the homeland, and they are economically exploited accordingly.

One might at first seek to look to economic extraction from settler colonies as practiced in New Spain and the American colonies as a model by which this was done, but this would be in error. As has been mentioned above, the relationship between colony and colonizer in the Zhou realm may well not have been primarily economic in nature—but, it was definitely heavily military-political. Accordingly, what are we to make of *economic* poverty in the context of east-west differentiation? I follow Ma Yinqin and suggest that the poem was not referring to resource extraction as practiced by European colonizing powers, but perhaps, tied to demands made by the presence of the Zhou king and his entourage during a royal tour or military campaign.⁷² To engage in a bit of speculation, perhaps the poem refers to the reign of King Li of Zhou (r. 877–841), whose transmitted reputation

⁷⁰*Shi jing*, Mao 203, 629–35, trans. Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), 154–55, with modification. The text literally reads “the sons of the boatmen” rather than the “sons of the men of Zhou.” Note, however, that *zhou* 舟 (boat) can at times be used to signify *Zhou* 周 (the dynastic title; cf. Paul Kroll ed., “舟 *zhōu*” in *A Student’s Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese Online* [Leiden: Brill, 2017]), as Karlgren observes here.

⁷¹For more on this, see the interpretation of the poem in Cheng, *Shi jing zhuxi*, 629–36, which goes as far as to explain even the astrological elements of the poem in its last lines as referring to abuses by the western-based government.

⁷²Ma, *Liang Zhou shi shi*, 256–57.

indicates a preference for recklessly profiteering off of his subjects to the extent that the regional lords no longer came to his court.⁷³ In any case, the basic premise of geographic distance, subordination, and oppression shine through in “Da dong,” informing us that not just the natives, but even the colonists, held critical perspectives on their condition.

Secondly, I suggest that the poem indicates a difference in standing between those Zhou elites of the heartland in Guanzhong compared to those in the settlement states. On the assumption that the author of this poem is not a commoner but an elite of some capacity, this poem should not be read along exclusively class lines—this is not just a matter of the rich exploiting the poor, but of one area exploiting another.⁷⁴ The repeated complaints about the treatment of the author at the hands of the elites of the west suggests that Zhou aristocrats of the colonial region were of a lesser status than those of the homeland. One might even slightly stretch the reading of the line regarding employment to indicate a preference among Zhou elites that personnel for higher or more rewarding posts be sourced from the Zhou heartland rather than from the local population.⁷⁵ Indeed, it is not beyond reason that non-ruling elites of the heartland would have been seen as preferable and of higher status than ethnically and culturally identical individuals raised in the eastern settlements.⁷⁶ This would not be a unique dynamic in colonial situations—recall that native Spaniards were given preference over ethnically and culturally fully Spanish *criollos* men in the social hierarchies of Spain’s eighteenth century CE colonial enterprises, though both were clearly of higher standing than natives and Africans.⁷⁷ One need not introduce racial categorizations to understand this dynamic in the Zhou case.⁷⁸ Instead, the Zhou ruling framework of making the state an extension of the household meant that any individuals in closer proximity to the king were of a higher status by virtue of that proximity alone. Further, where some colonial elites may have once been close kin to Zhou rulers when the dynasty was founded, after several generations, there would necessarily arise a kinship distance among these elites if not actively maintained by marriage ties.⁷⁹ Even the elites of a regional state, if not making regular trips to the Zhou court (and, based on the current distribution of known inscriptions, they were

⁷³Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 4.141–42; Nienhauser Jr., *Grand Scribes Records*, 1:70–71.

⁷⁴Admittedly this is a difficult assumption to prove. Michael Nylan, *The Five ‘Confucian’ Classics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 88 and 97, notes that later legends existed of commoners submitting poems from their own perspectives that would later be included in the *Shi jing*, though Nylan seems to suggest that this should not be accepted at face value.

⁷⁵As Vogt, *Kingship, Ritual, and Royal Ideology*, 205, observed, a much greater number of excavated bronzes which mention direct interactions with the king are known from the Zhou heartland than from the other states, which could also be interpreted as further evidence of this, i.e., those closer to the king are more frequently favored by him.

⁷⁶I do not mean to suggest that this dynamic was *more* important than one’s lineage affiliation; rather that it operated adjacent to it: several “colonial” state ruling lineages had family branches settled in the Guanzhong, nearer to the Zhou king, and therefore, they would have retained a means by which to sustain proximity to him.

⁷⁷Magali Marie Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 16, 33, and 46.

⁷⁸How racialized these Spanish categories really were in practice has been called into question: on this, see Ben Vinson III, *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 35–69.

⁷⁹Maria Khayutina, “Marital Alliances and Affinal Relatives (Sheng 甥 and Hungou 婚媾) in the Society and Politics of Zhou China in the Light of Bronze Inscriptions,” *Early China* 37 (2014), 39–99, showed

making these trips less often even than the sporadic trips of the rulers of the states), would likely have been viewed as proportionally lesser in importance, at least from the perspective of the colonial governing body embodied in the person of the Zhou king.⁸⁰ This last assertion is unfortunately unprovable on the current evidence. Maria Khayutina, in personal correspondence, summarized the situation, saying that “Given the nature of bronze inscriptions, inscriptions that would directly deal with issues of higher or lower prestige cannot exist.”⁸¹ Indeed, given Yan Sun’s work showing the varying interactions of Zhou settlements and their neighbors, it is likely that local status and status in the larger Zhou system may not have been always one and the same, and the former could have been achieved by local marriages or activities apart from their direct connections to the larger Zhou state structures.⁸² Regardless, in this system, relations to the ruler formed the basis of stability of the larger political and social apparatus, and closeness to the Zhou king was worthy of celebration. It seems, then, that likelier than not that elites would be, if unable or unwilling to reforge close links with the Zhou royal clan, forced to seek status through other connections or means, or else be diminished in standing in the eyes of their own polity and in the wider Zhou milieu.

Imperial Diaspora and Victim Diaspora?

The trips to the Zhou heartland, the centrality of the Zhou capital region in the creation of a memorial culture, the key role of ties to the homeland (or more accurately, ties to the ruling clan through marriage or blood relations) being worthy of celebration, and the basic fact that these regional states relied on the authority of the king for their very reason for being must be taken together. Collectively, they indicate a power dynamic between the Zhou royal administration and the eastern regional settlements that can be called colonial. Accordingly, the transplanted populations of these colonies can be understood as having comprised an imperial diaspora. I have thus shown that the Western Zhou was colonial, and thereby was diasporic as well, but the changes in identity that followed the Western Zhou collapse require exploration as well. With the invasion of the Xianyun in the eighth century BCE, the Zhou colonial framework was degraded, with the Zhou king clinging on in a kind of rump state and incapable of exercising the role of geopolitical master through force of arms.

conclusively how maintenance of kinship ties through marriage was key to maintaining cultural bonds even across great distances.

⁸⁰Khayutina, “Royal Hospitality,” 24–25.

⁸¹By this, Khayutina is indicating that the nature of celebratory bronze inscriptions of a dedicatee make it an unfitting medium to engage in comparative rank or prestige measuring with peers. If (as this article assumes) bronzes were stored and displayed together, it may have created a kind of competitive element between those who cast them within a given lineage. It is unclear what significance this competitive spirit would have on relations with the Zhou king, who generally recognized individuals as simultaneously representing themselves and their lineages together. I thank my anonymous reviewer for this latter point. On this intra-lineage competition, one might also read such competitive activities as archery contests, on which, see Paul Nicholas Vogt, “Western Zhou Government and Society,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early China*, ed. Elizabeth Childs-Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 417n70.

⁸²Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 193, notes how Yan essentially governed local groups through co-opting the local elites through marriage ties and material culture integration.

This transition was culturally catastrophic for those who experienced it firsthand, and its remembrance in transmitted texts is comparable with the traumatic experiences that shape victim diaspora identities like those of the ancient Hebrews. Like the Hebrew experience, the fact that the number of individuals who actually experienced the traumatic loss of homeland directly was small is of no consequence to our classification of the experience and its consequences. In the Zhou case, it was an uncertain number of elite families and their servants accompanying the king and his household, while in the Hebrew exile, the number was between 5,000 and 10,000 at most.⁸³ The small numbers of people involved have a magnified cultural echo given that these were in both cases literate elites. In a further parallel, those who undergo the experience of dispersion firsthand are not the people *as a whole*, but a fraction that include these elites. It resulted in similar cultural consequences as well.⁸⁴ The intense emotions around the collapse come to us in certain poems of the *Shi jing*, such as that of “Zheng yue” 正月 (Mao 192), “Yu wu zheng” 雨無正 (Mao 194), and “Zhao min” 召旻 (Mao 265).⁸⁵ “Zheng yue,” among the longer poems of the *Shi jing*, exclaims frustration with corrupt governance bringing down the Western Zhou, at one point explicitly laying blame on the infamous temptress Bao Si 褒姒 (fl. late eighth century), which dates the poem to necessarily some time after the 780s.⁸⁶ “Zheng yue” includes numerous first person exclamations of stress and sorrow regarding the situation, including the author lamenting that he was born in such times and expressing at numerous points a deep concern for the welfare of the larger population.⁸⁷ “Yu wu zheng” expresses frustration with corrupt governance and explicitly describes the ruling lineage of Zhou and/or the capital city as “wholly obliterated” (*ji mie* 既滅).⁸⁸ Its author describes how the strain of it causes him to “weep blood” (*qi xue* 泣血).⁸⁹ “Zhao min” describes the chaotic conditions of the late Western Zhou, opening with lines exclaiming that “Merciful Heaven overawes with its afflictions/Heaven

⁸³Jeremiah 52:28–30; 2 Kings 24:14.

⁸⁴On this, note the early efforts of H. H. Rowley, *Prophecy and Religion in Ancient China and Israel* (London: The Athlone Press, 1956) in examining the contexts and cultural outputs of Israel and China specifically (rather than in a more generic “Axial Age” style comparative mode).

⁸⁵*Shi jing*, 561–72, 581–88, and 927–32. The dating of these poems, like with other *Shi jing* poems, can only be ascertained in vague timeframes, though Michael Loewe, “Shih ching 詩經” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), 415–23 points out that even the latest *Shi jing* poems cannot have been composed long after 600 BCE. Nylan, *The Five ‘Confucian’ Classics*, 87–89, points out that the segments referred to as the *xiaoya* 小雅 and *daya* 大雅 which together contain these three poems, would have not been among the last set composed, and by inference that the poems are referring to events pertaining to the fall of the Western Zhou, which in the case of poems like “Zheng yue” is explicit, it seems reasonable to assume a loose date of composition of sometime between 771 and 700.

⁸⁶*Shi jing*, Mao 192, 568: “Brilliant Zongzhou [one of the capital cities], is being destroyed by Bao Si” (赫赫宗周、褒姒滅之).

⁸⁷*Shi jing*, Mao 192, 562: “My heart is burdened with lamentations” (我心憂傷); 563: “Parents who gave birth to me, why [did you] cause me such pain?” (父母生我、胡俾我痛。); 564: “My heart is sorrowfully burdened, and I recall my lack of fortune. Those of the people with no offense, all become lowly servants” (憂心惻惻、念我無祿。民之無辜、並其臣僕。).

⁸⁸*Shi jing*, Mao 194, 583: “The house of Zhou [Karlgrén, *Book of Odes*, 140 takes it as the capital city] is wholly obliterated” (周宗既滅).

⁸⁹*Shi jing*, Mao 194, 588: “My thoughts are anxious; I weep blood” (鼠思泣血).

relentlessly brings down destruction” (旻天疾威、天篤降喪).⁹⁰ The lands of the Zhou are afflicted with famine and disorder, and the author laments that the Zhou king has filled the state official posts with “vile maggots” (*maozai* 蠹賊), who mislead the state and bring destruction upon it.⁹¹ The author ends with the frustrated claims that in the past, good ministers would “in a day expand the kingdom a hundred *li*./ Now indeed it diminishes in a day a hundred *li*” (日辟國百里。今也日蹙國百里).⁹² The tension of bad governance, economic hardship, and state instability would be on their own enough to presume a horrendously stressful experience, and the author speaks of the catastrophe “consuming his body” (災我躬) regarding the situation.⁹³ In these and other poems, authors describe conditions towards the end of the Western Zhou period, and we see the emotional burden that living through those events put on the authors (and the broader elite whom they represented). Key to a diasporic understanding of the Zhou experience is a sense of spatial distance to the homeland. While this is not prominent in the poems above, it is very much a factor in others.⁹⁴ Consider “Du ren shi” 都人士 (Mao 225).⁹⁵ “Du ren shi” is an ode to the superior ways of the people of the old Zhou capital, with the author expressing grief at no longer seeing them. While understandable as a love poem, the poem has also been specifically interpreted as a lament over the political chaos bringing an end to the magnificence of the Zhou capital and the distance in both a spatial and temporal sense of that time and place to the author themselves.⁹⁶

The lamentations of these works decrying corrupt government and its catastrophic consequences resonate with memorials to lost homelands and traumatic collapses found in the biblical poetry of Lamentations and Psalms pertaining to the Babylonian Exile.⁹⁷ As the Hebrews are considered the quintessential diaspora, an aside on the context and nature of the Babylonian Exile is called for.

After a series of diplomatic-political intrigues that left the Hebrew kingdom of Judah a client of Babylon, it revolted around 598. The revolt went poorly; Judah was conquered by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 605–562) in 597 and the

⁹⁰*Shi jing*, Mao 265, 928.

⁹¹*Shi jing*, Mao 265, 929.

⁹²*Shi jing*, Mao 265, 932.

⁹³*Shi jing*, Mao 265, 931: “Vast, then, is the devastation/and it is made greater;/will this not consume me?” (溥斯害矣、職兄斯弘、不災我躬) I take *gong* 躬 in its sense as *qiong* 窮, such that the indicated catastrophe subsumes the speaker physically. The line lends itself to alternate translations but focuses on the physical pain tied to the circumstances. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*: vol. 4 pt. 2 (Hong Kong: Lane, Crawford, and Co., 1893), 567, translates the passage as “Great is the injury [all about]/So that my anxious sorrow is increased. Will not calamity light on my person?” Compare Karlgren, *Book of Odes*, 238: “They spread everywhere this injury, and only moreover enhance it; will they not bring calamity on our persons?”.

⁹⁴Though note that this spatial sense of loss is temporary, as the Zhou experience takes on elements of “deterritorialized diasporas,” a concept I explore further below.

⁹⁵*Shi jing*, Mao 225, 716–20.

⁹⁶Cheng, *Shi jing zhuxi*, 716–17.

⁹⁷My thanks to Dr. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher for assisting me with the Hebrew of the following passages. All English translations of biblical Hebrew are taken from the The New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised.

capital of Jerusalem was razed.⁹⁸ An uncertain number (likely between 5,000 and 10,000) of Hebrew elites, including priests and artisans, were forcibly removed in several waves from their homes and sent into exile in Babylon.⁹⁹ They remained there under the power of the Babylonian empire until it was itself conquered by Cyrus the Great (r. 559–530) in 539. Cyrus, seeking to ingratiate subjects to his rule, allowed the Jews to return home and rebuild their society, though those Jews who returned brought with them an understanding of Jewishness that was fundamentally rooted in their diasporic experience, leaving a permanent mark on Jewish identity that persists to this day.¹⁰⁰

The poetics of bitterness in reaction to these political catastrophes are quite similar between the Zhou and the Hebrews, but before this brief comparison, I will specifically highlight that I am not arguing that the Early Chinese are “just like Hebrews.” The following analyses highlight the distinctions in the Zhou experience sufficiently to show their clear differences. I raise the comparison nevertheless because the Hebrews are the poster-children for diasporic experience, and while distinct, the Zhou experience shows quite a few fundamental similarities, especially when examined in light of the newer approaches to diaspora studies.

The Book of Lamentations recounts at length the destruction of Jerusalem and the seizure of its people and their deportation to Babylon. Jerusalem itself is depicted to be, like its priests and women, “in bitter anguish.”¹⁰¹ The cause of the devastation is explicitly identified as deriving from the will of the Hebrew god.¹⁰² It is laid out that god is bringing catastrophe on Israel because of Israel’s own impiety.¹⁰³ Lamentations 3 speaks to the physical misery endured by those who experienced the events, with the author decrying that God has “made my skin and my flesh grow old and has broken my bones. He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.”¹⁰⁴ Most infamously, Psalm 137 exclaims the bitter misery of exile in Babylon, recounting the destruction of Jerusalem and the declaration that the author will always remember the city, in spite of their present onerous circumstances. It recalls the “day Jerusalem fell,” and already one sees catastrophe turning into remembrance culture with vows such as “If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem

⁹⁸On the context of these events, see Elias J. Bickerman, “Nebuchadnezzar and Jerusalem,” in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, vol. 1, ed. Elias J. Bickerman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 961–74.

⁹⁹Jeremiah 52:28–30; 2 Kings 24:14. On the Exile, see also Daniel Smith-Christopher, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989).

¹⁰⁰Contra Ezra 2, the return was piecemeal or in waves, and not a mass re-migration, as shown by Bob Becking, “‘We All Returned as One!’ Critical Notes on the Myth of Mass Return” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Philadelphia: Eisenbraun, 2006), 3–18. On the impact of the exile on Jewish identity, see Daniel Smith-Christopher, “Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587–539 BCE)” in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 7–36.

¹⁰¹Lamentations 1:4.

¹⁰²Lamentations 1:5, 1:12, 2:1, and 2:5, for just a few examples.

¹⁰³Lamentations 1:5: “The LORD has brought her grief/because of her many sins.” 1:8: “Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean.”

¹⁰⁴Lamentations 3:4–5.

my highest joy.”¹⁰⁵ Expressing a deep well of anger and bitterness, the Psalm declares that “Happy is the one who repays you [Babylon] according to what you have done to us. Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.”¹⁰⁶ Without engaging in a full comparison of these Hebrew and Chinese poems, only the following needs to be highlighted for our purposes: First, it is clear that both the descriptions of the fall of the Western Zhou and the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylonian Exile are filled with expressions of highly personal suffering, suggesting that the memory, at least, of these events was similarly infused by long-lasting feelings of duress or even trauma. These works both are included in compilations of texts that would become extremely commonly read in the ensuing eras.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, it has long been noted that the cultural disruptions introduced by becoming a victim diaspora through the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylonian Exile provided a key impetus for the proliferation of textual production and editing engaged in by literate Hebrews.¹⁰⁸ That victim diaspora groups often seek to preserve earlier memories or traditions of lost time periods and homelands has been noted above. If, as we have seen, there *was* a Zhou imperial diaspora created through colonial practices, and there *were* texts produced that show a level of strain and duress comparable to what created a victim diaspora in the case of the Hebrews, can we understand the Eastern Zhou period as exhibiting some dynamics normally found in a victim diaspora? We must look beyond just expressions of the inciting event and into both the practices of Zhou textuality and the topics of those same texts, whereupon we note the frequency with which Eastern Zhou textuality bears marks of concerns commonly found among diasporic groups.

Diasporic Cultural Expressions of the Zhou

The flight of the Zhou king eastwards preserved the form but not the substance of pre-existing political frameworks and relationships, and the regional states were forced to reckon with a dramatically changed world going forward. Wang Mingke has highlighted how much of the Western Zhou period was “forgotten” by Eastern Zhou sources, including key details like the fact that the “king” of the Western Zhou was one among many thus-titled rulers in Guanzhong instead of a singular figure of unchallenged moral and political authority.¹⁰⁹ However, the “forgetting” of the past was also a key element in opening a space for creative remembering. Mingke highlights that in several cases, the re-conceptualization of Zhou history could be undertaken opportunistically, such as occurred when the state of Wu 吳 joined the Zhou cultural *oikumene* partly through an alteration to a pre-existing narrative about the flight of Taibo 泰伯 (~1150), a Zhou royal lineage scion.¹¹⁰ Into the memory space left by this historical amnesia were inserted “remembered” traditions of the Western

¹⁰⁵Psalm 137:6.

¹⁰⁶Psalm 137:8–9.

¹⁰⁷The *Shi jing* was a cornerstone text for all educated people in early China. On this, see Nylan, *The Five ‘Confucian’ Classics*, 91 and Hunter, *The Poetics of Early Chinese Thought*, 1–16.

¹⁰⁸On this matter, see Smith-Christopher, “Reassessing the Impact of the Babylonian Exile.”

¹⁰⁹Wang Mingke 王明珂, *Huaxia bianyuan: Lishi jiyi yu zuqun rentong* 華夏邊緣: 歷史記與族群認同 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin, 2013), 157–70.

¹¹⁰Wang, *Huaxia bianyuan*, 171–93.

Zhou that display concerns regarding identity which closely resemble those of diasporic groups. Relevant contemporary concerns were thus attached to events too prominent to be forgotten—including those pertaining to the collapse of the Western Zhou itself.

Judging by *Shi jing* poems associated with the fall of Zhou, regional lords were actively avoiding rendering aid to the Zhou king, and in such a light, many of these regional lords may not actually have been much aggrieved at the change of circumstances. With the benefit of distance from the situation, however, the distinctive trajectory of Chinese textual transmission preserved the extreme strain and anxiety of the collapse in those *Shi jing* poems, thus making them a kind of encoded memory for the larger Zhou cultural realm. In Early China, the victim-diasporic mentality grew up over time in reaction to the memory culture around the catastrophic event involved, rather than emerging quickly in conditions of subjugation. Moreover, it did so as a *component* of the aforementioned “forgetting” of the Western Zhou that took place over the duration of the Spring and Autumn period.

Consider that victim diasporas often display clear tensions related to the maintenance of in-group identity relative to the populations of natives surrounding them.¹¹¹ This is because in such circumstances, questions of intermarriage or cultural assimilation may pose existential risks to subaltern cultural groups. As nominally dependent but in-practice-autonomous polities, the Zhou regional states were not necessarily at an *immediate* risk of destruction just because the Western Zhou homeland had fallen. Wai-Yee Li has noted that the *Zuo zhuan* abounds with cases where the rulers of Zhou states intermarry and ally with foreign leaders, become infatuated with foreign styles, and practice other modes of cultural borrowing.¹¹² Western Zhou culture had been comfortably syncretic, adopting elements of its Shang predecessor and practicing intermarriage with non-Zhou elites.¹¹³ After the fall of the Western Zhou, new models of Zhou ethnic identity appear clearest in texts like the *Zuo zhuan*, whereby proper cultural-ritual customs marked one properly Zhou, while essentially nothing else factored into this identification. Wai-Yee Li has described the cultural attitudes as “an us-versus-them formula in *Zuo zhuan* (and early Chinese texts in general) [that is] cultural rather than ethnic.”¹¹⁴ However, the matter of the actions recorded, and the matter of the attitudes of the text towards those same

¹¹¹Robin Cohen, “Diasporas and the Nation-State: From Victims to Challengers,” *International Affairs* 72.3 (1996), 515.

¹¹²Wai-Yee Li, “Cultural Identity and Cultural Difference in *Zuo zhuan*,” *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 7.1 (2020), 10–11. This continues a trend noted by Mu-Chou Poo, *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 88–90, who noted a distinct lack of hostility to foreign cultures among Western Zhou practices compared to the case by the end of the Eastern Zhou.

¹¹³On the former point, see Kim, *Ethnicity and Foreigners*, 33; Shu-hui Wu, “The Great Migration: Inception of the Zhou Identity” *Studia Orientalia Electronica* 111 (2011), 407–45; Poo, *Enemies of Civilization*, 88; Sun, *Many Worlds Under One Heaven*, 123–33.

¹¹⁴Li, “Cultural Identity and Cultural Difference,” 7; see also the attendant remarks of Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 263–64.

actions, are in fact two separate things. Due to its compilation likely occurring in the Warring States period, *attitudes* to events derive from later contexts.¹¹⁵

Thus, concerns over preserving cultural unity and togetherness are clearly detectable, though our clearest literary evidence for these attitudes issues from centuries after the collapse of the Western Zhou realm.¹¹⁶ The seemingly long time delay of evidence aside, the dynamics by which this attitude developed are again similar to those of the Hebrews during the Babylonian Exile. In the Zhou case, literate elites of the regional states drove a significant shift in the makeup of Zhou identity, while the same dynamic occurred for the Hebrews in Babylon lasting even after their return from Exile. These elites evince clear worries about the preservation of Zhou practices and identities.¹¹⁷ As the Warring States period began, these attitudes became further entrenched rather than dissolving. By that era, one's "Zhou" identity was based on proper cultural–ritual activities, and very little else. As Yuri Pines and I have separately argued, the case of Qin indicates that the *lack* of proper ritual–cultural activities could *remove* one from being considered Zhou in the minds of Warring States authors.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵In this way, we can say, for example, the statement that Lord Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 built a Chu-style palace is a factual claim to be separated from the also-recorded prophecy that this was an inauspicious act and that his death in the palace was inevitable; see *Zuo zhuan*, Xiang 31 (542 BCE): Yang, *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan*, 1184–85; Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 1275. The matter of the construction of the palace is clearly separable from the inclusion of the prophetic utterance, with the latter being more suspect as a later addition. On such prophecies in the *Zuo zhuan* and the attendant difficulties it introduces to its historiography, see Wai-Yee Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007). Compare, as well, the matter of the Wei ruler prophesied to die in Yue because he “spoke like a barbarian” (*xiao Yi yan* 效夷言) in *Zuo zhuan*, Ai 12 (483 BCE): Yang, *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan*, 1672; Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 1911 and n265 on the preceding page.

¹¹⁶This is not to say there is Spring and Autumn period evidence that speaks against my interpretation—there is relatively little in the way of literary material that conclusively derives in the main from the Spring and Autumn period rather than the Warring States period. Moreover, see the view of Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” 10–13 arguing that “diaspora” is as much an *action* taken by groups as it is a descriptor of an entity. Understanding it as an action allows for a vision whereby the diasporic lens can be activated within cultural groups under certain conditions. Shelly Chan, “The Case for Diaspora: A Temporal Approach to the Chinese Experience,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 74.1 (2015), 107–28 points out, contra Shu-mei Shih, “Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production,” in *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays*, eds. Jing Tsu and David Der-wei Wang (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 29–48, that the modern Chinese diaspora operates in this way, wherein the group can undergo “diaspora moments,” where actors from the community emerge and their activities and rhetoric can initiate a phase wherein the dynamics of diasporic identity take on a cultural prominence it did not previously possess. If one interprets the absence of much Spring and Autumn evidence as itself evidence of absence of any diasporic trend, then it becomes probable that something along what Chan suggests may have become operative in the early Warring States Period, but digging into this matter is beyond the scope of this short article.

¹¹⁷Li, “Cultural Identity and Cultural Difference,” 12–13. This makes a certain degree of sense, going with Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, 315–24, which holds that the basic sources for the *Zuo zhuan* are potentially orally transmitted. Political fragmentation plus time would have caused regional variations to form in established cultural practices if not passed down through written texts. Given that adherence to the earlier modes of being was a matter of moral conduct, this means that the time delay is itself *necessary* to bring about the conditions necessary to cause the kind of existential anxiety observed in these texts.

¹¹⁸Yuri Pines, “Reassessing Textual Sources for Pre-Imperial Qin History,” in *Sinologi Mira k iubileiu Stanislava Kuczery: Sobranie Trudov*, ed. Sergej Dmitriev and Maxim Korolkov, Uchenye Zapiski Otdela Kitaja 11 (Moscow: Institut Vostokovedeniia RAN, 2013) 236–63; Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin*, 71–86.

Such concerns, as noted above, are known from other victim diasporas, but here they occur without the identity being necessarily under threat from a foreign oppressor.¹¹⁹ Instead, the worry derives from a particular understanding of the past that was reached by Zhou ministers and intellectuals over the course of the Eastern Zhou. Intimately familiar with the poems of the *Shi jing*, and attempting to reckon with the political chaos of their age, a kind of golden-age thinking reached a full growth by the Warring States period. Such revisionism was only made possible by the historical amnesia described above—had memory of the Western Zhou been perfectly transmitted, there would have been little space for reinvention and reimagination of the past. This thinking is obvious in the transmitted sources, which express a belief that the Western Zhou and its precedent states were (at the time of their foundations) morally superior and that the political framework of the current era was neither natural nor just.¹²⁰ It is also the case that both the Hebrews and the early Chinese preserved the clear memory that the disaster that separated their contemporary situation from the imagined superior period was *their fault* (stemming largely from in-group political misconduct more than blaming the collapses squarely on the evils of the Babylonians or Quanrong, that is), giving a sense of agency to the cultural survivors and reinforcing a sense of necessity for proper actions moving forward.¹²¹ In using the past as a call to proper conduct in imitation of earlier modes of cultural

¹¹⁹I do not mean to say that concerns for cultural preservation are exclusive to diasporic experiences, just that it is a frequent marker of diasporic identities. They are however nearly universally found in contexts of a real or imagined threat to the continuity of the culture.

¹²⁰Fu-sheng Wu, "The Concept of Decadence in the Chinese Poetic Tradition," *Monumenta Serica* 45.1 (1997), 39–62. Expressions of this perspective are far too vast in number to attempt a list of all of them, especially in texts associated with *Ru* doctrines, so I here include an arbitrarily selected listing of instances of this in a variety of different texts to convey their frequency: *Lun yu*, 3.14 = Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 ed., *Lun yu yizhu* 論語譯註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 182, 7.5 = Yang, *Lun yu yizhu*, 441, and 8.20 = Yang, *Lun yu yizhu*, 552–59; Mozi, 2.1.1–5 = Wu Yujiang 吳毓江 ed., *Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1993), 66–67, 3.2.8–9 = Wu, Mozi, 119–20; *Zuo zhuan*, Huan 2 (710 BCE) = Yang, *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan*, 86–90; Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 79; and Xiang 28 (545 BCE) = Yang, *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan*, 1150–51; Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 1229; see also the thorough analysis of Yegor Grebnev, *Mediation of Legitimacy in Early China: A Study of the Neglected Zhou Scriptures and the Grand Duke Traditions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022), 101–77 on the use of claimed ties to the Western Zhou as a source of legitimacy for ideas in the *Yi Zhou shu*. This viewpoint was not universally shared, and especially later Warring States period philosophical texts like *Zhuangzi* 14.6 = Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Zhuangzi jinzhu jinyi* 莊子今注今譯 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2009), 413, and *Han Feizi* 49 = Han Fei 韓非, *Han Feizi* 韓非子, eds. Gao Huaping 高華平, Wang Qizhou 王齊洲, and Zhang Sanxi 張三夕 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2010), 698, critique the stance, though in so doing just further suggest how prominent and enduring of a viewpoint it was. The eventual triumph of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty ensured that this viewpoint became a kind of cultural-political orthodoxy ingrained into the Chinese imperial system of the next two millennia. Compare with Hebrew equivalents in Lamentations 1:1, 1:7, 2:1, and 4:1–2, and 4:3 that indicate the superiority of prior times in the context of pointing out aberrant or tragic contemporary conditions. See also the discussion of the pertinent similarities in Rowley, *Prophecy and Religion in Ancient China and Israel*, 74–96.

¹²¹Note, for example, that Biblical traditions of the monarchy in the so-called "historical" books are composed in such a way as to often condemn their activity, at times even explicitly foreshadowing the consequences of exile in Babylon. The historical recollection of abuses of King You of Zhou and his concubine Bao Si were so deeply impressed into cultural memory as to form tropes in Chinese literature, discussed in Jianfei Kralle, Roderich Ptak, and Dennis Schilling, "Böse Brut: Bao Si [褒姒] und das Ende von König You [幽王]," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 149.1 (1999), 145–72, and also

identity, early Chinese texts such as these are in effect imitating the processes of victim diasporic identity-building. Identities built in this way emphasize the conservation of the ways and means of the earlier, imagined golden age. In this way, dilution or deviation from these norms, especially in the form of cultural integration with foreigners, becomes actively immoral.

Cases of philosophical texts disparaging the value of “local” traditions or customs and insisting on a kind of idealized remembered Zhou standard abound. Zhou identity described in these texts, especially in *Ru* (“Confucian” or “Classicist”) works, comes across as in this light as a form of high culture restricted to only those few who would intentionally practice it. A clear and influential line of *Ru* thought embodied in the *Xunzi* indicated the belief that acting according to emotion or innate tendency was a mark of savagery and baseness, and to be avoided.¹²² This resonates with an anecdote in the *Lun yu* that depicts Confucius as exclaiming that it took him (and therefore, can be expected to take others) an entire lifetime of study and self-control to act morally without needing to consciously try to do so.¹²³ While this indicates that it requires a lifetime of study to become a virtuous person, one need not stop at that interpretation. Remembering that what is morally right in *Ru* doctrine is overwhelmingly identical to whatever the practices of the earlier Zhou culture were imagined to be, the following can be said: *Ru* ideology holds that it takes a lifetime of effort to naturally embody the cultural and ritual practices of the former Zhou. For *Ru* philosophical texts, the obsession with maintaining the imagined culture of the Zhou led ultimately to the studied maintenance of traditional practices and rejection of “foreign” influences inextricably linked to larger discussions of ethical and moral philosophy. Again, because this Zhou diaspora was not one of oppressed minorities under foreign yokes, but a victim diaspora of colonizers, these rejections can take on a particularly elite character. Consider, for example, how *Xunzi* notes a court position, the *dashi* 大師 (preceptor), whose job entails “preparing model pieces and instructions, examining odes and note pitch, proscribing lewd tones, and following the appropriate season in his preparation so as to keep barbarian customs and unorthodox music from presuming to bring confusion to the ‘elegant standards.’”¹²⁴ Again, here one sees attitudes

in Olivia Milburn, “The Wicked Queen: Portraying Lady Bao Si in Imperial Era Literature,” *Korea Journal of Chinese Language and Literature* 3 (2013), 1–25.

¹²²*Xunzi*, *Xunzi*, 23 = Wang Xianqian ed., *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988), 442, translation in John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works/Books 17–32* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 23.4b:158.

¹²³*Lun yu*, 2.4 = Yang, *Lun yu yizhu*, 12–13, translation in Burton Watson, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 20.

¹²⁴*Xunzi*, *Xunzi*, 9 = Wang, *Xunzi jijie*, 167–68: “脩憲命，審詩商，禁淫聲，以時順脩，使夷俗邪音不敢亂雅，大師之事也。” Translation from John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, vol. 2, bks 7–16 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 9.17:106. Note that this remark is to be understood as distinct from, for example, American discourse in the twentieth century CE dismissing the influence of African-American culture in music; see Kalamu ya Salaam, “It Didn’t Jes Grew: The Social and Aesthetic Significance of African American Music,” *African American Review* 29.2 (1995), 351–75; Perry A. Hall, “African-American Music: Dynamics of Appropriation and Innovation,” in *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*, ed. Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 31–51. *Xunzi*’s vision of the ideal culture that must be protected is a culture external to the “native” community of discourse. That is to say, *Xunzi* wishes to preserve the standards of the Zhou high culture, in which elites shared, and which originated elsewhere, against degeneration brought on by

that local customs and deviation from the Zhou standards are seen as degenerations from a kind of perfect standard set by the Zhou, and must be guarded against by a court specialist.¹²⁵

As I see it, there are two potential stumbling blocks to accepting the Eastern Zhou elite culture as constituting a clear case of a diasporic cultural identity. First, there is the question of power relations. Classifying the Zhou regional states as constituting an imperial diaspora is to my eyes a certainty, but the categorization of their Eastern Zhou period existences as embodying a victim diaspora might make some uncomfortable. By far, most cases studied of diasporic experiences involved subjugated and oppressed populations living usually as minorities under the power of others. Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer have noticed a trend in diaspora studies to shorthand refer to people within a diaspora simply as being “subaltern.”¹²⁶ The Zhou case is not that. The Zhou elites ruled their own domains, with their own armies, and were not themselves conquered by the Rong. Living as exiles under the rule of others is often taken to be a critical factor in the diasporic experience, but in the Zhou case, this does not bear out: Subalternity is thus extremely common among victim diasporic communities, but this case indicates that it is not *necessary*, or, at the very least, that some new category between imperial and victim diaspora must be created to classify this case.¹²⁷

Second, one might suggest that the patterns discernible from Zhou cultural output show attachment to Zhou cultural practices but not necessarily to a physical geographic homeland. This is to say, they are not “exiled” enough. This is not necessarily a problem for my interpretation: recent works in diaspora studies have affirmed the existence of diasporic communities whose attachments to signifiers of home do not entail attachment to *the homeland* itself. Avtar Brah explains that for these diasporic

localism. Elsewhere, Xunzi elsewhere speaks of ideal men being at ease in Xia customs, distinct from how locals of any given area feel at home in their local conditions; Xunzi, *Xunzi*, 4 = Wang, *Xunzi jijie*, 611. Racialized American critique of African American culture feared the degeneration of American culture, but this fear was the fear of outsiders more than a diasporic desire to preserve precarious identity.

¹²⁵On this, see the excellent discussion in Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 189–243.

¹²⁶Cohen and Fischer, “Diaspora Studies,” 2. The difference is that not all subaltern groups are diasporic. Indigenous populations such as the Maori in the context of British colonization of New Zealand are subaltern, but not diasporic in that they were not displaced outside of New Zealand. In the context of imperial diasporas, not all diasporic groups are subaltern either. British colonists in New Zealand are not subaltern, as they are not displaced from the cultural and socio-economic institutions of society, but are diasporic in that they are a population scattered from a homeland. Because the traditional view of diasporic experience derives from that of the Jews, who are both diasporic *and* subaltern, traditional interpretations of diaspora assume subalternity.

¹²⁷Seeking to stick with Cohen’s categories, I have avoided adding any in the body of the text. However, given that this in-between category is proposed, I accept the suggestion of one of this article’s reviewers that it may tentatively be labeled as a “Former Imperial” diaspora. However, as observed above in n. 17, the “former” aspect of the British Imperial diaspora is behind its rapid dissipation as a relevant concept. One might suggest elements of generally willing participants in an imperial project being “marooned” as being essential to the Zhou experience. In this new category, I would classify any communities left behind from imperial projects that failed suddenly due to homeland collapse, such as any remaining Japanese communities deriving from Japan’s brief but explosive attempts at empire-building in the early twentieth century CE; see Sidney Xu Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868–1961* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 206–62.

communities, “‘home’ is a mythic place of desire . . . it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of ‘origin.’”¹²⁸ Though most of what Cohen calls “deterritorialized” diasporas are groups such as Afro-Caribbeans, Parsis, or even Roma, the core element noted in these cases, a fluid relationship with the idea of home that does not attach itself to specific geographic place, is key, and it is this dynamic that best explains the Zhou relationship to an imaginary home of perfect Zhou order.¹²⁹

Not all diasporas focus on the notion of a spatial “return” to a geographic homeland.¹³⁰ In the case of the Roma, a dispersed population claims origin in a place it has lost any connection with (India), and now expresses no particular interest in a “return” there.¹³¹ Cohen upholds the Afro-Caribbeans and Sindhis in Bombay as two prime examples of “deterritorialized” diasporas. He considers them diasporic in four ways:

1. Cultural retention of or affirmations of an origin in a location different than where the community resides (Africa/Sindh).
2. At minimum, a *symbolic* interest in retaining links to the original identity.
3. Cultural artifacts, products, or expressions that show shared concerns and cross influences between the new and the old locations (Africa and the Caribbean/Sindh and Bombay).
4. Behavior in ways consistent with a deterritorialized diaspora.¹³²

For our purposes, we can check these points off one by one. First, earlier in this article I noted and discussed the Zhou discourse of *Shi jing* poems, as well as the archaeological evidence of conditions of the early colonial settlements, which indicate a strong affirmation of the original identity of the elites sent away as retaining an identity of having been sent out and emplaced in their current positions by the king of Zhou. The symbolic interest in maintaining links to cultural identity is clear from the discomfort in the *Zuo zhuan* and *Xunzi* with deviating from the imagined norms of the Western Zhou. Cohen’s sense of cultural artifacts entails a sense by which the events and culture of the homeland retain at least *some* relevance to the “diasporic” group’s identity. While Cohen shows this with vernacular slang, I would suggest once again that the *Shi jing* provides us the clearest view of this. Qin, the Zhou foundation

¹²⁸Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 180–92.

¹²⁹Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 123–24. This is to say, the Zhou elite were in some sense relics, exiled from an earlier era’s political and cultural structuring, rather than exiles from a locative homeland. Eventually, with the reconquest of Guanzhong by the state of Qin, the physical “homeland” was retaken and brought back into the Zhou realm, but this did not *restore* the era of Zhou royal dominance, and in some sense, might have even highlighted the differentiation of the earlier era from the contemporary one in which the Zhou homeland was “Zhou” through the rule of Qin.

¹³⁰Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 177; Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 123–24. Cohen notes the existence of some groups which exist in a state of perpetual wandering, yet preserve their identity coherently, including the “Tuaregs, Bedouins, San, Qashqa’i, Maasai, and Berbers.” Cohen considers these groups to be on the far edge, perhaps even outside of the edge, of what can be considered diasporic: such groups being diasporic would mean that *all* nomadic societies are diasporas.

¹³¹Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 124.

¹³²Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 130–35.

“left behind” in the homeland while it was overrun, reclaimed the Guanzhong basin in a series of military campaigns through the seventh century BCE.¹³³ While distant from the northern plains that would become center-stage for “Chinese” history in the ensuing centuries, the *Shi jing* does significantly include the *Qin Feng* 秦風 (The Airs of Qin) as a ‘decade’ of poems. The *Zuo zhuan*, while showing a distinct focus on the events in the northwestern state of Lu, sees fit to at least mention the state of Qin often, though it rarely foregrounds events there.¹³⁴ The last of these categories, behavior fitting the vision of a deterritorialized diaspora, Cohen expresses some reticence about, given how vague and difficult to verify such a category necessarily must be.¹³⁵ For Cohen, the proof of this is in cultural behaviors rooted around short-term visits of Caribbeans abroad in the USA, UK, and elsewhere back to places like Jamaica (and not Africa). The situation for the Zhou is more complex. Qin retook the homeland, but while the Guanzhong became the Qin heartland, Qin did not become an imagined home or place of return.¹³⁶ Just as in the case of Afro-Caribbeans, the location of origin eventually became a place one could return to, but geographic return was not widely desired. Instead, the *new* royal court at Luoyang, the seat of a now vastly diminished king wielding only symbolic authority, became the new focal point for elites making official visits.¹³⁷

Conclusion and Consequences of a Diasporic Reading

There are several major consequences of reading diasporic dynamics into Eastern Zhou cultural developments. Historiographically, the model of the Zhou regional states and the development of an elite identity obviously working to secure not just its political, but its *cultural* survival, ought to be included in any larger study of diasporic dynamics. For the study of early China itself, the diasporic lens creates a new angle by which to understand how Chinese rulers and elites saw each other, and goes a long way towards explaining the particularities of the permeable Zhou identity—an identity which saw discourse capable of letting in foreigner entities, such as Wu, and casting out former compatriots, such as Qin, predicated upon steps taken to maintain cultural identity. The diasporic lens is worth applying to the analysis of a number of other dynamics which could easily fill a monograph. I have here tried to show only

¹³³Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 5.178–82. Note that there is uncertainty over the exact original identity of Qin, and the unprovenanced(!) excavated text *Xinian* 繫年 has stirred up a controversy on this front. Pericope 3 of that text (provided and translated in Milburn, “The Xinian,” 64–65 and n42) indicates some kind of Shang-affiliated origin, but this debate is far from resolved. What matters here is that even in this text, the Zhou emplaced them in their location intentionally and they are therefore to be understood as a Zhou foundation. Qin had mostly stabilized control over the Guanzhong by time of composition of texts like the *Zuo zhuan* or *Xunzi*, but further tensions with non-Zhou groups could occasionally flare up, such as with the Yiqu 義渠 in the fourth century BCE (Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 110.2885).

¹³⁴Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin*, 22n103.

¹³⁵Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 134.

¹³⁶In fact, quite the opposite: see Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin*, 71–84.

¹³⁷Indeed, note Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 191, who highlights the basic fact that an attachment to a “home” identity for diasporic groups does not at all preclude the possibility of establishing new homes, and new places of central cultural importance, in this case Luoyang. Note that the site had already been serving this function in a lesser capacity prior to the fall of the Western Zhou.

that it is a valid lens to use. Still, to demonstrate its validity further, I will apply it to two dynamics for analysis. First, I note the continuing comparisons between Chinese and Greek city states and the matter of civic participation and citizenship. Diasporic cultures have strong traditions separating in and out group identities, and this surely has some impact on participatory communality (or the lack thereof) in Spring and Autumn polities.¹³⁸ This is to say, in attempting to understand why Greeks developed citizenship structures and why China, for example, did not, one notes that Greek citizen communities did not base a sense of a shared Greekness around memories of a superior past that placed burdens and expectations on their present conduct. Greek ethnic identities remained primarily oriented around ancestry, and custom differences could muddy the waters, but in-or-out ethnic group identification even in the case of the disputably-Greek Macedonians never broke from rhetoric surrounding ancestry.¹³⁹ Greek social and governmental change or experimentation at the local level was not therefore an attack on one's Greekness. For the Zhou regional states, whose sense of themselves as a quasi-ethnic group became inextricably bound up with the maintenance of an identity tied to reclaiming a moral (and thus political) superiority in the world, deviation from received norms would have been constituted an attack on group identity.¹⁴⁰

Secondly, just as the Exile in Babylon is now considered to have prompted massive editing and additions to existing textual materials of the Hebrews, it is no doubt significant that several literary compositions are claimed to have been produced during the Spring and Autumn period as well.¹⁴¹ It is especially worth re-examining textual

¹³⁸For examples where these matters come up in recent discussions, see Hans Beck and Griet Vankeerberghen, "The Many Faces of 'the People' in the Ancient World: *δημος*—*populus*—*民* *min*," in *Rulers and Ruled in Ancient Greece, Rome, and China*, ed. Hans Beck and Griet Vankeerberghen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 1–24; Zhao, *Confucian-Legalist State*, 91–137; Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin*.

¹³⁹Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin*, 71–86. This is not to say that ancestry was unimportant for political identity in China, quite the opposite. This point specifically means that ancestry does not underpin a large sense of ethnicity—ancestry in Zhou China was a matter of clan prominence, pride, or political utility, rather than groups of distinct clans determining that their shared ancestral heritage set them apart from others in a politically actionable and cultural way that others lacking this ancestry could not join in with.

¹⁴⁰Pines, "Reassessing Textual Sources"; Christopher, *The Pioneer Kingdoms of Macedon and Qin*, 71–84.

¹⁴¹On exile's impact on the Bible, see Smith-Christopher, "Reassessing the Impact of the Babylonian Exile." Several texts are thought to have been compiled or recomplied during the Spring and Autumn period. These include the *Shi jing*, though, this is disputed; see Loewe, "Shih ching," for a history of the scholarship of that text. It also includes segments of the *Shang shu*—see the discussion in Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Shang shu 尚書 [*Shu ching* 書經]," in Loewe ed. *Early Chinese Texts*, 376–89—and the *Lun yu*, on which see Anne Cheng, "Lun yü," in Loewe ed., *Early Chinese Texts*, 313–23. That said, all these texts are known to have been further edited during the Warring States period along with much more, suggesting that a trend was formed that gained momentum over time. Still, scholarship that identifies significant Warring States reworkings should not be taken as evidence of absence of this trend in the Spring and Autumn period: Artemij M. Karapetiant suggested that the dissemination of early textual state records, such as the *Chun qiu*, between scribes in the Spring and Autumn period was a means of preserving cultural unity; see Artemij M. Karapetiants, "Чуньцю и древнекитайский историографический ритуал" [*Chun qiu* and Ancient Chinese Historiographic Ritual], in *Этика и ритуал в традиционном Китае* (*Ethics and Ritual in Traditional China*), ed. Leonid S. Vasilyev and Artem Igorevich Kobzev (Moscow: Nauka, 1988). However, see also the view of Yuri Pines, in his *Zhou History Unearthed: The Bamboo Manuscript Xinian and Early*

histories and the works of Chinese philosophy through a diasporic lens: Much of the *Ru* (Confucian) literary tradition can be re-read in this light. There remains continuous work being done both in Asian and Western scholarly circles aimed at understanding the moral-ethical expressions and implications of the *Ru* texts.¹⁴² The diasporic understanding of the Zhou identity helps to explain the emotional/anthropological dynamics at work underneath such key ideological stances across numerous Zhou texts, most prominently represented in Confucius' assertion that "I transmit and do not create, believing in and loving antiquity" (述而不作，信而好古).¹⁴³ It is not new to note that for much of Early Chinese cultural discourse, imitation of the ancients was a moral good in itself, but a diasporic angle can help explain *why*: imitating the sages, lionizing the former rulers, and accepting the downfall of the Zhou royal clan as morally justified were aids in preserving a culture that had developed a sense of being endangered, a sense rooted in the sudden disruption of Zhou colonial structures.¹⁴⁴ Appreciating the factors that undergird a uniquely Chinese-*Ru* variant of diasporic drives to cultural preservation is a necessary step to tackle the larger question of the longevity of a recognizable "Chinese" culture in world history as well as to highlight broad paradigmatic similarities to the Jewish tradition, which has itself seen a remarkable longevity in the world. The diasporic lens opens comparative angles for studying the ethical philosophies and texts of diasporic peoples such as those of the Hebrews in Babylon, a question that must be left for a further comparative paper. It is thereby clear: the postcolonial, and indeed the diasporic perspective as well, when applied to early China has much to offer. It is past time to apply it when engaging with the texts of the era.

Chinese Historiography (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 18, that the records were intended as reports to ancestral spirits. Even with the Hebrew examples, many of these later-compiled texts come chronologically *earlier* in the biblical narrative, such that just as with the Warring States period, the desire for authority from antiquity may be seen to have overridden concerns for authenticity.

¹⁴²Examples of this type of study (into Confucianism, its original meanings, or its later reinterpretations) are overwhelming in number, as would be expected of any body of research on a major world religion/philosophy. To point out only a few recent works, see Xinzhong Yao, "De and Virtue in Early Confucian Texts: Introduction," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 48.1 (2021), 5–12; Peng Yin, "Virtue and Hierarchy in Early Confucian Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 49.4 (2021), 793–807; Shirong Luo, "Integrating Care and Respect: Early Confucian Ethics as Inclusive Ethics," *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture* 35 (2021), 47–76.

¹⁴³*Lun yu*, 7.1 = Yang, *Lun yu yizhu*, 431.

¹⁴⁴This kind of dynamic is often seen in diasporic communities which can cling to matters as small as dining habits as a means to perpetuate identity; for this see Anita Mannur, "Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora," *Melus* 32.4 (2007), 27. Note as well that in light of the questionable status of *Ru* doctrine as a "religion" or not, one notes that religious practices can themselves create diaspora-analogue communities with similar dynamics; see Yong Chen, *Confucianism as Religion: Controversies and Consequences* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). See also Giulia Liberatore and Leslie Fesenmeyer, "Diaspora and Religion: Connecting and Disconnecting," in *Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies*, ed. Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer (London: Routledge, 2019).

早期中國的殖民主義與離散群體

劉元德

提要

西周王朝的覆滅「遺留」了中國中原地區的諸侯國，造就了歷史上或許獨一無二的局面：殖民勢力幾近消亡，其殖民地卻持續繁榮。本文將援引考古與文獻證據，論證儘管西周政權在關中地區的統治鬆散，仍可被視為「殖民」實體。其滅亡歷經時間淬鍊，逐漸被重新詮釋為某種創傷性肇因事件——諸如許多離散族群追憶自身離散境遇的起點。正如其他離散群體，既存傳統與記憶缺口皆由再構敘事與道德教訓填補，其中顯露對自身身份認同的強烈捍衛以及對「外族」的明顯戒備。這種對周代的全新詮釋，為重新審視戰國時期文獻，尤其是儒家經典，提供了嶄新的理解視角。由此，諸如儒家對傳統主義的關注，亦可在東周時期所浮現的更廣泛離散話語背景之中，獲得充分的理解。

西周， 春秋， 戰國， 離散社群， 後殖民主義