

# Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy

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

*Edited by*

Martin Kern  
Dirk Meyer



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

# Contents

- Introduction 1  
*Martin Kern and Dirk Meyer*
- 1 Language and the Ideology of Kingship in the “Canon of Yao” 23  
*Martin Kern*
- 2 Competing Voices in the *Shangshu* 62  
*Kai Vogelsang*
- 3 Recontextualization and Memory Production: Debates on Rulership as Reconstructed from “Gu ming” 顧命 106  
*Dirk Meyer*
- 4 One Heaven, One History, One People: Repositioning the Zhou in Royal Addresses to Subdued Enemies in the “Duo shi” 多士 and “Duo fang” 多方 Chapters of the *Shangshu* and in the “Shang shi” 商誓 Chapter of the *Yi Zhoushu* 146  
*Joachim Gentz*
- 5 The Qinghua “Jinteng” 金滕 Manuscript: What It Does Not Tell Us about the Duke of Zhou 193  
*Magnus Ribbing Gren*
- 6 “Shu” Traditions and Text Recomposition: A Reevaluation of “Jinteng” 金滕 and “Zhou Wu Wang you ji” 周武王有疾 224  
*Dirk Meyer*
- 7 The *Yi Zhoushu* and the *Shangshu*: The Case of Texts with Speeches 249  
*Yegor Grebnev*
- 8 The “Harangues” (*Shi* 誓) in the *Shangshu* 281  
*Martin Kern*
- 9 Speaking of Documents: *Shu* Citations in Warring States Texts 320  
*David Schaberg*

- 10 **A Toiling Monarch? The “Wu yi” 無逸 Chapter Revisited** 360  
*Yuri Pines*
- 11 **Against (Uninformed) Idleness: Situating the Didacticism of “Wu yi” 無逸** 393  
*Michael Hunter*
- 12 **“Bi shi” 柴誓, Western Zhou Oath Texts, and the Legal Culture of Early China** 416  
*Maria Khayutina*
- 13 **Concepts of Law in the *Shangshu*** 446  
*Charles Sanft*
- 14 **Spatial Models of the State in Early Chinese Texts: Tribute Networks and the Articulation of Power and Authority in *Shangshu* “Yu gong” 禹貢 and *Yi Zhoushu* “Wang hui” 王會** 475  
*Robin McNeal*
- Index** 497

## A Toiling Monarch? The “Wu yi” 無逸 Chapter Revisited

*Yuri Pines*

“Wu yi” 無逸 is a relatively marginal chapter of the *Shangshu*.<sup>\*</sup> It is rarely cited in pre-imperial texts; it inspired only a few scholarly discussions; it lacks the ideological importance of such documents as “Kang gao” 康誥 or the theoretical sophistication of “Lü xing” 呂刑; and it is less related to specific historical events of the early Zhou period than most of the “declarations” (誥) or “harangues” (誓). My initial interest in “Wu yi” was spurred by the chapter’s most notable feature: it is arguably one of the earliest texts that systematically presents Shang and early Zhou history so as to elucidate the functioning of Heaven’s Mandate (天命). Having reread the text, though, I discovered that its content is richer and more intellectually engaging; in particular, its views of the nature of rulership and of the monarch’s relation with the people deserve utmost attention.

In what follows I first translate the chapter; then I analyze its major ideas; and then I try to contextualize the “Wu yi” ideology in the intellectual atmosphere of the early Zhou period and relate it to later developments during the formative age of Chinese political culture—namely, the Warring States period (Zhanguo 戰國, 453–221 BCE).<sup>1</sup> Having done this, I shall try to date the text. I conclude with a few observations about the possibility of a fresh look at early Zhou ideology as reflected in the *Shangshu*.

### Translation

“Wu yi” records an alleged admonition of the Duke of Zhou 周公 (d. ca. 1035)<sup>2</sup> to his nephew, King Cheng 成王 (r. ca. 1042/1035–1021), soon after the latter’s enthronement. A significant portion of the text is cited (or partly retold) in the

<sup>\*</sup> This research was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (grant no. 240/15) and by the Michael William Lipson Chair in Chinese Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter all the dates are before the Common Era unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> All dates for the Western Zhou and Shang kings follow the suggestions of the Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project team (Xia-Shang-Zhou 2000).

chapter “Lu Zhou gong shijia” 魯周公世家 (“Hereditary House the Duke of Zhou of Lu”) in the *Shiji* 史記; segments of the modern-script version survive in some of the Han citations and in the remnants of the Han steles. There are minor variants among different citations, but presupposing the existence of fixed ancient- and modern-script recensions is premature. Even in a single text such as the *Shiji*, the title “Wu yi” is transcribed differently: once as 毋逸 and once as 無佚.<sup>3</sup> Probably, manifold versions of the text simply coexisted alongside one another.

The chapter comprises seven sections, each of which opens with the phrase “The Duke of Zhou said” (周公曰). I have given numbers to each of the sections for the convenience of later discussion. My translation is based primarily on the punctuation and annotation by Pi Xirui 皮希瑞, with further consultations of the texts annotated by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 and Liu Qiyu 劉起鈞 and with the modern translation by Huang Huaixin 黃懷信.<sup>4</sup>

1. The Duke of Zhou said: “*Wuhu!* The superior man should not be idle in his position.<sup>5</sup> First, he must understand the hardship of sowing and reaping, then he may be idle; only then will he know the distress of the lower men.<sup>6</sup> Look at the lower men: the parents exert themselves sowing and reaping; but if the son has no idea of the hardship of sowing and reaping,

3 *Shiji* 33.1520 and 4.133. Cheng Yuanmin (2013: 276) counts the following variants in early citations: the first character can be written as 無, 毋, or 亡; the second, as 逸, 佚, 佻, or 劬.

4 Pi Xirui 1998; Sun Xingyan 1998; Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005; Huang Huaixin 2002. Liu Qiyu (1917–2012) started his work on the annotations of the *Shangshu* in the early 1960s, but the work was interrupted (and most of his note cards destroyed) at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The work restarted in 1976, owing to Mao Zedong’s explicit desire to see a modern annotated edition of the *Shangshu* that would make the text comprehensible. Liu Qiyu proceeded for more than two decades, finishing his magnum opus in 1999. Although Gu Jiegang (who died in 1980) could only proofread a few chapters (and not “Wu yi”), Liu added his mentor’s name as coauthor of the book. In what follows, I refer to the glosses in Gu and Liu’s edition as Liu Qiyu’s. For more details, see Liu’s preface (Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: 1–24).

5 Liu Qiyu (Gu and Liu 2005: 1531) suggests that *junzi* 君子 here refers to the ruler only; however, the text can easily be read as applying to elite members in general. See also Hunter’s discussion in chapter 11 in the present volume.

6 Following Wang Yinzhi 王引之 (1766–1834), I read *yi* 依 as *yin* 隱, which is then glossed as *tong* 痛 (pain, distress) (see, e.g., Huang Huaixin 2002: 310). Liu Kunshen (2000: 9–10) suggests that the text here depicts a dialectical mode of learning: first the king should experience the peasants’ hardships; then he may be idle; thereby he will understand the difference between idleness and hard work.

he is idle, is sluggish in his tasks,<sup>7</sup> and, moreover,<sup>8</sup> humiliates his parents, saying: “These men of old, they know nothing!”<sup>9</sup>

周公曰：「嗚呼！君子所，其無逸。先知稼穡之艱難，乃逸；則知小人之依。相小人，厥父母勤勞稼穡，厥子乃不知稼穡之艱難乃逸，乃諺既誕，否則，侮厥父母曰：『昔之人，無聞知！』」

2. The Duke of Zhou said: “*Wuhu!* I have heard that in the past, King Zhongzong of Yin was stern and pious, respectful and fearful toward Heaven’s Mandate; he rectified himself;<sup>10</sup> he was reverent and cautious in ordering the people and did not have the temerity to be idle and at ease. Therefore, Zhongzong enjoyed his rule for seventy-five years.

“As for Gaozong, he spent a long time laboring outside [the palace], therefore being together with the lower men.<sup>11</sup> When he ascended the throne, he stayed at a mourning hut<sup>12</sup> and did not talk for three years; he was not talking, but when he did talk, his words were harmonious.<sup>13</sup> He did not have the temerity to be idle and at ease; he brought blessing and tranquillity to the land of Yin, and there was no resentment among either the inferior or the superior [people]. Therefore, Gaozong enjoyed his rule for fifty-nine years.

- 
- 7 Following Pi Xirui’s (1998: 364) emendation based on the Han stone version, *nai yan ji dan* 乃諺既誕 should be *nai xian* 乃憲 (read as *fa* 法, equivalent to *ye* 業) *ji yan* 既延.
- 8 Reading *fouze* 否則 as *pize* 丕則 as in the Han stone version (Pi Xirui 1998: 364).
- 9 *Shiji* 33.1520 has “Parents toil for a long time, while the descendants are self-indulgent and extravagant, forgetting [the parent’s toil], thereby bringing about the demise of their family. Can the son but be observant!” (為人父母，為業至長久，子孫驕奢忘之，以亡其家，為人子可不慎乎!). It is likely that Sima Qian 司馬遷 is retelling the archaic “*Wu yi*” version in more comprehensible Han language.
- 10 For reading 嚴恭寅畏天命 as a single sentence, I follow Li Guangji 1999; Li also argues that the next phrase, *zi du* 自度, should be connected to the following *zhi min zhi ju* 治民祗懼; yet this argument is based on replacing *du* 度 with Bo 毫, supposedly the Shang capital in Zhongzong’s time. This latter interpretation seems to me far-fetched.
- 11 Most commentators agree that *luan ji* 爰暨 should be read as *wei yu* 為與. See Sun Xingyan 1998: 436; Pi Xirui 1998: 365.
- 12 There is much controversy about *liang’an* 亮陰. See Pi Xirui’s (1998: 366) note; in all likelihood it is a kind of mourning residence.
- 13 Reading *yong* 雍 as *huan* 讜 (as in many early citations of this text) and adopting Zheng Xuan’s 鄭玄 (127–200 CE) gloss of *huan* 讜 as *hexie* 和諧 (cited from Sun Xingyan 1998: 438). Li Guangji (1999) prefers reading it as *quan* 勸 (to encourage); Liu Qiyu argues for the reading as *guan* 觀: “worth looking at” or “instructive.”

“As for Zujia, it was not appropriate that he become king;<sup>14</sup> hence, he spent a long time among the lower men. When he ascended the throne, he was well aware of the distress of the lower men, he was able to protect and be kind toward the commoners, and he did not have the temerity to offend widowers and widows. Therefore, Zujia enjoyed his rule for thirty-three years.<sup>15</sup>

“Thereafter, the kings who inherited the throne were idle during their lives; since they were idle during their lives, they did not understand the hardship of sowing and reaping, nor did they hear about the work of the lower men; they sought nothing but addiction to joy. Thereafter, nobody enjoyed longevity: some reigned for ten years, some for seven or eight years, some for five or six years, some for four or three years.”

周公曰：「嗚呼！我聞曰：昔在殷王中宗，嚴恭寅畏天命，自度，治民祇懼，不敢荒寧。肆中宗之享國，七十有五年。其在高宗，時舊勞于外，爰暨小人。作其即位，乃或亮陰，三年不言；其惟不言，言乃雍。不敢荒寧，嘉靖殷邦。至于小大，無時或怨。肆高宗之享國，五十有九年。其在祖甲，不義惟王，舊為小人。作其即位，爰知小人之依；能保惠于庶民，不敢侮鰥寡。肆祖甲之享國，三十有三年。自時厥後，立王生則逸；生則逸，不知稼穡之艱難，不聞小人之勞，惟耽樂之從。自時厥後，亦罔或克壽：或十年，或七、八年，或五、六年，或四、三年。」

14 “Not appropriate” (*bu yi* 不義) here apparently means that Zujia was not the designated heir apparent.

15 Pi Xirui (1998: 369–370) argues, on the basis of multiple citations in Han sources, that the original structure of section 2 differed from the ancient-script version current today: he proposes replacing Zujia with Taijia 太甲, aka Shang Taizong 商太宗, and placing the sentences referring to him at the beginning of the section (according to the historical sequence in which Taijia precedes Zhongzong [aka Taiwu 太戊] and Gaozong [aka Wuding 武定]; the latter’s reign was calculated by the Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project team to span fifty-nine years [1250–1192]; see Xia-Shang-Zhou 2000). Liu Qiyu (Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: 1532–1538) adopts this restructuring. The problem for both scholars is that they presuppose the lateness of the “Wu yi” version cited in the *Shiji* (which accords with the ancient-script recension), but there are no reasons to do that. It is more likely that some transmitters, puzzled by the elevation of the otherwise-undistinguished Zujia, tried to create a historically more convincing narrative; but by doing so they undermined the internal logic of the document, which depicts the decreasing length of the Shang kings’ reigns. Furthermore, an attempt to reconcile “Wu yi” with the known dates of Shang history is problematic: it is clear that at least insofar as the late Shang kings are concerned, the document is completely off target, and I see no reason to expect historical sensitivity from its authors with regard to earlier rulers.

3. The Duke of Zhou said: “*Wuhu!* It is also the Great King and King Ji of our Zhou who were able to be restrained and fearful. King Wen endorsed humble occupations, such as dealing with husks<sup>16</sup> and working in the fields. Good-hearted and mild, resplendent and reverent, he lovingly protected the lowly people and kindly supported the widowers and widows. From morning to dusk he had no leisure time to eat at ease, harmonizing the myriad people. King Wen did not have the temerity to entertain himself with amusements or hunting<sup>17</sup> but wholly concerned himself with the correct provisions [for the myriad states?].<sup>18</sup> King Wen had received Heaven’s Mandate at the middle of his life, and he enjoyed his rule for fifty years.”

周公曰：「嗚呼！厥亦惟我周大王、王季，克自抑畏。文王卑服，即康功田功。徽柔懿恭，懷保小民，惠鮮鰥寡。自朝至于日中昃，不遑暇食，用咸和萬民。文王不敢盤于游田，以庶邦惟正之供。文王受命惟中身，厥享國五十年。」

4. The Duke of Zhou said: “*Wuhu!* Henceforth, you, Successor King, should not excessively indulge in drinking,<sup>19</sup> idleness, amusement, and hunting; just concern yourself with correct provisions for the myriad people. Do not say blithely: ‘Today I shall indulge in joy,’ as this cannot be made into a constant lesson for the people, cannot be constantly approved by Heaven. Those who behave in such a manner commit a huge transgression! Do not go astray into calamity like King Shou [i.e., Zhouxin] of Yin,<sup>20</sup> who became submerged by the power of ale!”

周公曰：「嗚呼！繼自今嗣王，則其無淫于觀、于逸、于游、于田，以萬民惟正之供。無皇曰：『今日耽樂。』乃非民攸訓，非天攸若，時人不則有愆。無若殷王受之迷亂，酗于酒德哉！」

5. The Duke of Zhou said: “*Wuhu!* I have heard that in times of old, men warned each other, protected each other, and taught each other, while

16 Adopting Guo Moruo’s 郭沫若 (1892–1978) reading of *kang* 康 as *kang* 糠 (see Shi Sheng-huai 1979: 48). I also accept the reading of *bei fu* 卑服 as “humble occupations”; an alternative would be that King Wen wore “humble clothes.”

17 Reading *tian* 田 as *tian* 畋.

18 The words *shu bang* 庶邦 do not appear in the Han stone inscription.

19 Replacing *guan* 觀 with *jiu* 酒 as in the citation from *Hanshu* 85.3445 (“Gu Yong’s Biography” [谷永傳]).

20 Zhouxin 紂辛 (r. ca. 1075–1046), the last king of the Shang dynasty, is the paradigmatic bad last ruler whose misbehavior cost his dynasty the Mandate of Heaven (Pines 2008).

among the people none deceived each other.<sup>21</sup> When he (the ruler?) did not heed [the advice], the men [around him] were warning him; if he was wreaking havoc on the correct models of the former kings, then the people, both lowly and superior, were resentful and cursed him with their mouths.”<sup>22</sup>

周公曰：「嗚呼！我聞曰：『古之人猶胥訓告，胥保惠，胥教誨；民無或胥譴張為幻。』此厥不聽，人乃訓之；乃變亂先王之正刑，至于小大民，否則厥心違怨，否則厥口詛祝。」

6. The Duke of Zhou said: “*Wuhu!* From King Zhongzong of Yin until Gaozong, Zujia, and further until King Wen of our Zhou, these four men were of great understanding. When someone told them: ‘The lower men resent you and curse you,’ they became even stronger in respecting virtue. When they transgressed, they said: ‘I really transgressed!’ Really like that: they just did not have the temerity to be angry [at criticism].<sup>23</sup> If you are not tolerant,<sup>24</sup> some people will deceive you, saying: ‘The lower men resent you and curse you,’ and you will believe this. In such a case, you will not always think of your laws;<sup>25</sup> your heart will not be broad and lenient; you will wantonly punish the guiltless and kill the innocent. [The people’s] resentment will be uniform and it will coalesce around your own body.”

周公曰：「嗚呼！自殷王中宗，及高宗，及祖甲，及我周文王，茲四人迪哲。厥或告之曰：『小人怨汝詈汝。』則皇自敬德。厥愆，曰：『朕之愆允若時』。不啻不敢含怒。此厥不聽，人乃或譴張為幻。曰：『小人怨汝詈汝。』則信之。則若時，不永念厥辟，不寬綽厥心；亂罰無罪，殺無辜。怨有同，是叢于厥身。」

7. The Duke of Zhou said: “*Wuhu!* Let the Successor King scrutinize this!”  
周公曰：「嗚呼！嗣王其監于茲！」

21 In the modern-script version, there is no “people” and no “each other,” which means that it was the ruler who was not deceived, paralleling the warning in the next section.

22 I adopt Pi Xirui’s (1998: 378) reading of *fouze* 否則 as *pize* 丕則 (then).

23 Liu Kunsheng (2000: 10–11) assumes that the sentence is not complete here and a bamboo slip may have been missing in the original text. Indeed, the connection between this and the next phrase is not clear.

24 In the modern-script version, *ting* 聽 is replaced by the synonymous *sheng* 聖. Karlgren (1950: 59) indeed prefers to translate “if you are not wise”; but I adopt Pi Xirui’s (1998: 378) gloss, according to which *sheng* 聖 stands here for *rong* 容.

25 Following Sun Xingyan’s (1998: 444) gloss of *pi* 辟 as “law” and Cao Yang’s (1989: 35) gloss. Huang Huaixin (2002: 315) prefers instead a direct reading of *pi* as “your ruling position.”

## Analysis

The Duke of Zhou's admonition in "Wu yi" is presented as a historical text. The addressee, presumably King Cheng, should learn from the experience of his predecessors, so as to emulate the success of paragon rulers of the past, such as King Wen and the early Shang kings, and to avoid the misfortune of the Mandate losers, such as the last king of Shang, Shou 受 (aka Zhouxin 紂辛, r. ca. 1075–1046). In particular, he must be fully aware of the commoners' hardships and pay attention to their needs and tolerate their criticisms. Yet the most strongly pronounced message is the one outlined in the chapter's name, that is, to avoid idleness—a title first mentioned in the *Shiji*.

The term *yi* 逸 (or 佚 in some recensions) is a polysemous term; it can refer to idleness and laziness, to relaxation and being at ease, and to licentiousness and excessiveness, and it has a great variety of further, unrelated meanings.<sup>26</sup> As such, *yi* lacks a clearly pronounced negative or positive association, and its selection as an object of admonition is relatively rare. In "Wu yi," *yi* refers predominantly to laziness and idleness (alternatively called *huangning* 荒寧) or to lax morality and indulgence (e.g., indulgence in joy, *danle* 耽樂, or in ale, *xu yu jiu de* 酗于酒德); however, at least once it signifies legitimate relaxation.<sup>27</sup> Of these three meanings, the second one is unequivocally negative: excessiveness, licentiousness, and indulgence are singled out as deplorable features of a monarch's behavior beginning with the earliest known texts of the Western Zhou period, such as "Jiu gao" 酒誥 (see more below) and the Da Yu-*ding* 大盂鼎 inscription. It is for this reason, perhaps, that James Legge opted to translate "Wu yi" as "Against Luxurious Ease." Yet in "Wu yi," it is also plainly clear that the major source of the Duke of Zhou's concern is not just the "luxurious ease" and indulgence of his nephew but overall laziness and idleness, which are considered unforgivable characteristics of a ruler.

What does it mean "not to be idle"? One might expect this to refer to the ruler's engagement in government activities, as it is said about King Wen: "he lovingly protected the lowly people and kindly supported the widowers and widows. From morning to dusk he had no leisure time to eat at ease,

26 See, e.g., discussion by Xin Ting (2013), who also identifies many graphic variants of the character 逸. Among these meanings one finds "to rush," "to hasten," "to lose," "to order," "to be pleased," "to commit mistakes," and so forth. For *yi* in Western Zhou oracle-bone inscriptions in the meaning of "to perform sacrifices," see Xin Ting 2014. In the recently published dictionary of ancient glosses (Zong Fubang, Chen Shinao, and Xiao Haibo 2007), the character 逸 merits seventy-four explanations!

27 See sections 2 and 4; for a single positive invocation of *yi*, see section 1: "First, he [the superior man] must understand the hardship of sowing and reaping, then he may be idle."

harmonizing the myriad people. King Wen did not have the temerity to entertain himself with amusements or hunting but wholly concerned himself with the correct provisions [for the myriad states?]" (sec. 3). This advice for a ruler is uncontroversial and commonplace in many texts. But what about the opening phrases that the ruler "must understand the hardship of sowing and reaping ...; only then will he know the distress of the lower men"? An immediate interpretation of this passage would be that it is just a metaphor: the ruler must work hard just as the peasant does. Alternatively, Michael Hunter considers that the emphasis is on *understanding* the peasants' toil without necessarily experiencing it.<sup>28</sup> I think, nevertheless, that a second look at the text reveals a deeper meaning of the peasant metaphor.

The Duke of Zhou enumerates four paragons of non-idleness: Kings Zhongzong, Gaozong, and Zujia of the Shang and King Wen of Zhou. Among these four, Zhongzong regularly appears as a model monarch: he "was stern and pious, respectful and fearful toward Heaven's Mandate; he rectified himself; he was reverent and cautious in ordering the people and did not have the temerity to be idle and at ease" (sec. 2). Yet when we come to Gaozong and especially Zujia, we are told of their unusual backgrounds. Gaozong "spent a long time laboring outside [the palace], therefore being together with the lower men" (sec. 2); Zujia, who apparently was not supposed to inherit the throne, "spent a long time among the lower men" (sec. 2). It was this experience that proved an asset to Zujia: "When he ascended the throne, he was well aware of the distress of the lower men, he was able to protect and be kind toward the commoners, and he did not have the temerity to offend widowers and widows" (sec. 2). Finally, the greatest paragon of all, King Wen, also "endorsed humble occupations, such as dealing with husks and working in the fields" (sec. 3). Since three of the four paragons appear to have started their careers doing manual work, and since this was supposedly the main reason for their people-oriented policies, the conclusion is clear: an education that involves manual labor is the best means of ensuring the ruler's ability to rule properly!

This odd supposition seems to be corroborated in the Duke of Zhou's narrative regarding the later generations of the Shang kings: "the kings who inherited the throne were idle during their lives; since they were idle during their lives, they did not understand the hardship of sowing and reaping, nor did they hear about the work of the lower men; they sought nothing but addiction to joy" (sec. 2). Here it is clear that the idleness of the kings refers not just to their inadequate functioning as political leaders but also to their lack of experience with manual labor before they ascended the throne, which prevented them

---

28 See chapter 11 in this volume.

from understanding the peasants' hardships. Because of this lack of understanding, they were seduced by "addiction to joy," bringing about Heaven's dissatisfaction. It seems then that the proper education of the heir should indeed include manual labor, or at least a prolonged stay among the peasants, as this is the best way to imbue the future ruler with an appropriate work ethic and understanding of the people. This is one of the most striking ideas expressed in "Wu yi," an idea that, insofar as I can judge from my survey, has been completely overlooked by later commentators and modern scholars.<sup>29</sup>

Understanding the people's hardship and being "not idle" are the most important imperatives expressed by the Duke of Zhou. Yet there is a second important topic: heeding the people's remonstrance and being attentive to their feelings. This topic is discussed in sections 5 and 6 of the text; and while these sections are somewhat equivocal and possibly suffer from textual corruption, the basic message can still be determined with relative certainty. The ruler should take into account the people's sentiments and humbly heed their criticisms. There is a certain lack of clarity with regard to the following sentence in section 5: "In times of old, men warned each other, protected each other, and taught each other, while [among the people] none deceived [each other]." Who are the "men" (*ren* 人) mentioned at the beginning? Are they the elites, who should warn, protect, and teach the ruler, or are they "lowly people"? The first interpretation would fit the modern-script version, which omits "the people" (*min* 民) and "each other" (*xu* 胥) at the end, so that the entire sentence can be read as referring to the ruler's relationship with his courtiers.<sup>30</sup> However, repeated references in the next sentences to the "lowly people" (*xiao min* 小民) suggest that such a limited interpretation misses the point. "Wu yi" focuses on the ruler's relations with the entire community of his subjects rather than only with his elite advisers. These elite advisers, if present at all, are never explicitly identified in the text, which, as I shall show below, is one of the important peculiarities of "Wu yi."

If my interpretation is correct, then the text depicts the lower stratum as an influential political actor: the ruler should heed the people's voices, learn about

29 Here lies my disagreement with Michael Hunter's view of "Wu yi" (chapter 11 in this volume). Hunter considers the admonition to "understand" (*zhi* 知) the people's hardship in section 1 of the text as referring to "knowing" rather than "experiencing." This interpretation is entirely valid in the context of the single given passage, but when considered together with historical examples in sections 2–3, it seems clear to me that a personal experience of the people's hardship is considered essential for the ruler's "understanding" of their lot.

30 This understanding is clearly supported by some of the commentators, such as Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735–1815), as cited in Pi Xirui 1998: 376–377.

their experience, and address their concerns. The final warning of the Duke of Zhou to the effect that the resentment of the “lowly people” may threaten the ruler’s survival accentuates these points. As I shall demonstrate later, this emphasis on the people as the singularly important determinant of political success or failure echoes many other chapters of the *Shangshu*. Yet, again as in many other *Documents*, the ultimate kingmaker is not the people but Heaven. The idea of Heaven’s Mandate as the foundation of one’s right to rule is present in the background of the text: it is mentioned twice explicitly (once with regard to the Shang and once with regard to the receipt of the Mandate by King Wen of Zhou) and is hinted at through much of the historical part of the text. However, the “Wu yi” interpretation of the nature of Heaven’s Mandate differs somewhat from the rest of the *Shangshu*. Heaven’s intervention into political life is conceptualized as related neither to the people’s actions nor to omens and portents (which are in any case negligible in the *Shangshu*)<sup>31</sup> but, rather, is manifested primarily through the ruler’s longevity. To put it simply: good rulers are expected to enjoy lengthy terms in office, while bad ones are cut off after a few years.

The idea that Heaven’s support of the ruler or the lack thereof is reflected in the length of the ruler’s tenure is a curious one. Its advantage is clear: it creates an objective and easily observable criterion for judging the ruler’s performance and his relations with the supreme deity. To assess Heaven’s approval or disapproval of an incumbent, one does not have to wait for the rare occasion of the transfer of Heaven’s Mandate to another dynasty, but rather, one needs merely to observe his longevity in office. Thus, whenever a ruler attains a relatively long tenure, it can be considered a token of Heaven’s approval. Yet the introduction of this criterion by which Heaven’s attitude can be measured is a double-edged sword: how would one make sense of the brevity of tenure of a supposedly impeccable monarch or, alternatively, of the long term of a mediocre ruler? Insofar as the Duke of Zhou provided examples from the bygone age of early Shang history, the fantastic longevity of its kings could be accepted; but already for the late Shang kings, the fallacy of the “Wu yi” claim that each of them occupied the throne for just a few years is obvious.<sup>32</sup> Even more prob-

31 It should be mentioned here that omens and portents in the context of Heaven’s transfer of the Mandate might have been much more important in the Western Zhou period than the *Shangshu* indicates. See Luo Xinhui 2015.

32 Judging from the chronology accepted by the Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project team (Xia-Shang-Zhou 2000), only two immediate successors of Zujia had short reigns; but then Wuyi 武乙 reigned for thirty-five years (1147–1113 BCE), Wending 文丁 for eleven years (1112–1102), Thearch Yi 帝乙 for twenty-six years (1101–1076), and the last king, Zhouxin 紂辛, for thirty years (1075–1046) before he was overthrown.

lematic is how to fit King Cheng's father and predecessor, King Wu 周武王, who reigned for just four years before his death in 1043 BCE, into the historical model promoted by the Duke of Zhou. Should we assume that this paragon was actually less endorsed by Heaven than is commonly accepted? The text of "Wu yi" remains curiously silent about this all-important personality, whose length of tenure does not seem to fit the Duke of Zhou's scheme; not a few scholars have tried to resolve the riddle of this contradiction by proposing different, sometimes fantastic, interpretations.<sup>33</sup> In any case, the plain equation of Heaven's endorsement of a ruler with the length of his tenure in "Wu yi" was not the mainstream view, in which Heaven's Mandate was, instead, focused on dynastic change.

### Contextualization: "Wu yi" and Western Zhou Ideology

To better understand the position of "Wu yi" within the corpus of the *Shangshu*, I want to compare its views of rulership with those expressed in the supposedly contemporaneous documents associated with the Duke of Zhou. In the modern-script version of the *Shangshu*, twelve chapters (from "Da gao" 大誥 to "Li zheng" 立政) are attributed or related to the Duke of Zhou. Even though this attribution is questionable, there are many indications that the majority of these chapters, especially the so-called Eight Declarations 八誥 and the "Jun Shi" 君奭 chapter, are closely related.<sup>34</sup> There are more doubts about the dating of the "Jinteng" 金縢 and "Li zheng" chapters, and I shall avoid overreliance on them in the discussion below, although fundamentally they do not alter my analysis. It should be emphasized from the beginning that by exploring these chapters as a coherent corpus, I do not intend to make a decisive pronounce-

33 Qu Wanli 屈萬里 (1984: 105), for instance, averred that the text may be directed at King Wu rather than at King Cheng; yet he did not address the question of how the younger brother, the Duke of Zhou, could pose himself as his elder brother's teacher. Alternatively, Han Gaonian and Deng Guojun (2011) interpreted "Wu yi" as a ritual text that was read at the heir's capping ceremony. This ritual context explains in their eyes the omission of references to King Wu, to whom King Cheng would not be allowed to sacrifice directly. This is an interesting but unconvincing hypothesis: after all, the Shang kings mentioned in section 2 were also not the objects of sacrifice but just paragons of good rule.

34 I borrow the term "Eight Declarations" from Du Yong 1998. Du considers these chapters—which include five "declarations" (*gao* 誥) in addition to the "Duo fang" 多方, "Duo shi" 多士, and "Zi cai" 梓材 chapters—as an integral whole. For the close relationship between "Jun Shi" and "Shao gao" 召誥 and, by extension, other "declarations," see Shaughnessy 1997: 101–136.

ment on their dating, nor on their original interrelatedness; nor do I claim that “Wu yi” necessarily belongs to the intellectual framework of the “Duke of Zhou corpus.” My working hypothesis is that the Eight Declarations and the “Jun Shi” chapter reflect the earliest layer of the *Shangshu* and, later modifications aside, that they basically reflect Western Zhou ideology. By comparing “Wu yi” with these chapters, I hope to attain a better understanding of the peculiarities of the “Wu yi” chapter’s message.

Some of the ideas expressed in “Wu yi” are shared by almost all other *Documents* texts related to the Duke of Zhou. The notions that the ruler owes his position to Heaven’s Mandate and that he should emulate meritorious ancestors and learn from the mistakes of his predecessors are ubiquitous motifs and do not require further discussion.<sup>35</sup> Two other common features of “Wu yi” and the Duke of Zhou corpus are the call on the ruler to avoid moral laxity and the imperative to be attentive to and take care of the common people.<sup>36</sup> Yet with regard to these two points a more detailed comparison is needed.

The requirement of the ruler to maintain proper personal conduct recurs throughout the Zhou section of the *Shangshu*. In particular, “Jiu gao” 酒誥 is similar to “Wu yi” in this respect: it hails early Shang rulers, who “did not have the temerity to be leisurely or self-indulgent” (不敢自暇自逸), and accuses later Shang rulers of being addicted to drink so that “there was nothing venerable to manifest to the people” (罔顯于民祗). These later rulers “unrestrainedly followed their whims, engaging in licentious, dissipated, and disordered behavior, and, for the sake of being at ease, sacrificed their awe-inspiring decorum” (誕惟厥縱，淫泆于非彝，用燕喪威儀).<sup>37</sup> “Duo shi” 多士 similarly criticizes the Xia rulers for “great licentiousness and dissipation” (*da yinyi* 大淫泆 [=淫佚]) and repeats almost verbatim the “Jiu gao” invectives against the late Shang sovereigns. “Duo fang” 多方 presents a similar picture: the Xia rulers are said to have been “self-indulgent, unable to pity the people; they were only increasingly dissipated and benighted, and until the very end failed to follow God’s instructions” (有夏誕厥逸，不肯感言于民，乃大淫昏，不克終日勸于

35 For a good summary, see Liu Zehua 1996: 17–29; cf. Du Yong 1998: 204–225.

36 This is often identified as the concept “people as root” (*minben* 民本). An understanding of early Chinese political thought as focused on the people as the “root” or “foundation” of the polity has become widespread since the early twentieth century and is frequently discussed among current Chinese scholars. Some identify the *minben* idea as possibly conducive to a Chinese indigenous path to democracy, while others oppose this view. See Pines 2009: 187–214, q.v. for further references. For a more recent comprehensive survey of *minben* thought, see Zhang Fentian 2009.

37 Cited from Pi Xirui 1998: 324–326.

帝之迪).<sup>38</sup> The term 逸 (or 佚) recurs in these texts, strengthening their similarity to “Wu yi.” And, as in the latter, *yi* in the Duke of Zhou corpus may refer to either licentiousness or idleness or, rarely, to legitimate tranquillity.<sup>39</sup>

A few of the texts in the Zhou section of the *Shangshu* promoted the ideal of a diligent ruler, so cherished by the “Wu yi” authors. One example of endorsement of the Shang rulers who “did not have the temerity to be leisurely or self-indulgent” is cited above. Elsewhere, in the “Kang gao” 康誥 chapter, the Duke of Zhou advises his younger brother Feng 封, the founder of the Wei 衛 domain, as follows: “The lower men are difficult to protect; you must fully exhaust your heart. Do not be at ease, loving idleness and relaxation; only then will you truly order the people” (小人難保；往盡乃心，無康好逸豫，乃其乂民).<sup>40</sup> Here both the content of the advice and even the context are quite similar to those of “Wu yi”: a young and inexperienced ruler is urged by an elder statesman (the Duke of Zhou in both cases) to understand the importance of properly governing the common people by avoiding idleness. Yet neither “Kang gao” nor any other chapter speaks of the need for the ruler to personally experience the life of the common people so as to understand their hardship and improve his functioning. None of the chapters extol the merit of the heir’s education in manual labor prior to his ascendance, making “Wu yi” the exception.

Turning to the second pillar of the “Wu yi” view of rulership, that is, the ruler’s dependence on and need to be close to the people, once again we discover many ostensible similarities between “Wu yi” and other Duke of Zhou chapters. For instance, “Kang gao” explains that King Wen attained the Mandate because “he was able to manifest his virtue and be careful in punishing; he did not have the temerity to offend widowers and widows; he employed the employable, revered the reverent, overawed those who had to be overawed” (克明德慎罰；不敢侮鰥寡，庸庸，衺衺，威威).<sup>41</sup> Some of these actions, in particular taking care of widowers and widows, are presented as King Wen’s major merits in “Wu yi” as well. The ruler’s ability to attain the support of the “lowly people” 小民 is mentioned approvingly in such documents as “Jiu gao” and “Shao gao.” The people serve as a barometer of Heaven’s intent (“the awesomeness and intentions of Heaven are discernible from the people’s feelings” [天畏

38 See Pi Xirui 1998: 357–358 (“Duo shi”), 395 (“Duo fang”).

39 For this rare positive usage of *yi* in the phrase “God-on-High leads to tranquillity” (上帝引逸), see Pi Xirui 1998: 357 (“Duo shi”).

40 Pi Xirui 1998: 312.

41 Pi 1998: 310.

斐忱·民情大可見]);<sup>42</sup> they are also the major source of Heaven's concern. Thus, malpractice and abuses by Jie 桀, the last Xia king, caused Heaven to pick the Shang founder, Tang 湯, as the new "master of the people" (*min zhu* 民主).<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the cruelty of the last Shang ruler, Zhouxin, caused Heaven, pitying "the people of the four corners" (*si fang min* 四方民), to again replace its "primary son" (*yuan zi* 元子).<sup>44</sup> "Protecting the people" (*bao min* 保民) is identified as the major task of the Zhou government, if the new leaders want to escape the miserable fate of the Xia and the Shang.<sup>45</sup>

All these topics are duly present in "Wu yi," and as such the text belongs to the core ideology of the Duke of Zhou segment of the *Shangshu*. Yet there is one subtle and yet substantial difference. Namely, in "Wu yi" we find only the lower strata and the ruler. Elites, officials, regional leaders, and the like are not present, at least not explicitly (they are alleged to be among the ruler's admonishers, but they are never clearly identified). In contrast, each of the other texts in the Zhou section of the *Shangshu* places the elites on a par with the commoners as significant political actors. In some texts the importance of the elites is merely hinted at by stating that the declaration was issued in the presence of or addressed to the "[leaders of] many states" (*duo bang* 多邦) and "managers of affairs" (*yushi* 御事) ("Da gao"), "many officers" (*duo shi* 多士) ("Duo shi"), holders of the *hou* 侯, *dian* 甸, and *nan* 男 domains, in addition to the guardians (*cai wei* 采衛) ("Kang gao"), and the like. Other chapters ("Da gao," "Jun Shi") explicitly identify the ministers of King Wen as shareholders in the receipt of the Mandate.<sup>46</sup> Yet other chapters ("Zi cai") emphasize that preserving amicable relations with officials is essential for the ruler's success. All these features are conspicuously absent from "Wu yi."

We can now summarize the position of "Wu yi" in relation to the early Zhou documents. On the one hand, the chapter shares many of these texts' ideas, terms, and emphases: its warning against the ruler's laxity and the imperative to heed the people and to care for their needs are all among the pillars of Zhou ideology. On the other hand, the chapter's exceptionality is observable on three levels. First, its insistence that the ruler would benefit from personally experiencing the subjects' hardships is unparalleled. Second, the apparent omission of the elites from the focus of the ruler's concern distinguishes "Wu yi" from the rest of the Zhou documents. And third, as mentioned in the

42 "Kang gao," as cited from Pi Xirui 1998: 312.

43 "Duo fang," as cited from Pi Xirui 1998: 395.

44 "Shao gao," as cited from Pi Xirui 1998: 338–342.

45 See, e.g., "Kang gao," "Mu cai."

46 For the analysis of the "Jun Shi" chapter, see Shaughnessy 1997: 109–113.

previous section, its perception of Heaven's Mandate as manifested in the length of a ruler's tenure is also highly exceptional. How should we understand these peculiarities? Are they incidental, or do they reflect differences in the text's authorship, dating, or audience in comparison to other Zhou documents? I shall return to this question in the final section of this essay; but first let us compare "Wu yi" with Warring States period texts, which explore common topics of the ruler's functioning.<sup>47</sup>

### A Subversive Classic? "Wu yi" and Warring States Period Thought

The impact of Western Zhou documents (or allegedly Western Zhou documents) during the Eastern Zhou period (770–256) differs considerably from one text to another, reflecting either differences in individual documents' circulation or in their ideological appeal to Eastern Zhou thought or both. "Wu yi" clearly does not belong to the ranks of influential documents. Not only is it cited infrequently and very selectively (see below), but more significantly, its fundamental messages do not appear to have been endorsed or shared by any other Eastern Zhou texts.

Let us start on the level of political vocabulary. As we have seen, in "Wu yi" (and in the Zhou documents in general) the term *yi* (either 逸 or 佚) is used overwhelmingly in its negative senses; yet in later texts this is not the case. While the association of *yi* with licentiousness, loose morality, and self-indulgence remains visible, this usage—in the context of discussing the behavior of either a ruler or a *shi* 士—is rare. More significantly, the use of *yi* to indicate idleness, the hallmark of the "Wu yi" approach, becomes even rarer.<sup>48</sup> Most

47 My discussion jumps from the Western Zhou to the Warring States period primarily because there are not enough relevant and reliably datable sources for the intermediate Spring and Autumn period (Chunqiu 春秋, 770–453). In the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, which I consider as reflective of the Chunqiu intellectual atmosphere (Pines 2002), the issue of Heaven's Mandate remains marginal. Many (albeit not all) of the *Zuo zhuan* speeches aver that Heaven plays an important role in the success or failure of political actors, but this is never discussed in the context of the monarch's right to rule his domain (see Pines 2002: 57–70 for further details). Heaven's Mandate is treated in several chapters of the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書, but the dating of each of the relevant chapters remains controversial; I therefore do not discuss them in this study (for a recent study of the *Yi Zhou shu* dating, see Zhang Huaitong 2013).

48 An interesting invective against idleness is recorded in an anecdote about the sagacious mother of a Lu 魯 noble, Gongfu Wenbo 公父文伯 (*Guoyu* 國語, "Luyu, xia" 魯語下, 5.13:193–198). The mother explains how her own domestic spinning fits the overall pattern

commonly, *yi* is associated with legitimate relaxation and rest rather than with idleness per se; the latter is indicated by the term *duo* 惰, which is not attested in the Duke of Zhou section of the *Shangshu*. The difference between the two terms is clear: for instance, Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 310–ca. 230) comments that the superior man is “relaxed but not idle” 佚而不惰.<sup>49</sup>

The divergence between “Wu yi” and the Warring States period texts becomes explicit when the ruler’s functioning is concerned. Whenever the term *yi* appears in the context of ruler-related discussions, its connotation, in marked distinction from “Wu yi,” is overwhelmingly positive. Relaxation is considered a legitimate quest of any human being; and it is doubly legitimate for the ruler. Although the concept of the ruler’s relaxation is not prominent prior to the fourth century BCE, afterward it becomes extraordinarily widespread, permeating the majority of political texts of the late Warring States period. For instance, Xunzi explains his vision of the Son of Heaven:

The Son of Heaven is the one whose power is the heaviest, and whose body is the most relaxed; his heart is the most pleased, and his will has nothing to complain about; his body does not work, as he is the most respected.<sup>50</sup>

天子者，執至重而形至佚，心至愉而志無所詘，而形不為勞，尊無上矣。

This depiction of the Son of Heaven differs markedly from the concept of the toiling monarch in “Wu yi.” Much of Xunzi’s political advice is aimed at attaining this perfect state of affairs so that the ruler’s “body will be relaxed and the state well ordered, his merits great and name illustrious; at best it will be pos-

---

of everyone’s involvement in appropriate labor so as to avoid indulgence and moral laxity. This passage contains certain parallels to “Wu yi” (see a somewhat perfunctory discussion in Shen Libin and Zhao Junfang 2000), but the differences in emphasis between the two texts are pronounced. Most notably, in the *Guoyu* version, the nature of everyone’s labor should differ according to his or her social station: only the lower men should labor using their “force” (*li* 力), while the rulers and the nobles should work with their “hearts” (*xin* 心); their labor is to perform rituals and control administration. Only the elite’s women-folk should perform manual labor, that of weaving and spinning (for the parallel idea of “separation of labor” based on class, see *Mengzi*, “Teng Wen gong, shang” 滕文公上, 5.4.124, 5.3.118–119; *Xunzi*, “Fu guo” 富國, 6.10.182). Most interestingly, the lengthy *Guoyu* text, which refers to the “instructions of the former kings” (*xian wang zhi xun* 先王之訓), never cites “Wu yi.”

49 *Xunzi*, “Fei shi er zi” 非十二子, 3.6.105.

50 *Xunzi*, “Zheng lun” 正論, 12.18.333; cf. “Junzi” 君子, 17.24.450.

sible to become the True Monarch, and at worst a hegemon” (則身佚而國治，功大而名美，上可以王，下可以霸).<sup>51</sup> The same idea is echoed in many other texts. Thus, the authors of the *Guanzi* 管子 promise the ruler who relies on law, techniques (*shu* 數), public-spiritedness (*gong* 公), and the Great Way that “his body will be relaxed and All-under-Heaven will be well ordered” (身佚而天下治).<sup>52</sup> Another of the *Guanzi* chapters warns against *yi* 佚 as licentiousness but also promises the ruler who knows how to utilize others’ knowledge and power that he will attain the blessed state of *yi* 逸 as relaxation.<sup>53</sup> Shen Dao 慎到 (fl. ca. 300 BCE) advocates the system in which the ruler should be “relaxed and joyful, while the ministers are assigned laborious tasks” (君逸樂而臣任勞).<sup>54</sup> Similar promises of a relaxed life under proper implementation of laws and techniques occur in the *Han Feizi* 韓非子.<sup>55</sup> And, finally, the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, the major synthesis of pre-imperial intellectual trends, also contains several statements on the desirability of the ruler’s quietude and relaxation.<sup>56</sup>

One should not overemphasize the contrast between “Wu yi,” which focuses on the ruler’s training, and the Warring States period texts that advocate the idea of relaxation as the ruler’s reward for implementing the authors’ recommendations. Yet the obvious difference in the emotive meaning of the term *yi* in both cases is significant. It may perhaps explain the paucity of references to “Wu yi” in pre-imperial works. According to Liu Qiyu’s survey, “Wu yi” is cited only four times in pre-imperial works;<sup>57</sup> of these, three citations refer to the anecdote about Gaozong, who supposedly did not speak for three years, while the fourth hails the industriousness of King Wen without mentioning his humble background. Chan Hung Kan 陳雄根 and Ho Che Wah 何志華 define “citations” more liberally and thus add several more instances of supposed quotations from “Wu yi,” but even those do not change the picture

51 *Xunzi*, “Wang ba” 王霸, 7.11.222; “Jun Dao” 君道, 8.12.230, 246.

52 *Guanzi*, “Ren fa” 任法, 15.45.900.

53 *Guanzi*, “Xing shi jie” 形勢解, 12.64.1187.

54 *Shenzi*, “Min za” 民雜, 32.

55 *Han Feizi*, “Wai chu shuo you xia” 外儲說右下, 14.35.343; cf. “Zhu Dao” 主道, 1.5.26–28.

56 “Hence, those of the ancients who excelled in rulership exerted themselves in selecting people and were at ease in dealing with affairs” (故古之善為君者，勞於論人，而佚於官事; *Lüshi chunqiu*, “Dang ran” 當染, 2.4.96; cf. “Shi jie” 士節, 12.2.623; “Cha xian” 察賢, 21.2.1441).

57 In his comment on this essay, Robert Eno reminded me that with the exceptions of “Kang gao,” “Lü xing,” “Hong fan” 洪範, and “Tang shi” 湯誓, most of the modern-script *Shangshu* chapters are hardly cited at all in Warring States period texts. From this perspective, the paucity of references to “Wu yi” is not exceptional.

substantially.<sup>58</sup> I have found one additional citation, which may be indicative of the Warring States period authors' unease regarding the message of "Wu yi." *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 records Yan Ying's 晏嬰 (d. ca. 500) remonstrance against Lord Jing's 齊景公 (r. 547–490) obsession with hunting, which damaged the peasants' livelihood. The lord replied to the remonstrance:

I heard: When the chancellor is worthy, the state is well ordered; when the minister is loyal, the sovereign is at ease. My years are numbered, and I want to engage in what makes me joyful and to finish my life doing what pleases me; please be at rest, master!

吾聞相賢者國治，臣忠則主逸。吾年無幾矣，欲遂吾所樂，卒吾所好，子其息矣！

Yanzi said: "In the past, *King Wen did not have the temerity to entertain himself with amusements or hunting*;<sup>59</sup> therefore, the state prospered and the people were at peace. King Ling of Chu did not suspend the Ganxi campaign and erected the Zhanghua Terrace, and the people rose up against him.<sup>60</sup> Now if you, my lord, do not change, you will endanger the altars of soil and grain and will become the laughingstock of the regional lords. I have heard that the loyal does not shun death and the remonstrator does not fear recrimination. If you, my lord, do not listen to me, I will leave."<sup>61</sup>

58 The anecdote about Gaozong appears in the *Lunyu* 論語 ("Xian wen"), the "Fang ji" 坊記 chapter of the *Liji* 禮記, and the "Zhong yan" 重言 chapter of the *Lüshi chunqiu*. A reference to King Wen, who "from morning to dusk had no leisure time to eat at ease, harmonizing the myriad people," appears in the "Chu yu" 楚語 section of the *Guoyu* 國語; see more in Liu Qiyu 1996: 20. Chan Hung Kan and Ho Che Wah (2003: 240–241) add many supposed citations of the phrase 不敢侮鰥寡, which depicts Zujia (sec. 2), but I believe that all these citations refer to the same phrase from a much more prominent text, "Kang gao," which attributes this moral policy to King Wen. Chan Hong Kan and Ho Che Wah (2003: 239) also identify references to the Gaozong anecdote in the "Tan gong, xia" 檀弓下 and "Sangfu si zhi" 喪服四制 chapters of the *Liji*, unnoticed by Liu Qiyu.

59 Citing "Wu yi," sec. 4.

60 The Ganxi hunting cum military expedition was undertaken by King Ling of Chu (r. 540–529) at the apex of his power and shortly before his downfall; the campaign and the erection of the Zhanghua Terrace are manifestations of the king's insatiability and hubris. See the discussions in Schaberg 2001: 194–203; Wai-yee Li 2007: 307–316.

61 *Yanzi chunqiu* 2.8.73. I partly borrow from the forthcoming translation of the text by Yoav Ariel (cf. the translation by Olivia Milburn [2015: 212–213]). For an argument in favor of reading *Yanzi chunqiu* as a pre-imperial text, see Cook 2015.

晏子曰：「昔文王不敢盤于遊田，故國昌而民安；楚靈王不廢乾溪之役，起章華之臺，而民叛之。今君不革，將危社稷，而為諸侯笑。臣聞忠不避死，諫不違罪。君不聽臣，臣將逝矣。」

This exchange is remarkable. Lord Jing—in an unmistakable emulation of late Warring States period discourse—argues that he has the right to enjoy his life of ease since he has a worthy minister in his service. Yan Ying counters this argument by pointing out the dangers of excessive laxity. In his response, Yan Ying invokes a line from “Wu yi,” which suggests that the anecdote’s authors were aware of the text.<sup>62</sup> Yet if this is the case, then why did the authors not invoke “Wu yi” to criticize the principle of the ruler’s “being at ease” but instead only warned against his excessive obsession with hunting? The anecdote’s authors notably do not refer to the “Wu yi” chapter’s fundamental opposition to the ruler’s idleness, although it would have been easy to counter Lord Jing’s appeal to his right to be *yi* by resorting to the canonical text that explicitly rejects that right. That such an expected counterargument was not made may suggest that it was not considered a good argument in the first place.

That Warring States period (and later) texts eschew the “Wu yi” attack on idle rulers is not incidental. The chapter’s praise of hardworking sovereigns was at odds with the mainstream thought of that age. As I have argued elsewhere, texts from the second half of the Warring States period onward consistently try to “deactivate” the sovereign and to convince him to refrain from everyday policy-making, relegating his tasks to meritorious aides. The dominant vision of pre-imperial (as well as imperial) thinkers was that of a “non-acting” (*wu wei* 無為) ruler, one who enjoys the utmost ritual superiority over his subjects but who limits his intervention into political life.<sup>63</sup> For thinkers who worked hard to convince the monarchs to refrain from excessive activism, the pivotal message of “Wu yi” might have been somewhat unwelcome.

If the insistence on an active sovereign in “Wu yi” was problematic for Warring States period thinkers, then its recommendation that the ruler should have some experience of manual labor was perhaps outright subversive. To be sure, the idea of a toiling monarch was not alien to Warring States period

62 It is of course possible that the line is cited not from “Wu yi” but from a common third source. Nonetheless, since the eight characters 文王不敢盤于遊田 are identical to those in “Wu yi” (the longest segment from “Wu yi” to appear in any pre-imperial text), I believe that we have a case of direct citation here.

63 See details in Pines 2009: 82ff, esp. 106–107. For the imperial period attitudes, see Pines 2012: 63–69.

thought: such paragons as the rulers Shun 舜 and Yu 禹 in antiquity were renowned as having performed harsh labor prior to their ascendancy. Shun “cultivated land at Mount Li, made pottery on the [Yellow] River’s banks, went fishing in the Lei marshes” (舜耕歷山，陶河瀕，漁雷澤);<sup>64</sup> Yu “personally held the sack and the spade, uniting all the streams under Heaven; no hair was left on his calves and legs” (禹親自操橐耜，而九雜天下之川；腓無胈，脛無毛).<sup>65</sup> Yet these exemplar sovereigns were not ordinary rulers: they did not inherit the throne but received it thanks to their predecessors’ abdication. Their personal experience was highly exceptional and did not fit the system of hereditary rule.<sup>66</sup> More fundamentally, the very idea that a ruler should gain labor experience prior to his ascendancy was dangerously close to advocacy of nonhereditary modes of power transfer, which, as I have argued elsewhere, failed to gain legitimacy in the mainstream thought of the Warring States period.<sup>67</sup> There were other advocates of the value of work experience for the ruler, such as the so-called “propagators of Shennong” 為神農之言者 (later dubbed Agriculturalists 農家),<sup>68</sup> but their ideas, like those of the opponents of hereditary power transfer, remained a “political heresy,” to use Angus C. Graham’s terminology.<sup>69</sup> Insofar as mainstream political thought is concerned, the idea of a ruler engaging in manual labor could be proposed only as a highly ritualized act, such as, for example, symbolic plowing at the year’s start, but not as a firsthand experience among the “lower men.”<sup>70</sup>

Looking from this angle, we can understand how controversial “Wu yi” might have appeared to a Warring States period reader. The insistence of the Duke of Zhou on the advantages of an upbringing outside the palace for a future ruler challenged the system of hereditary monarchy. Not incidentally, three of the four paragons mentioned in “Wu yi”—Gaozong, Zujia, and King Wen—did not start their careers as appropriate heirs to the throne, and it was their peculiar experience that became their major asset when they finally assumed power. The logic of these examples comes dangerously close to questioning the system of hereditary power transfer.

It is possible that my reading of “Wu yi” as a subversive text is far-fetched; but let us look at how much, if at all, it influenced those texts that shared its

64 *Mozi*, “Shang xian, zhong” 尚賢中: 2.9.77.

65 *Zhuangzi*, “Tianxia” 天下, 33.863, referring to the Mohists’ presentation of Yu.

66 On the topos of abdication and related legends, see Allan 1981, 2015; cf. Pines 2005b.

67 Pines 2005b, 2009: 54–81.

68 For their views, see *Mengzi*, “Teng Wen Gong, shang” 騰文公上: 5.4.123.

69 See Graham 1989: 292–299.

70 For the recommendation that the Son of Heaven engages in ritual plowing, see, e.g., *Guoyu*, “Zhouyu” 周語, 1.6.14–22; *Lüshi chunqiu*, “Mengchun ji” 孟春紀, 1.1.2.

major concern: the proper education of an heir apparent. Strikingly, none of the known pre-imperial texts that address this topic refer to “Wu yi” at all. For instance, the paradigmatic text in this lore, the “Wen Wang shizi” 文王世子 chapter of the *Records of Ritual* (*Liji* 禮記), discusses extensively how to train an appropriate heir. The training should be focused on texts and rituals and conducted in a neat home framework, under the guidance of a Grand Preceptor 太傅 and a Junior Preceptor 少傅; the idea that an heir would intermingle with peasants and other lowly folk is inconceivable. “Wen Wang shizi” repeatedly invokes the Duke of Zhou’s instructions to King Cheng; yet these are never related to “Wu yi” but rather to an otherwise unknown text *Methods of Training Heirs* (*Shizi fa* 世子法).<sup>71</sup> It is possible, of course, that “Wu yi” was unknown to the authors of “Wen Wang shizi”; but it is equally possible that it was deliberately ignored because of its political sensitivity and its equivocal stance toward hereditary monarchy.<sup>72</sup>

Yet another point made by “Wu yi” to which pre-imperial thinkers paid little if any attention was its peculiar concept of Heaven’s Mandate as manifested in the ruler’s longevity. We should remember that the concept of Heaven’s Mandate, which was so prominent in the Western Zhou and later in imperial political culture, was of relatively negligible importance in the intermediate Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. Except for Mozi 墨子 (ca. 460–390) and Mengzi 孟子 (ca. 380–304), no major thinker of that age stressed Heaven as the primary determinant of the right to rule.<sup>73</sup> Yet even for a staunch believer in Heaven’s Mandate, the “Wu yi” version of its manifestation probably sounded very odd. After all, even minimal historical knowledge sufficed to show that not every morally upright ruler was blessed with longevity, and that not all the mediocrities on the throne suffered a rapid demise. The only passage in a Warring States period text that may echo the “Wu yi” conceptualization of Heaven’s Mandate is Mengzi’s insistence that the length of Shun’s tenure as Yao’s 堯 chancellor (twenty-eight years) demonstrated Heaven’s

71 *Liji* 12.8.553.

72 Aside from “Wen Wang shizi,” another major discussion on the upbringing of the heir apparent appears in the “Chu yu 楚語 1” section of the *Guoyu* (15.1.483–487). This text speaks much of textual, moral, and ritual education but eschews any discussion of practical experience for an heir apparent even in the field of government, much less menial occupations.

73 The marginality of Heaven’s Mandate in the Warring States period has been pointed out by Loewe (1994: 85–111), albeit Loewe did not notice Mozi’s insistence on Heaven as the primary kingmaker. Interestingly, the First Emperor of Qin (r. as emperor 221–210 BCE) conspicuously omitted references to Heaven from his imperial propaganda (for which see Kern 2000; cf. Pines 2014a).

explicit endorsement of Shun.<sup>74</sup> Aside from this single instance, the views on the Mandate expressed in “Wu yi” remained without observable parallel.<sup>75</sup> Once again, contrary to our expectations of a canonical scripture, “Wu yi” appears not as representative of the mainstream ideological orientation of the Eastern Zhou period but rather as a marginal—and in some respects even subversive—text.

### The Dating: The Text and the Context

I now turn to the question of the dating of “Wu yi.” Normally, this question should have been addressed at the start of the discussion; but in the case of “Wu yi” a researcher faces a problem. The document itself does not provide sufficient clues for its dating; it neither contains obvious anachronisms that would allow us to securely date it to the Warring States period, nor does it contain specific data from the early Western Zhou that would strengthen its connection to the historical Duke of Zhou. Most scholars routinely treat it as an early Western Zhou text; yet there is also a minority opinion, exemplified by Liu Qiyu, which postulates a later date for the chapter. Liu raised six historical and linguistic points that, in his eyes, are indicative of the Eastern Zhou traits in the text. According to his—somewhat odd—view, the text was initially prepared by the Duke of Zhou but was subsequently rewritten well into the Eastern Zhou period.<sup>76</sup> Not all of Liu’s points are equally convincing. For

74 *Mengzi*, “Wan Zhang, shang” 萬章上: 9.5,219. Another possible parallel with the “Wu yi” approach to explaining the lengths of rulers’ reigns occurs in “Yao dian” (discussed by Kern, chapter 1 in this volume); there Yao is said to have ruled for seventy years before abdicating in favor of Shun (Pi Xirui 1998: 34). It is possible that this lengthy tenure was fabricated by the “Yao dian” authors as proof of Heaven’s support for Yao; but it is more likely that they had a subtler goal of suggesting that only after a comparably long tenure does abdication become an acceptable method of power transfer (Pines 2005b: 274–275).

75 Indirect support for the “Wu yi” view of longevity as the manifestation of one’s virtue may be found in a saying that the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸) attributes to Confucius: “Hence, the [possessor of] great virtue should surely attain his position, surely attain his emoluments, surely attain his name, and surely attain his longevity” (故大德必得其位，必得其祿，必得其名，必得其壽; *Zhongyong* 17, in *Sishu*, 25). It is curious how this “just deserts” doctrine coexisted with the accumulated historical experience that could easily demonstrate its fallacy.

76 Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: 1547–1549. Liu Qiyu’s supposition of a lengthy textual history for “Wu yi” is odd: “Wu yi” is a perfectly integrated document (see Hunter, chapter 11 in this volume), and it is likely that it was produced as an organic whole rather than undergoing a lengthy process of accretion, as implied by Liu.

instance, his insistence that under the Western Zhou system of “agricultural slaves” 農奴 it would be impossible for a son of a hard-toiling peasant to enjoy a relaxed life, as is suggested in section 1 of “Wu yi,” is highly speculative: the validity of his quasi-Marxist paradigm of a “slave society” for the Western Zhou case is highly disputable since we know next to nothing about the lives of Western Zhou peasants. Some of Liu’s other points deserve more attention: for instance, his insistence that the occurrence of the possessive *zhi* 之 after the first-person pronoun *zhen* 朕 can be considered a sign of the chapter’s lateness should not be ignored.<sup>77</sup> Most importantly, Liu is undoubtedly correct in arguing that the presentation of Shang history in “Wu yi” is at odds both with historical facts and with the narration in other *Shangshu* chapters related to the Western Zhou. This observation can serve as a starting point for the dating discussion.

The list of the Shang “good” and “bad” kings in the “Wu yi” is doubly puzzling. First, as mentioned above, it markedly deviates from historical reality: any person living in the Duke of Zhou’s time would not have failed to see the fallacy of attributing extremely short reigns to Shang’s last rulers. Second, as noticed by Liu Qiyu, this list, which omits Thearch Yi 帝乙 from the sequence of good kings and instead includes Zujia 祖甲, who is not mentioned positively in any other Zhou document,<sup>78</sup> differs markedly from excurses into Shang history in such documents as “Jiu gao,” “Duo shi,” and “Duo fang.” It is highly unlikely then that the “Wu yi” list was originally part of the same corpus as these documents. More plausibly, the text was composed centuries after the end of the Shang, when memories of its erstwhile rulers became vague enough to allow manipulation of the length of their tenures. This observation allows me to tentatively conclude that the chapter was not composed before the end of the Western Zhou period.

But can we be more precise about its dating? To do so, let us focus on the overall picture of the Zhou polity as seen from the text. In my eyes, neither the

77 Gu Jiegang and Liu Qiyu 2005: 1547–1549. I have not spotted the compound 朕之 in pre-imperial texts; but its single occurrence in “Wu yi” does not suffice, in my eyes, to date the chapter to Han times.

78 Zujia’s singularly positive presence in “Wu yi” bewildered commentators. Many considered him identical to the second Shang king, Taijia, but were puzzled by the apparent breach of chronological sequence in presenting him after Zhongzong and Gaozong (see also n. 15 above). A more interesting—even if highly speculative—solution was offered by Zheng Xuan. Zheng argued that Zujia was offered the throne instead of his elder brother but considered this inappropriate and hence escaped and lived among the commoners, inheriting the throne only after his father’s and brother’s deaths. See *Shangshu zhengyi* 16.221–222.

model of an heir who resides and works with peasants nor the idea of a ruler who is close to his subjects and who may be admonished by the entire population of his domain fits the monarch of a large territorial state akin to those of the Warring States period.<sup>79</sup> Also, the conspicuous absence of territorial lords or of other officials from “Wu yi” presupposes a setting that is clearly distinct from the powerful early Western Zhou polity. The text may ostensibly fit the predynastic Zhou: a primeval polity at the beginning of its evolution from the level of an extended lineage to that of a nascent state. In such a lineage-based polity, the connections between the ruler and the ruled are incomparably closer than in a territorial state; admonitions by lower strata are politically relevant; an heir can be expected to perform menial work; and the political impact of the commoners is a reality rather than an ideological abstraction. In this tiny state, the “lower men” (*xiao ren* 小人) or the “lowly people” (*xiao min* 小民) of whom the text speaks may well be identical to the Zhou clansmen, a usage that I have identified in some other early Zhou texts.<sup>80</sup>

And yet, it is clear that the text was not produced in predynastic Zhou, and even the supposition that it preserves the memories of the predynastic past is not easily reconcilable with its anachronistic presentation of Shang history. Is there any other period in Zhou history when the pattern of a tiny polity depicted in “Wu yi” could be valid? Here allow me to speculate. I think that the situation of a tiny polity became valid for the Zhou again in the immediate aftermath of the disastrous collapse of the Western Zhou state in 771 BCE. Having lost most of its lands, its supporters, and its prestige, Zhou was reduced again to a kind of lineage-state.

It is important to remember the very small size of the political units of the early Spring and Autumn period (Chunqiu 春秋, 770–453) (and, by inference, of the Western Zhou period as well). *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, for example, mentions that after the disastrous defeat by the Di 狄 tribesmen in 660, only 730 “men and women” of the state of Wei 衛 remained alive.<sup>81</sup> However terrible the massacre by the Di was, the original population of the Wei capital could not have numbered more than a few thousand people, at the time a situation per-

79 Of course, tiny polities, of which the most notable was the Zhou royal domain itself, continued to exist throughout the Warring States period; but in terms of political thought these polities were negligible, and it is highly unlikely that they would have served as a source of inspiration for the “Wu yi” authors.

80 Pines 2009: 189–191. Note that in “Wu yi” the terms “lower men” and “lowly people” are interchangeable: for example, section 5 warns that the “lowly people” will curse the ruler, while in section 6 the cursers are the “lower men.”

81 *Zuo zhuan*, Min 2.266.

haps typical of much of the Zhou world.<sup>82</sup> Whether or not this tiny size justifies the application of a “city-state” model to these polities is beyond the scope of the present discussion.<sup>83</sup> If we set aside the problem of which label—“city-state” or “lineage-state”—is more appropriate, the fundamental issue is that the majority of contemporaneous polities were small enough to make some of the observations in “Wu yi” and many of its recommendations surprisingly valid.

The question to be asked is whether these recommendations could reasonably apply to the Zhou domain, which, even if tiny, was not a regular regional political unit but the seat of the “Son of Heaven.” Normally, the answer would be negative. And yet when we go back to the immediate aftermath of the 771 debacle, it seems that Zhou was reduced then, even if for a short while, to a minor regional polity. The dramatic events that led to the collapse of the Western Zhou and their impact on early Eastern Zhou political life have been recently analyzed by Li Feng and will not be addressed here anew.<sup>84</sup> Yet a remarkable piece of new evidence may explicate the depth of the Zhou crisis. The second section of the recently published bamboo manuscript “Xinian” 繫年 from the Qinghua (Tsinghua 清華) University collection<sup>85</sup> tells of the events after 771:

... King You and Bopan<sup>86</sup> both were killed, and Zhou was annihilated. The rulers of the states and various officials thereupon established the younger brother of King You, Yuchen, at Guo: this was King Hui of Xie.<sup>87</sup> 21 years after his establishment [749], Lord Wen of Jin, named Chou, killed King Hui at Guo. For nine years [749–741] Zhou was without a king, and the rulers of the states and regional lords then for the first time ceased attending the Zhou court. Thereupon, Lord Wen of Jin greeted

82 Tian Changwu and Zang Zhifei estimate that in the early Spring and Autumn period, even large capital cities comprised no more than three thousand families (Tian Changwu and Zang Zhifei 1996: 178, and general discussion on 167–183).

83 For the most recent attempt to apply this model to the Spring and Autumn period states, see Lewis 2006: 136–150. For criticism of this model, see Pines 2005a: 174–181; Li Feng 2008: 284–287.

84 Li Feng 2006.

85 For an introduction to the “Xinian” manuscript, see Pines 2014b.

86 Bopan is named Bofu 伯服 in other sources; he was the designated heir apparent selected by King You (r. 781–771) to replace the former heir, the future King Ping.

87 According to the *Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年 (*Bamboo Annals*), Xie was a location from which Yuchen reigned. Hui was his posthumous name. See citation in *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi* 52.2114.

King Ping at Shao'e and established him at the royal capital. After three years [738] he relocated eastward, stopping at Chengzhou.<sup>88</sup>

..... 幽王及伯盤乃滅，周乃亡。邦君諸正乃立幽王之弟余臣于虢，是攜惠王。立廿又一年，晉文侯仇乃殺惠王于虢。周亡（無）王九年，邦君諸侯焉始不朝于周，晉文侯乃逆平王于少鄂，立之于京師。三年，乃東徙，止于成周。

This extraordinarily interesting narrative introduces several possible alternatives to the previously understood picture of the early years of the Eastern Zhou. Some of its new details are fascinating, especially the fact that “for nine years Zhou was without a king, and the rulers of the states and regional lords then for the first time ceased attending the Zhou court.” The detailed meaning of this phrase and the very bold supposition that Zhou lacked a legitimate king for the whole nine years are contested, but limitations of space prevent me from discussing this topic here.<sup>89</sup> Yet at the very least we may conclude that during a few decades between the annihilation of the Western Zhou and the reestablishment of the dynasty at Chengzhou, the power of Zhou reached its nadir, and in terms of its size, prestige, and, possibly, functioning mode, the Zhou did not differ much from a predynastic lineage-state.

If my guess is correct, then it may provide a clue for the dating of “Wu yi” and explain some of the text’s peculiarities. In the aftermath of awful turmoil, when the dynasty lost its power, when its basic norms were undermined and its ideological foundations were questioned, conditions were ripe for the appearance of a nonorthodox text. It is tempting to view some of the features of “Wu yi” as directly related to that turmoil. It is possible, for instance, that succession struggles that crippled the Zhou house caused the authors to develop a certain skepticism toward the hereditary transfer of power. It is also possible that the personal experience of King Ping (d. 720 BCE), who underwent a prolonged period of hardship before ascending the throne and who later contributed toward the partial restoration of the dynasty’s fortunes and

88 *Qinghua Daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 2011: 138.

89 The sequence of events depicted in “Xinian” 2 may fit well the chronology of the Zhou final relocation to the east (i.e., to Chengzhou). A heretofore-not-understood prediction in the *Zuo zhuan* from year 638 says that the Rong tribes would settle in the area of the Yi River 伊川| precisely one hundred years after King Ping’s relocation eastward; this prediction makes sense only if we accept the relocation as having occurred in 738, which is precisely what the “Xinian” says. On the other hand, the “Xinian” 2 chronology runs contrary to the *Shiji* chronology of regional lords, such as Marquis Wen of Jin 晉文侯 (r. ca. 780–746). For some of the debates over the precise meaning of the “Xinian” 2 account, see, e.g., Wang Hongliang 2012; Deng Shaoping 2012; Xu Shaohua 2016; Li Ling 2016.

achieved remarkable longevity, was a source of inspiration for the authors of “Wu yi.”<sup>90</sup> And insofar as post-771 Zhou was just a tiny polity, we may understand why reliance on the “lowly people” could have been more significant than focusing on officials and on regional lords, who “ceased attending the Zhou court.” Needless to say, none of these conjectures can be proven. Yet at the very least I hope I have provided a plausible scenario that explains some of the peculiar features of “Wu yi.”

### Epilogue

Having noticed the potentially subversive message of “Wu yi,” I could not but wonder how much—if at all—my understanding of the text may have been shared by the imperial literati. Although reviewing all the references to “Wu yi” through the twenty-one centuries of imperial rule would be an unmanageable task, I decided to make a sample study. I focused on a single passage, the message of which is clearly at odds with the mainstream political culture of the Warring States period and of the subsequent imperial age, namely, the phrase that depicts Zujia—“it was not appropriate that he become king; hence, he spent a long time among the lower men” (不義惟王舊為小人)—and checked its quotations in the electronic *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 database. The results are revealing. The phrase is cited almost one hundred times, but never in an admonition to the emperor. Whenever the exegetes discuss it, they invariably focus on the identity of the king under discussion (Zujia or Tajia) and never analyze how a future ruler’s stay among the lower men might benefit his rule. The only (partial) exception is a discussion by the Ming scholar Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水 (1466–1560). Zhan starts by suggesting—similar to Hunter in this volume—that the Duke of Zhou insists on the ruler’s need to *understand* rather than to personally experience the peasants’ hardship. Yet then he continues:

Later rulers, who were born deep in the palace and grew up well fed, knew nothing of the hardships of poor neighborhoods. Is it surprising

---

90 The traditional narrative speaks of King Ping as a king from the moment of his father’s demise in 771; according to the *Bamboo Annals*, he reigned for years parallel to another incumbent, the rival king at Xie. According to the chronology in “Xinian,” however, he assumed real power only in 740 and reigned for two decades thereafter. By the end of his reign, insofar as we can judge from the *Zuo zhuan*, the royal house had regained some of its prestige, even if not its military prowess. King Ping’s longevity can be inferred by the fact that he was the heir apparent already in the 770s; by the time of his death in 720, he must have been at least sixty-five to seventy years old.

then that they were benighted and oppressive and pitilessly cast away the people's wealth? It reached the point of the country's root being pulled out, so that crisis and collapse followed. Can one but be fearful of that?  
後世人主，生於深宮，長於豢養，不知閭閻之疾苦：無怪其為昏、為虐、輕棄民財而不知恤也。及邦本既拔而危亡隨之：可不懼乎！<sup>91</sup>

Zhan Ruoshui is as unequivocal as an imperial man of letters could allow himself to be: under the dynastic principle of political succession, the rulers are raised “deep in the palace” and “well fed,” and this causes them to have no understanding of the people's hardships. The results, predictably, are wanton, oppressive, and wasteful behavior and the coming collapse. While Zhan does not directly advocate an extrapalace upbringing for the future emperors, this message can clearly be inferred from his analysis. One can only wonder whether or not he had in mind the erratic behavior of the by-his-time recently deceased emperor Ming Wuzong 明武宗 (r. 1505–1521), whose lack of understanding of the realities of extrapalace life may have contributed to his excesses.<sup>92</sup>

Yet Zhan Ruoshui's audacity remained exceptional. Reading “Wu yi”—supposedly, the production of the Duke of Zhou himself—as critical of the hereditary form of rule would demand extraordinary intellectual and political courage. It would mean not only defying generations of early commentaries but, more dangerously, approaching the red line of questioning the appropriateness of the dynastic principle of power transfer. Understandably, a commentator—or an imperial tutor—would instead prefer to focus on less controversial ideas in “Wu yi,” such as the recommendation to the ruler to heed remonstrance, to be attentive to the multitudes, and to eschew self-indulgent behavior. This was indeed the dominant, almost exclusive reading of this chapter throughout the millennia.

Somewhat ironically, then, generations of emperors who were taught “Wu yi” might have remained forever ignorant of what I see as the major message of this text: a ruler should experience the life of the “lower men” so as to understand his subjects' hardships and treat them fairly. If some of the imperial tutors or other literati discerned this message in the text, they might have found it too sensitive to point out. The conventional reading of the text as an invective against “luxurious ease” was backed by millennia of commentaries and citations and eventually became so powerful that even modern scholars

91 Zhan Ruoshui 1528, 97.1.

92 For Wuzong's reign, see Geiss 1988. Recall that Zhan Ruoshui composed his *Gewulun* 格物論, from which the above passage is cited, shortly after Wuzong's demise.

remain under its sway. I have not found a single researcher who does not read the text from a “Confucian” or “traditional” perspective and who has tackled its ideological exceptionality.

More research on the reception of “Wu yi” in the imperial period is needed. But even this short essay suffices to show that a fresh look at the millennia-old documents may bring about new understandings. Beneath the repetitiveness and seeming dullness of much of the *Shangshu*, we may discover gems of alternative political ideas, which were glossed over by generations of readers but which may become highly rewarding for our research into Zhou political thought.

### References

- Allan, Sarah. 1981. *The Heir and the Sage: Dynastic Legend in Early China*. San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center.
- Allan, Sarah. 2015. *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Recently Discovered Early Chinese Bamboo-Slip Manuscripts*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Cao Yang 草秧. 1989. “Yi pian youxiu de gudai huiwen—*Shang shu-Zhou shu-Wu yi xiyi*” 一篇優秀的古代會文—《尚書·周書·無逸》析譯. *Mishu zhi you* 秘書之友 5: 34–36, 26.
- Chan Hung Kan 陳雄根 and Ho Che Wah 何志華. 2003. *Citations from the “Shangshu” to Be Found in Pre-Han and Han Texts* [*Xian-Qin liang Han dianji yin “Shangshu” ziliao huibian* 先秦兩漢典籍引《尚書》資料彙編]. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.
- Cheng Yuanmin 程元敏. 2013. *Shang shu xueshi* 尚書學史. Shanghai: Huadong shifan Daxue chubanshe.
- Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義. 1991. Annotated by Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達. In *Shisan jing zhushu fu jiaokanji* 十三經注疏附校勘記, comp. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), vol. 2, 1697–2187. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Cook, Scott. 2015. “The Changing Role of Minister in the Warring States: Evidence from the *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋.” In *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China*, ed. Yuri Pines, Paul R. Goldin, and Martin Kern, 181–210. Leiden: Brill.
- Deng Shaoping 鄧少平. 2012. “Qinghua jian *Xinian* yu liang Zhou zhiji shishi zongkao” 清華簡《繫年》與兩周之際史事綜考. *Shenzhen Daxue xuebao (renwen shehui kexue ban)* 深圳大学学报 (人文社会科学版) 3: 60–61.
- Du Yong 杜勇. 1998. “*Shang shu*” *Zhou chu bagao yanjiu* 《尚書》周初八誥研究. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe.

- Geiss, James. 1988. "The Cheng-te Reign, 1506–1521." In *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, pt. 1, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchet, 403–439. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Graham, Angus C. 1989. *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*. La Salle, IL: Open Court.
- Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Liu Qiyu 劉起鈞. 2005. *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun* 尚書校釋譯論. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Guanzi jiaozhu 管子校注. 2004. Comp. Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Guoyu jijie 國語集解. 2002. Comp. Xu Yuangao 徐元誥. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Han Feizi jijie 韓非子集解. 1998. Comp. Wang Xianshen 王先慎 (1859–1922). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Han Gaonian 韓高年 and Deng Guojun 鄧國均. 2011. "Zhou chu guanli yishi yuege ji yishi songci kaolun—yi Zhou song si shi yu Zhou shu-Wu yi wei zhongxin" 周初冠禮儀式樂歌及儀式誦辭考論——以《周頌》四詩與《周書·無逸》為中心. *Xibei Shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 西北師大學報 (社會科學版) 48.6: 9–13.
- Hanshu 漢書. 1997. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Huang Huaixin 黃懷信. 2002. *Shangshu zhuxun* 尚書注訓. Jinan: Qilu shushe.
- Karlgren, Bernhard, trans. 1950. *The Book of Documents*. Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities.
- Kern, Martin. 2000. *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation*. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society.
- Lewis, Mark E. 2006. *The Construction of Space in Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Li Feng. 2006. *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 BC*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Li Feng. 2008. *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Li Guangji 黎廣基. 1999. "Shangshu-Wu yi pian xin zheng" 《尚書·無逸篇》新證. *Nanjing shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 南京師大學報 (社會科學版) 6: 128–131.
- Li Ling 李零. 2016. "Du jian biji: Qinghua Chu jian Xinian di yi zhi si zhang" 讀簡筆記：清華楚簡《繫年》第一至四章. *Jilin Daxue shehui kexue xuebao* 吉林大學社會科學學報 56.4: 168–176.
- Li, Wai-ye. 2007. *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.
- Liji jijie 禮記集解. 1995. Comp. Sun Xidan 孫希旦 (1736–1784). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Liu Kunsheng 劉坤生. 2000. "Shangshu-Wu yi yu Shijing ruogan wenti kaobian" 《尚書·無逸》與《詩經》若干問題考辨. *Shantou Daxue xuebao (renwen kexue ban)* 汕頭大學學報 (人文科學版) 16.3: 8–15.

- Liu Qiyu 劉起鈞. 1996. *Shang shu xue shi* 尚書學史. Rev. ed. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Liu Zehua, ed. 1996. *Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi* 中國政治思想史. Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe.
- Loewe, Michael. 1994. *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy in Han China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Luo Xinhui. 2015. "Omens and Politics: The Zhou Concept of the Mandate of Heaven as Seen in the *Chengwu* 程寤 Manuscript." In *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China*, ed. Yuri Pines, Paul R. Goldin, and Martin Kern, 49–68. Leiden: Brill.
- Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi 呂氏春秋校釋. 1990. Comp. Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷. Shanghai: Xuelin.
- Mengzi yizhu 孟子譯注. 1992. Comp. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Milburn, Olivia, trans. 2015. *The Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Yan*. Leiden: Brill.
- Mozijiaozhu 墨子校注. 1994. Comp. Wu Yujiang 吳毓江 (1898–1977). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞. 1998. *Jinwen shangshu kaozheng* 今文尚書考證. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Pines, Yuri. 2002. *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period, 722–453 B.C.E.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Pines, Yuri. 2005a. "Bodies, Lineages, Citizens, and Regions: A Review of Mark Edward Lewis' *The Construction of Space in Early China*." *Early China* 30 (2005): 155–188.
- Pines, Yuri. 2005b. "Disputers of Abdication: Zhanguo Egalitarianism and the Sovereign's Power." *T'oung Pao* 91, nos. 4–5: 243–300.
- Pines, Yuri. 2008. "To Rebel Is Justified? The Image of Zhouxin and Legitimacy of Rebellion in Chinese Political Tradition." *Oriens Extremus* 47: 1–24.
- Pines, Yuri. 2009. *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Pines, Yuri. 2012. *The Everlasting Empire: Traditional Chinese Political Culture and Its Enduring Legacy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Pines, Yuri. 2014a. "The Messianic Emperor: A New Look at Qin's Place in China's History." In *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited*, ed. Yuri Pines, Lothar von Falkenhausen, Gideon Shelach, and Robin D. S. Yates, 258–279. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pines, Yuri. 2014b. "Zhou History and Historiography: Introducing the Bamboo Manuscript *Xinian*." *T'oung Pao* 100.4–5: 325–359.
- Qinghua Daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian 清華大學藏戰國竹簡. 2011. Vol. 2. Ed. Li Xueqin 李學勤. Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi.
- Qu Wanli 屈萬里. 1984. *Shang shu jin zhu jin yi* 尚書今註今譯. Taipei: Lianjing.
- Schaberg, David. 2001. *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

- Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義. 1991. In *Shisan jing zhushu fu jiaokanji* 十三經注疏附校勘記, vol. 1, 109–258. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Shaughnessy, Edward L. 1997. *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Shen Libin 沈利斌 and Zhao Junfang 趙俊芳. 2000. “Liang ‘yi’ zhi bi—*Shang shu-Wuyi yu Guoyu-Lun laoyi duidu*” 兩“逸”之比——《尚書·無逸》與《國語論勞逸》對讀. *Sichuan jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 四川教育學院學報 16.1–2: 42–44.
- Shenzi jijiao jizhu* 慎子集校集注. 2013. Comp. Xu Fuhong 許富宏. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Shi Shenghuai 石聲淮. 1979. “Zhou Wenwang ‘bifu ji kangong tiangong’ bian” 周文王“卑服即康工田工”辨. *Huazhong shuyuan xuebao* 華中師院學報 3: 48–53.
- Shiji* 史記. 1997. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Sishu zhangju ji zhu* 四書章句集注. 2001. Comp. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Sun Xingyan 孫星衍. 1998. *Shangshu jinguwen zhushu* 尚書今古文注疏. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Tian Changwu 田昌五 and Zang Zhifei 臧知非. 1996. *Zhou Qin shehui jiegou yanjiu* 周秦社會結構研究. Xian: Xibei Daxue chubanshe.
- Wang Hongliang 王紅亮. 2012. “Qinghua jian *Xinian* zhong Zhou Pingwang dongqian de xiangguan daikao” 清華簡《繫年》中周平王東遷的相關年代考. *Shixue shiyanjiu* 史學史研究 4: 101–109.
- Xia-Shang-Zhou duandai gongcheng zhuanjia zu 夏商周斷代工程專家組. 2000. *Xia-Shang-Zhou duandai gongcheng 1996–2000 nian jieduan chengguo baogao: Jianben* 夏商周斷代工程 1996–2000 年階段成果報告：簡本. Beijing: Shijie tushu chubangongsi.
- Xin Ting 新亭. 2013. “Da Ke-ding de ‘yi yu shangxia’ jiqi yiyi” 大克鼎的“逸于上下”及其意義 <[http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src\\_ID=2022](http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=2022)>.
- Xin Ting 新亭. 2014. “Qishan Zhougongmiao bujia ‘Wang simei ke banyi yu miao’ de guancha he sikao” 岐山周公廟卜甲“王斯妹克奔逸于廟”的觀察和思考 <[http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src\\_ID=2254](http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=2254)>.
- Xu Shaohua 徐少華. 2016. “Qinghua jian *Xinian* ‘Zhou wu wang jiu nian’ qianyi” 清華簡《繫年》“周無王九年”淺議. *Jilin Daxue shehui kexue xuebao* 吉林大學社會科學學報 56.4: 183–187.
- Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解. 1992. Comp. Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1917). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Yanzi chunqiu yizhu* 晏子春秋譯注. 1996. Comp. Chen Tao 陳濤. Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe.
- Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水. 1528. *Gewu tong* 格物通. E-Siku quanshu edition.

- Zhang Fentian 張分田. 2009. *Minben sixiang yu Zhongguo gudai zhengzhi sixiang* 民本思想與中國古代政治思想. Tianjin: Nankai Daxue chubanshe.
- Zhang Huaitong 張懷通. 2013. *Yi Zhou shu xin yan* 逸周書新研. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Zong Fubang 宗福邦, Chen Shinao 陳世鏐, and Xiao Haibo 蕭海波, eds. 2007. *Guxun huizuan* 故訓匯纂. Beijing: Shangwu.