

“Offices” in Bronze Inscriptions and
Western Zhou Government Administration
青銅銘文中所見的『官署』及西周政府的行政制度

The present article focuses on the administrative process of the Western Zhou government and addresses the origin of bureaucratic government in China. The article first examines *gong* 宮 in bronze inscriptions that bore names of individuals or officials, suggesting that such *gong* had probably functioned as administrative “offices” of the Western Zhou government. Then, it focuses on inscriptions which record appointment ceremonies (*ceming* 冊命) that took place in the same “offices.” These inscriptions show that there was a certain degree of specialization in the arrangement of appointments and in the use of “offices” for particular administrative tasks. In the appointment ceremonies, Western Zhou officials were normally accompanied by superior officials from the same government units, showing that there were three functional divisions in Western Zhou government administration: royal household, civil administration, and military. Each division operated as a relatively closed system and *ceming* was a routine administrative procedure within the system. Finally, the article studies the role of the Zhou king in administration, showing that while engaging in the operation of government through his “ritual” role in the appointment ceremony, his visits to various *gong* seem to have followed a certain routine. The evidence in bronze inscriptions strongly suggests that the Western Zhou government was the earliest bureaucratic government in China.

本文的重點在討論西周政府的行政程序和中國官僚政府的起源。筆者首先考察西周青銅銘文中所見以人名或職官稱謂命名的『宮』，並提出這樣的『宮』可能就是西周政府的行政『官署』。筆者接著分析在同一『官署』中進行的冊命銘文。這些銘文說明，西周政府對冊命儀式的安排及各『官署』所負責的行政事務已經形成一定程度的專門化。在冊命儀式中，西周官員通常是由來自同一政府部門的長官所陪同，這說明西周政府可劃分為三個具有行政功能的部門，即王室、民政部門和軍隊。每一個部門做為一相當封閉的系統各自運作，而冊

命則是各系統內常規性的行政程序。最後，本文研究周王在行政中的角色，說明周王以其在冊命儀式中具『儀式性』的角色參與政府的運作，而他對各個『宮』的造訪似乎也遵循著一定的常規。青銅器銘文中的證據有力地指出，西周政府是中國最早官僚政府。