

COLLECTED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE X GONG XU

Chen Shu

The name “X Gong *xu*” was coined in March 2003 at the first international workshop organized by Sarah Allan and Constance A. Cook on the bronze vessel that was called either Bin Gong *xu* 鬯公盃 or Sui Gong *xu* 遂公盃 depending on how the first character 鬯 was deciphered. As a compilation of the variant interpretations of the inscription cast into the bottom of the bronze vessel, this article aims at providing an all-inclusive resource for researchers. It adopts the name “X Gong *xu*” in an effort to accommodate different interpretations of 鬯.

The X Gong *xu* 鬯公盃 is a Western Zhou 西周 (1046–771 B.C.E.) period bronze inscription that makes references to the Great Yu 大禹 of the Xia 夏 dynasty (2070–1600 B.C.E.) and to the phrases in the “Yu gong” 禹貢 chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書. Since the publication of the image and the inscription of the vessel in 2002, scholars in the field have proposed considerably different interpretations of the bronze text. Professor Li Xueqin’s 李學勤 transcription was among the first of this Western Zhou text. On the tenth anniversary of the publication of the bronze vessel, I am providing this compilation of the interpretations of the X Gong *xu* inscription to facilitate research in the field and to mark Professor Li’s eightieth birthday.

Prefatory Note

Scholars Cited

The following list consists of all the scholars whose transcriptions and interpretations are included in this compilation. Scholars initials are followed by their names in Romanized letters and then in Chinese. The

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my friend Professor Xing Wen 邢文 from Dartmouth College for generously sharing with me his professional expertise in this area and offering me his scholarly guidance and total support in this project. I would also like to thank Professors Li Xueqin 李學勤, Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, Sarah Allan and Constance A. Cook for kindly allowing me to include their reconstructed transcriptions and/or English translations in this article. I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewers for *Early China* for promptly reviewing my article and providing me with valuable comments.

Early China 35–36, 2012–13

order of the list is based on the order in which the transcriptions and interpretations are included in this compilation.

- LXQ: Li Xueqin 李學勤
 ZYS: Zhang Yongshan 張永山
 QXG: Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭
 ZFH: Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚
 SJH: Shen Jianhua 沈建華
 CAC: Constance A. Cook 柯鶴立
 FS: Feng Shi 馮時
 ZFW: Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五
 LL: Li Ling 李零
 LY: Liu Yu 劉雨
 JTI: Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤
 LK: Luo Kun 羅琨
 LSM: Lian Shaoming 連劭名
 CYJ: Chen Yingjie 陳英杰
 ELS: Edward L. Shaughnessy 夏含夷
 SA: Sarah Allan 艾蘭
 XNY: Xu Nanyu 徐難于
 XW: Xing Wen 邢文
 LK: Li Kai 李凱

Interpretations

The interpretations of the phrases are provided where the last character, rather than the key word, of the phrase is listed.

Comprehensive interpretations that reflect the meaning of each character in the phrases are not provided as a general rule.

If the scholars interpret a phrase without providing interpretations for each character, I will include the interpreted phrases only and skip the un-interpreted characters. If the scholars provide interpretations of individual characters without giving further interpretations of the relevant phrases, I will include only the interpretations of the characters accordingly. I will provide my own translations based on conventional understanding for the common words for which scholars do not provide interpretations.

If different scholars have the same transcriptions and interpretations, only those published first are included. If the same transcriptions and interpretations are published in the same journal, only those printed in earlier pages are included. If the same article by the same author is cited more than once, reference is given at the first occurrence only.

An English translation is given for each sentence or phrase when there is a different interpretation. Therefore, if a scholar concurs on the

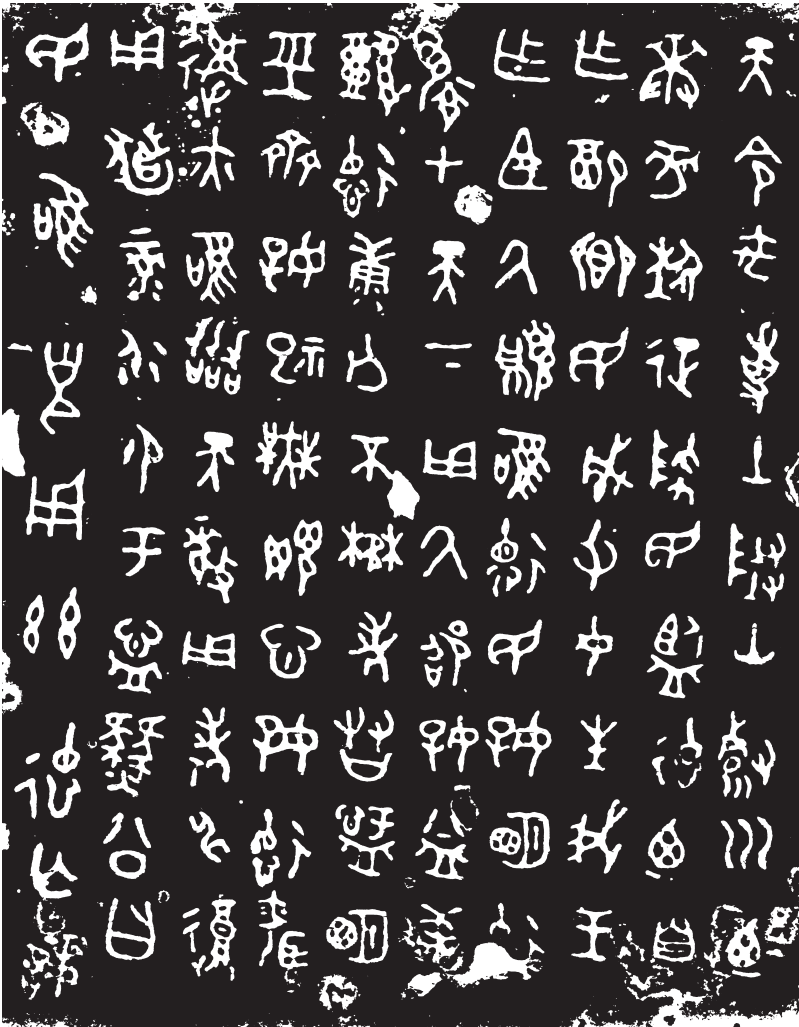


Figure 1: Rubbing of the X Gong *xu* inscription

transcriptions published by others earlier but interprets the transcriptions differently, I will include the new interpretations with translations without reiterating the transcriptions.

Line Naming and Numbering

X Gong *xu* inscription, like most ancient Chinese texts, is to be read in vertical columns from top to bottom and from right to left. This compilation follows the flow of the text.

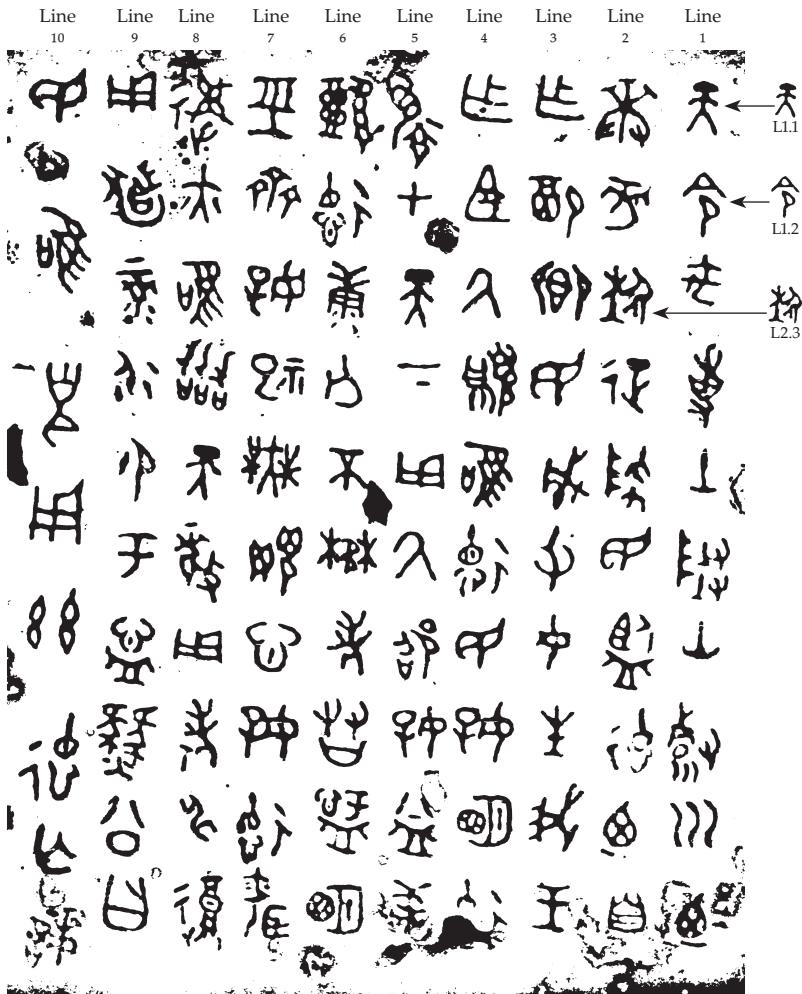


Figure 2: Reversed image of the X Gong xu rubbing with each line and selected characters labeled

Each vertical column is labeled as a line, as shown in Figure 2. It is named a *line*, instead of a *column*, so that it is easier for modern readers to comprehend. Thus in Figure 2, L1.1 indicates the 1st character of Line 1, while L2.3 denotes the 3rd character of Line 2. The following section presents interpretations of the individual characters by the scholars listed earlier. Each character is presented as a reversed rubbing; scholars are identified by their initials, and the interpretations consist of a modern transcription of the character followed by its English translation.

Collected Interpretations of the X Gong xu

Line 1

L1.1 天

LXQ: 天¹, Heaven

L1.2 命

LXQ: 命, to ordain

L1.3 禹

LXQ: 禹, Yu

L1.4 敷

LXQ: 敷, to chart

ZYS: 敷², i.e., 治, to administrate

L1.5 土

LXQ: 土, the earth. 天命禹敷土: Heaven ordains Yu to chart the earth.

L1.6 隨

LXQ: 隨, to follow

QXG: 墮³, to make (earth) fallZFH: 導⁴, pathSJH: 築⁵, i.e., 隨, to destroy

L1.7 隤

LXQ: 山, mountain

QXG: 墮山, to level mountains

ZFH: 導山, to make paths by cutting the mountains

CAC: 墮山, "collapsing mountains"⁶

1. Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Lun Sui Gong Xu jiqi zhongyao yiyi" 論夔公盃及其重要意義, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物 2002.6, reprinted in Li Xueqin, *Zhongguo gudai wenming yanjiu* 中國古代文明研究 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue, 2005), 126–36.

2. Zhang Yongshan 張永山, "Bin Gong Xu ming 'duo shan jun chuan'" 夔公盃銘"隤山叡川"考, *Huaxue* 華學 6 (2003), 31–34.

3. Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, "Bin Gong Xu mingwen kaoshi" 夔公盃銘文考釋, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 2002.6, reprinted in Qiu Xigui, *Zhongguo chutu guwenxian shijiang* 中國出土文獻十講 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue, 2004), 46–77.

4. Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, "X Gong Xu mingwen chushi" 夔公盃銘文初釋, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 2002.6, 28–34.

5. Shen Jianhua 沈建華, "Du X Gong Xu mingwen xiaozha" 讀夔公盃銘文小札, *Huaxue* 6 (2003), 26–30.

6. Constance A. Cook, "Bin Gong xu and Sage-king Yu: Translation and

FS: 墮山⁷, to break mountains
 ZFW: 墮山⁸, to dig through mountains

L1.8 

LXQ: 濬, to channel
 QXG: to deeply channel

L1.9 

LXQ: 川, rivers

L1.10 

LXQ: 廼, then

Line 2

L2.1 

LXQ: 差, to differentiate
 QXG: 疇, to categorize by types
 ZFH: 奏, to advance, to go forward
 FS: 任, according to
 ZFW: 釐, to divide
 LL: 拜⁹, i.e., 別, to differentiate
 LY: 差¹⁰, according to
 JTI: 來¹¹, to come
 LK: 差, i.e., 佐¹², to assist
 LSM: 拜¹³, i.e., 辨, to examine (the differences)
 CYJ: 擣 or 討¹⁴, to attack

Commentary," *International Research on Bamboo and Silk Documents: Newsletter* 3.2-6 (2003), 2328.

7. Feng Shi 馮時, "Bin Gong Xu mingwen kaoshi" 夔公盤銘文考釋, *Kaogu* 考古 2003.5, 63-72.

8. Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五, "Sui Gong Xu ming chutan" 遂公盤銘初探, *Huaxue* 6 (2003), 7-14.

9. Li Ling 李零, "Lun X Gong Xu faxian de yiyi" 論夔公盤發現的意義, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 2002.6, 35-45.

10. Liu Yu 劉雨, "Bin Gong kao" 鬲公考, *International Research on Bamboo and Silk Documents: Newsletter* 3.2-6 (2003), 6-16.

11. Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤, "Bin Gong Xu yu Xia shu yipian 'Yu zhi zong de'" 夔公盤與夏書佚篇《禹之總德》, *Huaxue* 6 (2003), 1-6.

12. Luo Kun 羅琨, "Bin Gong Xu ming yu Da Yu zhishui de wenxian jizai" 夔公盤銘與大禹治水的文獻記載, *Huaxue* 6 (2003), 15-25.

13. Lian Shaoming 連劭名, "'X Gong Xu' mingwen kaoshu" 《夔公盤》銘文考述, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 2003.4, 51-56.

14. Chen Yingjie 陳英傑, "Bin Gong Xu mingwen zaikao" 夔公盤銘文再考, *Yuyan kexue* 語言科學 2008.1, 63-77.

L2.2 方

- LXQ: 象, i.e., 地, lands. 差地, to distinguish different lands
 QXG: 方, i.e., 法, laws. 疇方, to classify the laws into different categories
 ZFH: 方, four directions. 奏方, to go forward to deliver foods to the people in the four directions
 CAC: 差方, “distinguished the regions”
 FS: 地, land, earth. 任地, according to the quality of earth
 LL: 別方, to bid farewell to the places
 LY: the locations of the nine states.
 LK: 方, the states
 ELS: 疇方, “to divide the regions”¹⁵

L2.3 設

- LXQ: 設, to set up
 ZFH: 藝, to set up
 ZFW: 藝, to plant
 JTI: 獄, (no explanation provided).

L2.4 征

- LXQ: 征, tribute
 QXG: 政, i.e., 正, governors
 CAC: 設政, “set up the government”
 ZFW: to collect tribute
 LSM: 藝征, i.e., 立中, to establish the center
 ELS: “set up their tribute”
 SA: 差地設征, “selected the land suitable for building a city from which to govern”; or 征, “Yu’s campaigns against the rebellious 有苗”¹⁶

L2.5 降

- LXQ: 降, to send down from the mountains to the plain
 QXG: to give birth to
 ZFH: to descend
 FS: 降, to please
 LL: 隴 (no explanation provided).

15. Edward L. Shaughnessy, “The Bin Gong Xu Inscription and the Origins of the Chinese Literary Tradition,” in *Books in Numbers: Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Harvard-Yenching Library, Conference Papers*, ed. Wilt Idema (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2007), 3–21.

16. Sarah Allan, “Some preliminary comments on the 鬲公盃,” in *The X Gong Xu 鬲公盃: A Report and Papers from the Dartmouth Workshop*, ed. Xing Wen 邢文, a special issue of *International Research on Bamboo and Silk Documents: Newsletter* (2003), 16–23.

L2.6 

LXQ: 民, people

L2.7 

LXQ: 監, i.e., 察, to examine and to monitor

LL: 監, i.e., 鑒, to understand and to think of

CYJ: to administer

L2.8 

LXQ: 德, virtue

L2.9 

LXQ: 迺, then

L2.10 

LXQ: 自, self

LSM: to begin

Line 3

L3.1 

LXQ: 作, to make

L3.2 

LXQ: 配, to mate, to conjoin

SA: "a [ritual] counterpart"

L3.3 

LXQ: 鄉, i.e., 饗, or 享, to bestow blessings (upon people)

QXG: 嚮, to direct

ZFH: 饗, i.e., 享天命, to enjoy the Heavenly Mandate

CAC: 配饗, "to present a sacrificial feast to match (Heaven's pattern)"

FS: 饗, i.e., 相, to assist

LL: to sacrifice

LSM: 享, to receive

XNY: 鄉, i.e., 相¹⁷, to govern

17. Xu Nanyu 徐難于, "X Gong Xu ming: 'nai zi zuo pei xiang min' qianshi" 夔公盨銘: "乃自作配鄉民" 淺釋, *Zhonghua wenhua luntan* 中華文化論壇, 2006.2, 19–24.

L3.4 𠄎

LXQ: 作配享民, to conjoin with (Heaven) and bestow blessings upon people

QXG: 嚮民, to direct or to guide the people

LL: possibly 流民, (no explanation provided).

LSM: 享民, to receive people

SA: 鄉民, "to give feast for the people"

L3.5 成

LXQ: 成, to become

QXG: to be

ZFH: to establish

LL: to complete

L3.6 父

LXQ: 父, father

L3.7 母

LXQ: 女, i.e., 母, mother

QXG: 母, mother

L3.8 生

LXQ: 生, to give birth to

ZFH: possibly a particle in the phrase 民生父母生; an auxiliary word with no lexical meaning

FS: to nourish

L3.9 我

LXQ: 我, I

L3.10 王

LXQ: 王, king

Line 4

L4.1 作

LXQ: 作, to become

QXG: to establish

ZFH: to give birth to

FS: to be read as 則, i.e., therefore

L4.2 𠄎

LXQ: 臣, ministers

LSM: 作臣, to confer or to appoint (ministers)

L4.3 𠄎

LXQ: 厥, an auxiliary word with no lexical meaning used at the beginning of a sentence

L4.4 𠄎

LXQ: 穎, i.e., 沫, 貴, to value

QXG: 顯, i.e., 美, to praise. Later changed to 貴.

ZFH: 沫, to wash face

CAC: 昧, "being unenlightened"

ZFW: 務, work of priority

LL: 顯, i.e., 昧, (no explanation provided).

LSM: 蔑, small, meticulous, thorough

XW: 豐¹⁸, diligence

L4.5 𠄎

LXQ: 唯, an auxiliary word with no lexical meaning

L4.6 𠄎

LXQ: 德, virtue

L4.7 𠄎

LXQ: 民, people

L4.8 𠄎

LXQ: 好, to love

L4.9 𠄎

LXQ: 明, bright, luminous

L4.10 𠄎

LXQ: 德, virtue

18. Xing Wen, "Sui Gong Xu ming de fenduan yu 'Jue wei wei De'" 夔公盤銘的分段與“厥豐唯德,” in *The X Gong Xu 夔公盤: A Report and Papers from the Dartmouth Workshop*, 53–55.

Line 5

L5.1 𠄎

- LXQ: 𠄎, i.e., 顧, to think of
 QXG: 𠄎, i.e., 羞, to employ
 ZFH: 𠄎, i.e., 贗 or 贗, thus 讚, to praise
 CAC: 𠄎(閑?), “protected (it)”
 FS: 𠄎, i.e., 優, soft and harmonious
 LL: 𠄎, i.e., 擾, compliant and docile
 JTI: 𠄎, to be concerned and worried
 LSM: 𠄎 (no decipherment provided).

L5.2 十

- LXQ: 才, i.e., 在, in (the world) or under (Heaven)
 ZFH: 甲, number one
 FS: 才, i.e., 哉, an auxiliary word with no lexical meaning
 signaling the end of a sentence

L5.3 天

- LXQ: 天, Heaven

L5.4 一

- LXQ: 下, under

L5.5 𠄎

- LXQ: 用, because
 ZFH: from
 LL: to use

L5.6 𠄎

- LXQ: 𠄎, it
 ZFH: that

L5.7 邵

- LXQ: 邵, to continue
 QXG: noble and beautiful, or 劬, diligent
 ZFH: 邵, i.e., 昭, bright
 LL: 邵, i.e., 詔, to announce

L5.8 𠄎

- LXQ: 好, beauty
 ZFH: good situation

FS: love
LL: good

L5.9 益

LXQ: 益, even more
QXG: to add
ZFH: further
FS: 益, Yi, Yu's assistant
LL: 諡, posthumous name

L5.10 遂

LXQ: 妥 (?), read as 干, to seek for
ZFH: 求, to seek for
FS: the name of another ancient worthy
LL: 美, to announce and praise
LY: 敬, to respect
LK: 奸,¹⁹ to offend

Line 6

L6.1 懿

LXQ: 懿, nice and beautiful
LL: 歆, i.e., 懿, beautiful

L6.2 德

LXQ: 德, virtue

L6.3 康

LXQ: 康, wide, prevalent
QXG: peaceful and safe
FS: 康, i.e., 荒, not
ZFW: unrestricted
LL: not diligent
LSM: peaceful and happy, quiet, or empty

L6.4 亡

LXQ: 亡, not
QXG: 亡(?), not
ZFH: 亡, i.e., 無, not

19. Li Kai 李凱, "Bin Gong Xu yu Yi Qi chuanshuo de zai renshi" 邨公盪與益啟傳說的再認識, *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化 2007.1, 80–84.

L6.5 不

LXQ: 不, not

L6.6 懋

LXQ: 懋, i.e., 懋, diligent

ZFH: 懋, i.e., 堪, 勝, to win

L6.7 孝

LXQ: 孝, i.e., 孝, filial piety

L6.8 友

LXQ: 友, to be kind and amicable with the brothers

CAC: “behaving in ... a collegial manner (toward their brothers)”

SA: “amicable”

L6.9 愷

LXQ: 愷,²⁰ i.e., 訏, big, great

QXG: a kind of good virtue

FS: 愷, i.e., 謨, strategy

ZFW: 辨, (no specific explanations provided).

LY: 欷, i.e., 忤, to be concerned

LSM: 于, so that

CYJ: 忤, a kind of virtue

L6.10 明

LXQ: 明, bright

QXG: a kind of good virtue

ZFH: 倡明, to explicate and to advocate

CAC: to illuminate

LL: to clarify

LSM: to demonstrate

CYJ: 孝友忤明, four kinds of virtue—filial, kind, *yu* virtue, and bright

ELS: 孟明, “expansive and bright”

SA: 訏明, “great and luminous”

20. Some scholars also transcribe this character as 愷. Maria Khayutina, “Bin (Sui)-gong xu i konstruirovaniie proshlogo v kitaiskoi traditsii” (Bin [Sui]-gong *xu* and the construction of the past in Chinese tradition), in *Materialy kitaevvedcheskoj konferencii ISAA pri MGU (Mai 2004 g.)* (Proceedings of the Sinological Conference of the Institute of Asian and African Countries of the M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University [May 2004]) (Moscow: ISAA, 2005), 62.

Line 7

L7.1 亓

- LXQ: 亓, i.e., 經, constant
 QXG: laws for people to follow
 ZFH: to walk or to act in observance of the norm
 CAC: to practice
 ZFW: to follow
 LL: to manage
 LSM: 孝友于明經, to be filial and amicable in order to demonstrate the Way of Heaven

L7.2 齊

- LXQ: 齊, "regular." 訃明經齊, "great and luminous, constant and regular"²¹
 QXG: respectful
 CAC: purification—"purification, likely involving the washing of the exposed parts of the body such as hands and face with grain infused liquids (as perhaps originally put in *xu* vessels), was necessary before entering ancestral temples."
 FS: 經齊, respectful
 ZFW: modest
 LL: 亓齊, i.e., 經濟, to handle and manage
 ELS: even

L7.3 好

- LXQ: 好, good, and 隆重, grand
 SJH: nice and appropriate
 FS: to love to
 ZFW: respectful
 LL: beautiful
 SA: pious

L7.4 祀

- LXQ: 祀, offerings
 LY: 好祀, offerings in prayer for more descendants

L7.5 無

- LXQ: 無, no

21. Sarah Allan's translation, in "Some preliminary comments on the 夔公盃," 21.

L7.6 𦉰

LXQ: 覲, i.e., 廢, to give up. 好祀無廢, to aggrandize sacrificial offerings and to be persistent in doing so (offering sacrifices)

QXG: 隗, i.e., 悖, to oppose

ZFH: 欺, i.e., 欺, to cheat

SJH: 兇, i.e., 兇, inauspicious

ZFW: 訕, controversial, 爭訟, acrimonious and litigious

LL: 期, i.e., 期, time limit

LY: 愧, shame

L7.7 心

LXQ: 心, mind

L7.8 好

LXQ: 好, to love

L7.9 德

LXQ: 德, virtue

L7.10 婚

LXQ: 婚, i.e., 婚, marriage

ZFH: 聞, i.e., 婚, marriage

Line 8

L8.1 婚

LXQ: 婚, i.e., 婚; 婚媾, marriage

ZFH: 好德婚媾, marriages should be based on virtue

L8.2 亦

LXQ: 亦, also

L8.3 唯

LXQ: 唯, an auxiliary word with no lexical meaning

L8.4 婚

LXQ: 婚, i.e., 協, harmony. 婚媾亦唯協, marriages should also be in harmony

QXG: 婚, i.e., 協, to match

L8.5 天

LXQ: 天, heaven

FS: 婚媾亦唯協天, marriages should also be in harmony with Heaven's intention

L8.6 釐

LXQ: 釐, i.e., 釐, to bestow

QXG: 敏, diligent

ZFH: 釐, i.e., 理, principle. 亦唯協天理, (marriages) should also be in harmony with the principles of Heaven

FS: 釐, i.e., 予, to give

LSM: 釐, i.e., 來, to come

L8.7 用

LXQ: 用, i.e., 以, with

LSM: 用, i.e., 由, from

L8.8 考

LXQ: 考, longevity. 天釐用考, Heaven bestowed longevity

QXG: 老, i.e., 孝, filial

ZFH: 考, i.e., 孝, filial

LSM: 老, old and everlasting

L8.9 申

LXQ: 申, i.e., 神, spirits

QXG: 敏用孝神, to filially serve the ancestral spirits with a diligent devotion to virtue

ZFH: ancestors

FS: 信, sincerity. 孝信, filial piety and sincerity

LSM: 釐用老神, Yu came from Heavenly spirit

L8.10 復

LXQ: 復, 復, to be paid back, returns

ZFH: 復, i.e., 且, also

LSM: to come back, to return

Line 9

L9.1 用

LXQ: 用, i.e., 以, with

L9.2 𧇧

LXQ: 𧇧, i.e., 祓, blessing

ZFH: sacrificial rituals for the purpose of exterminating the evil

L9.3 𧇨

LXQ: 𧇨, i.e., 祿, wealth

ZFH: 祿, blessing

L9.4 𧇩

LXQ: 永, forever

L9.5 𧇪

LXQ: 𧇪, i.e., 御, to govern

QXG: 𧇪, i.e., 孚, to be consistent with

LL: 𧇪, i.e., 止, to stop

FS: 节, to stop

LSM: 即, to reside

CYJ: 孚, i.e., 復, to return

L9.6 于

LXQ: 于, in

L9.7 𧇫

LXQ: 𧇫, i.e., 寧, peace

LSM: 心, heart

L9.8 𧇬

LXQ: 𧇬, i.e., 遂, Sui (duke's name)

QXG: 𧇬, i.e., 邕, Bin (duke's name)

L9.9 公

LXQ: 公, duke


L9.10 曰

LXQ: 曰, to say


Line 10

L10.1 𧇭


LXQ: 民, the people

L10.2 

LXQ: 唯, an auxiliary word with no lexical meaning.

L10.3 

LXQ: 克, may, can

L10.4 

LXQ: 用, to use

L10.5 

LXQ: 茲, this

L10.6 

LXQ: 德, virtue

L10.7 

LXQ: 亡, no

L10.8 

LXQ: 誨, i.e., 悔, to be despised, to be disgraced

QXG: 誨, i.e., 悔, (to) regret

LSM: 悔, to resent

Transcriptions and Translations of X Gong xu

I have included Professors Li Xueqin's and Qiu Xigui's Chinese transcriptions below to provide the reader with a complete picture of the inscription. In order to facilitate a smooth reading, I have included only Li's and Qiu's interpretive transcriptions instead of their direct transcriptions.²²

Currently, there are three English translations of the X Gong xu, by Sarah Allan (2003, reprinted in 2006²³), Constance A. Cook (2003) and Edward L. Shaughnessy (2007) respectively. Thanks to the kind permissions from Sarah Allan and Constance A. Cook, I have included two of their earlier translations to provide the reader with an overall understanding of the bronze text in the English language.

22. For definitions of "interpretive transcription" and "direct transcription," see Xing Wen, "Towards a Transparent Transcription," *Asiatische Studien* LIX.1 (2005), 31–60.

23. Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allan), "Qianxi X Gong xu" 淺析斃公盃, in *Zhongguo gudai wenming yanjiu yu xueshushi: Li Xueqin jiaoshou kangli qishi shouqing jinian wenji* 中國古代文明研究與學術史: 李學勤教授伉儷七十壽慶紀念文集, eds. Jiang Linchang 江林昌, et al. (Baoding: Hebei daxue chubanshe, 2006), 34–38.

Li Xueqin (2002)

1 天命禹敷土，隨山濬川，迺
 2 差地設征，降民監德，迺自
 3 作配饗民，成父母。生我王、
 4 作臣，厥貴唯德民，好明德，
 5 顧在天下。用厥紹好，益干(?)
 6 懿德，康亡不懋。孝友，訏明
 7 經齊，好祀無廢。心好德，婚
 8 媾亦唯協。天釐用考，神復
 9 用祓祿，永御于寧。遂公曰：
 10 民唯克用茲德，亡侮。

Qiu Xigui (2002)

天命禹敷土，墮山，濬川；迺
 疇方，設正，降民，監德；迺自
 作配，嚮民；成父母，生我王，
 作臣。厥美唯德，民好明德，
 任在天下。用厥邵好，益□
 懿德，康亡(?)不懋。孝友愷明，
 經齊好祀，无悖心。好德婚
 媾，亦唯協天，敏用考神，復
 用祓祿，永孚于寧。豳公曰：
 民唯克用茲德，無侮。

3. Sarah Allan's translation (2003 & 2006):

Sky/heaven commanded Yu to spread out the earth, follow along the mountains, and make channels for the rivers. Then, [it commanded that he] select land and establish a government, descend among the people and inspect their *de*-virtue. Then, it made a [ritual] counterpart to itself, to give feast for the people, and become [their] father and mother. [Sky/heaven] begat a king for us and made [a court of] ministers [for him]. What they valued was *de*-virtue. The people loved the luminous virtue, and docile was the world below. By means of this transmitted goodness, they expanded (?) the perfect *de*-virtue; peaceful in mind, in nothing did they not strive. Filial and amicable, great and luminous, constant and regular, they were pious in making offerings; with no shame in their mind/hearts, they loved virtue; harmonious were their marriages. Sky/heaven gave them long life and the spirits returned with blessings, that they might be at peace forever. Bin (Sui?) Gong said: If the people can only use this virtue and not be slack!

4. Constance A. Cook's translation
(2003, revised by the author):

- 1 Heaven charged Yu to spread the earth, collapsing mountains and deepening rivers,
- 2 So he distinguished the Regions and set up the governing (structures), descended among the people and examined their *de*
- 3 So, based on this, (Yu) created the sacrificial feast matching (his sacrifices in return for Heaven's mandate) and the people became parents,

- 4 Giving birth to Our King and acting as his servants, what they displayed was *de*.
- 5 The people cared for (the king's and Yu's) luminous *de* and provided food for All Under Heaven.
- 6 Employing it to glorify and care for (the king's and Yu's way of *de*) and to abundantly pay their respects to (their) refined *de*,
- 7 Contentedly, they all worked hard and behaved in filial and collegial manners, enlarging and illuminating (the King's and Yu's way of *de*),
- 8 Practicing purification, they took care with the annual sacrificial performance, (performing it) endlessly; the people nurtured *de* in their hearts.
- 9 Married relations are likewise all harmonious so Heaven's gifts are used for Deceased-father spirits,
- 10 May (they) repeatedly expel (bad fortune), (provide) wealth, and eternally guide (the people) towards tranquility.
- 11 Bin Gong said: "The people have been able to employ this *de* without harm."

Concluding Remarks

Judging from the transcriptions and interpretations included in this collection, we can see that traditional Chinese paleography remains the principal approach adopted by scholars in deciphering *X Gong xu*. This methodology starts with an examination of the shapes of the graphs and draws from the knowledge of the classical texts to form plausible transcriptions and interpretations of the *X Gong xu*. The recognition of the graph and the recognition of the sentence structures constitute the two levels of differences encountered in the decipherment. The analysis of the graph 𠄎 exemplifies the difficulties at the level of character decipherment. Despite the general agreement on the shape of the graph itself, scholars offer diverging views on certain components of the graph, drawing on different paleographic evidence, and thus arrive at different interpretations of the graph. The difficulty in punctuating *X Gong xu* is an issue that is an inherent part of the study of ancient Chinese texts. Most ancient works, including received classical writings, do not contain modern punctuation as we know it today. Therefore, providing punctuation to the ancient texts is the result of certain interpretive reading of the texts; the placement of the punctuation in turn molds our interpretations of the sentences. The different punctuation placement also has an effect on the decipherment of the individual characters involved.

Take the sentence in the X Gong *xu* that contains *hungou* 婚媾 (marriage) for example. Some scholars punctuate it as *xin hao de, hungou yi wei xie* 心好德, 婚媾亦唯協, and others as *hao de hungou, yi wei xietian* 好德婚媾, 亦唯協天. The choices of the different sentence structures inflect the interpretations of the character immediately following the word *tian* 天. In the "*hungou yi wei xie*" version, *tian* is considered the subject of the next sentence, and the character immediately following *tian* is thus interpreted as *xi* 釐 (bestow), a verb used as the predicate of the sentence. However, in the version of "*yi wei xietian*," the word following *tian* becomes the beginning of the next sentence; thus it is interpreted as an adverb *min* 敏 (diligently). Clearly the same research methodology, traditional Chinese paleography, can lead to entirely different results in the interpretations of the X Gong *xu* inscription. This article aims at providing an easy reference tool to facilitate further research in this area where different views abound. The interpretations and translations in this collection are to be taken as a quick reference only. For a more accurate and thorough understanding of the scholarship, consult the original sources from which the entries in this compilation are taken.