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REVIEW ARTICLE

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Method, Logic, and the Debate about Western Zhou Government: A Reply to Lothar von Falkenhausen

Abstract In response to Lothar von Falkenhausen's contention that the Western Zhou government was hopelessly stuck in a kinship structure that operated in accordance with the order of aristocratic lineages, the present paper offers new theoretical grounds as well as new inscriptional evidence showing that the Western Zhou government was a bureaucracy invented precisely to allow the Zhou king to overcome or manipulate the restrictions imposed by a kinship structure, in order to achieve actual political and administrative goals. This is the central debate in the study of the Western Zhou government as the fountainhead of the long-standing Chinese political culture and institutions. To refute the ill-conceived "anthropological model" of the Western Zhou government, the paper carefully examines the logical confusions, the wrong methodological choice, and the misinformation about contemporaneous bronze inscriptions as well as about current archaeology exhibited in Falkenhausen's review, thus reconfirming bases for a correct understanding of the Western Zhou government already offered in *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China* (Cambridge 2008). Furthermore, the paper discusses intellectual norms in book reviews in the West and China and offers new insights into the date of the Ling group of vessels, a central problem in the dating of Western Zhou bronzes. The paper provides an important cornerstone for future constructive studies of the Western Zhou government and the issue of bureaucracy in Chinese history.

Keywords Western Zhou, bureaucracy, bronze inscriptions, lineage, Ling bronzes, culture of book review

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Seven years after the publication of my volume, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou* (Cambridge 2008; as *BS* below),[1] Lothar von Falkenhausen's words about it have finally appeared in print, in English, in a new journal published in China.[2] Falkenhausen told me once that his review was initially submitted to *Early China*, but the journal's vigilant editors turned it down for its excessive criticism (which is now apparent, if not more so) of me as the author of the book.[3] In this long review of twenty-five pages, which is still not the longest of what he has ever written (for reasons I will clarify later),[4] Falkenhausen staged numerous charges not only against the author's interpretation of the Western Zhou government, but also, when taken together, contradicting his own judgment that the book "provides a largely accurate description of the rather complex features of the Zhou kingdom" (269) and the book "largely succeeds in achieving its goals" (277).

If it were only for those charges, which I have carefully considered along with some of his compliments, which I appreciated, this reply would not have been written. But deeply running between us are some fundamental differences in the conceptualization of the Western Zhou government and the Western Zhou state owing to different theoretical orientations, and in the understanding of the basic ethical norms that the scholar writing a book review should guard when criticizing others. For instance, with regard to the Western Zhou government as a bureaucracy, a characterization with which we both agree, I considered that the Western Zhou "bureaucracy" (by the definition of the term), was a way of governance that was invented to allow the Zhou king (or anyone else in control of the bureaucratic machine) to overcome or at least to manipulate the restrictions imposed by a kinship structure in order to achieve actual political and administrative goals. But Falkenhausen claims that the Western Zhou government as a bureaucracy was hopelessly stuck in a kinship structure, and everything done by or through that government has to be explained by the logic of lineage orders. This is the central debate that concerns the nature of the Western Zhou government, and Falkenhausen's position in this debate underlies many misconceptions that he expressed in the review. It will be a true misgiving, or perhaps irresponsible of this author, if Falkenhausen's misconceptions (some are due to inaccurate knowledge, see below) about *Bureaucracy and the State* go

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[1] Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China.*

[2] Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Review: Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China*," 252–77.

[3] Ibid., personal conversation with the author.

[4] For instance, Falkenhausen's eighty-eight page long review of Edward L. Shaughnessy and Jessica Rawson's volumes in "Issues in Western Zhou Studies," 139–226.

unchecked to lead the future reader to misunderstand the essential organizational logic as well as operational principles of the Western Zhou bureaucracy. This can have major damage on our proper understanding of the nature of early states in China and about the political culture that contributed so much to the foundation of Chinese civilization. Therefore, I feel compelled to undertake the writing of this response.

The Disciplinary Mishope

Without running hastily into a discussion of the above key difference, which should become clear by the middle of this response, let me first quote the following lines from Lothar von Falkenhausen:

> Li's failure to account for the kin-centered nature of Zhou society is the result of his explicit refusal to adopt a systemic, anthropologically informed view of Western Zhou culture as a whole. While such a stance is a potential strength to the philologist keen to take an unprejudiced first look at a text, it becomes a weakness when it comes to interpreting broader historical significance (265).

These lines come as the conclusion of two long paragraphs that comment on the discussion of the selection of officials for government service in *Bureaucracy and the State*. Without making any conceptual bridge between the two realms, Falkenhausen was effectively confused between the politic order of the Western Zhou government, which was based on a range of variables much broader than a strict consideration of statutory rules, and the kin-order of the Zhou society. But be it as it may, his allegation of my "explicit refusal" is simply untrue. As a matter of fact, in-depth discussions of anthropological theories both informed my characterization of the Western Zhou state (*BS*, 271–93, especially 278–80, 290–93) and underlay a new understanding of the religious foundation of the Zhou royal power (*BS*, 294–98), which Falkenhausen was unable to engage. The accusation is also particularly unfair as every unbiased reader would agree that the book, as one of its strengths, generates broader interpretations about the Western Zhou state and its government on the basis of a systematic analysis of the bronze inscriptions.

But, then, what is Falkenhausen's "anthropological" version of the Western Zhou state (note that he uses the expression of "Western Zhou culture," but the topic of discussion here in the review is the state and government)? Nowhere in the review or elsewhere did he ever spell it out, or to even try to give an overall picture. The only place where Falkenhausen comes close to a general discussion of his "anthropological" model of the Western Zhou society (still not of the state) is

his discussion of the so-called "Five-Generation Rule" in his mistitled 2006 book, but the discussion there is completely based on later Confucian ritual texts, and the validity of such sources for the Western Zhou must be verified in the first place.[5] Ultimately, a realistic account of the Western Zhou state and its government, whether informed by "anthropological" or other theory, must come from careful analysis of the contemporaneous bronze inscriptions. Regrettably, Falkenhausen was unable himself to offer such an account; instead, he prefers to criticize other people for doing so.

Anthropology, owing largely to the history of the discipline, is concerned with the overall condition of humans and large patterns in their behavior past and present, and offers few theoretical elaborations about the principles of government organization and administration, or about the workings of "bureaucracy." Studies of bureaucracy typically belong to the realm of a scholarship that has benefited so much from discussions in political science and sociology, with help also from political economy. This was because most early anthropological theories were built through the study of the so-called "acephalous societies" that were thought to have lacked proper government, let alone a "bureaucracy." Therefore, early anthropologists focused their attention on kinship structure instead of government organization. This omission also has to do with anthropology's grounding in ethnography and lived experience. There are studies of how governments are experienced by individuals at local levels; but structural analyses of complicated bureaucracies are truly rare in anthropology.[6] In other words, Falkenhausen's call to use anthropological theory in the study of bureaucratic governments, particularly that of the Western Zhou, is largely misplaced, or he needs to demonstrate how to do so, which he cannot. It is like a call to use the carpenter's tools to solve problems facing a blacksmith. It is not that they cannot be used if Falkenhausen insists; simply they are not the right approach. After all, "bureaucracy" is a construct in social and political theories, which I have discussed in some detail and provided reference to the relevant literature in the book (*BS*, 3–6). Unfortunately, such strong and nearly religious insistence on applying

[5] Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 64–70. The book is wrongly titled because Confucius lived in an age separated from the Western Zhou by three hundred years, during which profound social changes had taken place in China. For Confucius, the Western Zhou period was antiquity.

[6] As examples of anthropological discussions of government, see Max Gluckman, *Politics, Law, and Ritual in Tribal Society*; Bruno Latour, *The Making of Law*. Unfortunately, Falkenhausen was not even able to suggest such works in anthropology that are distantly relevant to the study of the Western Zhou government.

anthropological theories to the study of government organization and operations, and the virtual ignorance of the essential political or social scientific theories which informed the study in *Bureaucracy and the State*, lead Falkenhausen to overlook conceptual distinctions between essential social categories, saving him only the chance to make pompous claims.

Conceptual Confusions

This problem happens typically in the debate about a number of important aspects concerning the formational and operational principles of the Western Zhou government. Therefore, the relevant confusions caused by this problem must be clarified first before we can discuss the general definition of the Western Zhou bureaucracy.

The first issue is about the number of functional roles and the possibility to infer from it the size of the Western Zhou bureaucracy. Falkenhausen accepts the author's reduction of the number of official titles seen in the bronze inscriptions to twenty-nine, and suggests to further cut it to twenty-five by eliminating such general designations as the Three Supervisors which was the combination of the Supervisor of Land (*Situ* 司土), Supervisor of Construction (*Sigong* 司工), and Supervisor of Horses (*Sima* 司馬). This is unproblematic. However, Falkenhausen then goes on to say: "Undoubtedly, these twenty-five or so offices represent only part of a larger—possibly much larger—bureaucratic apparatus, but Li cautiously refrains from speculating about its actual size. Extrapolating from our above considerations, we may surmise that the small number of administrative offices is partly a reflection of the limited geographical scope of authority of the Western Zhou bureaucracy . . . it is likely that the record is skewed toward the higher end of the administrative hierarchy. The lower offices, in other words, are probably severely underrepresented" (255–56). He uses this case to show that my methodology to use the bronze inscriptions to study Western Zhou history also has "problem": "Li is reluctant to reflect on any possible biases introduced by incompleteness and possibly selective preservation" (257). The possibility of skewed record and biased perspectives that we may learn from the bronze inscriptions is certainly real, and perhaps even inevitable. But I have previously discussed this bias in detail,[7] and even in *Bureaucracy and the State*, the problem was taken up as part of the large context of discussion of the nature of the bronze

[7] See Li Feng, *Landscape and Power in Early China*, 9–10.

inscriptions (which includes a modest criticism of Falkenhausen's misconception of the so-called religious nature of the bronze inscriptions) (*BS*, 11–20).[8] So, Falkenhausen's allegation of my "reluctance" to address this issue is simply untrue.

What is really problematic here is a confusion about the nature of the official titles in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions discussed in the book. I have carefully noted in the introduction to "Appendix I: Listing of Official Titles" that these titles need to be understood as "functional roles," not representing the actual number of offices (*BS*, 305). I described this as an important feature of the Western Zhou bureaucracy that the same titles can be found at different levels of the bureaucracy from the central government to the major cities (*BS*, 168), and even in the rural settlements (*BS*, 185–86), but proper terminologies had not been developed to differentiate the titles in a hierarchical way (*BS*, 84, 305). In Chapter 2, I have carefully compared two lists of the "Three Supervisors" in the Fifth-year Qiu Wei *ding* 五年裘衛鼎 and the Qiu Wei *he* 裘衛盉, and suggested that there must have been multiple officials sharing the same title as each of the "Three Supervisors" at some, if not all, levels of the Zhou bureaucracy at any given time (*BS*, 71–72). This is a phenomenon that is related to the level of institutional maturity of the Western Zhou bureaucracy. It is possible to get a sense that the Zhou bureaucracy was definitely larger than what is represented by the twenty-five titles, but one should not venture into such a guess until knowing the overall government structure of the Western Zhou state and the number of tiers of its administration. In other words, the number of conceptual classes cannot be directly converted into numerical accounts, even by extrapolation. Unfortunately, Falkenhausen does not seem to understand this important distinction.

In his comments on Chapter 2 of *Bureaucracy and the State* that discusses structural development of the Zhou central government, Falkenhausen singles out the author's use of the inscription of the Ling *fangyi* 令方彝 as the main source of government organization during the early Western Zhou. He notes about Tang

[8] Concluding the section on the nature of bronze inscriptions, I carefully noted: "Although the purpose of these commemorative inscriptions was to record and communicate historical events that their owners considered important, they might not always record history as it was. Instead, they only record what their composers think the history is or should be and how they want it to be remembered, as is true of all kind of historical documents that came into being as the work of human brain. There are certainly prejudice and subjectivity in the recording of the bronze inscriptions, as I have recently discussed fully in another place." See Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State*, 20.

Lan's 唐蘭 view to date the Ling vessels to the reign of King Zhao,[9] and then says: "It seems unlikely that a significant level of bureaucratization existed at the very beginning of the dynasty, nor, pace Li (*[BS]* 62), can one extrapolate from the Ling *fangyi* inscription to explain how the early Zhou were able to overcome the Shang and conquer a large territory" (267). In the following paragraph he then delivers his second line of criticism relating to this point: "Rather than assume, as Li does (*[BS]* 62), that a fully formed bureaucracy sprang into existence the moment any administrative functions were assumed, the historian . . ." (267). Thus, Falkenhausen accused me not only of using the Ling *fangyi* inscription to pose "a significant level of bureaucratization" at the beginning of the Western Zhou, but for using the appearance of "any administrative functions" to determine the moment of the bureaucracy's birth.

These are serious accusations that concern the methodology of studying bureaucracy based on the bronze inscriptions. But contradicting these accusations, just a page before, Falkenhausen acknowledges that "He [Li] finds that the rise of a full-fledged bureaucracy mainly occurred during the Middle Western Zhou" (266). As a matter of fact, in neither the section on the early Western Zhou government (*BS*, 52–63), nor anywhere in the book, was anything written about a bureaucracy (or even bureaucratization) during the early Western Zhou period. Instead, all I did was to use the Ling *fangyi* inscription to show the structural organization of the early Western Zhou government, and, correlating it with other inscriptions of the same period, to discuss the emergence of functional roles in the early Western Zhou government. The core problem here is Falkenhausen's own confusion about the conceptual distinction between "government organization" and "bureaucracy," and to a lesser degree between "bureaucracy" and "bureaucratization."

"Bureaucracy" is only one type of government that has specific qualifications and is organized in certain ways according to theories in political science, which I carefully discuss in the book (*BS*, 3–4). "Bureaucratization" is a process by which these qualifications were gradually developed. In Chapter 2, this process is addressed in the section on "Middle Western Zhou Government" where I said: "These developments gave the mid-Western Zhou government the clear

[9] It suffices to note here only that the date of Ling vessels involves a very complex situation which will be discussed later in this paper. A fuller consideration of the Ling bronzes together with new evidence, as against Tang Lan's view, will now date them to the reign of King Cheng, as previously argued for by other authorities including Guo Moruo and Chen Mengjia. See Guo Moruo, *Liang Zhou jinwen ci daxi tulu kaoshi*, 6–10; Chen Mengjia, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai II," 86–91.

organizational characteristics of a bureaucracy" (*BS*, 84); and this was based on careful analyses of a structural differentiation between, as well as the development of functional roles associated with, the Royal Household administration, the Grand Secretariat, and the military administration. The early Western Zhou government, despite the fact that it had achieved structural complexity and functional differentiation to a certain degree, was not considered a "bureaucracy." Furthermore, "bureaucratization" is a very complex process and at least three main aspects of it are analyzed in detail in the book—Chapter 2 on organizational maturity, Chapter 3 addresses operational development, and Chapter 5 deals with the career of bureaucratic officials—after all, the whole book was designed to analyze the process of "bureaucratization" of the Western Zhou government. Falkenhausen's criticisms aside, which offer an unfair reading, nowhere in the book do I write or even imply that "administrative functions" mark the beginning of a fully-formed bureaucratic government.

On a more philosophical level, we find that Falkenhausen is confused about the distinction between the nature of an act and the source of power with which a person or a people carried out that act, a problem that comes out in his comments on my discussion of the appointment ceremony (*BS*, 104–12). This is a critical logic divide that one must learn to recognize in order to understand some most delicate features of the Western Zhou government. He criticizes: "Li insists—needlessly, in my opinion—that such an appointment was an entirely administrative act without any religious sanction implied ('very bureaucratic,' [*BS*]110, repeated on [*BS*]111), quite distinct from the religious ritual of ancestral worship ([*BS*]107n21). But since the texts are inscribed on vessels made for use in the ancestral cult, the emphasis on the secular nature of Western Zhou administration may be anachronistic. Elsewhere in the book, the author is commendably sensitive to the religious dimensions of royal authority. . . . Li explains the king's involvement in the work of his administrators—plentifully documented—as due to the 'partly religious claim' underlying royal legitimacy ([*BS*]142), reminding us that the king saw himself as the 'agent of the ancestors' ([*BS*]143)" (261).

Note first that Falkenhausen's notion of the religious nature of the inscriptional texts just because of their placement on the "ritual vessels" has been subject to strict criticism in recent years and is systematically refuted in the book based on full evidence (*BS*, 13–20), which he did not address. Note second that I never wrote that the appointment ceremony was "without any religious sanction implied"—regretfully, Falkenhausen is here fabricating a statement which he attributes to me, and then criticizes me for it. In contrast, in a later section of the same chapter, I have carefully analyzed appointment ceremonies that took place in the royal temples (*BS*, 142–43), and pointed out in particular: "The implication of this is probably that, by conducting the appointment session in front of the spirits

of the ancestors, the appointment itself gained legitimacy and was literally sanctioned by the royal ancestors (*BS*, 143)." However, the appointment ceremony *per se* was conducted at particular moments to meet the actual needs of Zhou governance, and for the purpose of achieving actual administrative goals. When such an act was carried out on a routine basis and governed by a set of rules, it was of course a bureaucratic and administrative procedure. Whatever religious power enabled the Zhou king or anyone else to control this ceremony is a different issue; it is logically faulty to use such source of power to determine the nature of the act, for the very reason that the link between the two can break down easily as such power source can change and, in fact, the appointment ceremony took place frequently also in many other locations. This distinction between an act and the power to carry out it, though subtle conceptually, is not difficult to recognize.

Furthermore, there is also a need to differentiate between the purpose for which an institution was set up and the outcome of its long-time practice. But regrettably Falkenhausen seems unable to see this point that is important in rational historical thinking. This problem first appears as a reflection on my identification of the three divisions in Zhou administration, each carrying out relatively independent operations, characteristic of a bureaucratic government; but this, according to Falkenhausen, "would seem to contradict his [Li] own view ([*BS*]104–5) that the king's virtual monopoly over official appointments was a strategy aimed at concentrating power in his hands" (264). This question continues to trouble Falkenhausen with regard to the causes of the Western Zhou government's bureaucratization. I have suggested that bureaucratization was an internal process aimed to achieve better management of resources in the royal domain in Shaanxi, as most evident in the development of Royal Household administration. Where, Falkenhausen says: "Li offers no opinion on whether the creation of the bureaucracy aimed to shore up royal power or was forced upon the king by aristocratic lineages hungry for a share of power. Whatever the intentions may have been, the royal house declined as the bureaucratic administration was consolidated" (266). The answer to this question is indeed not too far to reach, but the contradiction Falkenhausen describes does not exist.

Briefly, bureaucratization is a very complex process that comprises multiple dimensions of change, and the standardization of the official appointment procedure is only one aspect of the bureaucratization program. It is true that the Zhou king's monopolization of the right to host all appointment ceremonies was an open display of royal power over the aristocracy, and was probably a strategy to move away from a power structure characterized by the oligarchical rule of the prominent dukes during the early Western Zhou. In mid-Western Zhou inscriptions we see no such strong influence from the prominent dukes; instead, a group of high official acted collectively as a committee that took orders from the king and led the central bureaucracy (*BS*, 84–85). This certainly created new

power dynamics in the central court. However, bureaucracy, whether intended or not by the Zhou king, once in place operates on the principle of the so-called "bureaucratic autonomy" or "rule by officials" through impersonal and often institutionalized rules on the basis of the (at least perceived) routineness of operation, a point commonly held among political scientists (*BS*, 141, 146).

Although the Zhou king had control of the appointment ceremony, he was equally bound by rules, as were officials as long as he allowed the bureaucracy to stand. All this is evident in the bronze inscriptions. The lineage heads, as time passed, could certainly find ways to invade the king's power to control the bureaucracy, for instance, to control the operation of certain sectors of the Zhou bureaucracy, or even to influence the Zhou king's decisions with regard to official appointments, as clearly explained in the book (*BS*, 145–47). The same phenomenon can happen even in modern bureaucracies and usually it leads to corruption and the decline of public spirit. In fact, this is likely what had happened as we again see the oligarchical rule of a few prominent dukes during the late Western Zhou. And this shift in the power structure of the Zhou court from the mid- to the late Western Zhou suitably paralleled the decline of the royal house. But the Zhou lineage leaders had never gone to the extent as to actually take over the king's role to host the appointment ceremony, and the change in the political power to control the bureaucracy certainly did not demand the Zhou bureaucracy to decline along with the king's power. Instead, the Zhou bureaucracy continued to operate through 771 BC, though no evidence suggests that it was substantially expanded during the late Western Zhou. It was only a matter of who controlled the bureaucratic machine. There is also evident, however, that certain rules governing the appointment ceremony might have become even more delicate during the late Western Zhou (*BS*, 109).

In short, Lothar von Falkenhausen seems quite unable to understand and even less to appreciate the merit of such nuanced historical interpretations of the Zhou government on the basis of a conceptual distinction between the political structure of the Western Zhou state on the one hand, and the Zhou bureaucracy that was built in the structure on the other. His failure to account for the real organizational and operational features of the Western Zhou bureaucracy as described in *Bureaucracy and the State* is the result of his explicit refusal to engage with sociological as well as political scientific theories of government and bureaucracy. This, coupled with a demonstrated level of unfamiliarity with the methodology of complex historical analysis, hindered Falkenhausen's ability to see subtle distinctions between the often mutually related but conceptually differentiated layers in an argument that are essential to thinking through logically about a complex research problem. His many criticisms, doubts, as well as misunderstandings about *Bureaucracy and the State*, very unfortunately, are reflections of his own weakness.

The "Anthropological" Fallacy

Falkenhausen has never produced an anthropological account of the Zhou government; instead, he presented his call for anthropological analysis as a part of his criticism of my book in two main areas of the Western Zhou government that I should now discuss in some detail.

Falkenhausen's first charge appears in his criticism of my discussion of the operational regularities manifested in the largely stable relationship between the *youzhe* 右者 and the appointees.[10] He first remarked: "Li would have us believe that the association between the *youzhe* and his protégé was principally administrative. . . . In about 80 percent of these cases [*BS*, 125–30, Table 1], it can be shown that both the *youzhe* and the appointee belonged to the same general branch of the government" (263). He continues in the next paragraph: "He [Li] interprets the closeness of the *youzhe* and their charges as a measure of the professionalization of the Zhou royal administration. But this is arguably anachronistic. More plausibly, the pattern visible in our small sample reflects the custom of handing down offices (or, perhaps more flexibly, the entitlement to some kind of official appointment) within families. Most or all of the *youzhe*, in other words, are likely to have been senior relatives of their charges. . . . Assuming the existence of a kin relationship between the awardees and their *youzhe* goes a long way to explaining two other phenomena emerging from Li's analysis of the bronze inscriptions: The influence exercised by officials on promotions, and occasional conflicts between an official's loyalty to his *youzhe* and his allegiance to the king" (263).

Leaving aside for the moment theoretical interpretations, let us look first at the data and see if Falkenhausen's kin relationship can really be "plausibly" assumed between the *youzhe* and the appointees to the various government offices. In the majority of the cases of appointment the lineage identity of the *youzhe* is self-evident in their names. But the lineage identity of the appointees is sometimes difficult to determine because as the principle castors of the bronzes that document the appointment ceremonies they usually only use their personal names. In some cases, the lineage identity can be inferred from the name of the ancestor to whom the bronze was dedicated or from other bronzes cast by the same person. There are also cases where a *youzhe* accompanied multiple appointees or an appointee was accompanied by multiple *youzhe* for which cross-references can be conveniently

[10] *Youzhe* was the official who guided the appointee into the courtyard and customarily stood to the right of the appointee during the ceremony of appointment hosted by the Zhou king. *Youzhe* was usually superior in status to the appointee. On the status and role of the *youzhe*, see Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China*, 108–9.

made. There is no evidence at all in the cases we know for a family/lineage-based selection of *youzhe* to accompany his kin-relatives in the appointment ceremony. On the contrary, the norm is for the *youzhe*-appointee relationship to be constructed across family/lineage boundaries. Let us examine just a few examples in Table 1 (*BS*, 125–30):

Nanbo 南伯 (#59 in Table 1) of the Nan 南 family served as *youzhe* to Qiu Wei 裘衛 of the Qiu 裘 family located in Zhouyuan. Mugong 穆公, who we know was the founder of the Jing 井 lineage in Fengxiang, served as *youzhe* to Li 盩 of the Shan 單 family in Meixian. Jingbo 井伯 (very likely a son of Mugong) of the Jing family served as *youzhe* to Shi Maofu 師毛父 of the Mao 毛 lineage (#43). Shi Li 師釐 (or Fu Shi Li 輔師釐) had two official appointments, being accompanied by Zai Zhousheng 宰琱生 of the Zhou 琱 family (which was a sub-lineage of the Shao 召 lineage) as his *youzhe* in the first ceremony (#8), and by Rongbo 榮伯 of the Rong 榮 family in the second (#21). As evident from the content of the inscriptions, Shi Xu 師詢 (or Xun 詢) and Shi Yu 師酉 were father and son, and their *youzhe* were Rongbo 榮伯 (#19), Yigong 益公 (#49; most likely head of a lineage different from Rongbo's), and a Royal kinsman (#69). One of their *youzhe,* Rongbo (#24), also served as *youzhe* to the ruler of the state of Ying 應, who visited the royal capital from southern Henan. Among the four individuals accompanied by Superintendent Gong 共 as their *youzhe*, we know at least that Shi Chen 師晨 (or Bo Chen 伯晨) was a prince from a regional state in the east (#29), and Xing 癲 was a member of the Wei 微 family. Hu 虎 (or Shi Hu 師虎) had two official appointments with Jingbo 井伯 of the Jing 井 lineage (#42) and Mi Shu 密叔 of the Mi 密 lineage (#47) as his *youzhe*, respectively. When a *youzhe* accompanied appointees from two different families, or when an appointee was accompanied by two *youzhe* from two different families, there is certainly no *youzhe*-family correspondence.

Thus, Falkenhausen completely lost on this issue. The above information is presented in Table 1 in the book (*BS*, 124–30) and was available to him, and it is hard to understand why Falkenhausen did not look at this data before making his arbitrary assumption in accordance with his "anthropological" belief in kinship principle. Regrettably, in this regard, one must say that the review was not written with care by a reputed scholar of Early China. There is, in fact, one case in which Jingbo 井伯 served as *youzhe* to Li 利 in the Li *ding* 利鼎 (JC: 2804), whom we know based on records in the *Jinben zhushu jinian* 今本竹书纪年 can be identified with a member of the Jing family called Jing Li 井利. But this is not a case of official appointment. As far as we know of the official appointment, while the selection of *youzhe* for appointees in the ceremony was relatively stable (*BS*, 134–36) within the large administrative divisions of the Zhou government, the decision was made with no reference to family background. This situation is itself a good indication of the administrative nature of the appointment ceremony,

characteristic of the Zhou bureaucratic government.

Falkenhausen's second "anthropologically informed" charge referred to the succession to government offices examined in Chapter 5: "Even more problematically, the critical reader will quickly notice that the discussion of hereditary offices is predicated on the notion that no family ever had more than one male member per generation. Li's argument breaks down as soon as one admits the possibility—and this was more than a few centuries before China's adoption of its one-child policy!—that a candidate for office might receive a leg up from a brother or an uncle already in government service. Moreover . . . the bureaucracy provided opportunities for some of the younger sons of aristocratic families, giving them an alternative path to status and privilege. If . . . holders of bureaucratic offices were compensated by their own lineages (. . .), it would seem only logical that any office that became vacant would have been filled by a relative. For the relatively high positions attested by the bronze inscriptions, it was the king himself who issued the appointments, suggesting, above all, that most or all of those appointed belonged to junior branches of the royal lineage (265)."

This last statement that the Zhou king distributing offices suggests that most or all offices went to members of the junior branches of the royal lineage (implying family relatives) stands as a sophomoric argument showing no awareness of the status of the lineages, both royally and non-royally descended, as socially independent entities. This is similar to saying that all lands belonged to the Zhou king (as spuriously claimed in the *Book of Poetry*) and therefore, all slaves in the Zhou world were the king's slaves. This is pointless! Moreover, lineages were social solidarities meaningfully different from clans that were made up of kin-groups, although certain lineages shared the same kin-origin. This distinction is key to understanding Western Zhou society.[11] Indeed, as we know from the bronze inscriptions, many offices actually went to members of the non-Ji 姬 lineages. But in order to see the problem in Falkenhausen's argument about family monopolization of government offices, we need to put the issue in a larger context.

In Chapter 5, I have suggested (I summarize only points relevant to the present debate): (1) Hereditary succession was an important avenue to government office as the Zhou king appointed many officials with reference to their grandfathers' or fathers' service; (2) It is not likely that hereditary succession ever became a rule, for the Zhou king appointed at least an equally large number of officials with no demonstrable family history of service. Clearly multiple paths to government service existed; (3) Hereditary right meant only a "qualification," or a "better

[11] On the important difference between lineage and clan, see recent discussions in: Li Feng, *Early China*, 140–43.

chance" to enter government services, but not the right to occupy one's father's or grandfather's pervious office; rather the opposite, beginning officials were often appointed assistants to senior officials in different offices; (4) Alteration of offices and promotion to higher levels were certainly possible, so was the Zhou king's power to manipulate the process. In all, the Western Zhou government was not a system that allowed only a few prominent families to monopolize most offices. It operated on the presumed participation of all elite families that resided in the royal domain in Shaanxi (*BS*, 216–17). I consider that these points are explicit in the book and are fully supported by our current evidence from the bronze inscriptions.

Nowhere did I imply a "one-child policy" in the Western Zhou period. And I never wrote that officeholders in the Western Zhou government must be first-born sons. Indeed, the names in inscriptions show some were second to fourth-born sons. Apparently, Falkenhausen has falsified the situation. Such practice of groundless accusation based on what he imagines the author "may" think was previously seen in Falkenhausen's book reviews, but it is ultimately against the norm of professional scholarly practice.[12] The situation in the bronze inscriptions is fully compatible with my point (2) above that there were multiple paths leading to government service as well as room for the Zhou king to manipulate the process. For instance, if a father's office was already occupied by the oldest son of a family (even in such cases of hereditary succession, this would not happen in the early stage of an official's career as he would have been most likely to be first appointed an assistant to a senior official in another office; *BS* 199–201), the king had enough freedom to appoint its junior sons to a different office, going perhaps by the non-hereditary rule of succession that accounted for an equally large number of official appointments. Therefore, my argument will not break down as Falkhausen claims, if a family had more than one son in any given generation. In fact, this situation actually supports my configuration that the succession rules in the Western Zhou government initially accounted for multiple paths. As for the possibility that a son inherits offices from his brother or uncle, the same rules discussed in *Bureaucracy and the State* apply (*BS*, 213–14). In such cases, the inscription should have mentioned it. Or, at least, there is no reason why it should not. But this cannot be assumed without evidence. Again, the large margin composed of inscriptions that mention no family's recent history of government

[12] In another review, Falkenhausen alleged the reason for "Chinese archaeologists" to insist on the identity of Erlitou as Xia is a fear of being branded as unpatriotic. A survey conducted soon later shows that Falkenhausen forged the intention of the "Chinese archaeologists" to make scholarly judgement based solely on "political correctness." See Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Review: *The Chinese Neolithic*," 178–93; Li Liu, "Academic Freedom, Political Correctness, and Early Civilisation in Chinese Archaeology," 831–43.

service as condition for official appointment assures that many appointments must have been done this way, and that the Zhou king had freedom in deciding who should be where, and when, as evident in the bronze inscriptions.

In short, Falkenhausen's "anthropologically informed" conception of a kin-ordered government, in which offices were passed down within families, follows exactly what the Warring States to Han Confucian texts say and what the traditional historiography would have us believe about the Western Zhou.[13] The modern historian should not accept this view uncritically; instead, he/she should use the full information from the contemporaneous bronze inscriptions to reexamine and challenge it. In this regard, Falkenhausen's notion that "any office that became vacant would have been filled by a relative" (265) contrasts to a very large extent the Western Zhou reality. More seriously, this notion results in a fundamental disarray in Falkenhausen's thought about the Western Zhou government. Falkenhausen clearly agrees with the author's view that the Western Zhou government was a bureaucracy from the mid-Western Zhou time onwards (255–56, 265–66, and elsewhere). But his insistence on kin-ordered government contradicts straightly the definition of "bureaucracy" in the first place. In other words, if a government is founded on the principle of kinship and operates on the basis of kinship relations, it simply cannot be a bureaucracy which promotes impersonal official rules based on the principle of "bureaucratic autonomy," as commonly held by political scientists (*BS*, 4–6). This is an inadvisable conceptual conflict, perhaps not expected by Falkenhausen himself.

As pointed out in the book, the rule of hereditary success alone simply could not work in any given society because it cannot meet the challenge of the law of nature that allows irregular patterns of human production (*BS*, 192), not to mention unordered death of family members. But in the Zhou case, the existence of multiple ways to recruit officials was not simply forced on them by nature; rather, it was likely a political decision on behalf of the Zhou king to undercut the possibility of monopolization of offices by a handful prominent families. On the methodological level, modern historical scholarship looks at history not as a lineal development, but as parallel processes that progressed as the result of the co-working of both institutional decisions and their modifications, driven by multiple forces both rational and contingent. *Bureaucracy and the State* uses bronze inscriptions to uncover, among other important aspects, the actual dynamics in the selection of officials for government service as modified by the

[13] For instance, the "Li Yun" 禮運 chapter of the *Li ji* 禮記 stipulates that eminent officials pass power and property onto their next generations is the norm in accordance with rites. This view is repeated by some scholars in general histories of China: Jian Bozan, *Zhongguo shi gangyao*, 42–43; Bai Shouyi, *Zhongguo tongshi*, 323–25.

co-working of both kin-relationship and other sociopolitical and natural mechanisms that the Zhou king used as alternatives to balance between the influence of the families and the wellbeing of the Western Zhou state. Unfortunately, Lothar von Falkenhausen does not seem to understand the contributions of such a complex view of history.

Inaccurate Knowledge

Other problems in Falkenhausen's review of *Bureaucracy and the State* are due mainly to his inaccurate knowledge about recent archaeology especially about the scholarship on bronze inscriptions.

Let us first give an example in archaeology. Falkenhausen rejected my placement of one of the Zhou royal capitals in Zhouyuan 周原 (one of the five cities referred to in the bronze inscriptions as *Wuyi* 五邑), on the border between Fufeng and Qishan Counties (*BS*, 165). He argues that "the principal royal residence and the royal cemetery were probably located at present-day Zhougongmiao, Qishan 岐山周公廟" (272), about 30 kilometers west of Zhouyuan. Ten years ago, this contention would have been in line with the view of some scholars. In 2003, the discovery of oracle bones at the site and large ramped tombs on the nearby mountain slopes excited scholars, particularly the Beijing University team responsible for the discovery, to propose that Zhougongmiao was a royal capital. Other scholars have disagreed, arguing instead that the site was the lineage settlement of the Duke of Zhou (*BS*, 172 note 50), which I agree. Further archaeological work on the site during the past decade has clarified the relatively small demission of its residential core. For this reason, the Beijing University team that made the 2003 discovery has shifted its work to Zhouyuan during the past five years. As a result, few scholars today still think that Zhougongmiao was a royal center. Instead, most have now come around to the view that it was the central settlement of the Duke of Zhou's family, although the more cautious scholars continue to alert us of the fact that there is no definite evidence at present to prove it.[14] Falkenhausen, however, does not seem to have been informed of this new development in the archaeology of Zhouyuan and Zhougongmiao over the past decade.

This problem is even more serious when it comes to paleographical materials. Commenting on the author's reconstruction of the appointment ceremony, Falkenhausen rejected my translation of the expression *li zhongting* 立中廷 [庭],

[14] For recent discussions of this issue, see Fu Zhongyang, "Zailun Zhougongmiao Xi Zhou daxing guizu muzang qun xingzhi," 360–70; Xu Lianggao, "Zhougongmiao yizhi xingzhi zatan," 411–17.

frequently seen in appointment inscriptions, as "stood in the center of the courtyard." He suggests translating it as "stood in the central courtyard." His translation would mislead people to think of a centrally located courtyard among other courtyards in the "complexes of buildings" called *gong* 宮 (261 note 24). But this not only contradicts the layout feature of the building structure called *gong* as temples, now archaeologically confirmed as a group of three buildings facing the court in a U shape, surrounded by an exterior wall (*BS*, 108), but more problematically violates the grammar of the language of bronze inscriptions.

This is the same mistake amateur historians usually make when reading the term *zhongguo* 中國 in the He *zun* 何尊 (JC: 6014) as "Central Kingdom," thus tracing the concept of "China" back to the beginning of the Western Zhou. Instead, by the grammar of the bronze inscription language, it merely meant the "center of the state." In the same way, *zhongting* 中廷 meant only the "center of courtyard." It should also be noted that Falkenhausen thinks that my interpretation of Grand Secretariat (*taishiliao* 太史寮) as a standing architectural structure was inspired by the graphic shape of the constituent character *liao* 寮 (262 note 25); but my interpretation was about the Ministry (*qingshiliao* 卿事寮) and it was based on the character  with a *gong* 宮 component at the bottom (*BS,* 114). Since the analysis of this graph is clearly presented in a paragraph there in the book, it is hard to understand how Falkenhausen made this careless mistake. In another place, Falkenhausen rejects my reading of *situ* 司土 and *situ* 司徒 as two terms. He suggests that *situ* 司徒 is "nothing but a variant 'spelling'" of *situ* 司土 (255). But very unduly he overlooked my careful discussion of the two terms in my book. Where I refer to Itō Michiharu's suggestion that the transition from *situ* 司土 to *situ* 司徒 (in view of the chronological gap between them) might have reflected the transition from state control of people through controlling land, to state control of land through controlling the more mobile population (*BS*, 74, and especially note 72).[15] So this is not simply a graphic issue as Falkenhausen thought. The difference was encoded with deep meanings in the social history of the Western Zhou, but Falkenhausen's criticism misguides the reader to overlook this

[15] See also, Itō Michiharu, *Chūgoku kodai kokka no shihai kōzō*, 217. There is also one place, in fact, Falkenhausen admitted that he made a mistake by misreading the character *lai* 逨 as *qiu* 逑 previously, but then playing on the ambiguity of the sentence saying: "Recently, however, Lai Guolong has convincingly argued that the transcription as *lai*, adopted by Li Feng among others, is preferable," effectively trigging people to think that the author adopted the reading "Lai" from Lai Guolong (265, note 30). But Lai Guolong's article that Falkenhausen refers to was published in 2014, while I have rendered it as *lai* 逨 both in *Landscape and Power* in 2006, and here in *Bureaucracy and State* in 2008. Thus, there is no way for me to adopt it from Lai Guolong whose article I have not seen.

important topic.

Another, even more problematic, issue is Falkenhausen's misreading of bronze inscriptions. In Chapter 4, I have discussed the condition of the *yi* settlement that was originally inhabited by kin-descended groups, but this condition could be modified by the transaction of land among the lineages or from state possession into the lineage estates (*BS*, 174). Commenting on my discussion, Falkenhausen says: "Li apparently fails to realize that all of the inhabitants of a given *yi* were members of the same lineage. That is, each of these lineages, internally stratified according to one's relation to the founding ancestor, comprised both holders of aristocratic rank and what was probably even then a vast majority of unranked commoners" (272). There is certainly no doubt that the lineage had internal social hierarchies, but there was no such one-lineage to one-*yi* settlement correspondence. Plenty of evidence from the bronze inscriptions suggests that, as analyzed in *Bureaucracy and the State*, many lineages had under their control multiple *yi* settlements (*BS*, 176–77), and some large lineages like San 散 in the Baoji region already developed internal administrative hierarchies among the numerous *yi* settlements they possessed (*BS*, 185–87). Many inscriptions, for instance, the Xiao Yu *ding* 小盂鼎 (JC: 2839) and others, suggest that many lineages received a large number of low-rank agricultural labors or slaves awarded to them by the Zhou king during the great early Western Zhou expansion, and such items like *tutian* 土田 (lands and fields) and *fuyong* 附庸 (unfree labors) continued to be granted by the king or transferred between the lineages (Fifth-year Zhousheng *gui* 五年琱生簋 (JC: 4292); Hu *ding* 曶鼎 (JC: 2838). How these non-kin members of a lineage were distributed in the lineage structure is a topic for further study, but it can be surmised that the situation must be very complicated, and necessary modifications could be made anywhere to adapt to local residential situations.

In fact, only three pages down (*BS*, 177–78), or even earlier (*BS*, 157–58), I have written extensively and used two illustrations to show how Itō Michiharu's analysis of the inscription of the Fifth-year Qiu Wei *ding* 五年裘衛鼎 allows us to see the actual social impact of land transaction between lineages. It shows that four of the five fields to be transferred from the family of Bangjun Li 邦君厲 to Qiu Wei 裘衛 needed to be cut out of the land of the former, which was already surround by the fields belonging to two other lineages, Zhengfu 政父 and San 散. The remaining field was then likely to have been sliced out from the *yi* settlement core belonging to Bangjun Li, in order to accommodate residents from Qiu Wei's family. Although the last point still needs further study, there is no doubt that the breakdown of settlement integrity with respect to lineage-based kin-group must have happened in at least some regions in the royal domain in Shaanxi during the mid-to-late Western Zhou. Without knowledge of this analysis, or better, overturning it, Falkenhausen is in no position to make the bold claim that "Li

apparently fails to realize that all of the inhabitants of a given *yi* were members of the same lineage." His criticism of my conclusion completely ignores my analysis. On a general advice, Falkenhausen needs to read more bronze inscriptions to get access to the full range of information they offer in order to criticize a work that heavily uses such inscriptions.

Finally, I should discuss the issue of the Ling *fangyi* 令方彝, which Falkenhausen dates to the reign of King Zhao, following Tang Lan's famous theory about the meaning of "Kang Gong" 康宮 frequently mentioned in the bronze inscriptions. Understanding "Kang Gong" as the sacrificial temple for King Kang, according to Tang Lan, those bronzes whose inscriptions mention a royal temple like "Kang Gong" must be dated later than the king for whom the temple is named. Although earlier scholars like Guo Moruo 郭沫若 and Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 dated the Ling *fangyi* (also Ling *fangzun* 令方尊) to the reign of King Cheng, since the publication of Tang Lan's paper in 1962, many scholars followed his view and dated the vessel to King Zhao, a date adopted by Falkenhausen.[16] However, I have always thought that Tang Lan was right about the meaning of "Kang Gong," but he was wrong about the date of the Ling vessels.

Now fifty years after Tang Lan proposed his theory, the issue must be reexamined. But this issue is too complex to be discussed here, so I should only summarize my reasons for dating the Ling vessels to the reign of King Cheng: 1) The term "Kang Gong," when appearing in all other inscriptions, is always prefixed by the placename Zhou 周, suggesting it was a temple complex (which probably included temples for Kings Kang, Zhao, Mu, Yi, and eventually Li) located in present-day Zhouyuan, not in any other city on the Wei River plain.[17] Only the Ling *fangyi* mentions a Kang Gong that is located far in the Luoyang region to the east, suggesting that the latter "Kang Gong" was a building complex different from King Kang's temple in Zhou. Therefore, Tang Lan's "Kang Gong" theory cannot be used to date the Ling vessels. 2) Straightforwardly, the Duke of Zhou was still alive in the inscription who gave order to his son Ming Bao 明保, the protagonist of the narrative of the inscription, to go out and join officials of the Ministry. The duke died in the reign of King Cheng (advocates of the King Zhao date of the Ling vessels had hard time to explain this). 3) Stylistically, the Ling *fangzun* is identical to the famous Mai *fangzun* 麥方尊 which together with other bronzes cast by the same Mai 麥, are dated by most scholars to the reign of King

[16] Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang Gong' wenti," 15–48. For a discussion of the "Kang Gong" debate and the date of the Ling bronzes, see also, Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western History*, 193–216.

[17] This point became clear from my previous study of Western Zhou administration. See Li Feng, "'Offices' in Bronze Inscriptions and Western Zhou Government Administration," 1–72.

Kang. By the reign of King Zhao, new types of bronze *zun* had been developed that are quite different from the Ling *fangzun*. The design and ornament of the Ling *fangzun* fit much better the fashion of bronze *zun* vessels of the Cheng-Kang period. 4) New support to this observation is provided by the recently discovered Lai *pan* 逨盤 inscription from Meixian. The genealogy of the Shan 單 family on the Lai *pan* includes a certain ancestor named Hui Zhong Lifu 惠中盩父, who assisted King Zhao and King Mu, and there seems little doubt that he can be identified with the caster of the previously known Li *fangzun* 盩方尊 and Li *fangyi* 盩方彝, which now can be established as the style standards for the set of *fangzun* and *fangyi* in the period of King Zhao to early King Mu. But compared to the set of the Li *fangzun* and *fangyi*, the set of Ling *fangzun* and *fangyi*, both by their body design or ornament, leaves a major gap from the Li vessels (Fig. 1). Just by this comparison, there is little chance the Ling *fangzun* and *fangyi* can be dated to the reign of King Zhao.

Ling *fangzun* 令方尊

Ling *fangyi* 令方彝

Li *fangzun* 盩方尊

Li *fangyi* 盩方彝

Fig. 1 Comparison of Ling *fangzun*/*fangyi* with Li *fangzun*/*fangyi* (for convenience, all image are derived from "Digital Achieves of Bronze Images and Inscriptions," nos, 6061, 9901, 6013, and 9899; Academia Sinica: http://bronze. asdc. sinica. edu. tw/qry_bronze.php).

The Ethics of Book Review

Book reviews are checkpoints of scholarship and important lubricant for Western academic life. Compared to the often complimentary book reviews (some time they can be harsh too) published in China, book reviews written by Western scholars tend to be more critical overall. This difference stems in part from the general intellectual atmosphere on Western, especially American, campuses, which shifted in the 1950s to favor of critical approaches, if not deep-rooted skepticism, toward previous intellectual paradigms as part of the European legacy. There are largely two types of book reviews: 1) solicited book reviews, usually 1000–2000 words and published in society journals that served as important vehicles to introduce new books to a professional and yet still considerably broad audience; 2) unsolicited book reviews, usually published 1–2 years later that offer more engaged evaluation of the books. Healthy criticisms are fertilizers for rigorous scholarship; however, book reviews (sometimes of the first types, but more often the second) are also places of trial of one's ability to draw distinctions between the scholar's intellectual responsibility and what is his or her ego. Unfortunately, more often than not, people fail this test. The field of Early China Studies has been nourished by healthy reviews since at latest the publication of the first issue of the journal of *Early China* in 1975, but once in a while it was also eroded by the publication of irresponsible or even biased reviews.

Lothar von Falkenhausen's review of *Bureaucracy and the State*, to be fair, offered some positive responses and contributed to highlighting a number of important issues discussed in the book. But the review says more about Falkenhausen himself than about the book. Regrettably, Falkenhausen belongs to the small group of scholars who typically use the occasions of writing a review to bag in all what they think and know about a subject, of which often times they themselves cannot produce a fuller and independent account. Such practice often produces extremely long and redundant reviews that ironically, for their rich inclusion of references, can in fact be informative and helpful to the students and non-specialist readers. But this ultimately departs from the goal of book reviews, and there is indeed a distinction between the review of a study by a particular author, and the review of a subject area of study. More often than not, this divide is not recognized.

There is also a distinction between the scholar who evaluates the success and failure of a work by the goals set up by its author, and the scholar who evaluates a work by whether he agrees or disagrees with the author's view. The former scholar would comment on the significance of the research subject, carefully examine the validity of the author's evidence, check into the logic of his arguments, and objectively evaluate the work's contributions to the respective field and to the

advancement of human knowledge. But the latter scholar would use the chance to promote his or her own views, attack the elements of the author's analysis that differ from his or her own thought, and reject or misinterpret the author's conclusions that he or she does not like. It would be even worse if such criticisms are based on the reviewer's prejudice against the scholarly tradition in which the author was trained, or based on the dislike of the author's personal character. Such criticisms are indeed not too rare to see, but the responsible scholar must repel such practice.

Unfortunately, Lothar von Falkenhausen seems quite unable to guard against the above distinctions. Too often his criticisms are based on assumptions rather than evidence, or on neglecting carelessly the evidence and analyses already presented by the author. Such irresponsible practice, presented habitually in an arrogant tone that shines through the lines of his review of *Bureaucracy and the State*, is simply unacceptable to respectable scholarly norms. His accusations that the author "fails to" do something often reflect his own biases or incomplete readings of the latest research in the field. His nearly religious belief in the applicability of "anthropological" theory to the study of Western Zhou government prevented him from giving a fair consideration of my different methodological approach to develop more complex and nuanced historical interpretations of the Western Zhou government. Having pointed out these problems, I should recommend that people can still benefit from reading Falkenhausen's often long reviews for the benefit of his rich references, but the cautious reader must always be aware of his prejudice, and must understand that when Falkenhausen says something is wrong, it often means only that he thinks about it differently, or perhaps he has something to say about it at all.

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