



A Study of the Mystery of Zeng: Recent Perspectives



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Abstract

The study of the Zeng 曾 state known from palaeographic sources is often intertwined with the state of Sui 隨 known from the transmitted texts. A newly excavated Zeng cemetery at Wenfengta 文峰塔, Hubei 湖 Suizhou 隨州 extends our understanding of the state itself in many respects, such as its lineage history, bronze casting traditions, ritual and burial practice, and so on. One tomb at ruler's level - Wenfengta M1 - yielded a set of large musical bells with long narrative inscriptions, which suggest that state of Zeng had provided crucial assistance to a Chu king during the war between the states of Chu and Wu 吳. As some scholars suggest, this issue may be correlated to the text in Zuo Zhuan 左傳 (Ding 4 定公四年), which records that it was the state of Sui who saved a Chu king from the Wu invaders. Such an argument brings again into spotlight the 'age-old' debate of the 'Mystery of Zeng 曾國之謎', or more specifically, the debate about 'whether or not the Zeng and the Sui refer to the same state'. The current paper aims to have a brief review of this debate, and further discuss the perspectives of the debaters based on the newly excavated materials.

Keywords: The mystery of zeng; Zeng and sui; Wenfengta

Introduction

The states of Zeng and Sui are considered as two mysterious neighbours of the Chu, as the textual and archaeological evidence to verify their existence as Chu allies are intertwined with each other. The related issues have formed a long debate since 1970s, known as the 'Mystery of Zeng', which is a good reflection of the different attitude of archaeologists towards transmitted texts, and is also a good case study to show how to strike a balance between historical texts and excavated materials.

The mystery of zeng

Both the Zeng state and the Sui state have long been known by researchers, but most of their Understandings about them are obtained through completely different approaches. For the Sui state, Despite their best efforts, archaeologists have never found any Sui cemetery or related burial goods before 2012, [1] but the Sui state is often mentioned in transmitted texts, recorded as the most powerful state among the Ji-surnamed 姬

regional powers to the north of the Han River 漢水, [2] dated from no later than the late Western Zhou to the early Warring States period [3]. For the Zeng state, in contrast, it is never seen in any of the historical texts [4], but archaeological discoveries of Zeng cemeteries, high-standard tombs and burial goods have constantly emerged in Suizhou and its surrounding areas to the northeast of the Han River, illustrating a strong, long-lasting Zeng state from the early Western Zhou to mid-Warring States period [5]. Therefore, people often get confused about why the

documented Sui occupied areas had so many high-standard Zeng tombs buried here, especially after the discovery of the Marquis Yi's tomb in 1978 [6]. Li Xueqin 李學勤 is one of the first scholars who pay serious attention to this situation [7]. He names it 'Mystery of Zeng', and points out that if the Zeng and the Sui were as influential and powerful as they look, it is unlikely that they could have shared with each other such a modest-size land for such a long period.

¹For the newly excavated Sui bronzes after 2012, see next section.

²See Zuo zhuan [Huan 6 桓公六年].

³For the earliest records of the Sui state, see Guo Yu (Zheng Yu 鄭語), and for its last records, see Zuo zhuan [Ai 6 哀公六年].

⁴The Zeng state in this paper only refers to the Ji-surnamed Zeng state, named with the Chinese character

'Zeng 曾', from palaeographic sources. In transmitted texts, there are other Zeng characters used as state names, such as the 'Zeng 𡗗', and the 'Zeng 𡗘' recorded in Guo Yu and Shi Ji. But the latter are believed to

be Si-surnamed 姒 states, located far away from the material-based Zeng state. Therefore, the Zeng states other than the one in palaeographic sources are excluded from the current paper. For a further comparison of the different states of 'Zeng', and the related supporting evidence, see Zhang 2009a: 376-382.

⁵Only in the recent five years, there are three large Zeng state cemeteries found and excavated in northern Hubei: 1) the early Western Zhou Yejiashan cemetery, published in 2011 (Hubei 2011); 2) the early Spring-and-Autumn Caomenwan Zeng cemetery, published in 2015 (Fang 2015); and 3) the early Warring States Wenfengta Zeng cemetery, published in 2014 (Hubei 2014c).

⁶For the primary report, see Beijing 1989.

⁷The original idea of Li Xueqin was first seen on newspaper in late 1970s after the discovery of the Marquis Yi's tomb in Suizhou, which was maintained but slightly updated in a later publication by the same author; see Li 1978 and 1990.

⁸For the Sui state, most of Sui-related texts have Chu and Sui recorded together. Before the late Spring-and-Autumn period, the texts often recorded wars between Sui and Chu, but after that period, as stated in Zuo Zhuan [Ding 4 定公四年], the Sui seems to have turned to Chu state and helped to save a Chu King from Wu invaders. For the Zeng state, a study of bronzes shows that the general style of Zeng bronzes had turned from Zhou to Chu after the mid-Spring-and-Autumn period, see Zhang 2009a. Excavated materials from Leigudun M1 also show a close relationship between the Zeng and Chu in early Warring States period. One of Marquis Yi's large chime-bells is found to have been replaced by an inscribed bo 罍 bell, which is supposed to be a sympathy gift from the King Hui 惠 of Chu. In addition, this tomb

To reconcile this paradox, Li suggests that the Zeng and the Sui should have referred to the same regional power, and further highlights three common characteristics shared by them:

- A. The location: the Zeng and Sui are basically located in the same area to the northeast of the Chu heartland along the Han River;
- B. The relationship with the Chu: both the Zeng and Sui appear to be closely associated with the Chu state after the mid-Spring-and-Autumn period [8];
- C. The surname of Ji: both the Zeng and Sui are believed to share the same surname - Ji with the Zhou royal family [9].

Though disputed, these common characters do make them look like the same state [10], but due to lack of hard evidence, Li and his followers have to speculate broadly about the 'Mystery of Zeng', until the recent discovery of the Wenfengta cemetery.

The Wenfengta cemetery

Wenfengta is part of the Yidigang cemetery, located in the eastern part of the Suizhou city [11]. The discovery

of this cemetery has passed through three stages:

- 1) in 2009, a rescue excavation revealed two Eastern Zhou tombs, and one Ming 明 tomb (14th to 17th centuries) [12];
- 2) another rescue excavation in 2012 found four burials and confirmed that this area is a cemetery dating from the late Spring-and-Autumn period to the Ming dynasty [13];
- 3) from 2012 to 2013, 54 shaft pit tombs, 12 brick tombs, two chariot and horse pits, and one horse pit were excavated.

Among the known burials, the tombs M1 and M21 are especially relevant to our discussion. The middle-sized tomb M21 is noteworthy because it reveals the first excavated Sui bronzes - a bronze ge 戈 inscribed with 'Sui Dasima Xianyou zhi xing ge 隨大司馬獻有之行戈', showing that this weapon may have belonged to an official of the text-based Sui state [14]. The tomb M1 is better known for its large set of inscribed musical bells. In spite of being severely disturbed by both modern construction work and early looting [15], M1 still has remains of a set of ten bronze bells in the form of yong zhong 甬鐘, which can be divided into three groups in

also has several names of Chu officials recorded on bamboo slips, such as Lingyin 令尹、Gongjiuyin 宮尹、Lian'ao 連敖, which imply that the Chu king may have sent his officials to attend Yi's funeral. See Suixian 1979: 14.

For the Sui state, its Ji surname comes from a few chapters in Zuo zhuan, showing that the Sui state was one of the Ji-surnamed regional powers to the north of the Han River. For related contents, see Zuo zhuan [Huan 6 桓公六年], [Xi 28 僖公二十八年], and [Ding 4 定公四年]. For the Zeng state, its Ji surname comes from two inscribed bronze ge from a tomb in Suizhou. For related discussions, see next section.

Shi Quan 石泉 is one of the main supporters of Li's argument, see Shi 1979. Apart their viewpoint, there are some other speculations about the 'Mystery of Zeng': 1) Sui destroyed Zeng and inherited its surname of Ji, see Yu 1979; 2) Chu destroyed Zeng and Sui, and then created a new Zeng state on Sui land, see Xu 1979; 3) Zeng destroyed Sui and occupied its land, see Gu 1980; 4) Zeng and Sui were two independent regional powers, see Yang and Qian 1980; and so on. But like Li's version, none of these interpretations is easily self-explanatory at that time.

In Hubei 2014c, a brief report of the whole cemetery has been published, but the report is too brief to provide detail information of each tomb. So far only the materials from M1 and M2 have been published in the form of archaeological reports (see Hubei 2014a), and the rest of the major burials are still on the waiting list.

M1, M2 are Eastern Zhou tombs, and M3 is a Ming tomb. See Hubei 2014a.

The four burials are numbered from M4 to M7. See Hubei 2013, and Hubei 2014a: 3.

See Hubei 2014c: 30-31. Except for the excavated ge, there is another bronze ding also carrying the character Sui, known as the 'Sui zhong Naijia 隨仲孺加' ding, and currently housed in storage of the Hubei Provincial Museum. See JHKG 2011.4. This vessel is a collected object, so it is excluded from the current discussion.

An iron tool is found in the sounding area of M1, mixed with remains of burial goods, wooden coffin chamber, refill and other burial materials that have been destroyed by the construction work. This type of tool, according to the excavators, often appears in robber holes in 'early periods'. So although without knowing the exact time, most archaeologists believe that this burial may have been looted long ago. See Hubei 2014a: 3-4.

terms of their appearance and narrative inscriptions: 1) Group A consists of the two largest zhong (M1: 1, and 2), and one of them has been severely damaged (M1: 2) [16]; 2) Group B has a middle-sized one, partly broken (M1: 3) [17]; and 3) Group C contains the remaining smaller zhong (M1: 4-10), including four intact ones, a partly broken one, and two fragments that cannot be restored [18]. In Group A, the inscriptions of the largest two yong zhong carry the same contents, inscribed at the shoulder (zheng 鉦) and the waist (gu 鼓) on both front and back of their bodies [19]. The inscription is read from right to left, starting at the shoulder on the front (front a), and ending at the right waist on the front (front c):

惟王正月，吉日甲午。曾侯與曰：伯適上帝，佐佑文武。
達殷之命，撫奠天下。王遣命南公，營

宅裔土。君庀淮夷，臨有江夏。周室之既卑，吾用變蹙楚。吳恃有眾庶，行亂，西征南伐，乃加于楚。荊邦既殄，而天命將誤。有嚴曾侯，業業厥聲。親博武功，楚命是爭。復奠楚王，曾侯之

靈。穆穆曾侯，臧武畏忌，恭寅齋盟。代武之表，懷變四

方。余申固楚城，改復曾疆。擇台吉金，

自作宗彝，蘇鐘鳴皇。用孝于台皇祖，以祈眉壽，大命之長。期純德降余，萬世是尚。

It was the king's first month, the auspicious day, Jiawu (day 31). Marquis Yu of Zeng said: Shi, as [my] ancestor, assisted the King Wen and King Wu. [They] conquered the Yin [Shang], and united the world. The king sent Nangong [Shi], and asked him to lay out a city at the remote region [20], and to govern the outsiders along the Huai River [to its north] and the area at the confluence of [the rivers] Jiang and Xia [to its south]. When the Zhou declined, the Zeng stood on the side of the Chu. Emboldened by its power, the Wu attacked [Yue] in its south, and made their way west to invade Chu. It was a foretaste of impending doom for Chu, and the Mandate of Heaven was about to lose [Chu]. The glorious Zeng marquis decided to fight for Chu, and to restore the majesty of the Chu king. The marquis of Zeng respected the covenants [between Zeng and Chu], who was seen as a model for others. [The Zeng marquis] helped Chu king to strengthen his city, and also regained the [previous] Zeng land. [I, Yu] select fine bronze to make a treasured zhong, in order to honour my

The two bells in this group were inscribed with the same inscription, so although they have different degrees of damage, the contents here are amazingly complete, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

The inscription on M1: 3 is also important: 唯王十月，吉日庚午，曾侯與曰：余稷之玄孫。穆善敦敏，畏天之命，定均曾土，恭寅齋盟，吾以祈眉壽。See Hubei 2014a: 16-26. The wording '余稷之玄孫' here indicates that its owner may have been a distant offspring of the Zhou royal family. See Luo 2014: 53.

Hubei 2014a: 14-33.

For terms that related to the Eastern Zhou yong zhong, see So 1995: Appendix II.

The transcribed phrase 'yitu 裔土' here, referred to as 'remote region', follows the Chen Wei's 陳偉 viewpoint. For further discussion, see Chen 2015. According to Li Xueqin and Li Ling 李零, this phrase should be 'neitu 汭土', referring to the confluence of rivers, possibly the present-day Suizhou area. The character 'nei' (its variant nei 內) is also seen in the inscription of Yu 禹 ding, which records a war in the Suizhou area between the Zhou king and the E marquis Yufang 馭方. See Li 2014b: 69, and Li 2015a: 118.

ancestors, and to pray for health and longevity. I hope that I, and my descendant, can be given pure virtue [21].

Although scholars hold different opinions with respect to the interpretation of characters in this inscription, most of them are in agreement on the following points in general:

- A. Yu, as the owner of these chime-bells, was possibly the occupant of the Wenfengta M1 [22];
- B. Yu's ancestor - Nangong Shi had helped the Zhou kings conquer the Shang, and he was thus sent to govern the south [23];
- C. the name Nangong implies that the early Western Zhou Zeng and the Zeng in the late Spring-and-Autumn belonged to a clear line of succession [24];

D. as the Zhou declined, the Zeng had turned to the newly empowered Chu tradition [25]; and

E. the Zeng helped the Chu state during the war between Wu and Chu. The last three points of this interpretation are especially helpful for us to discuss the 'Mystery of Zeng', as it literally confirms that the Ji-surnamed Zeng state had lived in the Suizhou area since the early Western Zhou period, who then turned from Zhou to Chu, and saved the Chu king from Wu. All these points appear to coincide with Li's common factors to unify the Zeng and the Sui.

Especially the last point about how they had acted as Chu allies against the Wu, as claimed by Huang Fengchun 黃鳳春 - the excavator of Wenfengta site, is 'an incontrovertible evidence' to show that the Zeng and Sui should have been the same states, and thus 'the Mystery of Zeng is no longer a mystery anymore' [26].

²¹This text is first seen in the brief report of Wenfengta M1 and M2, see Hubei 2014a: 15-16. Since then, it have been heavily discussed by many archaeologists and historians, such as Fan Guodong 凡國棟 (Fan 2014), Li Xueqin (Li 2014b, and Li 2015b), Li Tianhong 李天虹 (Li 2014a), Li Ling 李零 (Li 2015a), Chen Wei 陳偉 (Chen 2015), Gao Chongwen 高崇文 (Gao 2015), and so on. The current version is basically translated from the latest edition by Li Ling in 2015, with a combination of opinions of the mentioned scholars above.

²²Apart from Yu's names on bells, another inscription of Marquis Yu is found on a bronze li (M1: 19), together indicating that Yu was the possible occupant of the Wenfengta M1. See Hubei 2014a: 9-10. Previous studies show that there are three Zeng marquis' names, Yue, Yu, and Yi inscribed on the bronzes in the early Warring States tomb Leigudun M1. It is believed that Yu and Yue are forefathers of Marquis Yi. For further discussion, see Zhang 2009b.

²³Most of the scholars agree that the name 'Nangong' and 'Boshi 伯適' refer to the same person, who is also seen in the inscriptions of Yu ding, see Fan 2014: 62.

²⁴The names of Nangong appear in Yejiashan and Wenfengta are believed to refer to the same person, so the Zeng in the early Western Zhou and the Zeng in the late Spring-and-Autumn should refer to the same state. In the meantime, some archaeologists further suggest that the person that the name 'Nangong' refers to is one of the text-based early Western Zhou key ministers - 'Nangong Kuo 南宮括'. See Huang and Hu 2014b: 43. However, linking the Nangong inscription to the Zhou minister Nangong Kuo is only Huang's assumption. Although some archaeologists agree with him (see Li et al. 2013), none of the current archaeological evidence supports this idea.

²⁵This inscription is the first evidence to confirm the transition from Zhou to Chu in a Zeng ruler's position. In 1980s, this transition has been observed by a number of scholars (see discussions in Zhou 1980, Shu and Liu 1982), while the most comprehensive work has been done by Zhang Changping, see Chapter Three and Chapter Four in Zhang 2009a.

²⁶See Huang 2014: 44.

Opinions of the minority

Huang's approval of Li's argument is soon accepted by others. In a following conference about the Wenfengta discovery in 2014, nearly all the scholars, such as Li Boqian 李伯謙, Luo Yunhuan 羅運環, and Xu Shaohua 徐少華, express their support for this idea [27]. In the meantime, very few scholars raise objections. Focusing on the excavated Sui bronze ge found in Wenfengta M21 [28] Zhang Changping 張昌平 insists that the current evidence is insufficient to draw such a conclusion, and the mentioned common factors cannot withstand deliberates [29]:

A. The location: Zhang indicates that there were early Western Zhou precedents who were strong and powerful but located very close to each other in the Suizhou area [30]. Meanwhile, both the states of Zeng and Sui were probably not very large in terms of size and population, so though space is limited, it is possible that they shared the lands to the north of the Han River.

B. The relationship with the Chu: Zhang argues that the attitude of Zeng and Sui towards the Wu-Chu war should have been similar, as both of the two states are believed to be Chu allies after the mid- Spring-and-Autumn period. The Zeng and Sui are both located very close to the Chu heartland, so not surprisingly they could have provided timely assistance

to the Chu when it was in need, and respectively recorded this act for their own good.

The surname of Ji: Zhang agrees that both the Zeng and Sui were Ji-surnamed regional states. But he also points out that the Ji-surnamed Zeng is an undocumented state, while the Ji-surnamed Sui state is relatively well-documented. We cannot put the two states together simply because they had the same surname. The current paper is also on the side of the minority, which pays special attention to the surname of Zeng state.

As most scholars believe, the material-based Zeng state is supposed to be a clear Ji-surnamed regional power. But it is very interesting to see that all through its history from early Western Zhou to mid-Warring States period, very little evidence can connect the Zeng state with the surname Ji [31]. The conclusive evidence to show that the Zeng was a Ji-surname regional power, as many scholars use [32] is two inscribed ge found in a mid-Spring-and-Autumn Zeng tomb in Suizhou, including a 'Zhou wang sun Jidai 周王孫季怠' ge and a 'Zeng Dagongyin Jidai 曾大工尹季怠' ge. [33] If we understand the first Jidai (as a Zeng official Dagongyin) and the second Jidai (as a descendant of the Zhou kings) as the same person, then this Zeng elite should have shared the same surname Ji with the Zhou royal family. Meanwhile, if we accept that the early Western Zhou Zeng state and the Spring-and-Autumn Zeng state belonged to a clear line

²⁷See Luo 2014: 52, 56, and 57.

²⁸Zhang argues that the typology of the Sui ge is dated earlier than other Zeng bronzes in Wenfengta M21, so it may have been obtained from other places. See Zhang 2015: 62.

²⁹See Zhang's argument in Luo 2014: 60, and Zhang 2015: 63-65.

³⁰See Zhang's argument in Luo 2014: 60, and Zhang 2015: 63-65.

³¹Admittedly, there are a few inscribed Zeng bronzes carry the character 'Ji', such as the 'Zeng Ji wuxu 曾姬无恤' square hu 壺 and the 'Zeng hou zuo shuji 曾侯作叔姬' fu 簋, but they are all dated to the mid-Warring States period when the character 'Ji' may not be used as a surname anymore. So in recent publications, scholars normally do not use them as evidence to show that the Zeng was a Ji-surname regional power

³²See Zhang 2015: 61.

³³of succession, [34] then the earlier Zeng state should have been Ji-surnamed as well. The inscriptions of the two ge read as '周王孫季怠孔臧元武, 元用戈', and '穆侯之子, 西宮之孫, 曾大工尹季怠'. For further discussion, see Suixian 1980.

In fact, however, except for the mid-Spring-and-Autumn ge, we cannot find any other examples showing that the Zeng elites were Ji-surnamed. Conversely, increasing evidence in recent discoveries implies that the earlier Zeng people may have been associated with the non-Ji families. The first example comes from an inscribed water vessel excavated in the early Spring-and-Autumn Guojiamiao 郭家廟 cemetery [35]. In a female burial, tomb M43, archaeologists found a bronze yi 匜, the inscription of which shows that it may have been used as dowry, and its owner came from the Ji-surnamed Ze 隹 state. According to the Zhou principle that same surname couples cannot get married, if the Ze lady here was Ji-surnamed, then there is little chance that her husband, the Zeng elite, was Ji-surnamed as well.

³⁴For this viewpoint, see discussion of the inscriptions of Nangong above.

³⁵This vessels is reported on newspaper, see Hubei Ribao 湖北日報, 01/11/2016. For further information, see <http://ctdsb.cnhubei.com/HTML/hbrb/20160111/hbrb2823643.html>.

³⁶The yaokeng refers to the pit in rectangular or oval shape, set under the ground of the tomb pit beneath the waist of the tomb occupant, and normally equipped with a sacrificial dog, or very occasionally with sacrificial human or burial goods. Although started in the late Neolithic period, the waist pits are normally seen as a late Shang tradition, adopted by their successors in early Zhou period, but greatly reduced than that in the Shang period, see Wang 2006.

³⁷The xiedong refers to the tunnels in an inclined manner, constructed next to the corners of a shaft pit, connecting the ground surface with the middle of pit wall. So far there are only three examples of the use of inclined tunnels: one in Hubei (Zeng cemetery at Yejiashan), and two in Shanxi (Ba cemetery at Dahekou, and Peng cemetery at Hengshui), see Shanxi 2006, Hubei 2011, and Xie 2012.

³⁸In most of the cases, the Ji-surnamed Zhou burials were arranged in a north-south orientation. For examples, see Sanmenxia 三門峽 Guo state cemetery in Beijing 1959, and Beizhao 北趙 Jin 晉 marquis cemetery in WW 2011.8.

³⁹The riming normally refers to ten characters of 'tiangan 天干': jia 甲, yi 乙, bing 丙, ding 丁, wu 戊, ji 己, geng 庚, xin 辛, ren 壬, and gui 癸, which were used to record dates on oracle bones or bronzes in late Shang period. See Li Boqian's suggestions in Li et al. 2011: 65-67, who is inspired by Zhang Maorong's 張懋鎔 paper 'Zhou people did not use date names', see Zhang 1993. However, at least the discoveries in some of the Ji-surnamed Zhou states show otherwise. The bronze ritual vessel 'Ying Gong 應公' ding, found in Pingdingshan 平頂山 M8, Henan province, shows that the King Wu of Zhou also had a date name 'ri ding 日丁'. See Ying Gong ding and other similar examples in Wang 2014: 69.

⁴⁰There are in total six examples found in the Yejiashan cemetery, including two from M27, one from M28, one from M111, one from M50, and one from M126.

The above signs constitute an alternative to our current understanding of the Zeng people, implying that even if the Zeng state after the mid-Spring-and-Autumn period is recognised a Ji-surnamed regional power, the previous Zeng state may not have been Ji-surnamed in the first place. The change of its surname, as some scholars have suggested, may be as a result of a new surname given by the Zhou authority [41], or of the disguise of another social group [42]. Therefore, whether or not the Zeng was Ji-surnamed all through its history is still a question mark [43-48].

This viewpoint comes from Han Wei's 韓巍 argument, which is based on the author's private notes, recorded in the 2014 Beijing conference of Zeng studies, 21/12/2014.

For some reasons, the non-Ji-surnamed lineages are sometimes found to pretend to be Ji-surnamed. See four examples in Tani 2013: 1077-1073.

Questions like 'what was the original surname of Zeng, if at all?' and 'how it felt the need to change its surname' are all unsettled, which, as we have discussed earlier in this paper, may be linked to the documented states of 'Zeng 曾 and Zeng', or to the text-based Sui, or to a null in transmitted texts, just like the case of the material-based Zeng 曾 state.

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The second case comes from the early Western Zhou Yejiashan cemetery. Some of its burial practices are extremely rare to see in the Ji-surnamed burials, such as the widely use of waist pits (yaokeng 腰坑) [36], inclined tunnels (xiedong 斜洞) [37], and east-west orientation of tombs [38], the date names (riming 日名) inscribed on bronzes [39]. Apart from these practices, Yejiashan people were also interested in using a special type of bronze bells, which are small clapper bells, simply decorated and suspended on the underside of bronze vessels [40]. Such underside bells are very unusual to see in early Western Zhou period, but those social groups who were eager to use them, such as the Yu state in Shaanxi and Ba 霸 state in Shanxi, are all confirmed to be non-Ji-surnamed without exception.

Conclusion

The current paper aligns with Zhang Changping's attitude towards the unification of Zeng and Sui. Using the uncertainty of the surname of Zeng as an example, it suggests that many issues between Zeng and Sui are still unresolved. Therefore, for now we still have no good reason to close the debate. On the contrary, the 'Mystery of Zeng' is far from being settled, and we will probably need more evidence to see whether the Chu had one ally or two to the northeast of its heartland.

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