REVIEW ARTICLES

GRAPHS, WORDS, AND MEANINGS: THREE REFERENCE WORKS FOR SHANG ORACLE-BONE STUDIES, WITH AN EXCURSUS ON THE RELIGIOUS ROLE OF THE DAY OR SUN

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All three of the reference works under review will assist scholars who wish to survey the usages and meanings of particular words and phrases that appear in the corpus of the Shang oracle-bone inscriptions. *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan* is essentially a needed update of Shima Kunio's invaluable concordance. *Kōkotsumoji jishaku sōran* represents a streamlined and far more comprehensive development of Li Xiaoding's collected commentaries. All three works under review are major scholarly resources; the two works published in Beijing, however, especially *Leizuan*, need to be used with some caution. The article ends with a demonstration, initially inspired by a transcription error in the *Leizuan*, that shows how these works may be used to study one Shang graph in context. The examples cited suggest that the “sun” or “day” played a greater role in divinations about the Shang ancestral cult than has usually been thought.

The three works under review should do much to open up the field of Shang oracle-bone inscriptions to scholars with general sinological training. All those who, without immersing themselves in the challenges of epigraphic interpretation, wish to address particular questions to these earliest Chinese records will be greatly assisted by these new publications. The present review is intended as a guide to their use.  

The nature and virtues of *Yinxu jiagu keci moshi zongji* (Comprehensive Collection of Copies and Interpretations of Graphs Inscribed on the Oracle Bones from Yinxu [hereafter abbreviated as *Moshi*]) can be quickly de-scribed. It provides handcopies, in the numerical sequence in which they were published, of all the oracle-bone inscriptions reproduced in five major collections of rubbings: *Heji* (pp. 1–960), *Tannan* (pp. 961–1049), *Yingcang* (pp. 1051–1105), *Tōkyō* (pp. 1107–30), and *White* (pp. 1131–62).  

I estimate that inscriptions on some 58,000 pieces of oracle bone are included in *Moshi*. The handcopies transcribe each inscription twice, giving the *jiagu* 甲骨 forms in the top row of the register.

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3 No source index for *Heji has yet been published; see Keightley, “Sources” [cited n. 2], 47, 50, n. 62; see too the ten-year-old announcement of the completion of the draft *Jiaguwen heiji shiwen* 甲骨文合集釋文 at Hu Houxuan, ed., *Jiaguwen yu Yin-Shang shi: dier ji* 甲骨文與殷商史: 第二集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986), 105. Until such a reference is available it is

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*This is a review article of:


1 I am grateful for the reactions of William G. Boltz, Lian Shaoming, Edward L. Shaughnessy, and—even though he is co-editor of one of the books under review—Takahama Kenichi. Their comments improved an early draft of this review; its mistakes remain my own.
(hence the mo 摹, “copy,” of the title) and their modern kaishu 楷書 forms (hence the shi 釋, “interpretation”) in the bottom row. Thus, to give a short example, one of nine inscriptions on HJ 272f4 is reproduced at p. 10.2 (i.e., the second register on p. 10) in oracle-bone script as 国 RESULTS (top) and then, in modern script, as 国 RESULTS (below), which can be translated as, “Divined: ‘To Ancestor Xin, perform an exorcism.’”

The value of Moshi is evident. Within the compass of its 1,162 pages one has ready access to most of the published oracle-bone inscriptions of scholarly worth excavated at Xiaotun. By providing a readily accessible, if preliminary, decipherment, in modern characters, for any particular inscription reproduced in Heji, Moshi permits the rapid testing of any scholarship that makes appeal to the Heji inscriptions. It also enables scholars to place a particular inscription in the context of other inscriptions on the same bone. If, for example, one wants to consider the spiritual climate in which the Shang were divining, as transcribed above, the exorcism to Ancestor Xin, the Moshi entries for HJ 272f and 272b transcribe twenty-five additional inscriptions on the same plastron fragment; these indicate, among other things, that the king had experienced a potentially ominous dream (but see too page 511, below), and that the Shang were also divining at this time about offerings to Ancestor Yi and Ancestor Mother Geng. A whole series of contextual questions, in fact, can now, through the pages of Moshi, be answered in this way. One could, to pick an example at random, determine the months (if recorded elsewhere on the bone) in which the Shang kings were most likely to divine about military campaigns, about mobilizing their labor gangs, about offering harvest prayers, or about suffering from nightmares. Or one could use Moshi to place individual divinations about ancestral cult in the context of other cult divinations on the same bone, and so on. Certain cautions, introduced below, must be borne in mind, but Moshi is a straightforward reference set that all scholars working with oracle-bone inscriptions will wish to consult.

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The second work under review, Yinju jiagu keci lei-zuan (A Concordance of Graphs Inscribed on the Oracle Bones from Yinju)—hereafter abbreviated as Leizuan, when referring to the book, and as Y (for Yao Xiaosui, its chief editor) when used in a citation—is a more ambitious and potentially more useful work. Its three volumes provide, with certain exceptions, a concordance to the words and phrases found in the corpus of inscriptions transcribed in Moshi. The difference between the two reference works is that Moshi presents the inscriptions in the sequence in which they were published, so that it is essentially a bone-by-bone transcription of the contents of the five major collections. Leizuan, by contrast, arranges the inscriptions from these collections—once again transcribed in both jiagu and kaishu forms, with two registers to a page—under word-headings for

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5 Since Leizuan is the successor to Shima's concordance (cited n. 3), which has, in citations, conventionally come to be rendered as S, it seems appropriate that a one-letter abbreviation, Y, also be used in citations.

6 When a rubbing published in one of the collections transcribed at the end of Moshi has also been reproduced in Heji, Leizuan gives only the Heji reference. Thus, Tōkyō 270, so transcribed at Moshi 1111.2, is transcribed at Y956.1 only as HJ 388. This means that the inscription appears twice in Moshi—one as HJ 388 (on page 14.2), once as Tōkyō 270 (on page 1111.2)—but only once in Leizuan. Similarly, HJ 39572 (a drawing) also appears as Yingcang 30f in Moshi, but the Leizuan editors only transcribe one version (in this case, Yingcang 30f, the rubbing, at Y91.2). Such parsimony avoids the confusing duplication of inscriptions that appears in parts of Heji. In cases, however, where the Heji editors themselves have mistakenly reproduced the same bone, in whole or in part, twice, the situation is more complex, particularly when one source rubbing is less clear than the other. Huang Tianshu 黃天樹 ("'Jiaguwen heji' jiaochong" 甲骨文合集校重, Kaogu yan wenwu 考古與文物 1995.3: 92–93) has provided a list of such Heji duplications. In his first example, the larger rubbing of HJ 53 duplicates the contents of the smaller rubbing of HJ 19191; the Moshi editors, though dealing with what is, in reality, the same inscription, transcribe the two versions quite differently. Similarly, they transcribe the two versions of Huang's second example, HJ 490 and 4871 differently, and the Leizuan editors record them, mistakenly, as two independent inscriptions at Y747.2.
all of the words (ideally) that compose each inscription. In theory, therefore, HJ 272f, 阿ipes yu, the first inscription quoted above, would be transcribed five times under the heading of each of its five graphs. In fact, common Shang graphs—prepositions and negatives like 于, 在, 不, 勿, and 弗, as well as common words like 貞 and 卜, and the gan 干 “stems” (in this case, the stem xin 辛) and zhi 支 “branches”—are not given separate entries (“Fanli” 凡例, p. 16), so that this inscription is copied only twice, under the entries for 祖辛 (Y1406.1) and 祭 (Y143.1). (The editors also inform us with a “1” at the foot of the kai shu transcription that this is, in their opinion, an inscription that can be dated to oracle-bone Period 1.)

The omission of such common words in a concordance is perfectly acceptable, particularly for the purposes of historians. What is unacceptable in Leizuan, however, is the incomplete concordancing of important words. The worth of any concordance is seriously impaired if its entries for key terms are frequently and capriciously incomplete. I regret to say that Leizuan is seriously compromised in this regard. That key words are not concordanced consistently means that the entries provide no basis for drawing reliable conclusions about the scope and frequency of particular oracle-bone terms. The result is that Leizuan is valuable for adding—although how completely one cannot, without much additional research and documentation (see note 3), be sure—the new oracle-bone collections listed above to Shima’s concordance (cited in note 3), but its deficient and quirky handling of the traditional corpus of inscriptions assembled in Heji sharply reduces its value. Nobody should throw away their copy of Shima; indeed, I have frequently found it necessary to turn back to Shima in an attempt to make up for the lacunae in Leizuan.

I provide some examples. (In what follows, unless there is reason not to do so, I employ the kai shu transcriptions provided by the editors.)

At least three inscriptions (HJ 10976f, 14136, 14140f) containing the phrase 帝令多雨, “Di orders much rain,” which are recorded at Y418.2–19.1 under the heading 帝令雨, are not recorded, although they should have been, under the 多雨 heading at Y450.2. Any scholar relying upon Y450.2 to determine the degree to which Di, the High God, was involved in divinations about “much rain,” accordingly, will be misled.

The drawing, Xucun 2.187 (S513.2), 9 在於上甲 作父乙 用 “. . . the one who goes to (?)” 10 Shang Jia is Father Yi . . . is not transcribed under the 上甲 heading at Y1361.1–71.2; nor is it under the 作父乙 entry at Y1450.2–55.2. 11 The inscription has, in fact, been published as HJ 39549, a drawing, but I discovered that only by accident. Leizuan was of no assistance because its editors appear to have omitted HJ 39549 entirely.

HJ 41339, a drawing of a period iii inscription (originally published as Ningshu 3.228 [S456.2]), divined by He 何, about 王不遇雨, “the king will not encounter rain,” is reproduced, in sequence, in Moshi. It is not, however, recorded under the appropriate 遇雨 entry at Y1201.1, where the last Heji entry is 38187. I find no reference to the inscription elsewhere in Leizuan. Indeed, it is not even listed under the diviner He’s inscriptions at Y1499, where the last Heji entry is 31916. One has the sense, in fact, that, in compiling the Leizuan entries, the editors tend to have omitted drawings (which run from HJ 39472 to 41956) rather than rubbings.

HJ 22646 (Y186.1), which contains the phrase, 自上申衣至于多后, “From Shang Jia down to the many descendants,” is not listed under the 上申. 后 heading at Y1361.2–62.1; indeed, none of many similar

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7 The editors follow the periodization system employed by the editors of Heji. For a discussion of the system and its problems, see Keightley, “Sources,” 43–45.

8 Linguists, who may wish to study every occurrence of a particular word, will wish for a more comprehensive treatment. They will find this in two recently published concordances that, although they deal only with inscriptions from two major excavations, provide entries for every occurrence of every word: Takashima Ken-ichi, Yinshu wenzi bingbian tongjian 殷墟文字 丙編通檢 (A Concordance to Fascicle Three of Inscriptions from the Yin Ruins) (Taipei: Zhongyuan yanjiuyuan lishi yu-yuan yanjiusuo, 1985); Cai Fangpei, Edward L. Shaughnessy, James F. Shaughnessy, Jr., A Concordance of the Xiaoqun Nandi Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, Early China Special Monograph Series, no. 1 (1988).

9 My abbreviations to the traditional oracle-bone collections, converted into pinyin, are taken from Keightley, Sources of Shang History (cited n. 3), “Bibliography A,” 229–31.

10 For the view that wang 往 was a ritual term, so that the charge might be translated, “The one who offers the wang-ritual to Shang Jia is Father Yi,” see the opinions of Yu Xingwu (1979a: 154) and Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding (1985: 67), cited at Sôran 0770 (the third work under review).

11 There are no other inscriptions on the small fragment, Xucun 2.187, that would permit us to find the inscription in Heji by another route.
inscriptions containing the phrase (or a minor variant) just quoted, such as HJ 22648, 22650, and 22652 (all found at Y186.1 under the "in" heading), are recorded under 上. Some, however, HJ 22625 and 22647, which do contain the phrase 至于多后 (or a minor variant), and which are listed at Y1361.2, are not listed under the "in" heading at Y185.2–86.1. It is almost as if the Leizuan editors had cavalierly decided to put half the inscriptions containing 自上于多后 under one heading, half under the other, so that no comprehensive concordance entry is provided at either place. Nor is the division between the two headings absolute: HJ 22622 appears under both headings!

Under the heading of 告告, "the settlements report (?)," at Y119.2, the editors provide only two charges, both on HJ 2895. Yet at Y119.2, in the same register, but under the miscellaneous (qita other) heading, they record a third, HJ 4467, "Divined: 'The settlements will come to report.'" The editors, in short, are literal minded about the entries they include under particular headings; "exploded" versions of a phrase are not included.

The front of the large plastron, HJ 376 (Moshi 13.2), bears the inscription 聾呼 AVAILABLE, which one might translate, "Divined: 'Call out to raise the men whom Xiang sent in.'" This inscription is not recorded under the entry for 聾 (at Y139.1F or 142.1F) where one has every right to expect it (after all, if one is studying the activities of Xiang, one hopes to find all the divinations recording his activities listed in one place, under his name); it is not recorded under the 聾 entry at Y365.1–66.1: it can only be found, after much searching, under 人 at Y1791.1.

HJ 31, a fragmentary inscription, reads 禽于氏氏 聾宗宗 "Qin goes to (?)... leads the zhong (dependent laborers)... temple..." This is not concordant under the 聾 heading, central to the meaning of the inscription, at Y69.2. It is found under none of the other 聾 headings (Y69.1–71.1, 363.2, 520.1). It can finally be found under 宗 at Y756.1.

Users of the Leizuan should also be warned that the editors do not always follow the numerical sequence of the Heji numbers. Thus, the "dream" inscriptions transcribed at Y1185.2 go from HJ 112, to 376f, back to 272f, then to 376b, back to 376f again, and then back to 376b again. Similarly, at Y1186.1–2, HJ 17397f is listed between HJ 17377 and 17378; 17397f, in fact, should be shifted eighteen entries to the left, to join the other inscriptions on the same bone. At Y1288.2, HJ 35586 is misplaced between HJ 35485 and 35493; it should be placed nineteen entries to the left, at Y1289.1. Leizuan contains other careless editorial slips. The cross-reference to the oracle-bone phrase 丁父 at Y793.2 sends the reader to pp. 398 and 408; the phrase, however (discussed at page 520, below), is found at neither location but appears at Y402.1.

One final example will illustrate the lacunae in this concordance and the frustrating difficulties they can cause. Let us suppose one wishes to confirm the reading, identify the full context, and find parallel instances, for the following charge, 聾父乙十羌, "Present to Father Yi ten Qiang (captive)," which is recorded at S96.1 as appearing on Bingbian pl. 30 (= Bingbian 33.9, on the plastron back). One starts with the entry for the main verb, 聾, at Y365.1–366.2. The inscription is not there. Going to the Bingbian plastron, one looks for another inscription that, once found in Leizuan, will at least enable us to identify the Heji number of the bone we are looking for. Bingbian 32.24 (on the plastron front) reads: 在北史覔 獼羌, "Our envoys in the north will have occasion to catch Qiang (prisoners)." One looks under 聾 at Y65.2; the charge is not there. Nor is it under 聾 at Y1126.1 or under 聾 at Y560.2–561.3. It is only when one tries yet another charge from the same plastron, Bingbian 32.2, 價祖乙十俘十羌, "Promise Ancestor Ding ten dismembered victims and ten penned cows," which we find recorded at Y1133.2 under the 聾 heading, that we finally learn that the plastron in question is HJ 914 (a conclusion that needs, of course, to be checked by comparing the two rubbings, Bingbian 33.9 and HJ 914b).

That information now permits us to consult the HJ 914b entry at Moshi 37.2. There we find that the editors have omitted our original inscription entirely! Evidently, they did not see the characters, 聾父乙十羌, on the back of the plastron. Consulting the rubbing, HJ 914b, one discovers that the Heji rubbing is considerably less legible than the Bingbian 33 rubbing, of which it is presumably a photograph. This, however, is hardly a satisfactory explanation for the failure to record the inscription. The words in question are visible on Bingbian 33, they are clearly recorded in Zhang Bingsuan's tissue overlay to that Bingbian plastron, and, most importantly, they are still more clearly visible on the original rubbing, Tubian 6400. The editors of both Moshi and Leizuan have simply overlooked this inscription.

This frustrating and time-consuming exercise may throw some light on the editors' methods. A glance at the 聾 entry at Y365.1 and at the other entries consulted in pursuit of 聾父乙十羌 reveals that none of the entries include inscriptions whose Heji number is below ca. 6000.
Thus it seems likely that the Leizuan editors simply did not consider an inscription as “distant” as HJ 914; and this suggests, in turn, that they have let themselves be more influenced by the organization of Heji than they should have been. It appears that by the time the editors came to compile their jiagu and related entries they were simply content to take the cases they found around HJ 6000, which deal, as the Heji table of contents indicates, with topics like “the military, punishments, and warfare,” and hence with the raising of men. They did not, in this case, look back to the earlier oracle bone, HJ 914 (placed in the Heji section on “slaves and commoners”).

Rather than continuing to provide anecdotal horror stories of this type, I tabulate some of the additional coverage questions that arose as I have used Leizuan. I indicate the number of inscription units that are found for particular entries in Shima’s concordance (S) and in Yao Xiaosi’s and Xiao Ding’s (Y), providing a percentage figure to indicate the degree to which Y’s record is larger than (i.e., over 100%) or smaller than (less than 100%) that provided by S. Since the Leizuan is dealing with a larger corpus of inscriptions, one would expect that its entries would—if comprehensive—always be 100% or more of S’s. This, as can be seen, is far from the case. Rather than using Leizuan to supplement S, one frequently has to use S to supplement Y!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Head</th>
<th>Units in Y</th>
<th>Units in S</th>
<th>%Y/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>多龺</td>
<td>11 (Y438.2)</td>
<td>28 (S402.3–4)</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>亦不吉</td>
<td>2 (Y93.1)</td>
<td>4 (S33.3)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>王令</td>
<td>29 (Y1251.2)</td>
<td>53 (S46.3–4)</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>從</td>
<td>10 (Y1191.2)</td>
<td>12 (S418.2)</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>門令</td>
<td>14 (Y791.2–92.1)</td>
<td>14 (S46.4)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>正(= 征)</td>
<td>22 (Y272.1)</td>
<td>19 (S130.2–3)</td>
<td>115%</td>
</tr>
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<td>29 (Y426.2–27.1)</td>
<td>19 (S159.4)</td>
<td>414%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I turn now to other examples of careless editing that further reduce the value of Leizuan and Moshi. First, one must beware the kaishu transcriptions given for each of the jiagu entries. It is a cardinal rule of all oracle-bone scholarship that one should not, in the last analysis, trust any other scholar’s modern (or, as we shall see, even jiagu) transcriptions; one should, in every case, check the original rubbing for oneself. Some examples involve difficult, and inevitable, interpretive choices. The Moshi editors, for example, transcribe the 偶 of HJ 5944 as Bi Ren 婦人, “Ancestral Mother Geng.” Qiu Xiguī, more plausibly in my view, proposes the reading of ren 任 (= nan 男). The Leizuan editors read the oracle-bone word that I have treated as “dream” in HJ 2721 (page 508, above) as meng 夢 (Y 1185.2), as do most of the commentators (Sōran 0962); it should be noted, however, that Zhang Bingquan, in his commentary to Bingbian 51.8–9 (the same inscription) reads the word as ji 疾, so that the cause of the exorcism ceremony would have been the king’s “illness” rather than the king’s dreams. Such paleographic disagreements are inevitable.

Readers should also be aware of certain conventions adopted by the Leizuan and Moshi editors. They consistently transcribe oracle-bone 互 as wu 無, but there are, in my view, reasons for rejecting this choice. Wu is only justified by post-Shuowen evidence; the graphic filiation, moreover, makes the transcription of wang 王 preferable. It should also be noted that the editors transcribe oracle-bone 匪, the short-tailed bird, as 惟, this obliterates, in the kaishu transcriptions, a number of significant grammatical distinctions.

Other Leizuan and Moshi transcriptions, however, involve careless omissions. The Moshi transcription of HJ 14206b, for example, omits the sheng 屍, “inspect,” that is visible on the shell, that is recorded by the commentary to Bingbian 148.1 (the original published version of this plastron), and that is recorded at S435.2. The Moshi transcription of the prognostication and verification incised on HJ 902f—壬囝: 其雨隹壬。壬午允雨, “The king reads the cracks: ‘If it rain it will be on a ren-day.’ On renwu it really did rain”—omits the ren that starts the prognostication. Here, as elsewhere, one has the sense that the editors, for whatever reason, did not avail themselves of Zhang Bingquan’s rubbings and commentaries (the transcription had originally been published as Bingbian 235.2) as thoroughly as they might have done. The Moshi transcription of HJ 11497f omits entirely the pref-ace and charge starting 丙午卜... (Bingbian 207.4), even though the inscription is clearly visible in the rubbing. And whoever was doing the kaishu transcriptions for Leizuan and Moshi had trouble distinguishing between

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12 For the inevitable problems raised by the Heji plan of organization, see Kightley, “Sources,” 45–46.
13 This table of contents is also reproduced on pp. 630–31 of Pu Maozuo’s bibliography cited in n. 25 below.

elephants and horses. The editors have classified the inscription on *HJ* 9172f, for example, under the heading for *xiang* 象, "elephant," at Y631.2, but they have then transcribed the oracle-bone graph in question as *ma* 马, "horse"; it may not be easy to distinguish the two oracle-bone forms, but the inconsistency is disconcerting. (And at Y632.1, for good measure, not only is *HJ* 36347 out of numerical sequence, but it should not be placed under the *xiang*, or even *ma*, heading at all!)

At Y530.2 (figure 1), to give a more significant example, the editors transcribe the preface date of *HJ* 10116, which concerns a prayer for harvest, as 見 *mu* (top register) and *dingzi* 丁子 (bottom register); this immediately raises a red flag because there is, alas, no *dingzi* "stem-branch" combination in the *ganzhi* cycle.\(^{16}\) Curiously, when one turns to the same inscription at *Moshi* 241.1, one finds that the copyist has provided an ellipsis in place of the oracle-bone *mu*, giving only a transcription of "丁..." Since the rubbing of *HJ* 10116 is hard to decipher at this point, such caution is understandable, but it is puzzling to find the same inscription reproduced and transcribed differently in two reference works produced by the same editorial team. When we consult Shima, at S194.4, we find that he did provide—for *Yicun* 126, the original rubbing—the ☐ *mu*, which he would, of course, have understood, quite properly (see note 16), as *dingsi* 丁巳 (day 54 in the cycle). When we consult Shang Chengzuo’s commentary to the original publica-

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\(^{16}\) This is not the only instance of such a basic error. Y185.2 and *Moshi* both give the *ganzhi* date for *Yingcang* 150f as *xinsi* 辛巳. (On the long-accepted reading, in the appropriate context, of oracle-bone 子 as the earthly branch 巳, see the numerous entries at *Soran* 1704.)
tion of this piece, however, we find that he read the date as jiazi 甲子, day 1 in the cycle, reading the first character not as oracle-bone 甲 (= 丁) but as oracle-bone + (甲). A close examination of the original rubbing, Yicun 126 (which is clearer than HJ 10116), confirms his reading, as do the readings provided by other scholars. In this case, accordingly, the Leizuan editors have provided an impossible kaishu date, dingzi. And in seeking to correct that error we find that—misled perhaps by Shima’s concordance and by the inferior quality of the Heji rubbing—they have also misread the first character of the oracle-bone date, which should be jia, not ding. The point may at first appear trivial, but, as I shall argue below (pages 517–19), it has considerable significance in helping us understand the larger significance of the inscription.

I give one final example of editorial carelessness. At Y1451.2, the editors transcribe a 五月 “fifth moon,” after the first of four identical charges, 父乙不賛于祖乙, “Father Yi will not be entertained by Grandfather Yi,” that appear on HJ 1657f. There is, alas, no 五月 on the plastron; Zhang Bingquan did not see it in his presentation of Bingbian 338, the original form in which the plastron was published; Shima Kunio did not see it at S546.3; I do not see it. It is conceivable that the editors confused the 五月 of the crack-notification (crack number “5”) by Bingbian 338.10 with a month number but there is no 五月 present, and since the crack numbers “1,” “2,” “3,” and “4” all are present, leading up to the expected “5,” it is hard to see why they should have done so. Furthermore, since the same crack number appears by Bingbian 338.9, the positive charge of the charge pair, one wonders why they did not repeat their error for that charge as well.

The Leizuan concordance has many virtues. The two indexes of modern graph forms (the first arranged by stroke-number, the second by pinyin romanization) at the back of volume 3 considerably facilitate the finding of characters when the modern forms are known. The oracle-bone graph index, which is also at the back of volume 3, is based on jiagu “radicals” (which are listed at the start of each of the three volumes) and generally follows the one devised by Shima in his concordance; it works well. The large script size in both the index and main body of the work makes for easy legibility.

One can only lament the carelessness that characterizes this potentially important reference work. Scholars will still use it. Indeed, scholars are increasingly required to use it as citations to Heji become more widely used and citations to Shima’s concordance require “translation” between the original citation and Heji citation. But scholars cannot always trust it as a reliable guide to the true state of affairs in the oracle-bone corpus itself. Yinzu jiagu keci leizuan needs to be redone, perhaps on disk, so that it may be kept continually up to date as new inscriptions are discovered and published. Given its coverage—more comprehensive than Shima’s 1967 concordance—many of us will use it and cite it, faute de mieux. But it does not yet fully replace Shima’s pioneering contribution which, as I have indicated above, needs to be consulted on occasion as a corrective to the problems found in Leizuan. Leizuan is a flawed example of what still needs to be done.

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The third volume under review, Kôkotsumoji jishaku sôran (A Comprehensive Guide to Interpretations of Oracle-Bone Graphs), edited by Matsumaru Michiô and Takashima Ken-ichi (and hereafter abbreviated as Sôran), provides an efficient reference to the meanings of
individual Shang words (not phrases) seen in the divination inscriptions—from Yinxu but not from Zhouyuan—have been interpreted by 471 scholars around the world in their publications from 1904 through 1988 (including a few that appeared in 1989). As Matsumaru explains in his preface (p. ii), Sōran builds upon four major predecessors: Jiaguwen bian (A Compilation of Oracle-bone Graphs) (hereafter JGWB),23 Shiima’s concordance (cited note 3), Li Xiaoding’s collected commentaries,24 and Xu Zhongshu’s dictionary.25 Rather than, as Li Xiaoding’s Jiagu wenzi jishi (note 24) had done, transcribe the analyses of other scholars extensively—Li quoted 59 scholars, writing in 164 works—this reference work condenses the opinions of nearly eight times the number of scholars by frequently providing, for each scholar cited, only a single character as the kaishu equivalent of the Shang word under consideration, or occasionally providing the character and a few words, rarely more than ten, of explanation from the source being cited.26

The editors have evidently given much thought to the arrangement of the volume and their principles are explained in the directions to the reader (凡例) on pp. iii–viii. In essence, each Shang graph is presented in tabular layout as follows:

Column 1 (文编): A four-digit entry-number in bold face (which is the same entry-number as that used in JGWB, cited note 23 above); this is followed by the juan and page number in JGWB, information that greatly facilitates movement among all reference works organized on the Shuowen scheme (as both JGWB and Jiagu wenzi jishi are).27 In some cases, cross-references to other entries are supplied; these are indicated by a hollow arrow, pointing towards the other graph and its entry number (see, e.g., 1618). And the notation, kensaku, 檢索, when present (as in 1619), advises the reader to consult the index table (pp. 669–84) that directs the reader to related entries in Sōran or JGWB.

Column 2 (综合): A finding number for the character in Shiima’s concordance; these numbers, assigned by the editors on pp. 686–718, are to Shiima’s “radical” and the number of the character under that radical (see the example in the paragraph below).

Column 3 (甲骨文字): A transcription of the representative oracle-bone form(s), taken, but with some graphic and editorial revisions based upon examination of the original rubbings, from JGWB. The presence of a circled plus-sign by a graph form (as in Sōran 2101) indicates that the editors have added the form to the JGWB entry; a circled minus-sign, which is evidently used more commonly (as in Sōran 0003, 0011, 0012, 0018, 0038, 0085, 0094, 0165, 0169, 0171, etc.), indicates they believe the form should be subtracted from the JGWB entry; the hollow arrow or arrows in column 1 refer the reader to the appropriate entry.

Column 4 (字释): A list of the kaishu graphs and/or words that modern scholars have assigned to the oracle-bone graph. In cases where no modern graph was proposed, the editors provide a dash.

Column 5 (参考): A brief account, if warranted, of the scholar’s analysis (as described above).

Column 6 (出典): A citation, in Social Science style, to the scholar’s work.


23 Zhongkuo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所, Jiagu wenbian 甲骨文編, Kaoguxue zhuankan yizhong de shishi hao 考古學專刊乙種第十四號 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965). For an introduction to this oracle-bone reference, essentially a transcription of single oracle-bone characters assembled under their Shuowen 說文 equivalents (when known), and originally compiled by Sun Haibo 孫海波 in 1934, see Keightley, Sources of Shang History, 59–60.

24 Li Xiaoding, Jiagu wenzi jishi 甲骨文字集釋, Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo zhuankan zhi wushu 中央研究院歷史語言研究所專刊之五十, 8 vols. (Nangang, 1965).

25 Xu Zhongshu 徐中舒, ed., with Chang Zhengguang 常正光, Wu Shiqian 伍仕賢, et al., Jiaguwen zidian 甲骨文字典 (Chengdu: Sichuan cishu, 1988). As Matsumaru notes, the editors received the latest bibliography of oracle-bone studies, Pu Maozuo 濮茅左 Jiaguwuxue shi lundun juzhu mulu 甲骨學與商史論著目錄 (Shanghai: Guji, 1991), as well as Zhao Cheng’s 甲骨文字典 Jiaguwen jianning zidian: Buci fenlei duben 甲骨文簡明詞典: 卜辭分類讀本 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988), too late to include in their entries.

26 The longest entry I have found, Sōran 1076, assigns sixty-plus characters to Qiu Xigu’s analysis. (Unless otherwise indicated all my Sōran citations are to entry-numbers, not page-numbers).

27 Entries after Sōran 1723, the last “Shuowen” entry in JGWB, are further supplied with references like “合 25” (as in Sōran 2296), a reference to p. 25 of the hewen 合文 section at the back of JGWB. A reference such as “下 27” in still later entries (like Sōran 5711) refers the reader to p. 27 of the fulu 車文, part 2, the appendix still further to the rear of JGWB. The last 1,330 entries in Sōran are graphs not found in JGWB (entries 7001–7203) or in S (entries 8001–8330).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>文編</th>
<th>総類</th>
<th>甲骨文字</th>
<th>字樣</th>
<th>参考</th>
<th>註</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>095-004</td>
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| 0663 | 005-069 | 005-072 | | | | |
| 5.17 | | | | | | 蕭餘玉1917：2.21 *5.1673-1674 |
| 登 | | | | | | 王釧1925：寄席13a *5.1674 |
| 登 | | | | | | 廖順1939：47b *5.1763-1764 |
| 登 | | | | | | 陳作寶1945 (1977)：7.705 |
| 登 | | | | | | 楊樹達1954：23 *2.0465-0466：5.1764 |
| 登 | | | | | | 張家權1957：1.2.239 |
| 登 | | | | | | 島1958b：387 |
| 登 | | | | | | 萬隆1960：385, 569 |
| 登 | | | | | | 池田1964：1.125：2.29 |
| 登 | | | | | | 小字定 *5.1764-1765 |
| 登 | | | | | | 巴楚先1969a：2 |
| 登 | | | | | | 白川1972a：1a |
| 登 | | | | | | 陳邦傑1973：113 |
| 登 | | | | | | 徐厚宣1982a：62 |
| 登 | | | | | | 許連烽1977：41 |
| 登 | | | | | | 陳邦傑1979：31 |
| 登 | | | | | | 陳邦傑1982a：140-141 |

Fig. 2. Kōkotsumoji jishaku sōran, page 162, showing entries 0661 (partial), 0662, and 0663 (partial).
Thus, to give a concrete example (figure 2), column 1 of entry 0663 on pp. 162–63 tells us that the oracle-bone character 篣 (and variants) can be found at Jiaguwen bian, j. 5, p. 17. The “005–069” and “005–072” in column 2 indicate that the oracle-bone forms are to be found as entries no. 069 and 072 under Shima’s radical no. 005 (the “right hand,” 鼎); using this information to turn to page 691, it may be learned that Shima has transcribed the inscriptions containing these graphs at S95 and S96. Column 3 lists twenty kaishu (or pseudo-kaishu) equivalents for 篣, of which deng 登 (eleven cases) is the most common, together with brief, one-line comments by ten of the twenty-scholars cited. Column 5 provides condensed citations to these scholars, arranged chronologically, in the form: 孫詒讓 1917: 2.21. The full citations may be found in the bibliographies towards the end of the volume. Works in Chinese and Japanese, arranged by number of strokes in the author’s name, are found on pp. 581–640 (Sun Yirang’s 1917 article is given on p. 611). The asterisk that appears in certain entries in column 5 (and in the bibliography) means that the article in question was copied into Li Xiaoding’s Jiagu wenzi jishi (note 24 above); in this case, Sun Yirang’s discussion can be found, as indicated by the asterisked reference after the 1917 citation in column 5 on p. 162, at vol. 5, pp. 1673–74 of Jiagu wenzi jishi. This useful notation saves readers the trouble of having, in every case, to retrieve the original publication. The bibliography of works in Western languages runs from pp. 641–46.

Three separate indexes or finding lists increase Soran’s usefulness. The first is a modern-character index arranged by radical and stroke number (pp. 649–68).28 The second is a table that permits the reader to move from particular entries in JGWB (and hence Soran) to the character entry in S and on to related graphs in JGWB (pp. 671–84).29 This “translation table,” provided for the JGWB and Soran entries for which more than one reading or meaning (or none) has been proposed, is a particularly valuable feature of the work, for it permits the reader who is studying the shape of particular graphs to move rapidly to a much larger number of examples than those found in the main entries of Soran. The third is a table that permits the reader to move from oracle-bone forms (classified under the “radicals” used in S) to JGWB entries, and then to the relevant entries in Soran (pp. 687–718).30 Since this table provides page numbers, in sequence, to Shima’s “Concordance,” it is particularly useful for helping readers move rapidly between that work and the present volume. If, for example, one wishes to consult the scholarly opinions about the word zhong 中, whose entry appears at S25.1, it takes but a moment to jump to the “page 25 entries” (Soran, p. 687, third column) and thus find that the Soran entry is 1033.

Like all works of great magnitude, Soran has a small number of lacunae and errors, but they are generally of the niggling, “why didn’t you include so-and-so?” variety and not systemic. I provide a few examples, simply to caution readers about the lapses from perfection I have encountered in several entries (I use the Soran bibliographic citations when available).

0006: Overlooks the link between Di 帝, “Lord, God,” and di 媛, “legitimate consort or heir,” proposed by Qiu Xigui 1983a: 2–4 (though Soran 0066 does record Qiu’s related discussion about jie 介 as a term that the Shang applied to collateral descendants).

0184: Misses Qiu Xigui 1983a: 18, who (following Shirakawa 1958a) reads oracle-bone 篣 as ying 影 or hui 會. Since the word has sometimes been interpreted as tu 都, “to kill, butcher (servile dependents)” (e.g., Yu Xingwu 1943: 23a; Shu Shicheng 1956: 51; Yang Shengnan 1982: 393), Qiu’s reading has important implications for arguments about Shang slavery.

0392: Misses Serruys 1974: 76 and the Cheng Te-k’un reference cited there.


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28 Readers should be aware that the character index in the back refers only to the forms listed in the fourth column. 字釋 (figure 2). Thus, three scholars have proposed, in the fifth column, 參考, the reading of hui 篣 for the oracle-bone character given at 0041 (usually transcribed, in the fourth column, as mu 母 or mei 媼); hui, however, cannot be found in the index. Similarly, the xiang 象 reading offered by Tang Lan 1939 in column 4 of entry 0072 cannot be found in the index, and so on.

29 Thus, to take the first entry on p. 671: entry no. 0007 in JGWB and Soran, usually read as pang 彈, may be found as item 006 under Shima’s “radical” no. 120 (see the index entry on p. 713); a related character form—related at least in the opinion of the editors—may be found at JGWB 4251; there is no entry at Soran 4251 because there is no relevant scholarship to cite. For the graph forms one should turn to JGWB 4251.

30 Thus the first entry on p. 687 indicates that the S graph numbered 001-001, oracle-bone graph 鼎, may be found on p. 1 of Shima’s “Concordance” and appears as a graphic element in eight entries, starting with 0064, in Soran (with the main entry turning out to be 0986).

31 I acknowledged my own error in this regard at Keightley, Sources of Shang History (paperback ed.: 1985), v.
0837 (and 0561, 1639, and 1691): Omits Chow Kwok-ching 1982: 322, who, in certain contexts, reads oracle-bone 亀 (xi 夕 or yue 月) as yue 則, to “cut-sacrifice.”

0595: Omits both the discussion of Ikeda Suetoshi (1964: 2:36.3), who (citing Chen Mengjia 1956: 295 and Li Yanong 1950: no. 35—both missing from the Sōran entry) proposed that 騁 was the name of a Former Lord and a place, and of Akatsuka (1977: 207) who treated it as the name of a regional spirit.

1152: Ignores the point of Wang Guimin 1983: 173–74, for whom oracle-bone 亀 馬 can mean not just “horse” but “horse-chariot.” This has important implications for our understanding of the Shang use of chiromancy.


4199: Omits the opinion of Rao Zongyi 1959: 133 that the graph be read as 堤, “prosperity.”

There is also the occasional typographical error. In 1028, for example, Matsumaru and Takashima erroneously record that Wen Shaofeng and Yuan Tingsong (1983: 56, 331) transcribe the graph in question as 亀, “loquat; a ladle used in sacrifices”; in fact, Wen and Yuan transcribed it as 亀, a sacrifice name. On p. 654, in the sixth column, the second entry under 亀 应 should read 2371, not 2731 (there is no such entry). Bernhard Karlgren’s last name is misspelled, as Kerlgen, in the list of works cited on p. 642. Takashima’s article, “Nominalization and Nominal Derivation,” despite the 1985 publication date given on page 645, was published in 1984.

But such omissions and lapses are relatively rare and I specify the ones above less to criticize than to remind readers that Sōran should always be used as an initial guide rather than as a permanent crutch. Kōkotsumoji jishaku sōran is an enormously valuable work. What oracle-bone scholar has not spent years compiling his own dictionary of the scholarship on particular Shang words, laboriously searching out further scholarship, evaluating one opinion against another, always uncertain about the comprehensiveness of the survey made? Sōran will not invalidate such work—and indeed, part of the pleasure of using this reference is to check one’s own surveys against the ones the editors offer—but it provides a wonderful “map” for surveying the relevant opinions, for assaying the range of scholarly solutions in each case, and even for seeing how particular scholars have developed their opinions with time (see, e.g., the two Qiu Xigui references [1979a and 1981] at no. 1134). Sōran also provides an efficient way for citing the scholarship on particular graphs. Li Xiaodong’s Jiaju wenzijishi (note 24 above) has been used in this way in the past, but the elegantly printed pages and efficient citation system of Sōran, together with its greater comprehensiveness (international in its scope, and adding nearly a quarter of a century of additional scholarship) will make it the new standard in this regard. That the editors have not limited their citations to works of philology, but have cast their net to include historical scholarship, further adds to the worth of their accomplishment. Unlike Leizuan, which the user approaches with some trepidation, Sōran may generally be relied on with confidence. Intelligently organized, permitting the reader to pursue many valuable lines of inquiry, it is a heroic work that establishes the field on a firmer, more mature level than before. Matsumaru and Takashima deserve great credit for their collaborative enterprise in bringing this work to fruition. Scholars should look forward to using it extensively and with great pleasure and gratitude in the years ahead.

*  *  *

In closing I provide an example of the way in which the three reference works that are the subject of this review may be used in the pursuit of a particular research question—the one initially suggested by the Period 1 inscription, HJ 10116, whose correct ganzhi date I had discussed earlier (pages 512–13). The inscription, which I render for purposes of analysis in kuanshi 寬式 (“relaxed mode”), using a mix of modern kaiju and Shang jiagu forms, may be transcribed (generally following YS30.2) as follows: 甲子卜事貳：灌年于丁 日牛鼻 百 牛，which might initially be translated, “Cracking on jiazhi (day 1).” Zheng divined: ‘In praying for harvest to Ding (?), we will cleave ten dappled cows and promise one hundred dappled cows.”

32 On the kuanshi style of transcription, see Qiu Xigui, “Buci ‘yi’ zhe Shi, Shu li de ‘shi’ zhe 卜辭‘異’字和詩, 書里的‘式’字,” Zhongguoyuwen xuebao 中國語言學報 1 (1982): 186, n. 1. For the scholarship on 萬 and 万, whose meanings are by no means certain, see Sōran 5085 and 0083. I provisionally transcribe oracle-bone 萬 as dao 萬, “pray (forth),” following the argument of Ji Xiaojun 經小軍, “Shuo jiagu wenzi zhong biao qiuju yi de hui zi—Jian tan hui yi fei jinwen cheshi mingcheng zhong de yongfa,” 説甲骨文中表祈求義的字—兼談 奚字在金文博名稱中的用法, Hubei daxue xuebao 湖北大學學報 911.1: 35–44, an article that appeared too late to be included at Sōran 1259, where many of the scholars cited read the graph as qiu 求, “seek, entreat.”
It is universally acknowledged that ding丁 (oracle-bone form □) when it appeared in ganzhi dating formulas referred to the ding-day; twenty-seven articles cited at Sōran 1683 read oracular □ in this way. When the ding stands alone, however, it can often be explained, as Qiu Xigui has argued, as a “Bin 寶 diviner group (Late)” reference to the preceding king, Wu Ding 武丁, divined in the generation of his sons, Zu Geng and Zu Jia.33 The ding evidently referred to “the Ding ancestor,” one not yet honored with a kin name like “Father.”34 Thus, it is probable—particularly because many of the charges were divined on the ding-day, or on the preceding bing-day, that HJ 339 and numerous similar charges transcribed at Y796.1, should be taken in this way:35 丙寅卜實貞: 壹丁問于孚(丁十), “Crack-making on bingyin (day 3), Bin divined: ‘On the next day, dingmào (day 4), make offering to (Father) Ding.” In this view, the charge of HJ 10116 above could also be understood as a prayer for harvest to the Ding-ancestor (i.e., Wu Ding). I find it anomalous, however, that it is only in the case of the supposed Ding-ancestor inscriptions that the temple name, Ding, is “naked” in this way, deprived of the kinship term, so that we are forced to guess the identity of the putative ancestor involved.36 This suggests to me that the ding, in this context, may not have referred to an ancestor at all.

Other scholars cited at Sōran 1683 have argued that the Shang engravers used □ to write the name of a ritual, which we should read as either beng 甀 or di 狐,37 this would permit a translation of HJ 10116 as “In praying for harvest at (the time of?) the beng (or di) ritual . . . ,” which I find unlikely because the yu 于 of 于□ is not usually used before a ritual (as opposed to a recipient) in this way.

Dissatisfied with the above interpretations, I now propose that, in some contexts, oracle-bone □ meant “day” or “sun,” pure and simple, and that the graph should be read not as ding丁 but as a graphic variant of oracle-bone □ (= ri 日, “day, sun”).38 This would permit a transcription and translation of HJ 10116, as 甲子卜事貞: 擾于日文十書 祀百牛, “Crack-making on jiazi (day 1), Zheng divined: ‘In praying for harvest to the sun, we will cleave ten dappled cows and promise one hundred dappled cows.’” Read in this way, the inscription records a major harvest prayer, offered to the sun (or suns) on the first day of the cycle (jiazi, day 1), in which ten cows were offered (one for each sun of the ten-day week?) and one hundred more were promised (ten for each sun?).39 This, and related inscriptions, if we read the graph □ as 日, throws new light on the attention that the Shang ritualists paid to the day or sun.40

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33 Qiu Xigui, “Lun ‘Li zu buci’ de shidai” 论‘梨祖卜辞’的時代, Guwenzi yanjiu 古文字研究 6 (1981): 263–321. See, in particular, Qiu’s discussion (pp. 308–9, 312) of Yucan 536 (= Cuibian 250 = HJ 22911 [Y400.2]). Qiu (pp. 312, 320 n. 47) cites HJ 1905–97 (which may readily be consulted in Moshi) as examples of this “ancestral Ding” in Bin-group inscriptions, with perhaps some early Chu 出 group included.

34 For numerous references to Wu Ding as Fu Ding 父丁, “Father Ding,” in the Chu-group divinations of his sons, see, e.g., the inscriptions recorded at Y1455.2–57.2.

35 But see the discussion of HJ 22618 on p. 523, below.

36 Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚 (Shang Zhou jiazu xingtai yanjiu 商周家族形态研究 [Tianjin: Xinhua, 1990], 56) has since proposed that, in the early Bin 寶 group divinations, Ding referred to Zu Ding 祖丁, and in the late Bin group divinations, to Wu Ding.

37 E.g., Zhang Bingquan 1957: 3.1.5, 1978: 460; Jin Xiangheng 1960a: 1.23, 25; Xu Jinxiang 1977: 27; Shima Kunio 1979: 396; Chang Yuzhi 1983: 245–47; and Chen Weizhan 1987: 86. In an earlier article, Chang Yuzhi (1980: 217) proposed that the beng was a special sacrifice offered to relatively close ancestors on the main line of descent. Sōran 1683 also cites readings, such as fang 方, proposed by other scholars.

38 I originally advanced this argument in “Oracle-Bone Inscriptions from the Homeland of the Chou,” a paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society, San Francisco (16 April 1980): 10, n. 9; I considerably develop the argument here. It is of interest that in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing “sun” and “day” were written with the same element; the dot-within-a-circle was a logograph for “sun,” and phonograms were added to distinguish the reading for “sun” from the reading for “day” (William G. Boltz, The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System, American Oriental Series 78 [New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1994], 76, 79, 102). As we shall see (page 523, below), the central line in the Shang graph □ may have served to specify that the □ was to be read 日, as ri not as ding.

39 Cf. HJ 1975 which, if we read □ as 日, involves the offering of ten cattle “to the sun” on a jia-day, jiazu (day 11).

As is generally known, the temple names of the ancestors and ancestresses were those of the ten suns and ten days—those days on which they received cult. Every ancestor and ancestress, accordingly, was associated, in the course of the ritual cycle, with one of the ten suns that rose in sequence during the Shang ten-day week. The association is inherent in the ambiguity of the word ri ‘day’ itself, which could mean “sun,” “day,” or both, that is, “the day over which a certain sun presided.” There is no reason to suppose that the Shang diviners clearly distinguished between “day” and “sun” on all occasions; the day was the domain of the sun and each ritual day was under the influence of a particular Sun Power. The reading of ri as “day,” however, would considerably increase the number of inscriptions that bear on this question.

Several pieces of evidence support the proposed new understanding of *HJ* 10116. First, it may be noted that the jiazi day of divination makes it unlikely (though not impossible) that cult to a Ding-named ancestor was being divined; ordinarily, such a divination would have taken place on a bing-day, the day immediately preceding the ding-day, or on the ding-day itself.42

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41 *Ri* meant “day” in all the calendrical divinations that involved phrases like jin ri 今日, “today” (Y425.2–26.1), mei ri 明日, “the whole day long” (Y215.1–16.2), yiri 昨日, “the next day” (Y703.2–5.2), or (zi) jin (ji) ri zhi (自)今(幾)日至……,” “from the present (nth) day down to……” (cases at Y987.2–89.1), and so on.

42 For example, a rough count of the “Ding” inscriptions *HJ* 1905–97 (see n. 33 above), transcribed in *Moshi*, indicates that the divination or the cult (as in *HJ* 1960) to the Ding figure took place on a ding-day in nine cases, on a bing-day in twelve cases (as in *HJ* 1916 and 1932f). The third most common day of divination (five cases) was yi zi (just two days before ding). Other days were used for these “Ding” divinations—jia (two cases), ji (one case), gen (four cases), xin (one case), and gui (one case), but it is clear that a majority (twenty-seven out of forty-one) of the inscriptions to which we can assign a day-date clustered on or on the day before the ding-day, precisely as one would expect if the cult were addressed to a Ding ancestor. One finds a very similar distribution in the Chu-group divinations about cult to “Father Ding” (see, e.g., the approximately 104 inscriptions whose *gan*-day of divination is recorded at Y1455.2–57.2); most were divined on bing- (thirty-one cases) or ding- (thirty-five cases) days.


44 For what appear to be prayers to Ding ancestors, none of which involved harvests, see too the ☐ entry at Y795.1.
day, dingwei 丁未 [day 44]), (we) will offer a lao."45 That in most if not all of these cases the first ding, the Ding (or other gan-stem) of the temple name, was not written separately but was written as a hewen 合文 combined graph form—so that 武□□□ was actually written 武□□□—provides further grounds for thinking that the Shang scribes easily distinguished the ding of the temple-name (the □□□ written as part of a hewen) from the ri of the day (the □□□ written independently).46

I would suggest, furthermore, that the Period i oracle-bone phrase 武□□□, which most scholars (as at Y402.1) have read as 丁示, “the Ding altar stand (or ancestor),” should, in appropriate contexts, be read as 日示 and that the phrase meant “the altar stand (or ancestor) of the day (or sun).” Thus the charge, HJ 14906f (Y402.1), 不隹示害卑, instead of being read as 不隹丁示害卑, “It is not the Ding altar (or ancestor stand) that is harming Bi,” should be read as 不隹日示害卑, “It is not the ancestor of the day that is harming Bi.” Many of these inscriptions record no ganzhi date for the divination,47 but one exception, from Period ii, is suggestive: HJ 34125 (Y402.1), 庚辰貞: 其奏日示于□□□。It is unlikely (though certainly not impossible) that the Shang would have been divining on gengchen (day 17) about an offering to “the Ding ancestor,” an offering that presumably would not have been offered until the next ding-day, dinghai (day 24), eight days (counting inclusively à la Shang) in the future. I would propose instead: “Crack-making on gengchen, divined: ‘We will present (or make offering to?) the ancestor of the day at . . .’

My justification for reading oracle-bone □ as 日 rather than as 丁, 戄 or 摬, etc., in certain contexts, is supported by three additional kinds of evidence. First, it is clear that in a number of Period i inscriptions, □ was used—either deliberately or as a result of scribal haste—to write 日, the standard Shang graph for writing the word, ri 日, for “day” or “sun.” The JGWB entry 0806 for ri 日 includes one case (Yicun 425) in which the oracle-bone graph was written □ and not 日; Li Xiaodong, Jiagu wenzi jishi (note 24 above), had provided three more.48 Similarly, the Sóran entry 0806 for ri 日 includes a □ graph form—a diamond-shaped enclosure with no central line or dot, as another way in which the Shang wrote the word for “day” or “sun.” There are at least two instances of this usage. (1) The fragmentary Buci 536 (recorded at JGWB 0806): 日未: 今日不□□□, which, agreeing with the modern transcription provided by Rong Gong, the Buci editor, I would read as 日未: 今日不□□□, “. . .divined: ‘Today (we) will not. . .’” (2) The fragmentary Jianshou 47.5 (recorded at Jiagu wenzi jishi, p. 2173; = HJ 33013 [Y1054.1]); although the correct reading of the inscription is uncertain, the phrase 昔□□□ must surely be read as 日□□□, “on the next day.”49

For additional examples of □ occurring in contexts where, with varying degrees of certainty, it should be read as 日, consider:50

HJ 28461: 今日辛王其田亡灾 (Y728.2), which the Leizuan editors, in this case taking □ as 日, render as 今日辛 . . . . , thus: “Today, in the king hunts, there will be no disasters.” Notice that in this case,

45 For similar cases, see HJ 35858, 35932, 35934, 39535, etc. (Y797.1–2), involving gui-day divinations about cult to or on 祖甲□□□; the reading of 祖甲□□□, “On the day of Zu Jia,” makes far better sense than the 祖甲丁□□□ given by the Leizuan and Moshi editors.
46 HJ 35832 provides a possible exception, but even in this case, where the spacing suggests that Wu Ding (i.e., oracular 武□□□) was written as two independent graphs, the □□□ of Wu Ding is considerably smaller than the following □□□ (= □□□ in my view), yet another indication that the second □□□ was to be read differently than the first.
47 Mochii Yasutaka 柴井康考 (“In 〇chô no kôzô ni kansuru ichi shiron” 興王室の構造に関する一試論. Tôyô bunka kenkyûjo kiyô 東洋文化研究所紀要 82 [1980]: 64–88) has identified a group of approximately 220 “Ding lineage” (dingzui 丁族) inscriptions, all carved on turtle plastrons, excavated mainly from YH251 and 330. He identifies (p. 75, n. 22) the 丁示 as ancestors who sent down troubles on the Shang.
48 Once again, the Leizuan entry is deficient; Shima (S286.1) provides eighteen inscriptions containing the phrase 武□□□; Leizuan (Y402.1) provides only thirteen. More seriously, the Leizuan editors also break Shima’s Yibian 8696 and 8861 inscriptions (HJ 22289 and 22290) in two, thus removing the day of divination, dinghai, from the entry. In these two cases, and assuming, with Shima, that the ding-date preface was linked to the 武□□□ of the charge, the 武□□□ could well be read as 丁示 “Ding ancestor(s)” who were being addressed on a ding-day. These two inscriptions, in fact, form part of Mochii’s “Ding lineage” group (n. 47 above).
49 Qianbian 1.5.6, Houbian 1.12.3, and Jianshou 47.5, reproduced at Jiagu wenzi jishi, 2173.
50 The Leizuan editors’ understanding of these two characters as 丁□□□ is challenged by the numerous cases of □□□ used in similar contexts at Y1054.1. I note that Dong Zuobin 董作賓 (“Shangdai guibu zhi tuice” 商代龜卜之推測. Anyang fajue baogao 安陽發掘報告 [Beiping, 1929], 1: 121) read the phrase in this inscription as 丁□□□. See too the discussion of the same phrase in HJ 30757 and 27440 below.
51 In the discussion that follows, I use the □□□ generically to indicate various oblong, diamond, or oval shapes that, despite the precise shape of the perimeter, all lack any central line or dot.
it would be impossible to render the 易 as 丁辛 because the combination jin gan gan 今干干 (i.e., 今丁辛) never occurs.

HJ 2987: 不其易□ has to be read as 不其易日 (which is, in fact, how the Leizuan [Y1291.1] and Moshi editors both mistranscribe the oracle-bone form of the charge as 易□ rather than 易□): “May not change to (or give) sun.”52 For over four hundred fifty cases of inscriptions containing the phrase 易日, see Y1190.2–96.2. There is no doubt that in this case, □ must be read as 日.53

HJ 30757: 甲辰卜狄貞: 王其田羌翌□乙亡災. The Moshi editors, who usually transcribe □ as 丁 do not do so in this case—for a reading of 翌丁乙 would make no sense—but provide instead, 翌日乙, thus: “Crack-making on jiachen (day 41). Fu divined: ‘The king will hunt and it should be done on the next day, yi (i.e., yisi [day 42]); there will be no disasters.’”54

HJ 20441: 今□方征□. The Moshi editors transcribe this fragmentary inscription as □今□方征□ “... on the present ding-day the Fang will invade ...”, but it is more plausible to transcribe it as □今□方征□ “... today the Fang will invade ...”.55

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52 For the scholarship on 易, which, in this context, scholars generally read in the sense of “change” to sunny weather or “confer (易 = xi 錢 or ci 贛)” sunny weather, see Sörnä 1150.
53 As Tsung-tung Chang (Der Kult der Shang-Dynastie, 64, n. 3) remarks of this inscription (which he translates as Xubian 2.7.4): “v ist hier eine Variante von □ = Sonne.”
54 For the similar 翌日干 date pattern, see HJ 27440: 父甲蹋翌日辛□ (Y703.2), “In the gui-cutting sacrifice to Father Jia, it should be on the next day, xin, that (we) perform the you-cutting sacrifice.” This particular charge has no preface to indicate the day it was divined. However, the charge directly below it on this scapula fragment, about offering the gui-cutting sacrifice to Ancestral Mother Xi (妣辛), was divined on gengwu (day 7). It is likely, therefore, that the charge about offering the same gui-cutting sacrifice to Father Jia was divined on the same day, so that “the next day, xin” would indeed have been xinwei (day 8). For the reading of oracle-bone sui 歲 as gui 録, see Wen Shaofeng and Yuan Tingdong (1983: 5, 60, 95) as cited at Sörnä 0161. Curiously this Sörnä entry omits the earlier scholarship, including Takashima Kenichi’s own lengthy discussion of the word in “Nominalization and Nominal Derivation with Particular Reference to the Language of the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions,” Papers in East Asian Languages (Univ. of Hawaii) 2 (1984): 33, 58–63, even though that work (though misdated to 1985) is included in the Sörnä bibliography.
55 Cf. HJ 20412: ...今日方征... 20413: 方其征, 今日不征 (both at Y1209.1, where other variants also support the 今日方征). For another case in which □ has to be read as 日, consider HJ 12527, 戊子卜卯貞: 今□, whose charge the Leizuan editors transcribe at Y728.1 as 今□雨, “On the present ding-day it will rain.” Because jin before a gan-date usually refers to the same “present” day as the day of divination (in this case, the wuzi [day 25] of the preface), this is an unlikely reading. It is all the more unlikely because the next ding-day would have been dingyou 丁酉 (day 34), which would have fallen, not in the current, but in the next ten-day week. Jin 今 was always used as a prefix for days in the same week as the week of divination; if the day fell in a coming week, then the prefix before the ganzi date was always lāi 来.56 This inscription, accordingly, has to be read as 戊子卜貞: 今□雨, “Crack-making on wuzi (day 25), Mao divined: ‘Today it will rain.’”57

The phrases chu ri 出日, “the rising sun,” or ru ri 入日, “the setting sun,” or chu ru ri, “the rising and setting sun,” are common.58 On one scapula fragment, Tunnan 2615, however, we find two charges in which a □ has to be read as 日 (as the transcriptions at Y427.2 and the Tunnan commentary both do): 其卯□天□上甲□午, “We will split open (victims to the) setting sun (出日), in the gui-cutting sacrifice (note 54 above) ... to Shang Jia (offer) two cattle”; 其□□□□牛, “In the gui-cutting sacrifice to the rising and setting sun (出日), split open four cattle.” It may be remarked that we find here the same kind of attention to mathematical proportions observed in the case of HJ 10116 (page 518, above); there, one head of cattle was offered for each...
sun of the ten-day week; in *Tunnnan* 2615, we find two head for the setting sun, and four head (i.e., two head each) for the rising and setting sun. The incantatory phrase, *mei ri wang zai* 溝日亡災, “the whole day will be without disasters,” that ended a number of charges (Y1215.2–16.2), was on at least two occasions, *HJ* 28512 (Y1215.2) and 29313 (Y1216.1), written 洞口亡災.

In a limited number of Period *v* inscriptions, we find 亅 written in place of the expected 甲 (for 亅). Thus, given a standard formula such as *HJ* 35446 (Y1288.2), 乙酉卜貞: 王寳報乙 甲日亡尤, “Crack-making on *yijou* (day 22), divined: ‘The king hosts Bao Yi and performs the *yong-day* ritual; there will be no fault’,” we find variants like *HJ* 35621 (Y1289.1) (= *Cuibian* 208, S494.1). 亅卜貞: 乙呂 亅 甲日亡尤, which Guo Moruo, in his commentary to *Cuibian* 208, reconstructs as [己未]卜貞: [王寶]呂己 甲日亡尤, “Crack-making on *jiwei* (day 56), divined: ‘[The king hosts] Lu Ji and performs the *yong-day* ritual; there will be no fault.’”60 In this case, the usual 甲 亅 was written 甲 亅; Guo Moruo transcribed the 亅 as 甲 without comment.

Second, the Shang engravers not infrequently wrote the 甲 element in complex, multi-component graphs as 亅, that is, with an enclosure lacking the central line, dash, or dot. I cite only three out of many possible examples.61

The oracle-bone graph for *zhong* 众, “the many” (dependent laborers in the king’s service), was usually drawn as 众, a picture of three men under the sun (Guo Moruo 1952 [1954]: 9). In a number of cases, however—see Sôran 1033 and, for better examples, *JGWB* 1033—it was also written 众, with the 甲 element replaced by a 亅.

The oracle-bone graph for *dan* 旦 was usually written with a 甲 over a 亅, but there are at least five cases in which it was written with a 亅 over a 甲.62

The *hewen*, combined-graph form for “today,” composed of the elements *jin* 今 over *ri* 亅, was also written with *今* over 亅. Similarly, in the combined-graph form for “this evening,” composed of the elements *jin* 今 over *xi* 夕, the *xi* might either be written 夕 or 夕. This is further evidence, in fact, that, in the graph for “sun/day,” as in the graph for “moon/night,” the presence of the central line was not critical to the way the word was written or to its sense.64

Indeed, it is a strong confirmation of my argument about the interchangeability of 甲 and 亅 that both oracle-bone *yue* 月 or *xi* 夕 might be written either 夕 or 夕, with the presence of the central line having no semantic impact.65

Third, the standard reading of 亅 as 亅 not infrequently raises problems about the coherence of the cult schedule (as in the case of *HJ* 10116 discussed on pages 518–19, above). The problem may be considered in the following five charges:

己酉卜貞: 來告方征于尋隴則告于亅, “Crack-making on *yijou* (day 46), Bin divined: ‘(Someone) having come to report that the Fang are invading at Xun, in making the libation and cutting-sacrifice (we) will make ritual report to Ding (?).’” (HJ 6672) 乙巳卜: 于告于牛, “Crack-making on *jisi* (day 6): ‘In making ritual-report to Ding (?), (offer) one cow.’” (HJ 32650)

癸酉卜: 其告于牛一, “Crack-making on *guyou* (day 10): ‘In making ritual-report to Ding (?), (offer) cows, one.’” (HJ 32649)

癸酉卜亦貞: 上甲升隂其告于牛一, “Crack-making on *guyou* (day 10), Ji divined: ‘At the Shang Jia

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60 For similar cases involving the *yong-day* ritual in which the expected 甲 was written with a 亅, see *HJ* 35537 (Y1288.2) = *Qianbian* 1.5.6 (S494.2); *HJ* 35493 (Y 1288.2) = *Yizhu* 248 (S494.3), where the rubbing is clearer; *Nanbei*, “Fang” 4.436 (S493.4). *Jimbun* 2567 (= *HJ* 36228) and *Xucun* 1.2318 (both S494.2) may also use 亅 instead of 甲, but the characters are unclear. In all these cases, readers are urged to consult the original rubbings and not rely upon the transcriptions found in *Y* or *Moshi*, which often write 甲 where the Shang scribe had written 亅.

61 For other examples of multi-component graphs in which the sun element lacked the central line, see *JGWB* or *Sôran* 0728, 0808, 0810, 0812, 0815, 0821, 3288, etc.

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62 *JGWB* 0823; cf. the three cases reproduced at *Sôran* 0823.

63 *Yizhu* 402 and *Tongzuan*, “Bie,” 2.10.3, as reproduced at *JGWB* 2318.

64 At least two of the six 月 graphs reproduced at *JGWB* 2319, the *jin* 今 亅 entry, lack the central, vertical line in 亅.

65 See 0837 and 0845 in *JGWB* and *Sôran*; the entries in *Sôran* record that Yu Xingwu (1979a: 449–50) argued that, for periods i to iv (as he understood them; see n. 7 above), 月 was written 夕 and 亅 was written 亅, with the situation reversed in Period v. Chen Weizhan (1980: 75–79), however, found that the graphs for 月 and 亅 were interchangeable.
presentation of the cut-up (victims), we will make ritual-report to Ding (?) and (use) one cow.” (HJ 22676; Y248.2)

It seems unlikely that the Shang would have performed a ritual report to a Ding ancestor on a ji-day (as in the first two cases) or on a gui-day (the next case), or on a jia-day (the last two cases), rather than on a ding-day. I conclude that in all these cases the recipient of the ritual report was the sun or ancestor of that particular day. The fourth charge, for example, should thus be translated: “At the Shang Jia presentation of the cut-up (victims), we will make ritual-report to the sun (using) one cow.” And the last charge becomes: “On the next day, jia-yin, we will make offering to the sun (using) one cow.”

In short, I conclude that oracle-bone ink was polyphonic, sometimes, given the epigraphic conventions of the time, standing for the word ding, sometimes for the word ri. Takashima, responding to an earlier draft of this article, agrees that, in the case of the ink and ink graphs the central line had no semantic impact:

If anything, the addition of the central line to ink, when in fact done, was for the phonetic reason, i.e., the line, yi - (*jīt or *jīt), served as what I refer to as a “quasi-phonetic” indicator. Ri i was pronounced like *jīt. Though the initial consonants (glottal stop vs. dental nasal) do not agree (thus “quasi-phonetic”), the finals agree perfectly. Presumably, this would clearly disambiguate ding or tring, or tring, from oi, or, *jīt, but apart from the orthographical care which some scribes exercised, the graph for all intents and purposes could have been written as ink to express the word i, rather than ink.

The proposed understanding of oracle-bone ink, as suggested by many of the examples cited above, also encourages me, in one final example, to reinterpret at least thirty-five Period v charges (see, e.g., Y755.2 [spanning HJ 36076–36160], Y1431.2–32.1 [spanning HJ 36094–36151]) that involve the formula: “ancestor name + 宗 + ink + an offering,” as in HJ 36076 (Y755.2): 甲子卜贞：武乙宗口其詔。If one reads the ink as 丁, as the Lei- zuan editors do, I cannot translate the charge. Reading the ink as beng 衍 (see note 37) leads to a translation of: “Crack-making on jiazi (day 1), divined: ‘(In) the Wu Yi ancestral temple, in performing the beng-ritual, (we) will offer a pennied cow.’” As I have earlier proposed (in the paper cited in note 38), I believe that in such cases 宗 should be read not as “ancestral temple” but as “ancestor,” so that the received translation of the charge could be amended to: “(To) the Wu Yi ancestor, in performing the beng-ritual, (we) will offer a pennied cow.” The divination, it may be noted, was performed on the jia-day, one day before Wu Yi would have received cult, on his yi-day (in this case, yichou, day 2). I propose, however, that in all these cases, the ink should be understood as 日, written without the central line or dot. The translation of 武乙宗日其詔 would thus become: “On the day of the Wu Yi ancestor (i.e., the next day), we

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67 Chang Yuzhi 常玉芝 (“Bengji” buci shidai de zai bianxi) ’初祭’卜辭時代的再辨析, in Jiaoge wan yin Shang shi: Di er ji 甲骨文與殷商史. 第二輯, ed. Hu Houxuan 胡厚宜 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986], 161–62) quotes twenty charges of this form; in each the heavenly stem of the temple-name is the stem of the day that followed the day of divination. Chang concludes (p. 181) that, on the basis of these and related divinations, the Period v (Huang-group) inscriptions definitely included inscriptions from the reign of Wen Ding (Period tvb in Dong Zuobin’s system). Chang also notes (p. 181, n. B, that Dong Zuobin had read ink as 日, but she gives no reference. Perhaps she is referring to Dong’s transcription cited in n. 50 above; it should be noted, however, that at Sōran 1683, Dong (1951) is quoted as reading the word as 方 = 衍.

68 This, in fact, is precisely the way that Akatsuka Kiyoshi 赤塚信 (Chūgoku kodai no shūkyō to bunka: In ōhō no sai-shi 中國古代的宗教と文化—殷朝の祭祀 [Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1967], 632) transcribed this particular inscription, Buci 267, but with no explanation as to why he read ink as 日.
will offer a penned cow,” or, perhaps, “To the sun of the Wu Yi ancestor, we will offer a penned cow.”

The above discussion, facilitated by the ease of reference and consultation that the three books under review permit, bears on the nature of elite religion in early China, for it reveals, more explicitly than has yet been possible, the way in which the Late Shang ritualists directed their concerns to the Power, whether ancestral or solar, that was thought to preside over each day. Harvest prayers were addressed to the sun (HJ 10116);

attention was paid to offering cult “on the day of” or “to the sun of” particular ancestors (the approximately one hundred twenty cases like HJ 33832; and the thirty-five plus cases like HJ 36076); reference was made to “the ancestor of the day” (HJ 14906f); two more charges (on Tunnan 2615) can be added to the number of divinations involving cult of the rising and setting sun; and it is possible that ritual reports were made to the suns of particular days (HJ 6672, 32650, 32649, 22676).

Whether this excursus into the □ graphs and the words they recorded will find favor with my peers remains to be seen, but if and when a new edition of Sōran appears, it ought to include a reference, under entry no. 1683, to this article, an article that I will, I hope, have demonstrated the power and usefulness of the research tools that Matsumaru Michio and Takashima Kenichi, Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding, together with their collaborators, have provided for the field. We are all much in their debt.

71 Lian Shaoming (letter of 21 December 1995) has raised the legitimate objection that in these cases I can cite no instance in which the phrase was actually written with an □ rather than a □. This is true; I can only reply that by Period v the calligraphy had become so minuscule that the engravers might have consistently saved a stroke when the context permitted them to do so.