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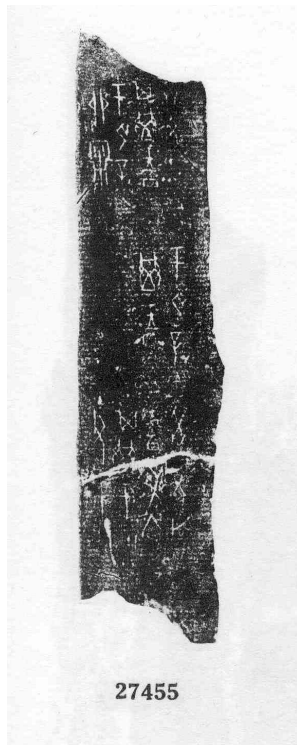
On the Shang period designation ‘Ding’ 丁

Jiaguwen Heji 27455 (=Yinxu buci zongshu 殷虛卜辭綜述 23.11) is a divination record of considerable interest. When considered in light of the recent discovery of the prolific oracle-bone corpus from Huayuanzhuang¹ its importance is even more spectacular.

Within the recently published HYZ corpus, there is living man repeatedly called by the designation *Ding* 丁. *Ding* is recorded as having his own *zu* 族² (294.1), organizing a military expedition against the Shao territory (HYZ 275, 449), and leading rituals and sacrifices to royal ancestors such as Da Jia 大甲(34.4, 169.1) and his father Xiao Yi 小乙 (34, 37). He issues commands to the patron of the HYZ corpus *Zi*, one of which includes Fu Hao (475.9), as well as bestowing gifts to him such as servitors and millet (257, 416). These examples are sufficient to argue that this man is none other than the reigning king, Wu Ding. There is an immediate problem to be addressed, however---How should we understand the designation *Ding*? Below is rubbing and transcription of HJ 27455:

¹ ZSKY [Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo]中國社會科學院考古研究所. *Yinxu Huayuanzhuang dong di jiagu* 殷墟花園莊東地甲骨, six volumes. Yunnan Renmin chubanshe 雲南人民出版社, 2003.

² K.C. Chang, *Shang Civilization*. Yale University Press, 1980, p. 164-165, says, “The oracle bone character for *zu* (wade-giles to pinyin) 族 has two elements, a flag above and an arrow below. Ding Shan’s interpretation, that it originally signified a military unit, is generally accepted. In ancient China the association of flags with military units is well known, and in oracle bone inscriptions *zu* are shown to be action units in military campaigns. ...But military action was only one of the functions of the *zu*..., and composition was apparently based on kinship.”



27455.(1)癸丑卜：王丁黍入，其登于父甲。

(2)于妣辛登王丁。

(3)癸丑卜：其登王丁于妣辛，卯牢。

There is no consensus on the transcription offered above. For record (1), Hu Houxuan's *Jiaguwen shiwen* omits the graph 王, transcribes 丁 as 日, and 黍 as 𪛗 (喪). In place of the graph 黍, Yao Xiaosui and Xiao Ding's *Yinxu jiagu keci moshi zongji* 殷墟甲骨刻辭摹釋總集 reads 稭. All stand in agreement as to the transcription of (2) and (3). The transcription offered above is taken from Lian Shaoming's article

《關於商代稱謂的幾個問題》 published in *Yindu xuekan* 殷都學刊(1999.3). Lian offers the following analysis:

這是一版卜祭日的卜辭。‘妣辛’‘父甲’代指祀典中二人的法定祭日。

‘王丁’的最大可能是武丁。‘王丁’和‘帝丁’的意義是相近的，《說文》：

“帝，諦也。王天下之號。”

Although I agree with Lian’s transcription, I disagree with his explanation of ‘Wang Ding’ (‘Our Majesty, Ding’). He says ‘Wang Ding’ is referring to P. 1 king Wu Ding. *Jiaguwen Heji fenzu fenlei zongbiao* 甲骨文合集分組分類總表 registers 27455 as a Li-No Name transition type 歷無名簡類 inscription.³ Since these inscriptions are for the most part dated in P.3, should we use Lian’s explanation ‘Wang Ding’ would have to be referring to someone deceased.

Rather, I think that ‘Fu Jia’ (Father Jia) refers to Kang Ding’s father, known from P.4 inscriptions onwards as ‘Grandfather Jia’, while ‘Bi Xin’ (Grandmother Xin) ought to be referring to Wu Ding’s spouse ‘Fu Hao’. Although Li-No Name transition type inscriptions can be as early as P.2 (the reigns of Wu Ding’s sons Zu Geng/Zu Jia) the reference to ‘Father Jia’ would rule out any possibility. Our view is strengthened by the Kang Ding 康丁 period inscriptions at HJ 27364, which offers cult to both ‘Father Jia’ and ‘Elder Brother Xin 兄辛’ (Lin Xin 廩辛), and *Zhuixin* 609, (rejoined from HJ 28276 + 28278) which does the same to the ‘Young Majesty Father Ji 小王父己’ (Xiao Ji) and ‘Father Jia’. Once we know that 27455 is a Kang Ding period inscription, we must reconsider the designation ‘our Majesty Ding,’ which I would suggest reading as representing the living reigning king. Compare the record from HYZ cited below:

³Huang Tianshu 黃天樹, *Yinxu Wang buci fenlei yu duandai* 殷墟王卜辭分類與斷代. Kexue chubanshe, (rpt.) 2006.

HYZ 416.4 庚寅：歲匕（妣）庚小𦍋，登自丁黍。

Chen Jian has already written an article⁴ substantiating the reading of the above as:

Gengyin day: (We) will perform a *sui*-sacrifice⁵ (to) grandmother Geng (consisting of) a small penned sheep, (as well as) offering in a *dou*-vessel millet received from *Ding*.

Comparing the two inscriptions at HJ 27455 and HYZ 416 we see that they are similar. HJ 27455.1 is inquiring about whether or not to offer “millet submitted from our Majesty, *Ding*” to Father Jia with the emphasis being on the recipient not the commodity. The day after *guichou* is *jiayin*---the divination is being enacted one day in advance, which would rule out any understanding of *ding* 丁 recorded in the charge as a date notation. 27455.2 asks whether or not to wait and use the millet for grandmother Xin instead. Here, as in 27455.3, 王丁黍入 is abbreviated 王丁 but the meaning is no doubt the same. HYZ records a similar abbreviated writing:

HYZ 29.1 丙寅卜：其禦唯賈視馬于癸子，惠一伐、一牛、一鬯，𦍋夢。用。

HYZ 259.2: 辛巳卜：子惠賈視用逐。用。獲一鹿。

HYZ 29.1 records 賈視馬 ‘Trader Shi’s horses’ while HYZ 259.2 has only 賈視 “Trader Shi”. Lin Yun has already pointed out that the latter writing is simply an abbreviated writing of 賈視馬⁶, which shows that it is possible to abbreviate 王丁黍 in this way.

⁴Chen Jian 陳劍, “Shuo Huayuanzhang Dongdi jiagu buci de ‘Ding’”說花園莊東地甲骨卜辭的‘丁’. *Gugong Bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊, 2004.4:51-63.

⁵ *sui*: Wu Qichang 吳其昌: “者殷代祭名之一也。其原始之本義，乃斧鉞之象形也...斧鉞可以刑牲，故‘歲’字引申之義為刑牲...戊刑為也” (*Yinxu shuqi jiegu* 殷虛書契解詁, Wuhan daxue chubanshe, rpt. 2008: 23-24).

Now let's turn to the word *ru* 入. The *Shuowen* defines it as "納", which is glossed in classical commentaries as *jingong* 进貢. Aside from occurrences as a place/lineage name (=Nei 内/芮), *ru* is used in Shang language as a verb. It is most commonly found in archival notations which record the origin and administrative processing of shells and bones sent in from subject lineages/localizations and earmarked for royal use.⁷ Within a royal divination charge 王卜辭, the verb *ru* can be used in an active voice:

HJ 23652[乙巳]卜疑貞：肩其入。王曰：“入。”允入。

(Yi inquiring: (We) anticipate that Jian will make a submission. Majesty said, “(He) will make a submission.” (He) really did make a submission.)

Yi 3318 王入于商。

(Our Majesty will enter into Shang.)

On *fei wang buci* 非王卜辭, oracular inscriptions patronized by some one other than the king, 入 is a high-frequency verb used in the below charges, inquiring what the main subject *Zi* will submit to *Ding*.

HYZ 38.4 壬卜：子其入麇⁸、牛于丁。

(Ren day divination: (We) anticipate that our Lord will submit a *zhi*-beast, and a bovine to *Ding*.)

⁶"Hua dong Zi buci suo jian renwu yanjiu"花東子卜辭所見人物研究, in *Lin Yun xueshu wenji* (2)林芸學術文集 (二). Kexue chubanshe 科學出版社, 2008.

⁷ Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, "Wu Ding shi wu zhong jishi keci kao"武丁時五種記事刻辭考. *Jiagu xue Shang shi luncong chujii* 甲骨學商史論叢初集, Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, (rpt.) 2000:343-454.

⁸ 《說文解字》麇：解麇，獸也。似山牛，一角；Rong Geng's *Jinwenbian* 金文編 places this graph in 《馬部》；for recent critique and discussion, see Bai Bing 白冰, *Qingtongqi mingwen yanjiu: Bai Chuanjing jinwen xue zhuzuo de chengjiu yu shushi* 青銅器銘文研究：百川靜金文學著作的成就與疏失. Xuelin chubanshe 學林出版社, 2007:302-308.

HYZ 124.7 戊卜：子入二弓。

(Wu divination: Our Lord will submit two bows.)

HYZ 36.3 不其獸（狩），入商。在末（沫）。

(If (we) do not hunt, (then) (we) shall enter Shang. At Mei.

Although 入 is usually translated as “to enter”, or “to submit,” it is common for early Chinese verbs to possess a bi-directional function, I.e. 授受 (to give/to receive), 教学 (to teach/to learn), 享 (to offer sacrifices/to be given blessings); therefore, 入 “to submit” or “to place in” can also have the passive meaning of “to be taken in/placed in/brought in”.

HYZ 84.1 羌入，惠[妾][索]用，若，侃。用。

(As the Qiang-prisoners have been taken in, it should be the bound female *qie*-servants who are used. May this be favored, and may it please (recipient unstated). It was used.

It is my opinion that HJ 27455 should be grouped as a *fei wang* inscription. Such inscriptions do exist from this period.⁹ However, still the most evident indicator is that hitherto the designation *ding* 丁 has only appeared on Zi-group inscriptions.

Translation of HJ 27455:

HJ 27455 translation: (1) Guichou day divination: As for the millet donated by our Majesty *Ding*, it shall be offered in a *dou*-vessel to Father Jia.

(2) To Grandmother Xin our Majesty *Ding*'s [millet] shall be offered in a *dou*-vessel.

(3) Guichou divination: (We) shall offer in a *dou*-vessel our Majesty Ding's [millet] to Grandmother Xin, and split open a penned bovine.

An Expanded Conclusion:

That our Majesty *Ding* is referring to the living reigning king is of paramount importance. As the charge records the possibilities of offering *shu*-millet received from the king to royal ancestors, it is evident that the patron of HJ 27455 is a member of the royal lineage. In a recent article on this subject Qiu Xigui believes that *ding* 丁 ought to be read as *di* 帝. He argues that within the OBI all former kings of the direct line could be called by this designation, and so, the current reigning king as the head of the royal ancestral line could also be called it as well. Furthermore, Qiu continues by pointing out that the phenomenon of referring to the king as *di* should be related to the nomenclature and organization within a traditional lineage system which separates *di* 嫡 'the head male of the direct line' and *shu* 庶 'the heads of branch lines'. He concludes that the reason the word *ding* is used to represent *di* is most probably to delineate it from the word 上帝.¹⁰

Although not unreasonable, Qiu's argument has not gained wide acceptance. Adam Smith, for one, believes that it is mainly due to phonological incongruity.¹¹ Recently I have found evidence to support a new interpretation of the appellation *Ding*. The inscription on the rediscovered *Ji Ji fangzun* 《季姬方尊

⁹ Most notably the Period 3-4 bone inscriptions found at the Western Locus of Xiaotun in 1971; see Zhu Fenghan 朱凤瀚, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu* (revised ed.) 商周家族形态研究, Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2004.

¹⁰ Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, "'HuaDong Zi buci" he "Zi zu buci" zhong zhi cheng Wu Ding de "Ding" keneng jiugai du wei "Di" "花東子卜辭和子組卜辭中指稱武丁的丁可能就該讀為帝", in *Huang Shengzhang xiansheng ba zhi huadan jinian wenji* 黃盛璋先生八秩華誕紀年文集, Zhongguo jiaoyu wenhua chubanshe, 2005.

¹¹ Adam Smith, "Writing at Anyang: The role of the divination record in the emergence of Chinese literacy", (Dissertation, UCLA), 2008:208-209.




》¹², a Western Zhou Mu Wang period vessel, offers linguistic evidence that Shang language used 'ding' when referring to the 'leader' or 'head' of a group, while Zhou language used *shi* 师. **Before setting out a translation and analysis of this inscription* (now to be done at the conference)**, I will first offer a brief review of the composition and original meaning of *ding* 丁 and its related words.

In modern Chinese usage the word 丁 *ding* (端母耕部), aside from its position as the 4th heavenly stem and a lineage name, most commonly refers to some thing in a T-shape because of its *Shuowen* →modern form, which is etymologically related to the word 'nail' 釘子, as in 丁字街, 丁字梁. My Chinese dictionary says: 金文象俯视所见的钉头之形,小篆象侧视的钉形。本义:钉子。 Although meats can be cut in a *ding*-shape (square cubes), i.e. 鸡丁肉丁, Xinjiang people eat a type of noodle called 丁丁面 which is cut in a T-shape. *Ding* is used as an adj. in the compound 丁壮 'strong/robust.' *Ding* also is used as a word for a "grown man" 人丁, 白丁; in generic appellations, or occupational titles, the famous cook in Zhuangzi's *Dazong shi* is still called 庖丁 "man (/head) of the kitchen", while a gardener can be called 园丁. When taking the semantic classifier 頁/首, *ding* means 'top of head' =('highest'), as in the words 顶好, 顶楼, 顶级, 山顶, 屋顶, 头顶. As a measure word 顶 is used with 'hat' because of its root meaning, what is related to the top of the head.. *Ding* 丁 also carries a pronunciation of *zheng* when used in the onomonpeia 丁丁 *ding zheng*, which can be used when refering to the sound of classical instruments like the 古筝.

¹² 《文物》2003.9; also see article by Li Xueqin, "Ji Ji fangzun yanjiu 季姬方尊研究," in *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 中國史研究, 2003.4.

Paleographically, the shape of the graph is said by Tang Lan to represent the pictograph of the 'head' of a

metal nail or tack (modern: 钉子).¹³ The earliest graphic forms show a top profile:  (Jia 2329)

 (Yi 9083), while later forms show a side profile  (bamboo text, Warring States period, Baoshan 4),  (seal, Warring States period state of Yan, Erhui 1688).

The *Ji Ji fangzun* records, "君命宰蒞賜弗季姬畋臣于空桑。厥师傅曰丁。". Li Xueqin has already pointed out the relationship between the word *ding* 丁, *zhang* 长 and the *Zhouli* administrative title 闾胥.¹⁴ In the *Zhouli* 长, 师, 正, 胥 are all synonyms used to designate the 'leader' or 'head' of a group of people. What interests me the most here is the use of the word *zheng* 正 (章母耕部).

There have been many discussions concerning the the original meaning and composition of the graph *zheng*, which is derived from the components 正 and 止.¹⁵ It is my opinion that *ding* is functioning as a phonetic-etymonic and *zhi* is a semantic classifier. In the OBI *zheng* has the following meanings: (1) The calendrical notation *zheng yue* 正月 "the first month of the year," which most clearly preserves a meaning of *zheng* as "the top/first/leader (of the months/year)"; (2) in administrative titles: *yu zheng* 御正 (HYZ 37, 63), *chen zheng* 臣正 (see *Zongshu*, p.503) . The use of *zheng* 'head/leader' in these titles is still seen in the the *Zhouli* administrative titles *dangzheng* 党正, *jiuzheng* 酒正, *xuanzheng* 县正, 校正,


¹³Tang Lan 唐蘭, "Shi 'ding'"釋丁, *Yinxu wenzi ji* 殷虛文字記, 1978.

¹⁴Li says, "其名“丁”之长即《周礼》的闾胥; *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Zhang Yujin 張玉金, "Yinxu jiaguwen "zheng" zi kaoshi 殷虛甲骨文“正”字考釋", in *2004 nian Anyang Yin-Shang wenming guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 安阳殷商文明国际学术研讨会论文集, Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 社会科学文献出版社, 2004.

马正, etc.¹⁶; (3) in weather divinations concerning rain, or in the coda of divination charges where it functions as an adjective. Zhang Yujin glosses 正 in this context as *dang* 當 (modern adj. 正當)¹⁷, meaning "appropriate". In WS bamboo manuscripts *dang* 當 is written as *shang* 尚 "the highest". Both are cognates of *tang* 堂 which Tang Lan has already analyzed as being related semantically to *gao* 高 "high" and *jing* 京 "a raised structure".¹⁸ (4) As a verb meaning "to lead a military expedition".

When talking about compound uses combining the radical 丁, the Shang word *tian* 天 (真部) is of significant interest. Peter Boodberg said, "The dot on top of 大 in the old graphs for 天...is, in our belief, 'phonetic-etymonic' and stands for the archaic word now represented by *dian* 顛 'forehead,' 'top,' the –*ng* variant of which is reflected in *ding* 頂 'top of the head' <*tieng*."¹⁹ This explanation can be verified by

HJ 20975 (Shi 師-group) where 天 is written  in the divination charge: 庚寅[卜], 王[貞]: 弗疾朕天. Yu Xingwu 于省吾 said, "天字上部○或●即古丁字, 也即人之颠顶之顶字的初文. 前文的弗疾朕天, 是占卜人之颠顶有无疾病. 天本为独体象形字. 由于天体高广, 无以为象, 故用人之颠顶以表示至上之义, 但天字上部以丁为顶, 也表示着天字的音读."²⁰ *Tian* meaning 'forehead' or 'top of the head' can also be found in the classics: 周易·睽 (六三): "其人天且鼻" (马融注, "黥鬻其额曰天).

¹⁶ For Western Zhou uses of *zheng* in administrative titles, see Zhang Yachu 张亚初 and Liu Yu 刘雨, *Xi Zhou jinwen guanzhi yanjiu*, *Zhonghua shuju*, 1986:58: "正是长帅的统称...古代的正就是今天所讲的领导."

¹⁷ Zhang, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Chen Jian 陈剑, "Class Notes", University of Chicago Paleography Seminar (1), Fall 2008.

¹⁹ Peter A. Boodberg, "Some Proleptical Remarks on the Evolution of Archaic Chinese," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3/4, 1937:329-372.

²⁰ Yu Xingwu 于省吾, "Shi juyou bufen biaoyin de duti xiangxingzi" 释具有部分表音的独体象形字, in *Jiagu wenzi shi lin* 甲骨文字释林.

As an extended meaning of ‘head/that which is the highest’, *tian* is synonymous with *da/tai* 大/太. In OBI, *Da yi Shang* 大邑商 “The Great City Shang” is also written *Tian yi Shang* 天邑商; and in both the OBI, and in the “*Yin ben ji*” 殷本紀 chapter of the *Shiji* 史記, the high Shang ancestor *Da Yi* 大乙 is written *Tian Yi* 天乙. Furthermore, the word *tian* 天 is related to *yuan* 元 “head”. In early writing, *yuan* 元 depicts a side profile of a man with *ding* as phonetic-eytmonic, while *tian* 天 is a frontal view--- these two graphs are allographs essentially signifying the same word. Traditional texts still preserve the meaning of *yuan* as ‘head’: 《左传·僖公 33》：“狄人归其元”。

The above discussion is adequate to show that *ding* 丁 can have the original meaning of “the top”, with extended meanings being: first, leader, greatest, biggest, highest, appropriate, adequate, strong.

The above paleographic and lexical analysis can also be supported by archaeological evidence. The recent publication of the excavations at a large Eastern Zhou cemetery, right in the center of Luoyang, has provided fascinating glimpses into mortuary culture at that time.²¹ Amongst the jade facial decorations 面饰 found, several are topped with *bi* jade-circlets. There is no doubt that the placement of these circlets in the forehead/top of the head region carries with it a specific meaning---that if following my train of thought--- ought to be an emblematic writing of the word 天.

That the king could be referred to by multiple designations is by no means strange. For an Old Kingdom Egyptian king had various designations (most of the them religious), and the two most commonly used in non-royal inscripational material represented his position on the land: *nswt* ‘the sedge plant’---representing the king’s dominant sharehold of the commodity most commonly found in Upper Egypt; and *Hm* ‘power’-- a pictograph of a club, which represents the king’s strength. In the OBI, *wang* 王 represents a man with

²¹ Luoyang shi wenwu gongzuo dui 洛阳市文物工作队(ed.), *Luoyang Wangcheng guangchang Dong Zhou mu* 洛阳王城广场东周墓. Wenwu chubanshe, 2009.

military 'power' (early graphic form of an axe blade facing down); *ding* 丁, represents the 'highest of men' ---the "(fore)head".

Based on the above analysis, I suggest reading the Shang designation *ding* 丁(頂) as "our Highness/Leader."