



SESSION VIII: STATE AND SOCIETY

\*25. NOEL BARNARD (Australian National University)  
A NEW APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF THE CLAN-SIGN INSCRIPTIONS OF SHANG

ABSTRACT:

Representing work still in progress, this paper attempts to demonstrate the value of making a comparative study of inscribed artifacts recovered from individual burials in the same cemetery area; published reports of such sites have, it is suggested, not realized the full potential promised by the evidence. Detailed study of the clan insignia and their graphic elements found in burials at Yin-hsü West, Hsi-pei-kang, Lo-shan-hsien, and Hsiao-t'un (M5), permits speculation about the writing of the archaic graphs, the meaning of abbreviated phrases, and inter-clan associations, as well as about the existence of "calligraphic groups" and possible links between artisan/scribes, vessel types, and foundries. The paper, which is amply illustrated with insignia rubbings, ends with a plea for reasonable scholarly access to the original bronzes.

DISCUSSION:

Betty Tseng Ecke inquired about the meaning of the yaxing 亞形 that appears surrounding clan signs in the bronze inscriptions. Her own tentative suggestion was that it could symbolize the four directions, and the regularly laid-out villages and cities inhabited by clans. Therefore, she argued, bronzes with clan signs enclosed by a yaxing would probably have belonged to clan leaders and kings. This is corroborated by the fact that the royal Shang tombs are also ya shaped. Barnard said he did not really know the solution: but he, too, believed that there might be some association with the clan system of the Shang. Yang noted in this context that a cosmological layout such as described as essential by Ecke -- and especially a city wall -- had not yet been discovered at Anyang.

Kao C.-H. said that Ruan Yuan and Yetts had interpreted the yaxing as a marker of bronzes belonging to a clan's ancestral temple -- the shape imitating the layout of the temple. Kao's own view, published in BIHP 39.2 (1969):175-188, was that it imitated the form

of the ming tang 明堂, the ceremonial seat of the Shang government, which was also built in the ya form, and which was again the model for the layout of the deceased kings' tomb chambers. There was in fact an old tradition of building wooden structures in ya form, attested by ya-shaped foundations at the neolithic site of Jiang-zhai 姜寨 (Shaanxi). At Anyang, no ya-shaped foundations have been found as yet, but perhaps the wooden structures on the hangtu platforms did have this shape. Later, the ceremonial buildings of the Han -- ming tang and bi yong 辟雍 -- were also erected according to this venerable tradition.

26. CHANG TSUNG-TUNG (Universität Frankfurt)  
A NEW VIEW OF KING WU DING

ABSTRACT:

This paper tries to attribute some peculiarities of the oracle inscriptions of Period I to the personality of King Wu Ding himself and comes to the conclusion that Wu Ding must have suffered from a persecution complex. It was precisely his occasional dumbness and permanent fears of the dead and of evil spirits that motivated him to consult bone and shell oracles frequently and, moreover, to have divination questions and postscripts about the real events written. From this point of view early Chinese writing owed much of its development to the personal suffering of King Wu Ding.

DISCUSSION:

Chang Kwang-yuan wrote a passage from Shang shu: "Wu Yi" on the blackboard, which Chang Tsung-tung had interpreted in a fashion he did not agree with.

其在高宗 (= 武丁) 時曰勞于外爰暨小人作其既位,  
乃或亮陰, 三年不言, 其不言, 言乃雍, (...) 其在  
祖甲不義惟王, 曰為小人

It seemed obvious, Chang Kwang-yuan said, that the intended meaning of this passage was that Wu Ding did not want to speak about unimportant matters, and that if he spoke, he always did so in a very polite manner. This was part of his description as a model ruler, and should not be taken as a pathological symptom. Secondly, Wu Ding was probably not driven from the court, but it might have been a traditional custom for Shang royal princes to spend some of their boyhood years among the common people to learn about their future subjects' ways. This, too, was lauded as a measure of good govern-