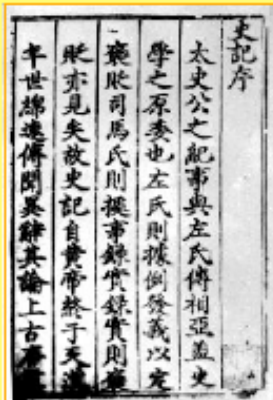


The Shang Kings



The front page of 'Records of the Grand Historian' written c.200 BC

Around the year 200 BC, historians started to write down what they knew about the kings of the Shang Dynasty. They recorded their names and the order they reigned. More than 2,000 years later, oracle bones were discovered with writing on which described the kings and when they ruled. Some of the information was different to that in the history books so which evidence is correct?



An example of an oracle bone

Shang king	What the history books say	What the archaeological evidence says
Da Yi (Tang the Great)	He is the first king of the Shang. He is said to have overthrown the last cruel ruler of the Xia Dynasty. He set up the capital at Dàyì Shāng.	He is the first king of the Shang but the capital city of Dàyì Shāng wasn't established until much later.
Tai Ding	He died young and did not become king.	He was the second king of the Shang.
Wai Bing	He was the second king of the Shang. He only ruled for two years.	He was the fourth king of the Shang. He only ruled for two years.
Zhong Ren	He ruled for four years after the death of his brother Wai Bing.	There is no evidence of him.
Tai Jia	He was the fourth Shang king.	He was the third Shang King and ruled after Tai Ding and before Wai Bing.
Wo Ding	He succeeded his father Tai Jia to the throne and ruled for 19 or 29 years.	There is no evidence of him.
Tai Geng	He was the sixth Shang king. He was succeeded by his son Xiao Jia.	He was the fifth Shang king after Wai Bing. He was succeeded by his brother Xiao Jia.
Xiao Jia	He was the seventh king of the Shang. He was succeeded by his brother Yong Ji.	He was the sixth king of the Shang. He was succeeded by his son Tai Wu.
Yong Ji	He ruled before Tai Wu.	He ruled after Tai Wu.
Tai Wu	He succeeded his brother Yong Ji.	He succeeded his father Xiao Jia.