

to Yinxu, or was his capital perhaps at Beimeng 北蒙 ; Secondly, if Pan Geng did move to Yinxu, how many years elapsed between his reign and the accession of Wu Ding? According to the contradictory written records, the timespan could be as short as 16 years, as K. C. Chang seemed to believe in his paper, but it could have been as much as 53 years. It is difficult for archaeology to determine the length of any recognizable stratigraphic phase in terms of absolute time. At any rate, Zou Heng's Period I reaches into Wu Ding's reign.

His on-site experience at Anyang, Yang continued, had yielded some material that could prove helpful. Recent digs had uncovered oracle bones with characters resembling Tung Tso-pin's Period IV in association with Period I pottery (Zou's periodization), in an apparently undisturbed context. The archaic character of Period IV oracle inscriptions has long been noted; perhaps, the bones recently found represent a genuinely early style that was imitated in a later period. The consequence of this new find may be a re-dating of part of the oracle bones previously classed as Period IV. Furthermore, Yang considered the Jia 甲 group of palace foundations at Yinxu to be from Zou's Period I, whereas the two other groups date from the second or third period. Perhaps, more foundations from the early part of Wu Ding's reign will be discovered in the ongoing excavations. On the other hand, we now know that there are twelve -- no more -- large tombs at Xibeigang. If the first three kings after Pan Geng were buried at Yin, it cannot have been at the Xibeigang cemetery. Yang also noted that some of the pit-houses referred to by Chang actually dated from Dasikong II, not Yinxu I.

K. C. Chang replied that these explanations only underlined the urgent need for a master chronological framework encompassing all excavations so far done at Yinxu.

6. WANG GUIMIN (Institute of History, Peking)

A TENTATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE CIVILIZATION OF THE MIDDLE PERIOD OF LATE SHANG

ABSTRACT:

The late Shang represents a peak in bronze culture, and was the culmination of a long period of development. The words of the Duke of Zhou in the "Wu yi" 無逸 chapter of the Shang shu that "The kings who arose after [Zu Jia], during their (whole) life enjoyed ease After this there were none who had any chance of reaching a high age..." is not sufficient to be relied upon. Nor is it appropriate to evaluate the entirety of Late Shang history solely on the basis of the large number of oracle bones from the reign of Wu Ding. The primary purpose of this paper is to demonstrate, through an analysis of the contents of oracle-bone inscriptions from the Middle

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Late Shang, i.e., from Lin Xin to Wen Wu Ding, that there was continued progress in the fields of society, economy, and culture and in the political and military affairs of the ruling house.

Agriculture under the direct control of the Shang ruling house, including all sorts of agricultural activities, continued as before, and in some cases advanced beyond that of the previous age. In the area of handicrafts, metal casting, the "hundred craftsmen," organizations of craftsmen and the official position of Director of Craftsmen 司工 all appear in the oracle bones. In terms of archaeology, the number, shape, manufacture, decoration, and inscriptions of bronze vessels reached a new plateau. The palace architecture and the geographical extent of residences at Yinxu were greatly expanded.

In military affairs, the Shang ruling house clearly established the three army (san shi 三師) organization, and increased and expanded military offices. The entire bureaucratic structure of the kingdom shows a corresponding expansion, transformation, and development as compared to previous periods.

There was an adjustment and improvement of relations between the Shang royal house and the clans of neighboring states, and many of these outlying states were conquered and submitted to the royal house. The "hunting and travelling" (tian you 田游) area was greatly expanded, also reflecting the vast extent of the territory under control. Within the bounds of this area peoples of each tribe joined together in creating bronze culture, and in each region a new cultural form appeared combining universal and regional characteristics, thus constituting a contribution to the further development of bronze civilization. This important historical stage must not be neglected.

Sacrifices from this period reflect the first waverings in thought concerning the power of the spirits and the patriarchal (zongfa 宗法) system advanced one step further toward completion.

In the course of this paper much important source material has been used from the recently published Xiaotun nandi jiagu (Volume One). Those inscriptions that this paper has quoted as source material from oracle bone periods III and IV make clear that such inscriptions have their own regular features distinct from those of other periods, and that this dating can be confirmed from contemporary archaeological and literary sources. Therefore, this paper is in one respect an attempt at employing a typological standard to periodize oracle bones.

DISCUSSION:

After outlining the scope of his paper Wang Guimin noted that the basis of his argument was the assumption that the oracle bones of the Li group of diviners did belong in the Middle Period of Late Shang; if this were proven not to be the case, the paper in its present form could not stand.

K. C. Chang asked whether Wang's conclusions -- based mainly on epigraphic evidence -- were in accord with the archaeological evidence from the Middle Late Period of Shang. Wang replied affirmatively; the development of the bronze decoration styles and the increasing number of datable hangtu 夯土 foundations seemed to corroborate his notion of this period as one of progress and development.

Zheng Zhenxiang (Institute of Archaeology, Peking) seemed to feel there was need for differentiation on this point. Actually, she said, there were relatively few bronzes from the period, and fewer tombs of any size than in the previous period. According to the discoveries so far made, Wu Ding's reign must be considered as a period of climax. Granted, there were architectural changes to be observed, concerning both the extent and the alignment of houses; and there was a development in artisanry, e.g., in the bone industry, from work displaying individual characteristics to a kind of mass production. As for jades, their quantity per tomb had been decreasing, but those pieces found are characterized by a sensitive and judicious use of the natural color of the stone (see remarks in her article in Kaogu 1976.4:268ff). There were also longer bronze inscriptions toward the end of the Yin period. While all these phenomena seemed to indicate a change of some sort, it was hard to distinguish any outright progress.

Louisa Huber (Cambridge, Mass.) also found it difficult to speak of unqualified progress in bronze art after M5. In fact, a classic style developed, characterized by a standardization of decor and an accompanying decrease in the variety of decorative motifs. On the other hand, there was a new clarity and refinement to those later bronzes and generally an increasing perfection of the vessels' decoration and their shapes.

According to Huber's art-historical analysis, the M5 bronzes could have been from the Wu Ding period. In her view, there is only one Fu Zi 婦字 in question, the one known from the Period I oracle bones. Addressing the question that had been raised whether Fu Zi signifies an individual or instead a category of individuals (the ruler's consorts or, as had also been suggested, his daughters-in-law), she noted that the oracle bones are very specific in their questions regarding Fu Zi, in some cases referring even to particular ailments. This point obviously would argue against the proposed use of Fu Zi as a generic term.

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Virginia Kane aroused some amusement among the participants by quoting Wang's paper as a corroboration for her proposal of a later dating of M5. She agreed that -- apart from M5 -- there was a relative scarcity of bronzes in the Middle Period of Late Shang. After M5, bronze styles would have undergone a dramatic change -- not toward conventionalization and standardization (pace Huber), and in no way declining, but in most aspects quite different from everything preceding it.

Hsü Chin-hsiung suggested that the 7000 cowrie shells found in M5 could provide a clue about its date. He claimed he was able to decide whether a cowrie shell was early or late from whether or not a hole had been bored through the shell, and whether or not this hole was polished. He had established a sequence of four stages, and his findings confirmed Kane's later date. Yang Xizhang questioned the value of Hsü's approach and declared that, since only a fraction of the cowrie shells discovered in M5 had been published, it seemed difficult to imagine how Hsu could have arrived at such daring conclusions. Kao Ch'ü-hsün was also skeptical, suggesting that Hsu was perhaps confusing the Shang cowries with phenomena to be observed in the Warring States period.

*7. XIA NAI (Academy of Social Science, Peking)
YIN DYNASTY JADES

ABSTRACT:

This paper tries to study the typology, terminology, and functions of the jades of the Shang dynasty by using an archaeological approach based mainly on archaeological materials from scientific excavations. This contrasts with the old method which relied upon questionable textual evidence and less well-documented jades in public and private collections. The main points of the paper are as follows:

(1) Ceremonial jades: Some jades of the Shang dynasty were ceremonial not practical objects, but the system of six jades called ruì yù (auspicious jades) in the three Books of Rites is a fabrication devised by the Confucian scholars of the period of the late Zhou and early Han dynasties, who used what they could find of the surviving jade objects and customs of use and supplemented old texts and oral traditions with their own imaginations so as to make the system perfectly rational according to Confucian standards. In our excavations, we have not found a single case in which the jades were grouped in a set of six, nor have we found any evidence to verify the uses mentioned in the Books of Rites.