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On the Ancient Site of Erlitou *

China has long been regarded as one of the earliest countries as far as the development of human culture is concerned. As early as the 22nd–21st centuries B. C. the Xia dynasty, the first dynastic power of China, was established. According to the Section on the Xia in the Shi Ji (Shi Ji. Xia ben ji) and other ancient records, during the 14 successive generations of the Xia dynasty, 17 kings reigned over the country for 471 years. In the 17th–16th centuries the Xia dynasty was overthrown and replaced by the Shang dynasty founded by Cheng Tang. The Xia and the Shang, two main tribes settled in the central part of the Huanghe valley in north China, had jointly created the Bronze Culture of Ancient China and depicted important parts of its history. Therefore, it has become a crucial task of Chinese Archaeology in the past few decades to explore and study the Xia Culture and the Early Shang Culture.

In 1928 large scale excavations near the village of Xiaodun, not far from the city of Anyang (Henan) led to the discovery of the ancient site of the late Shang dynasty capital, lasting for more than 270 years. The results of these excavations have opened a new chapter in Shang history. In 1951 another large Shang site, which revealed the middle period of this dynasty, was located at Erligang, at Zhengzhou (Henan). The mid-Shang period became known as the Earligang phase of the Shang Culture. Also the site found in Zhengzhou was possibly a capital city. In 1953

* The contribution of Zhao Zhiquan of the Erlitou Archaeological Team has been submitted to *Annali* through the Institute of Archaeology's kind assistance. We strongly hope it will be the first of many such contributions. Great is the interest among students of the early state formations on this site, first material expression of the Xia dynasty to be so systematically explored. We thank the author and the Director of the Institute of Archaeology for their cooperative attitude.

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an early Shang cultural deposit, earlier than Erligang, was explored in the Dengfeng County (Henan). Many similar sites were later discovered at the Luoda temple (or Luodamiao) in Zhengzhou, and Donggongou in Loyang. Up to now, about one hundred sites of this type have been found distributed in the entire Henan Province, in the south part of Hebei, and in the southwest part of Shaanxi. Of these discoveries, the Erlitou site – located in the Yanshi county of Henan province – covered the widest area with the thickest and richest cultural deposits. The culture revealed by this site was named Erlitou in the Chinese archaeological literature. The conscientious analysis and study of Erlitou became a crucial academic question, as its investigations bring to light the cultural context of the Xia dynasty and also characterize a complex related to the earliest Shang dynasty.

The site of Erlitou is located in the western part of the Henan province; administratively it belongs to the Yanshi county; surrounded by the rivers Yi, Lo, Chan, Jian and having the Mangshan (Mount Mand) in the north and the Songshan (Mount Song) in the south, the elliptical Loyang Basin – where the site is located – was the nuclear area of the Zhou, Han, Sui, Tang and other dynasties.

Erlitou lies about 4 km to the west of the ancient Loyang city of the Han and the Wei dynasties, 15 km from Dongdu (the Eastern City) city of the Sui and Tang dynasties, about 20 km from the Loyang of the Eastern Zhou period (see site location on fig. 1). Such a concentration of ancient cities represents the nuclear district of the ancient Chinese urbanization. Erlitou is located on the northern bank of the river, about 4 km from the Yi river south bank. The site is about 2 km long and 1.5 km wide, with a total area of ca. 300 hectares. The cultural deposit stands on high level ground, and slopes downward to land ca. 3 to 4 meters lower on the north, east and west sides while its western side adjoins a high plateau. The deposits of the Erlitou culture under the surface of the site are from 3 to 4 meters thick and can be divided into four phases.

On the base of present archaeological data we can assert that the Erlitou culture stemmed from the Henan variant of the Longshan culture and was succeeded by the Erligang phase of the Shang period.

The earliest phase of the Erlitou Culture reveals a strong influence by the Henan Longshan Culture; also second phase still maintains significant Neolithic Longshan characteristics, being quite similar to the first phase.

Unlike the first two phases the third one adds a large number of new features, which are definitely not influenced by the Henan Longshan Culture.

The fourth phase is like a bridge closely linking the third phase with the Erligang cultural phase. Both the 3rd and the 4th phases of Erlitou culture are similar to the Erligang phase belonging to the same cultural

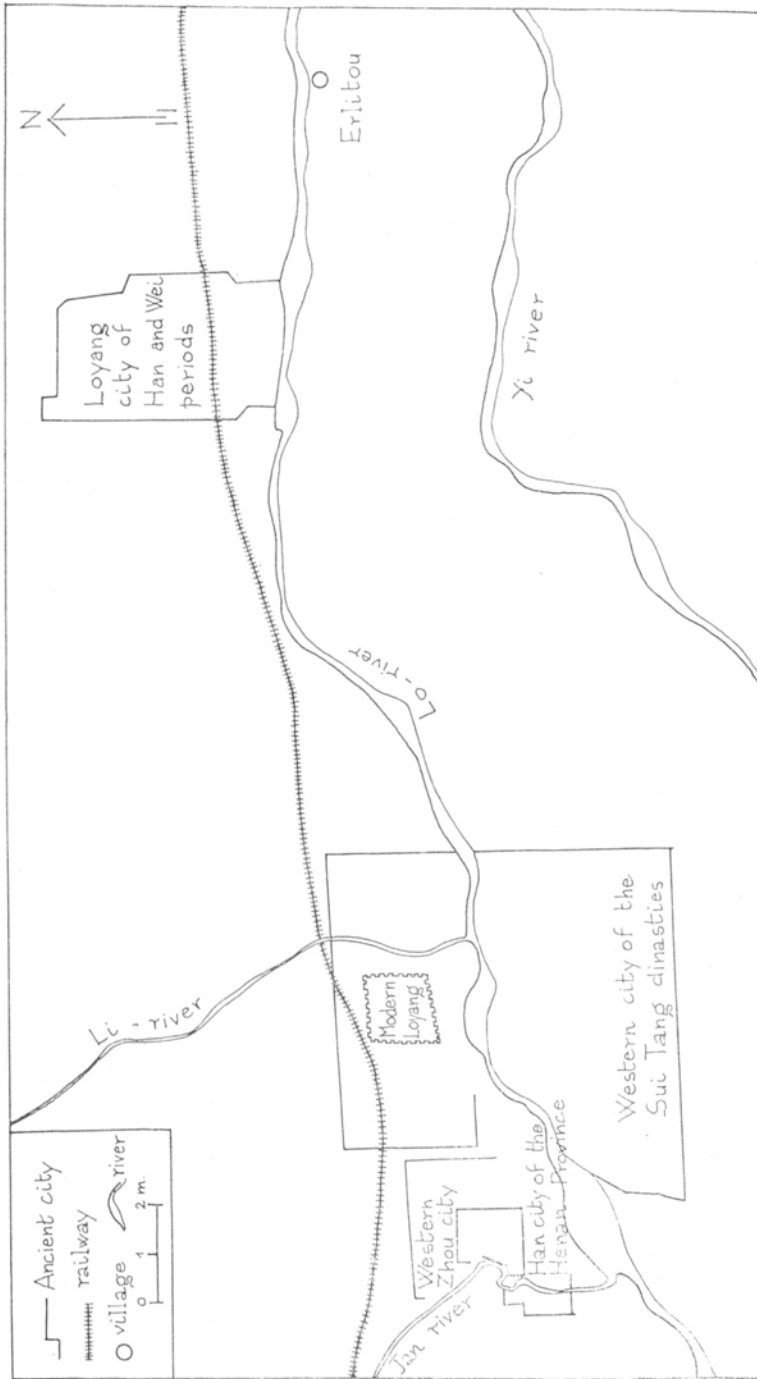


Fig. 1 - General plan of the Loyang archaeological area.

complex, while the earliest two phases show similarities with the 3rd millennium B C traditions.

The bulk of the Erlitou Culture has been identified in the 3rd-4th phases. In the central part of the site, clustered tens of foundation structures made by rammed earth layers (*hangtu*). The largest types are about 100 meters wide and 100 long, while the smallest have a side length of 20×30 meters. On the upper part of the foundation structures (or platforms) architectural remains pertaining to palace structures can be recognised.

Surrounding the "palaces area" are located common house foundations, storage-pits, wells, roads, hash-pits, etc. A great quantity of pottery, stone, bone, horn and shell objects together with a small number of bronzes and jades have also been recovered in the site. Moreover, some medium to small sized tombs - accompanied by grave goods of bronze, jade, lacquerware, pottery, stone and so forth - have been excavated.

On the south portion of the site, crucibles, fragments of earthenware, bronze slags and some burnt soil were uncovered, possibly indicating a ruined foundry. On the northern area of the site a pottery producing unit was located, while on the east, bones in semifinished artifacts and grindstones were also located, indicating the presence of more activity areas.

This type of layout, with the "palace area" located in the centre and surrounded by craft activity areas, is indicative of an integrated urban compound.

So far two palace structures belonging to the 3rd and 4th phase have been excavated. The first palace foundations consisted of rammed earth layers (*hangtu*). Facing south, on the surface of the roughly square-shaped ($108 \times 100 \times 1$ m) foundation, the remains of the building consisted of a series of post holes and wooden-framed wall bases (Pl. I). With the combined information offered by the ancient historical records and by the archaeological materials, the original plan of the palace building can now be assembled.

In the middle, toward the northern side of the platform, there is the Main Hall of the palace, facing a large courtyard. To the south is situated an entrance corridor and the entire building is surrounded by alleyways and flanked with rows of columns. The Main Hall formed the principal architectural feature; resting on the *hangtu* platform, it was built up with a perimetral colonnade formed by 9 columns on both the east and west sides and 4 on both the south and north sides, for a total of 22 columns, each column was situated 3.8 m apart from the other. Therefore the total length from east to west is about 30.4 m, and from south to north about 11.4 m. The exterior of the colonnade is also surrounded by a total of 48 auxiliary columns supporting the eaves of the roof. All the

supporting structures inside the hall seem to have completely disappeared. From the hypothetical reconstruction it seems that the palace structure was covered by a “*wutun* roof” or span-roof, which consists of a main ridge with four minor ridges sloping away from it.

To the south of the Main Hall, the big courtyard, about 5000 m² large and a capacity of ca. 10000 people, might have served as the core administrative system. Three passages were located in the south of the palace, presumably, the one in the middle was “His Highness way” (*YuDao*), which could only be used by the king, the remaining two were probably used by royal family members or nobles. At the sides of each entrance, four small rooms had been obtained probably to serve as a reserved space for military and civil officials. In the northeast corner of the colonnade wall there opened two narrow entrances, probably specifically intended for royal concubines or wives.

A second small palace site was also excavated. At the base of the Main Hall, wooden-frame wall bases can still be seen; they belong to three rooms surrounded by a colonnade. Outside the colonnade there are no auxiliary columns supporting the eaves. To the south of this hall there is only a corridor and two rooms.

It was equipped with terracotta sewers, placed underneath the east side of the corridor to drain the palace.

These two Erlitou palace structures are the earliest palaces so far discovered in China. Each of them is composed of a Main Hall, courtyards, corridors, door, entrances and passages converging on a platform of *hangtu*. With their severe and solemn air they not only represent the basic architectural characteristic of ancient Chinese palaces, but are also emblematic of the early Chinese State power.

In addition to the large scale excavations of the palace areas, several medium and small-size tombs were explored. The funeral rites and grave goods are very similar to the ones prevailing during the middle and late Shang periods. Most of the medium-sized elite graves are scattered on the high plateaus to the east and northeast of the site. These tombs are square-shaped pits with a north-south alignment, about two meters long and one meter wide. At the bottom of each tomb, along the four sides, runs the perimetral platform (or *ercengtai*). The true burial pit of the tomb was in the centre where mouldering fragments of painted wood coffins, mattress impressions and a thick layer of cinnabar can clearly be distinguished.

Each grave contains a human skeleton lying supine with extended limbs and the head to the north.

In general, the grave goods average 10 items with a maximum of more than 20. The standard grave furniture consists of two wine vessels – i.e.

one bronze wine pitcher-*jue* and one pottery kettle-*he* – a bronze dagger-ax (*ge*), a battle-ax (*qi*), and various jade ornaments.

The small-sized tombs are most probably the graves of free commoners. The tomb-pit is also square-shaped, less than 2 m long and ca. 0.7 mts. wide. There is no *ercengtai* around the bottom of the tomb pit, nor any layer of cinnabar. Each tomb has a skeleton lying supine with extended limbs; only pottery goods were buried with the deceased. Generally, the grave goods number range from 4 to 6 items, with a total of no more than 10, including tall beakers-*gu*, handled tripod vessels-*jue*, bi-elliptical mouthed tripod-*jiao*, kettle-*he*, variously shaped wine vessels-*zun*, “fruit-bowl” or high-stemmed bowl-*dou*, basin-*pen*, jar-*guan* and so on.

The pit burials of slaves are extremely narrow and can thus only contain corpses. Most of the corpses are buried face downwards in the pit; some seem to have been tied with rope and buried while still alive, but most of the slaves have no tomb pit and their corpses were thrown into simple ash-pits. Amputation or body segmentation is not rare. The slaves were buried in various ways but intact bodies are hardly ever found.

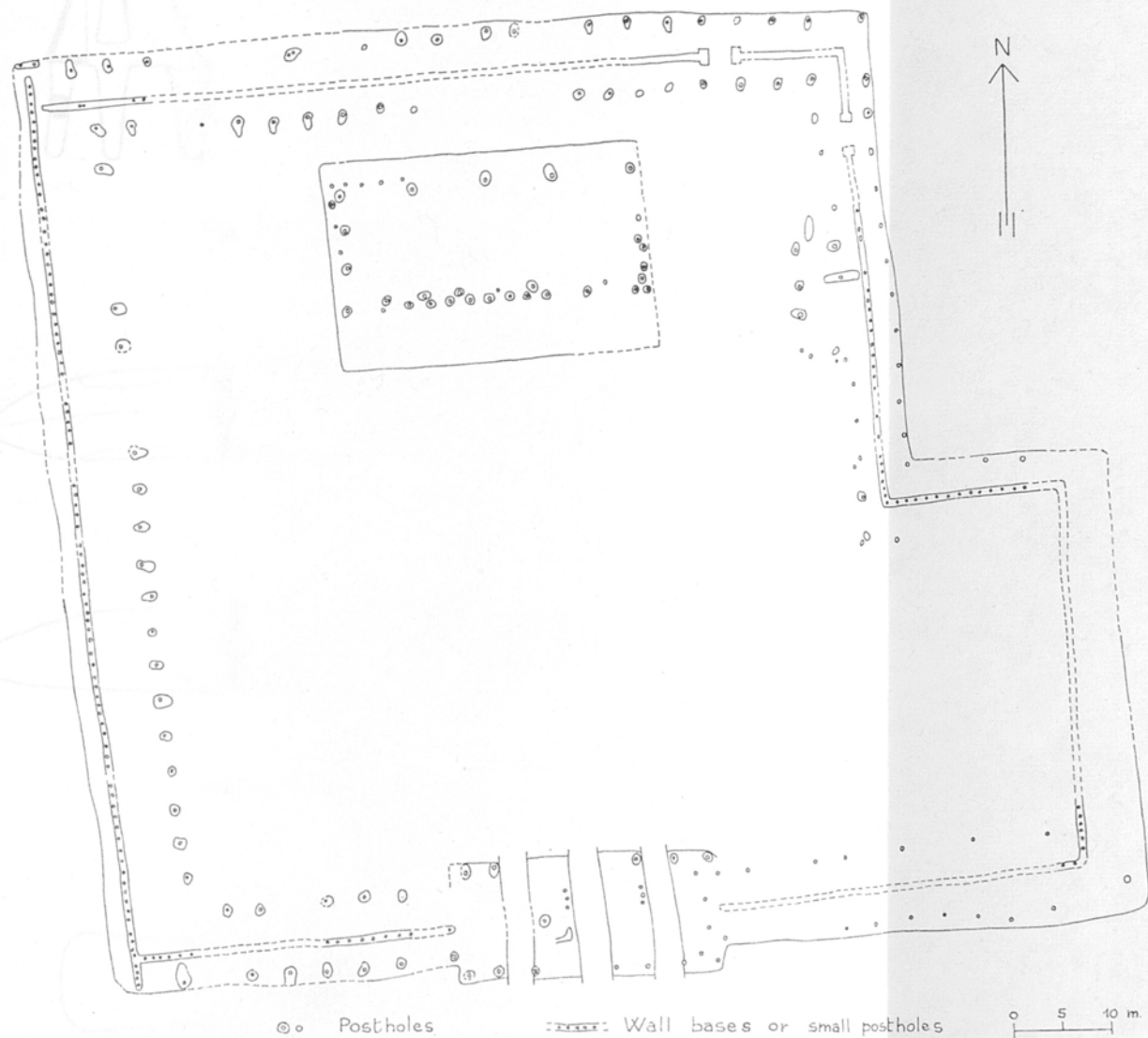
Bronzes are one essential item of the Erlitou culture and its most important feature. The bronzes of the 3rd and 4th phases include: adzes-*ben*, chisels-*zao*, knives-*dao*, awls-*zhui*, arrowheads-*zu*, fish-hooks, dagger-axes-*ge*, battle-axes-*qi*, tripods-*jue*, tripods-*jia*, bells-*ling*, round bubble-shaped objects, and round flat objects laced with turquoise. These objects can be classified into five categories, namely, tools, weapons, wine vessels, musical instruments and art works. Aside from the category of tools most of the items were the first artifacts of this kind found in China and represent the early Chinese bronze metallurgy.

In the Erlitou 3rd and 4th phases bronze *jue* has a rather thin body, flat bottom and plain surface; in the earliest stage it is narrow-waisted, has no rim columns and still bears traces of the mould, while the hollow parts still retain core fragments; the reconstruction of their shape is relatively approximate (Fig. 2). On the contrary, those of the later stage are better reconstructed, their body does not bear mould traces, being rather smooth, while the belly is relatively large and decorated with nipples and raised bands; short (rim-) columns begin to appear on the rims while the hollow parts (legs, etc.) retain no trace of the core (Fig. 3).

The Erlitou 3rd-4th phase bronze-*jue* is the earliest type of that kind of metal wine vessel so far discovered in China; its shape seems derived from contemporary pottery types which continued to be produced in the middle Shang period.

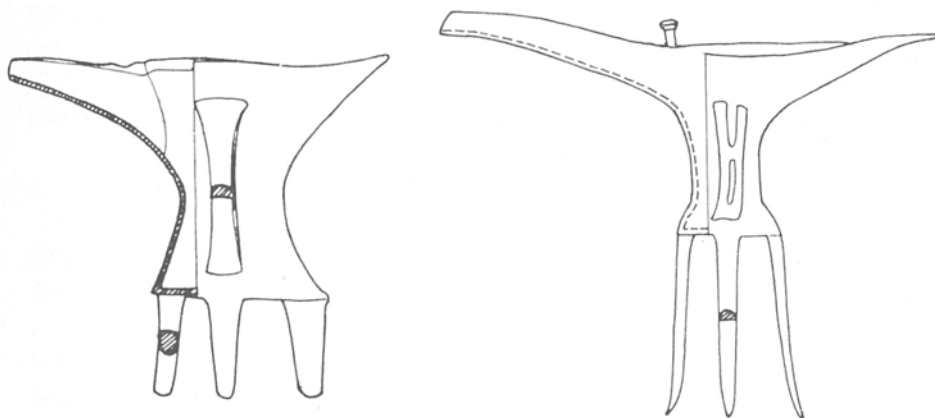
There are two types of bronze dagger/axes-*ge*: the straight type and the curved type (Figs. 4, 5). The bronze-*ge* was shaped by copying the

1. Erlitou palace foundation n° 1

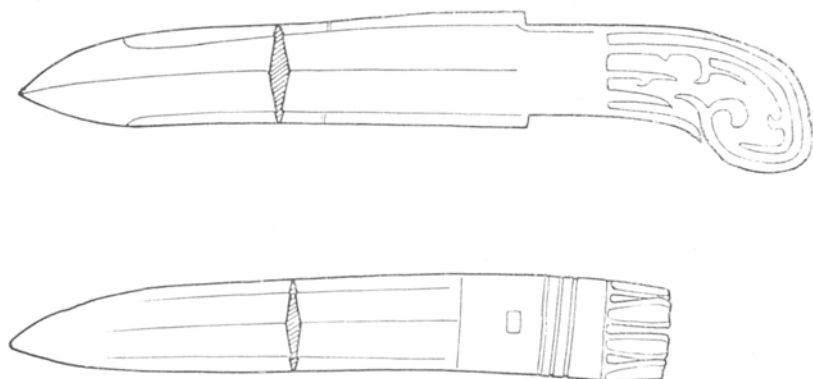


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Plan of the Palace foundation no. 1 at the site of Erlitou.



Figs. 2-3 - Bronze tripods-jue.



Figs. 4-5 - Bronze dagger-axes.

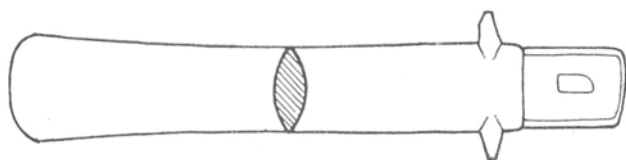


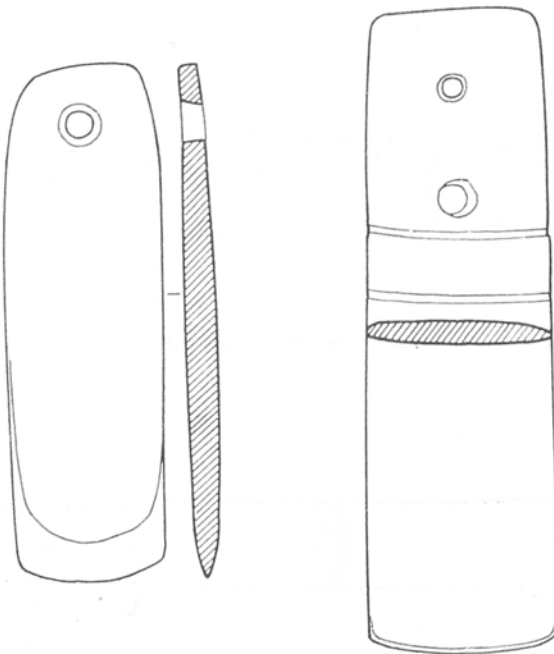
Fig. 6 - Bronze battle-axe.

corresponding stone weapon of the same period. Usually, the curved type has the tail-decorated with "cloud patterns" and "sharp-blade patterns" – which was fitted to a long wooden bar. The bronze-*ge* is the earliest bronze weapon to be discovered in China and its shape continued in the Shang period.

The battle ax-*qi* looks very special (Fig. 6); it is the only one of this kind to have been excavated in China up to now.

Among the bronzes a flat round object laced with turquoise is in fairly good conditions. The surface of the object is inlaid, and decorated with turquoise in geometric pattern, giving it the appearance of the face of a clock. The very well-proportioned pattern and the solidly applied turquoise pieces attest the exquisite workmanship and the high technological level reached by the metalsmiths of the time. The decorative patterns of these bronzes, obtained by direct casting, consist mostly of engraved "cloud-patterns", "string-patterns", nipples, hollowed out or turquoise-inlaid patterns, providing the foundations for the technological development of the subsequent mid-late Shang periods.

According to electronic analyses made to establish the composition of the bronzes in the 3rd-4th stages of Erlitou, three of the bronze samples



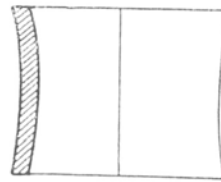
Figs. 7-8 – Jade tablet-*gui*.

average in composition 91.85 % copper, 5.55% tin and 1.19% lead, and can be classified as bronze alloys. Judging from the result of the analysis, it can be assumed that the technological level of metalsmith had already reached a fairly high level of craftsmanship.

Jade artifacts excavated at Erlitou play a significant role in the site culture. The beautiful and delicate workmanship of these articles in the Erlitou 3rd-4th phases have won great praise. They are mainly instruments for sacrificial ceremonies and ornaments, including the "tablet" or flat sceptre-*gui* (Figs. 7-8), the half *gui* tablet-*zhang* (Fig. 9), the round hollowed square body cylinder-*cong* (Fig. 10), the ax-*yue* (Fig. 11), the dagger-ax-*ge* (Figs. 12-13), and handle-shaped objects. The latter are variously shaped and appear in the 3rd-4th phases, mainly of two types: rectangular and square-shaped; one of these finds, probably an ornament for personal use, is engraved on the upper, middle and lower sections by three groups of zoomorphic motifs and by two groups of flower motifs on the central



Fig. 9 - Jade tablet-*zhang*.



10 - Jade cylinder-*cong*.

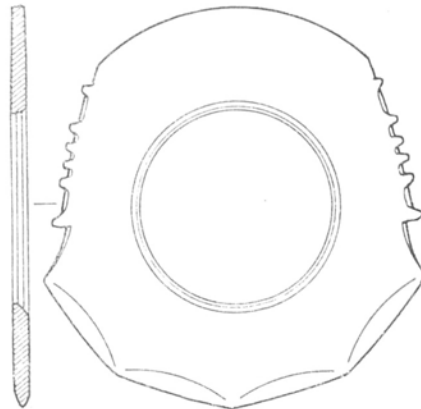
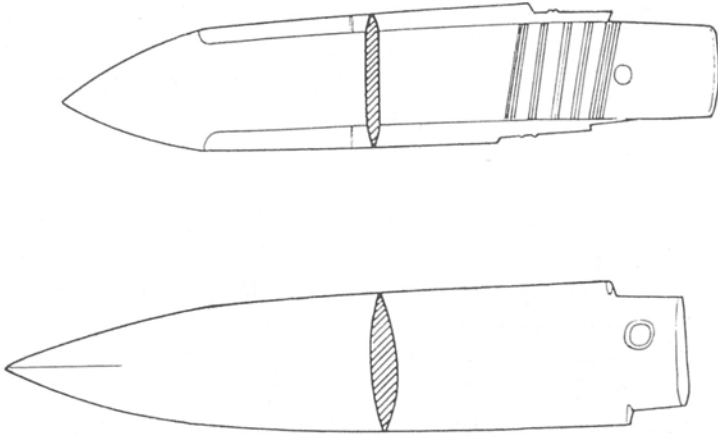


Fig. 11 - Jade battle-axe (*yue*).



Figs. 12-13 – Jade dagger-axes (*ge*).



Fig. 14 – Jade object in form of handle.

part (Fig. 14), all obtained through simple incised lines combined to bas-relief technique. Being highly representative of the Erlitou jade engraving technology, that object gives us a first hand material for studying the ancient Chinese sculpture. The jade engraving craft had reached a high technical level 3000 years ago, and if there were not the long and rich experience of generations of stone cutters it is very difficult that the carving art could have succeeded. It is from these materials that it is possible to see that the Chinese jade carving craft has a long standing and well established tradition.

Pottery in the Erlitou 3rd-4th phases differs from that of the 1st-2nd phases, and is already similar to the pottery of the mid-Shang period as far as raw materials, production methods, decoration and typology are concerned. The 3rd-4th phase earthenwares were mainly made of coarse gray ware and sandy gray ware, while the use of the brown or black wares, so common during the 1st-2nd phases was very rare; neither hard pottery nor glazed pottery, similar to the mid-Shang period, were found.

Apart from rare mould- and hand-made classes, pottery is mostly wheel-made. Very often the interior surface showed the clear traces of hand-manufacturing rather similar to the method of pottery-making in the middle Shang period.

Decorative motifs in the Erlitou 3rd-4th phases and the middle Shang period were the same, mainly cord motifs, followed by string motifs, "cloud motifs", "thunder motifs", circle motifs, *tao-tie* (or glutton-mask motif), fish, turtle and snake motifs. Rarely used are the basket, net and thin cord motifs of Erlitou 1st-2nd phases.

Particularly on the mouth of the large pottery vase-*cun*, during both the Erlitou 3rd-4th phases and mid-Shang period engraved marks appear such as: 丨, 凵, 卩, 乂, †, 人, 夂, 个. This proves that the people of Erlitou 3rd-4th phases and mid-Shang used same marks and shared the same ways of recording events.

The potteries of the 3rd-4th phases were basically classifiable in the same way as the middle Shang period types. There are pot-*guan*, tripod-*ding*, tripod-*li*, and steamer-*zeng* in the category of cooking utensils; basin-*pen*, jar-*guan* in the category of containers; deep basin-*pan-gui*, "fruit-bowl"-*dou*, beaker-*bei*, in the category of table ware; tall beaker-*gu*, tripod-*jue*, kettle-*he*, tripod-*jia*, and bottle-*he*, tripod-*jia*, and bottle-*hu* in the category of wine vessels; jar-*weng*, and jar-*gang* in the category of storewares; lids.

Sharing significant and close links, both from manufacturing and typological point of view, we can assert that the mid-Shang period pottery types are clearly derived from the Erlitou 3rd-4th phase types.

Due to the overburden of 3rd–4th phase remains on the site surface, the limits of distribution of the first two phases appear quite restricted, while the lay-out of the whole site is still unclear. Up to the present, ordinary house foundations, small tombs, storage pits, and ceramics kilns pertaining to the earliest phases have been discovered; the finds include a great quantity of pottery, some bone, stone, horn and shell artifacts, few bronzes, turquoise articles and oracular bones or carapaces. Moreover, residues of crucibles, copper slags, bone tools and grinding-stones have also been uncovered.

In the 1st–2nd phase layers two types of ordinary house foundations have been found so far: building elevated on the ground and semi-subterranean ones, either square or rectangular in plan.

The houses on the ground were built on *hangtu* foundations, while the inner surfaces of semi-subterranean houses were simply beaten; around both types of foundations can be found perimetral wall-bases remains. The inner surface of the walls had been smoothed by plastering; inside the house remains, post holes and stoves are still observable.

The Erlitou 1st–2nd phase houses clearly resemble those of the late Longshan Culture in western Henan; but the interior space of these Erlitou houses, unlike the earlier ones, had no lime-plaster pavement; this difference is probably due to the prevalence of *hangtu* construction at Erlitou.

No difference has been observed between the Erlitou 1st–2nd phase small graves and those of the 3rd–4th phases.

Each grave had a single skeleton, laid on its back with straight limbs. The grave goods were mainly earthen wares; in some cases a few items of jade, stone, and shell were found. Bronze bells were buried in the slightly bigger tombs. Furthermore, amputated skeletons were discovered in unshaped ash pits and earthen layers; individuals buried together with animals were found too.

The burial customs, then, appear quite similar both to the successive two phases and to the preceding Henan Longshan Culture habits.

The Erlitou 1st–2nd phase stone tools are mainly production tools as well as bone, horn, and shell tools. Pottery net-sinkers and spindle whorls were the only evidence of pottery production tools. The only bronze tools found so far are knives and awls, while traces of sharp, long blades on the walls of the ash pits could witness the use of wooden plough-like tools.

All this evidence gives us a clear picture of the various raw materials used during the earliest phases of Erlitou culture, but, above all, stone shovels, knives, axes, sickles, bone axes and knives, and wooden ploughs for agricultural production – which ranged from cultivation of land to

the harvesting of crops – have been found. The cultivation tools, e.g. stone shovels and wooden ploughs, and reaping crop tools, such as stone knives and sickles, had already been widely used in Henan Longshan Culture.

Until the Henan Longshan and the 1st and 2nd phases of the Erlitou culture, aside from some improvements made in the types of knives, shovels and sickles, there was a general increase both in the number of reaping tools and cultivating tools. As is known, this is a clear trace that the agricultural input had been massively increased at that time.

Meanwhile in the 1st–2nd phase layers quite a large number of bone fragments and tools have also been found; the most common ones were cattle, sheep, and pig bones. The paleozoological data from Erlitou 1st–2nd phases prove that the economy of domestic livestock – particularly for the three species mentioned – was highly developed. Moreover, a certain number of net-sinkers and arrowheads made of stone, bone and shell prove that fishing and hunting activities still played an important role in the economy of Erlitou.

The few metal objects recovered in the 1st–2nd phase layers were either production tools such as knives and awls, or musical instruments such as bronze bells.

Knives and awls were rather small in size and made from both single or double-valve moulds, while the bells were larger and mainly made using composite moulds. Compared with that of the 3rd–4th phases, bronze production of the earlier two phases was poor in quantity, variety and quality.

Recently a small number of crucible sherds and bronze knives have been discovered in Late Longshan Culture sites, e.g. at Meishan (Linru County, Henan) and at Niuzhai in Zhengzhou city. The number and the size of bronze knives were small, their types were very similar to those from Erlitou 1–2. Judging from the excavated materials, bronze tools were possibly used in the Central Plains of China not later than the late Henan Longshan Culture.

As known, the use of bronze was extremely important in human history, as it marks the end of the million year long Stone Age as well as the birth of a new epoch in human culture. Based on the evidence offered by the excavations carried out so far and according to ancient Chinese records, it seems likely that bronze had already been produced in the Xia dynasty.

In the Erlitou 1st–2nd phases a large number of bone tools were found. The jade artifacts were, in fact, engraved with single or double line patterns and zoomorphic heads.

The pottery surface was impressed with various patterns; wine vessels

include beaker-*gu*, tripod-*jue*, kettle-*he*, bottle-*hu* and so forth. All the above artifacts point to the very high level reached during the first two phases by the various handicrafts. Sites of ceramic kilns, crucible sherds, grinding stones used for bone working were also discovered. These data show that pottery, bone, wine brewing and building technology had been developed locally by that time. Despite the fact that the cleared surface in the 1st-2nd phase layers was smaller than the later one, it is clear that we are not dealing with an ordinary village because of the quantity and quality of the various craftworks discovered.

The pottery in phases 1-2 was mainly made of coarse sandy grey paste and a fine sandy grey one, although brown and black pottery was also in use. All pottery was fired at low temperature, had a polished surface and tended to be rather brittle. Basket and thin cord motifs were the most popular decorations. On both sides of the vessel bellies belt-shaped or cockscomb-shaped ears were applied, while some characteristic of the Henan Longshan Culture still continued in the shapes of the vessels. Pottery types were basically close to the late Henan Longshan tradition, including jar-*guan*, tripod-*ding*, steamer-*zeng*, basin-*pen*, basin-*pan*, "fruit-bowl"-*dou*, bowl-*wan*, beaker-*bei*, tall beaker-*gu*, tripod-*jue*, kettle-*he*, bottle-*hu*, jar-*weng*, jar-*gang*, and lids; even if technical improvements had been developed in the methods of manufacture, it is clear that the phases 1-2 at Erlitou stemmed directly from the ceramics of the Henan Longshan Culture. However, it cannot be overlooked in both the first phases of the Erlitou culture that the ceramic surface was either black-coated or decorated with red-painted patterns. This fact suggests that red and black were two favourite colours of the Xia people.

The Yanshi County is said to have been the capital area of Tang, the Shang dynasty founder. Bangu, the author of the *Hanshu*, wrote, in fact, in his work that Yanshi was the capital of Tang (or Cheng Tang) of Shang. Likewise Huang Pu Mi, another renowned Chinese scholar, also stated that Yanshi was Xi Hao, the capital of Tang. In the book *He Nan-Fu Zhi* it is mentioned more specifically that Xi Hao was located about ten kilometers west from Yanshi county. The site of Erlitou, in fact, was about ten kilometers east of Yanshi, which is in agreement with the ancient records.

A calibrated C-14 determination from the 3rd phase of Erlitou dates the complex to 1605 BC, not far from the traditional date for Tang foundation of the Shang dynasty in the 17th-16th centuries. At the light of the present evidence it is fairly reasonable to think that Erlitou phases 3-4 represent the early Shang Culture and that the site of Erlitou was Xi Hao, the capital city of king Tang.

The valleys of the Yi and Lo rivers in western Henan were the central

area of activities of the Xia people. The Song shan in the central part of the district in ancient times was named Chongshan (Mount Chong, or the High Mount). In the *Yu Wen* it is said that Gun, father of king Yu, settled near Chongshan, after that it was called *Chong Bo Gun* (The High [mount] of Father Gun). King Yu, the founder of the Xia dynasty, set up his capital south of Chongshan, which was also named Chong Yu (The High [mount] of Yu). Later the kings Tai Kang and Jie Xian both established their capitals in Zhen Xun, located in the northwest of Song shan in the east of Loyang basin. In the *Guo Yu-Zhou Yu*, it was written that the Xia dynasty lost its power when the rivers Yi and Lo dried up. Apart from distribution similarities in the same territory of the late Henan Longshan Culture and the 1st-2nd phases of the Erlitou Culture, significant connections exist between them; in fact, both shared the same cultural traits and spread in the supposed nuclear region of the Xia people.

Three more calibrated C-14 determinations from the first phase of Erlitou gave 1920, 1900, 1900 B.C. All the three dates are clearly very close to the year 1900 B.C. A base chronology is available for the late Henan Longshan Culture – two specimens from Meishan in Linru were, in fact, dated at 2290 and 2005 B.C., three specimens from Baiyin of Tangying were dated at ca. 2080, 2220 and 2150 B.C., all ranging from 2200 to 2000 B.C. According to ancient Chinese records, the Xia dynasty lasted for about 500 years, falling between the 22nd-21st and the 17th-16th centuries. On the base of the archaeological data at hand, then, it is fairly reasonable to infer that the late Henan Longshan Culture and the earliest two phases of Erlitou represent the Xia Culture.

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