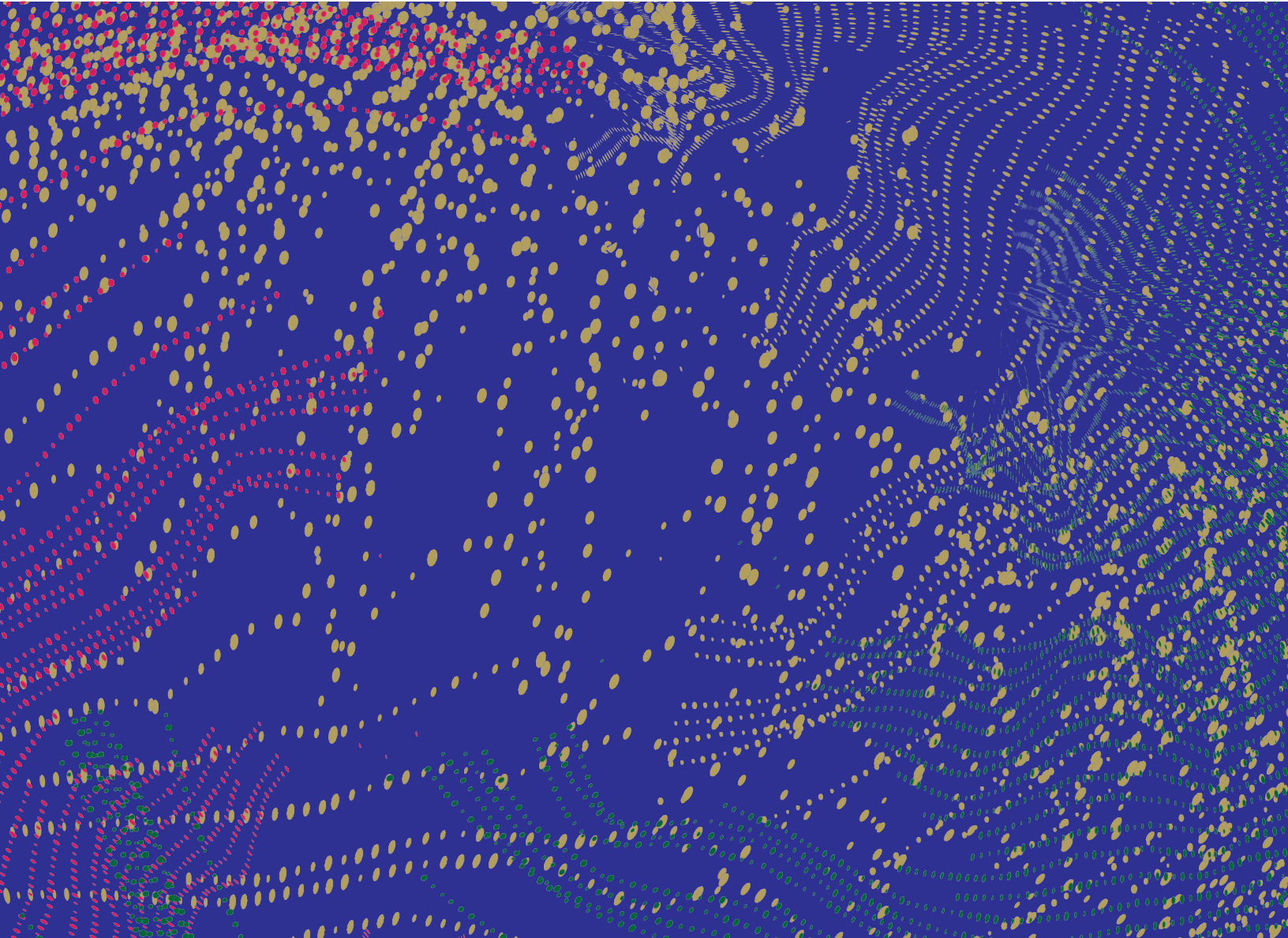


The World Humanities Report

Chinese Archaeology

Chen Xingcan



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Chinese Archaeology

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Overview

Since its introduction into China in the 1920s, archaeology has continued to develop, providing evidence for five thousand years of Chinese civilization. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, archaeologists sketched out a preliminary outline of human evolution, the origins of agriculture, the origins of civilization, and social development in China within the larger context of social development and scientific progress. In 1982 Xia Nai identified the three major hallmarks of Chinese archaeology that had occurred in the intervening thirty or so years: taking Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought as the theoretical basis for their work; transforming and advancing specific methods of scientific specialization and integration; and expanding the regions where archaeological work was undertaken and extending the time range for research objectives.¹ This overview section summarizes the development of Chinese archaeology in the last three decades, and the subsequent sections provide further detail.

Paleolithic archaeology. More than two thousand Paleolithic sites have been discovered within China's borders, and ever-increasing major discoveries have made China a global center of interest for Paleolithic archaeology. After the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, Paleolithic archaeologists began to focus their work on key regions and major sites, such as Shuidonggou in Ningxia Province, Jinniushan in Liaoning Province, Ang'angxi in Heilongjiang Province, the Nihewan Basin settlement complex in Hebei Province, the Han River valley settlement complex in Shaanxi Province, and Dadong in Pan County and Ma'anshan in Tongzi County of Guizhou Province, which have all produced fruitful results. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the research theories and methods in

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¹ Xia Nai, "Preface," in *Xin Zhongguo de kaogu faxian he yanjiu* [Archaeological discoveries and research in New China], ed. Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 1984), 1–3.

Paleolithic archaeology have seen steady development through integration of technology as well as theories from the natural and social sciences. The design of the discipline is being continuously refined, and there have been breakthroughs in the fields of use-wear analysis, residue analysis, lithic heat treatment analysis, and mechanical analysis. In addition, a skilled workforce has grown steadily, and international academic exchange has been a powerful driving force for Paleolithic archaeology, with international cooperation growing deeper.

Neolithic archaeology. Neolithic archaeology takes the reconstruction of China's ancient history as its core objective, “engaging in archaeological studies” (*kaogu*, lit. “examining the past”) to seek “an explanation of antiquity” (*shigu*) instead of relying on traditional literary accounts to reveal the origins of Chinese civilization. The thirty years before the beginning of the reform and opening-up policy were a period of data accumulation and theoretical exploration. Later, faced with new archaeological discoveries from across the country, the prevailing interest in an east-west confrontation between the Yangshao and Longshan cultures was challenged, and the primary task for scholars became that of establishing a space-time framework of China's prehistoric cultures. Meanwhile, efforts to reconstruct China's ancient history through archaeology were ongoing, led by the Central Plains core theory, which takes the Yellow River valley as the source of Chinese civilization. The Marxist theory of social development was applied to an evolutionary perspective to advance a deeper understanding of the origins of Chinese civilization. The first two decades after reform and opening-up were a golden age of major discoveries enhanced by new theoretical constructions. The large-scale sacrificial remains, jade funerary artifacts, and other specialized goods in the large burial sites of the Hongshan, Liangzhu, and Taosi cultures revealed that the degree of development for China's prehistoric societies went beyond previous scholarly understanding. At the same time, Western archaeological theory and methodologies were introduced, resulting in heated debate on the research into the origins of Chinese civilization. Various models—the “regional systems and cultural types” model, the “Chinese interaction sphere” model, and the “multi-petal flower” model—were proposed one after another. The approach of settlement archaeology also grew in popularity. Since 2000, as with Paleolithic archaeology, the combination of multidisciplinary integration, continued major archaeological discoveries, new technological methods for archaeological excavation, and domestic and foreign collaborative projects has

advanced the development of Chinese prehistoric archaeology enormously. Major developments related to the transition from the Paleolithic to Neolithic period, the origins of agriculture, the origins of Chinese civilization, and the formation of the early Chinese nation have also occurred.

Xia, Shang, and Zhou Archaeology. The time of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties (Three Dynasties) was a critical period in Chinese history. The establishment of the Xia dynasty inaugurated the era of dynastic states in Chinese history. The Xia, Shang, and Zhou period also introduced writing, with both direct and indirect records. According to accounts in literary records, the Xia, Shang, and Zhou period began with the establishment of the Xia dynasty in the twenty-first century BCE² and lasted until the Qin unification in 221 BCE. In terms of archaeological cultures, these dynasties included the Erlitou, Erligang, Yinxu, and Western Zhou cultures as well as the various cultures of the Eastern Zhou states. From the Xia, Shang, and Zhou to the establishment of the Qin dynasty, the political system moved from a patriarchal clan-based system to an imperial autocratic system of prefectures and counties. The political conditions changed from pluralism in the Neolithic age to integration in the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties. China, the “Middle Kingdom,” was initially conceptualized as a unified domain that serves the king:

Where'er their arch the heavens expand,
The king can claim the land below.
Within the seabounds of the land,
All at his summons come or go.³

The concepts of Chinese identity and national cohesion took shape then and became the foundation for strengthening historical memory. During this period, the development of ancestor worship and a culture of ritual music became the defining characteristics of Chinese civilization and lay its foundation.

² According to the results of the Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project, the Xia dynasty was established in 2070 BCE. See Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project Team, ed., *Xia Shang Zhou duandai gongcheng 1996–2000 nian jieduan chengguo baogao* [The concise report of the Xia-Shang-Zhou chronology project, 1996–2000] (Beijing: Shijie tushi chubun gongsi, 2000).

³ From *The She King; or, The Book of Ancient Poetry*, trans. James Legge (London: Trübner, 1876), 247.

Xia, Shang, and Zhou archaeology is different from Paleolithic and Neolithic archaeology, which lacks literary documents and are thus reliant on anthropological concepts and theories. But it also different from Qin, Han, and later period archaeology, which has much more abundant literary records. There are literary records in Xia, Shang, and Zhou archaeology, but relevant documents are incomplete and fragmentary, and there is controversy over the authenticity of different versions and the veracity of the content. Moreover, Xia, Shang, and Zhou writing has been found on various types of materials: excavated oracle bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions, and bamboo slips. Although these excavated texts have a closer proximity to the historical events of the Three Dynasties than literature that was handed down, there are enduring issues with fragmentary nature and the quality of the texts. A focal point of Three Dynasties archaeological research has been how to construct a reasonable historical narrative of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties based on the three categories of historical data—excavated material culture remains, excavated texts, and transmitted textual records—and the relationships among them.

Qin and Han to Ming and Qing archaeology. The time from the Qin and Han dynasties through the Ming and Qing dynasties was a significant period of continuous assimilation and the formation of an integrated Chinese nation. The period beginning with the unification of China in 221 BCE by Emperor Shihuangdi of the Qin Empire and continuing until the destruction of the Qing dynasty in 1911 lasted 2,131 years. The Qin and Han, Sui and Tang, and Yuan, Ming, and Qing Empires were imperial periods of large-scale unification. Over the course of that time, there were two periods of dynastic confrontation between north and south, and the northern steppe peoples and agricultural Han culture in the Central Plains experienced collisions, exchanges, and fusion. The Chinese nation continued to grow and strengthen until the unified Qing Empire established the current territory of the Chinese nation-state. Archaeological research on the Qin and Han through the Ming and Qing dynasties is closely related to pre-Qin archaeology, but at the same time has distinguishing features. For those conducting archaeological research on the historical period, there is an abundance of historical records and visual resources, and the content and scope of their research are vast. From a geographic perspective, it has expanded to cover all areas within the territory of the People's Republic of China. (In addition, the Liao, Yuan, and Qing imperial dynasties once encompassed the distant territory of Outer Mongolia.) From a temporal

perspective, there are roughly four divisions: the Qin and Han dynasties; the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties; the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties; and the Liao, Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties. A large-scale program of archaeological work on major sites from this period was only officially begun after 1949. Over the last seventy years, and particularly since the beginning of the reform and opening-up policy, archaeology of the historical period has seen an upswing, as opposed to the uneven development in dynastic and regional archaeological work seen earlier, which is a testament to the progression of Chinese archaeology. In particular, excavations and research on representative capital city sites have not only filled in many blanks in the history of development of ancient Chinese capitals, but they have also given rise to a methodology of urban site archaeology with Chinese characteristics. These achievements have been recognized by the international archaeological community.

Deeper interdisciplinary cooperation is an important indicator of development and progress for Chinese archaeology. Archaeological science utilizes methods and technologies from the natural sciences to conduct surveys of archaeological sites, to authenticate, test, and analyze excavated remains and relics, and to perform statistical analysis on various types of archaeological materials. This allows for an understanding of absolute dating, characteristics of the natural environment, modes of subsistence, the relationship between humans and the land, and the physical characteristics and health conditions of humans in relation to human behavior, among other things.

The emergence of archaeological science can also be seen as a hallmark of modern archaeology. Archaeological science arose after the Second World War, and as archaeology moved toward maturity, radiocarbon dating methods gained wide acceptance. The Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (which became the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in 1977) established the first radiocarbon laboratory for Chinese archaeology in 1965. The study of the application of the natural sciences in archaeology marked the beginning of the discipline of scientific archaeology.⁴ Since the 1990s there have been vigorous developments in archaeological science. Many research institutes and universities throughout the country have established archaeological science departments and have produced significant results in archaeological science research. The Institute of Archaeology at the

⁴ Chen Tiemei, “Woguo keji kaogu fazhan de huigu” [Review of the development of archaeological science in China], *Zhongguo wenwu bao*, November 17, 1999, 3.

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences established the Science and Technology Center, which carries out archaeological surveys, chronology, dietary analysis, composition and structural analysis, physical anthropology, zooarchaeology, paleoethnobotany, environmental archaeology, preservation and restoration of cultural relics, drawing and mapping, photography, and other technologies and fields of research. Archaeological science research is blazing new trails to reproduce ancient history, constantly giving rise to new theories and filling in gaps. In the process of producing comprehensive rich, refined, and expansive research, archaeology has entered into a new stage of disciplinary development.

Archaeological heritage protection is an important component of cultural heritage protection. The main focus and substance of the research is the situation of the “past” in the “present” and its social role in the form of archaeological remains, which is the key interface between archaeology and society.⁵ It lies at the critical juncture of archaeology and society. Valuation research, assessment and decision-making research, and research on preservation practices are the three basic areas in the field of archaeological heritage protection. When it comes to the protection of archaeological materials from various sites in China, practical explorations precede theoretical developments, which leads to a definite lag in this area of research. Theoretical research on the protection and exploitation of relics still needs to be expanded. It has mainly been applied through correlative research in the areas of land and resource utilization and cultural resource protection, research on the social conditions of the exploitation of large sites, and specialized research on archaeological park sites. In the period of development from 1978 to the present, the areas of site and cultural relic preservation have reached maturity. Traditional cultural relic preservation techniques and modern cultural relic preservation technologies have come together, as the introduction of international expertise has provided new knowledge to the profession. At present, the profession has reached a consensus on the importance of basic research on technical cultural relic preservation, and preservation treatments and materials research have become the focus of technical studies in the preservation of cultural relics. Through the process of conducting technical research on cultural heritage preservation projects, research in the areas of environmental monitoring, test analysis, environmental simulations, field experiments, and standardization has been strengthened to varying degrees.

⁵ Willem J. H. Willems, “The Future of World Heritage and the Emergence of Transnational Heritage Regimes,” *Heritage & Society* 7, no. 2 (November 2014): 105–20.

Since 2010 the Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has promoted laboratory archaeology research, and its rapid spread throughout the country shows immense potential for development.

Paleolithic Archaeology

Establishment of a Time-Space Framework and Theoretical Explanations for Paleolithic Archaeological Cultures

Filling in Regional Gaps

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, evidence of Paleolithic human activity had been found in nearly all provinces and regions, with the exception of a few regions where Quaternary strata were not preserved due to the geological forces of depression or strong natural erosion.⁶ There have been rapid developments in Paleolithic archaeology, particularly in the forty years since the start of the reform and opening-up policy. The excavation and study of the Zhoukoudian site are currently underway. The ongoing archaeological excavations of the Shuidonggou system in Ningxia are recognized as the benchmark for Paleolithic archaeology work. The excavation of the Gezishan site in Ningxia was the first to establish a chronological sequence for the last phase of the Late Pleistocene through the early phase of the Holocene in the desert border regions of the northwest. A chronological sequence of archaeological cultures covering nearly two million years in the Nihewan Basin has made China a center of interest for global Paleolithic archaeological research. Outside of the densely distributed areas of traditional Paleolithic sites in Shanxi and Hebei Provinces, breakthroughs have been achieved in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River Basin in Shaanxi, Henan, and Shandong Provinces.

There are also remarkable new gains in the northwest frontier region. Cultural remains with Mousterian elements that date from thirty to seventy thousand years ago were discovered at the Wulanmulun site in Inner Mongolia. Through the development of new projects, new knowledge has been obtained through early discoveries at Miaohoushan in Liaoning Province, Shibazhan in

⁶ Zhang Senshui, “Jin 20 nianlai Zhongguo jiushiqi kaoguxue de jinzhan yu sikao” [Developments and reflections on the last 20 years of Chinese Paleolithic archaeology], *Di si ji yanjiu* no. 1 (2002): 11–19.

Huma County, Heilongjiang Province, and other major sites. The Houshan site at the Agriculture University in Shenyang has filled a gap in Paleolithic archaeology in the Shenyang area and has advanced the history of human activity in the Shenyang area to an earlier time period of around 110,000 years ago. A large number of Late Paleolithic sites have been discovered in Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces. The Tongtiandong cave site in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was the first Paleolithic cave site discovered within Xinjiang. Typical Mousterian cultural remains were discovered as well, which have had significant impact on the study of ancient human evolution and population diffusion in the northwest frontier area over the past 40,000 years and have been used to establish a chronological framework for regional cultural development. Cultural remains discovered at Nwya Devu in Nagqu, Tibet Autonomous Region, are dominated by blade technology, which provides important evidence for investigating population migration, technological diffusion, and evolution. Moreover, they provide invaluable records for exploring human adaptation to the alpine region and reconstructing the paleoenvironment and climate of the plateau.⁷

Lower Paleolithic remains are plentiful in the south. Yuanmou County in Yunnan Province is the source of the earliest human fossils in China. Human fossils and cultural remains dating from one to two million years ago have been discovered at the Longgupo cave site in Wushan County, Chongqing, the Longgu cave in Jianshi County and Yun County in Hubei Province, the Renzidong site in Fanchang County, Anhui Province, and the Qiliting site in Changxing County and Shangmakan in Anji County, Zhejiang Province, all had discoveries of human fossils and cultural remains from one to two million years ago. Lower Paleolithic settlement complexes have been discovered in the Bose Basin and Bubing Basin in Guangxi Province, Yunan County in Guangdong Province, the Lishui River and Yuan River in Hunan Province, and Danjiangkou and Jianshi areas in Hubei Province. There has been drastic growth in the number of Late Paleolithic sites. Evidence of human activity has been found in nearly all large- and medium-sized river systems, with a particularly large number of cave sites distributed in the southwest and southeast limestone areas. There are relatively well-preserved traces of human activity as well as flora and fauna remains that can be used for reconstructing the environmental background in which people once lived.

⁷ Xiaoling Zhang et al., “The Earliest Human Occupation of the High-Altitude Tibetan Plateau 40,000 to 30,000 Years Ago,” *Science* 362, no. 6418 (November 2018): 1049–51.

Active Explorations on Theoretical Research

After the reform and opening-up policy, there was a rapid increase of new Paleolithic discoveries, and rapid progress was made in the quality of fieldwork and levels of information collection. Zhang Senshui has taken the viewpoint of Chinese Paleographic archaeological cultures as a complete system to summarize and systematically analyze all of China's Paleolithic era archaeological discoveries. He has developed standards and methods for dividing different types of Paleolithic industries and suggested that a set of continuous lithic industrial traditions once existed in China. He has argued that the appearance of the blade and microblade technology in Upper Paleolithic North China was the result of cultural transmission, further proposing the theory of "gradual regional progress and cultural communication" and the understanding that "inheritance delayed development, whereas communication promoted innovation."⁸ Gao Xing and others proposed a "comprehensive behavioral model" for China's ancient humans, observing that for most of the Pleistocene in this region, there was continuity, stability, high-frequency migration, pragmatism, flexibility and mobility, and compatibility with local conditions and the environment in terms of biological and behavioral evolution. With respect to cultural development, the behavioral features of the proposed model appear at the intersection of preserving tradition and initiating innovation. From an archaeological perspective, this supports a theory of "continuous evolution with hybridization" for China's ancient humans.⁹

The establishment of a model of Paleolithic archaeological cultures has contributed to the exploration of human exchanges and interactions that took place tens of thousands of years ago. From a global perspective, Paleolithic cultures in China have long been considered to have relied upon simple lithic manufacturing techniques that contributed to slow cultural development, because Acheulean and Mousterian lithic techniques, which were conceived as representations of advanced lithic techniques in contemporaneous Africa and Europe, were lacking in China. Within Chinese academic circles, there have been fierce debates whether the standard Acheulean handaxe ever existed in China and over the hypothesis of the Movius Line. Some scholars believe that

⁸ Zhang Senshui, "Zhongguo beifang jiushiqi gongye de quyu jianjin yu wenhua jiaoliu" [An archaeological interpretation of ancient human's stone tool technology and survival patterns in China], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 4 (1990): 322–33.

⁹ Gao Xing and Pei Shuwen, "Zhongguo gu renlei shiqi jishu yu shengcun moshi de kaogu xue chanshi" [An archaeological interpretation of ancient human's stone tool technology and survival patterns in China], *Di si ji yanjiu* no. 4 (2006): 504–13.

among China's Paleolithic remains handaxes exist as a category of implement, although in terms of morphology, technique, assemblage, and abundance, they have remarkable differences with handaxes from Eurasia and the West.¹⁰ Both fossil clues of human evolution and the binary structure and perpetuation of Paleolithic archaeological cultures show the continuity and independent nature of the human evolutionary process in Chinese territory over two million years. Presently there is still no persuasive proof of whether the humans in China in remote antiquity underwent a complete replacement or large-scale cultural changes.

As for regional differences in the environment, climate, and distribution of resources, there were many different lithic industrial systems in China during the Early and Middle Pleistocene. From the early phase to the late phase, there was a north-south dualistic structure, as well as many regional types of industry, which cannot simply be generalized as "one model" spanning millions of years. Lithic technology is not a "patented" product. Does it result from migration or technical evolution? Do different lithic technologies correspond to different groups? Does this correspondence have singular or multiple correlations? For these types of questions, there is no clear verdict at this time.

It is difficult to find direct material records for the modes of communication between different archaeological cultures. However, complicated lithic manufacturing techniques such as Levallois, blade, and microblade can help to reconstruct a definite temporal scale for ancient humans and cultural exchanges. There are different understandings regarding the origins and diffusion of blade and microblade technologies in China, and as new clues appear, the process of cultural diffusion may be recovered. We can combine subsistence, adaptation, and behavior with the mobility of human groups into a more synthesized interpretation.¹¹

¹⁰ Gao Xing, "Zhongguo jiushiqi shidai shoufu de tedian yu yiyi" [The characteristics and meaning of handaxes in China's Paleolithic era], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 2 (2012): 97–112.

¹¹ Jia Lanpo, "Zhongguo xi shiqi de tezheng he ta de chuantong, qiyuan yu fenbu" [The characteristics of Chinese microblade tools and their legacy, origins, and distribution], *Guji zhuidong wu yu gu renlei* no. 2 (1978): 137–43; Chen Chun and Zhang Meng, "Xi shi ye gongye yanjiu de huigu yu zai sikao" [Review and reassessment on the microblade industry], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 4 (2018): 577–89.

A Major Breakthrough in the Study of Human Origins

Human origins is the core issue in Paleolithic archaeological research. The human fossils that have been discovered thus far from two to six million years ago have all come from Africa, therefore the predominant viewpoint in international academic circles has been that humans originated in Africa, evolving from *Australopithecus* and *Homo habilis* to *Homo erectus*, and migrated out of Africa around 1.8 million years ago. Paleolithic sites that are likely related to *Homo erectus* have been found in northern and southern China, making it one of the world's most significant areas for research on human origins.

The Nihewan Basin Settlement Complex

The Nihewan Basin is situated within Yangyuan County and Yu County in northwestern Hebei Province. The well-developed Quaternary strata in the basin contain lacustrine deposits dating from two million years ago, during the Early Pleistocene and Middle Pleistocene, and the upper part also covers Late Pleistocene fluvial deposits. Around four hundred Paleolithic sites have been discovered, dating from two million years ago to about ten thousand years ago. It is internationally recognized as the most important area in China and all of East Asia for paleoanthropology and Paleolithic archaeological research on the origins and evolution of humans and the development of Paleolithic cultures in East Asia. They provide abundant and valuable data for reconstructing the paleoenvironment background and the geological sedimentary sequence in this region.

In 1978 Early Pleistocene human cultural remains were first confirmed at the Xiaochangliang site in the Nihewan stratum, pushing the history of human activity in the Nihewan Basin back to one million years ago. Shortly afterward, Donggutuo, Madigou, Maliang, Feiliang, Cenjiawan, and other Early Pleistocene sites were discovered one after another. Ongoing excavations and research following the discovery of the Majuangou site have confirmed that the Nihewan Basin is the earliest known human culture, dating from 1.76 million years ago to 1.25 million years ago.

New Discoveries in Lantian County, Shaanxi Province

The Cenozoic era stratum in the Lantian area is important for the study of Cenozoic stratum history and the evolution of ancient vertebrates and humans. In the 1960s the fully preserved lower jaw fossil of the Lantian man was

discovered, followed by a discovery of a cranium of the Lantian man, along with fossils of mammals and a small number of lithic artifacts. The physical anthropological characteristics of Lantian man are older than those of Peking man from Zhoukoudian, and the characteristics of the fauna also predate Peking man. Initially, paleomagnetic dating was used to determine a date of 700,000 years ago, and subsequent paleomagnetic dating defined a date of 1.15 million years ago. Recently soil stratigraphy and other multidisciplinary methods have been used to reexamine the Lantian and Gongzuling County *Homo erectus* layer, which are believed to date to 1.63 million years ago. Therefore, the Lantian man is considered to be second only to Georgia's Dmanisi man as the oldest *Homo erectus* outside of the African continent. The Shangchen site in Lantian, newly discovered in 2018, has dates that span from 2.12 to 1.26 million years ago. Related studies have established that these are the oldest human and related artifacts discovered outside of Africa to date.¹²

The Bose Basin Settlement Complex

Since evidence of Paleolithic human activity was discovered in the Bose Basin in 1973, over one hundred Paleolithic sites have been found. A portion of the major sites have been systematically excavated, and from these a relatively complete Lower Paleolithic cultural sequence has been constructed for the region. In particular, lithic tools discovered in this region have Acheulean cultural elements, which has drawn a high level of interest from the international academic community. Based on the dating of the tektites buried in situ with handaxes, the Acheulean remains in the Bose Basin can be dated to around 800,000 years ago.¹³ Although the dating remains controversial, the Lower Paleolithic sites within the Bose Basin are concentrated in distribution with distinctive features of the lithic industry, which provide key clues for investigating early human evolution, behavior, and diffusion in East Asia.

Other Important Discoveries

The Xihoudu site and the Yuanmou man fossils are the most important discoveries related to the origins of early humans in the initial stages of the

¹² Zhaoyu Zhu et al., "Hominin Occupation of the Chinese Loess Plateau since about 2.1 Million Years Ago," *Nature* 559, no. 7715 (2018): 559.

¹³ Ya-Mei Hou et al., "Mid-Pleistocene Acheulean-like Stone Technology of the Bose Basin, South China," *Science* 287, no. 5458 (2000): 5458.

nation's founding. Initially, lithic artifacts were discovered in the Pleistocene stratum at Xihoudu in Ruicheng County, Shanxi Province. Through paleomagnetic dating, the site was determined to be 1.8 million years old. The Xihoudu site has the earliest Early Pleistocene human cultural remains discovered in China and all of East Asia and altered the viewpoint that Peking man was the earliest human in China.

The teeth of Yuanmou man were discovered in 1956, and after decades of ongoing excavations and research, around ten lithic artifacts and some fossils of mammals were discovered. The characteristics of the mammal population indicate that they survived from the Early Pleistocene, and the results of paleomagnetic dating also point toward dating the Yuanmou man to around 1.7 million years ago.¹⁴

Clues regarding early human activity have been discovered in many areas south of the Yangzi River. At Renzidong in Fanchang County, Anhui Province, lithic artifacts and abundant fossils discovered at the site date to around two million years ago.¹⁵ The Hualong cave site in Dongzhi County, Anhui Province, is an important locality that contained fossilized skulls of *Homo erectus*. The human skull, lower jawbone, and teeth at the Hualong cave show shared characteristics between Middle Pleistocene and Late Pleistocene humans from 300,000 years ago and modern humans in East Asia. This offers new evidence of regional continuity for human evolution in East Asia as well as for the evolutionary transition from ancient humans to early modern humans.¹⁶ A large number of mammalian fossils and lithic artifacts have been excavated from the Longgupo Cave site in Wushan County, Chongqing. Electron spin resonance dating has indicated that the layer the human fossils and lithic artifacts were unearthed from is about 1.8 million years old.¹⁷ The early hominin fossils discovered in the 1970s at the Longgu Cave in Jianshi County, Hubei Province, attracted the attention of the academic community, and the human teeth discovered through later excavation work likely belong to the early hominid

¹⁴ Gao Xing, "Yuanmou ren de nianling ji xiangguang de niandai wenti tantao" [The age of "Yuanmou man" and related chronology issues], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 4 (2015): 442–50.

¹⁵ Zhang Senshui et al., "Fanchang ren zi dong jiu shiqi yizhi 1998 nian faxian de rengong zhipin" [Artifacts discovered in 1998 at the Paleolithic site of Renzidong in Fanchang], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 3 (2000): 169–83.

¹⁶ Xiu-Jie Wu et al., "Archaic Human Remains from Hualongdong, China, and Middle Pleistocene Human Continuity and Variation," *PNAS* 116, no. 20 (2019): 9820–24.

¹⁷ W. Huang et al., "Early Homo and Associated Artefacts in Asia," *Nature* 378 (1995): 275–78; Wu Xinzhi, "Wushan Longgupo shi ren xiahe shuyu yuan lei" [Longgupo hominoid mandible belongs to ape], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 1 (2000): 1–10.

genus. Furthermore, the abundant lithic artifacts and mammalian fossils have been dated to around two million years ago using paleomagnetic dating. The earliest remains of Lower Paleolithic wooden tools discovered in China thus far at the Gantangqing site in Jiangchuan County, Yunnan Province, are well preserved and abundant in number, making them a rarity in the world.

Disputes and Research on the Origins of Modern Humans

Within the stages of human evolution, “modern humans” are called *Homo sapiens* and appeared around 200,000 years ago. Within academic circles, there are many debates concerning the origins of modern humans. The out-of-Africa hypothesis and multiregional evolution hypothesis are two coexisting viewpoints.

The out-of-Africa hypothesis is supported by molecular biology research, which has sequenced and analyzed mitochondrial DNA from the placentas of living humans, showing that the modern African population has a longer period of accumulation of mitochondrial variation than populations in other regions and that they are situated at the root of the phylogenetic tree. Based on this research, modern humans are considered to have originated in Africa about 100,000 to 200,000 years ago before gradually spreading to other parts of the world, where the original local inhabitants may have died out or been replaced.

The multiregional evolution thesis is based on fossil evidence. The sources for this theory can be traced much further back, and it has been repeatedly revised and supplemented. In the 1980s Wu Xinzhi and others proposed the multiregional evolution model, which later developed into the continuous evolution with admixture model. This theory is based on direct evidence from Chinese human fossils. Chinese human fossils have a set of shared characteristics. They are a mosaic morphology from *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens*. Chinese fossils have morphological traces of Western genes. Therefore, this theory holds that human evolution from *Homo erectus* in East Asia was continuous, with no break in the evolutionary chain or large-scale replacement of the native population by foreign populations. There were exchanges and fusion with the existing genes, and as time went by, these became more frequent.¹⁸

¹⁸ Wu Xinzhi, “Xiandai ren qi yuan de duo di qu jin huaxue shuo zai Zhongguo de shizheng” [Empirical study of the multiregional evolution theory of the origin of modern people in China], *Disi ji yanjiu* no. 5 (2006): 702–9; Wu Xinzhi and Xu Xin, “Cong Zhongguo he Xiya jiu shiqi ji Daoxian ren ya huashi kan Zhongguo xiandai ren qi yuan” [Using the

The discovery of early modern human fossils in China in recent years has confirmed that early modern humans appeared around 100,000 years ago. However, further evidence for the evolution of early modern humans is required, particularly in order to resolve the issue of when humans with completely modern anatomical traits appeared in China. In addition, the results of the latest research from the Red Deer Cave people in Yunnan Province, the Lingjing site of Xuchang man in Henan Province, and Mulanshan *Homo sapiens* cave in Chongzuo City, Guangxi Province, indicate that the evolution of ancient hominids in East Asia is not purely a simple model of linear evolution or replacement. At the end of the Early Pleistocene, many groups of ancient humans in East Asia coexisted, and hybridization and genetic exchange between groups happened.

Ancient DNA research indicates that modern humans and early *Homo sapiens* had genetic exchanges with Neanderthals and Denisovans. Therefore, the replacement and extinction arguments within the out-of-Africa thesis do not have a leg to stand upon. The analysis of Paleolithic archaeological materials discovered in China demonstrates that there is strong continuity in the material characteristics of lithic artifacts and their methods of exploitation and use, the manufacturing technology of lithic tools, the types of lithic artifacts, morphological and assemblage features, the evolution of regional cultural traditions, and other traits. The appearance of Acheulean and Mousterian elements and blade technology within a limited time and space suggests that there were occasional exchanges rather than cultural or population replacement. “From the archaeological point of view, these provide strong arguments and support for the continuous evolution of ancient human populations to modern humans in China and East Asia and the theory of ‘continuous evolution with admixture.’”¹⁹

Paleolithic in China and West Asia fossils of human teeth in Daoxian to see the origin of modern Chinese people], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 1 (2016): 1–13.

¹⁹ Li Feng and Gao Xing, “Dongya xiandai ren lai yuan de kaoguxue sikao: Zhengju yu jieshi” [Archaeological reflections on the origins of modern humans in East Asia: Evidence and explanation], *Renleixue xuebao* no. 2 (2018): 176–91.

Neolithic Archaeology

Research on the Origins of Chinese Civilization

Building a Space-Time Framework for Prehistoric Cultures

By the end of the 1970s the number of Neolithic sites discovered in China had exceeded six or seven thousand. Large-scale survey excavations were spread throughout the country, new discoveries were abundant and varied, and the analysis of cultural types and their interrelationships were explored with increasing depth. Through these excavations, dozens of sites were recognized as archaeological cultures and major types. Building a space-time framework of archaeological cultures became a key task of prehistoric archaeology in China.

In 1977 Xia Nai used radiocarbon data to comprehensively describe a development sequence of regional archaeological cultures. The article discussed seven regions: the Central Plains, upper reaches of the Yellow River (the Gan-Qing area), lower reaches of the Yellow River and Lüshun port and Dalian City area in Liaoning Province, middle and lower reaches of the Yangzi River, coastal areas of Fujian and Guangdong Provinces, the Southwest, and the Northeast.²⁰ In 1981 a group led by Su Bingqi formally proposed a theory of “regional systems and cultural types,” dividing China’s prehistoric cultures into Shaanxi, Henan, Shanxi, and the surrounding area; Shandong and parts of neighboring provinces; Hubei and adjacent areas; the lower Yangzi River valley; a southern region with the triangular region between Lake Poyang and the Pearl River as its axis; and a northern region centered on the Great Wall.²¹ Entering into the twenty-first century, the space-time framework of China’s prehistoric cultures has become even more refined, as seen mainly in three areas. The first is the discovery of sites from the transitional period between the Paleolithic and Neolithic Age, around ten thousand years ago. The second is the refinement of the weak areas in the cultural sequence. The third is the use of highly precise radiocarbon dating technology to provide a more accurate chronological framework.²² At present, the divisions of regional systems and cultural types and the construction of a space-time framework of China’s

²⁰ Xia Nai, “Tan shisi ceding niandai he Zhongguo shiqian kaoguxue” [On radiocarbon dating and Chinese prehistoric archaeology], *Kaogu* no. 4 (1977): 217–32.

²¹ Su Bingqi (with Yin Weizhang), “Guanyu kaoguxue wenhua de quxi leixing wenti” [On the issue of regional systems and cultural types in archaeology], *Wenwu* no. 5 (1981): 10–17.

²² Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *Zhongguo kaoguxue xin shiqi shidai juan* [Chinese archaeology: Neolithic volume] (n.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2010).

prehistoric cultures are relatively well developed and therefore provide a solid basis for the reconstruction of ancient Chinese history and investigations into the origins of Chinese civilization within the vast scope of developments through space and time.

The Establishment of a Prehistoric Foundation for a Unified Multiethnic Nation

At the same time as the space-time framework of archaeological cultures was being constructed, archaeological research was being used to demonstrate China's prehistoric foundations, with the clear intention of seeking a cornerstone on which to stabilize a contemporary, unified, multiethnic state.²³

The Dismantling of “the Yi in the East and the Xia in the West” Model. The establishment of the Yangshao and Longshan cultures was a significant achievement of Chinese prehistoric archaeology before 1949. Due to the limited archaeological discoveries throughout the country at that time, painted pottery and black pottery were used as criterion for classifying two cultural centers, set up as an opposition between the Yangshao culture in the west and the Longshan culture in the east as they developed in parallel to each other. This aligned with “the Yi in the East and the Xia in the West” structure of ancient civilizations in remote antiquity proposed by Fu Sinian through the analysis of literary records and gave archaeologists confidence in their reconstruction of ancient history.

After 1949 a wealth of new archaeological discoveries rapidly proved that the Yangshao culture and Longshan culture were not parallel but followed one after the other. These two cultures were also insufficient for describing the characteristics of cultures throughout all areas of the nation, and as a large number of new archaeological cultures were named, “the Yi in the East and the Xia in the West” model was ultimately abandoned.

The Dominant Position of the Yellow River Valley and the “Central Plains Core” Model. The archaeological discoveries in the Yellow River valley were the most noteworthy before the 1980s. The discovery of China's earliest Neolithic Age

²³ Su Bingqi, “Zai quanguo kaogu xue guihua huiyi Zhongguo kaoguxue chengli dahui Shang de fayuan (zhaiyao)” [Speech at the National Archaeology Planning Meeting and the Founding Plenary Session of Chinese Archaeology (abstract)], in *Huaren, long de chuanren, Zhongguo ren yi kaogu xungenji* [The Chinese people, the descendants from the dragon, and the Chinese search for their roots through archaeology] (n.p.: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1994), 88–90.

culture, the Cishan–Peiligang culture, in the late 1970s in the middle reaches of the Yellow River fit within the Yellow River valley core model, thereby establishing the so-called Central Plains theory as the dominant model of constructing China’s ancient history. Although this model has limitations, it made great strides under the circumstances of that time by utilizing new archaeological materials to advance toward the reconstruction of ancient history, with far-reaching impacts.

The Regional Systems and Cultural Types Model. In 1981 Su Bingqi proposed a model of regional systems and cultural types (*quxi leixing*), which divided China’s prehistoric cultures into six regional divisions, emphasizing that each region developed along its own path to reach a relatively high level of social development, and a “dawn of civilization” arose for China. This model correlates well with the single entity with multiple components (*duoyuan yiti*) structure of China’s multiethnic population officially proposed by Fei Xiaotong in 1988,²⁴ which strives to break away from the unified thinking behind the Central Plains core model to initiate a model of the single entity with multiple components as the foundation of prehistoric China.

The Chinese Interaction Sphere Model. In 1986 Kwang-chih Chang borrowed the concept of interaction spheres from North American anthropologists to emphasize the independent development of different cultural areas in prehistoric China. In contrast to the regional systems and cultural types model, he placed special emphasis on using archaeological data to show that various cultural spheres were in close contact and how these interactions linked the various spheres into a whole. He believed that an interaction sphere could be formed without a core, that is to say that the interactions were not necessarily directed toward the center of the sphere, but were part of an intersecting network.²⁵

The Multi-petal Flower Model. In 1987 Yan Wenming proposed a multi-petal flower model, pointing out the structure of prehistoric cultures: “The Central Plains cultural area is the most notable, which is in the area at the center of the Wei River basin and the convergence of the three provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan. It extends over nearly all of the territory in Shaanxi,

²⁴ Fei Xiaotong, “Zhonghua minzu de duoyuan yiti geju” [The single entity with multiple components of Chinese ethnic groups], in *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* [The structure of the single entity with multiple components of Chinese ethnic groups] (n.p.: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan chubanshe, 1989), 1–36.

²⁵ Kwang-chih Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 4th ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).

Shanxi, Hebei, Henan.” The larger area surrounding Central Plains includes the Gansu–Qinghai cultural area, the Shandong cultural area, the Yan–Liao cultural area, the middle reaches of the Yangzi River area, and the Jiangsu–Zhejiang cultural area, and an even wider outer layer includes the cultural areas of Fujian Province, Taiwan, Guangdong Province, Yunnan Province, Tibet Autonomous Region, the Northeast, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, such that “China’s Neolithic cultures together resemble an immense double-petal flower.” Because the Central Plains area is located at the center of the flower, “it is susceptible to agitation and influence from surrounding cultures and can absorb advanced elements from all areas that are conducive to its own development, thereby facilitating the conditions for it to become the earliest civilized society.”²⁶ This model properly considers the characteristics of each region on a path of independent development where each has moments of cultural superiority. It emphasizes the key role of the Central Plains area, integrating the Yellow River valley core model and the regional systems and cultural types model.

An abundance of archaeological data demonstrates that China does not fit with the recent idea of imagined communities. Around 5300 BP, the “initial China” had taken shape as a “single entity with multiple components,” establishing the basis for a multiethnic unified nation in the historical period.

Revealing the Fundamental Formation Process of Chinese Civilization

The Appearance of Agriculture and Social Complexity (15,000–6000 BP). The shift from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic took place around 15,000 years ago. The earliest pottery and collective harvesting and preparation of millet and rice appeared at the Yujiagou site in Yangyuan County, Hebei Province, Lijiagou and other sites in Xinmin County, Henan Province, Xianrendong Cave and the Diaotonghuan site in Wannian County, Jiangxi Province, and Yuchanyan and other sites in Dao County, Hunan Province. This began the transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic, taking the form of dry farming in the north and rice planting in the south.

Even clearer evidence of domesticated rice from around 9000 BP was found at the Pengtoushan and Bashidang sites in Hunan Province, Shangshan and

²⁶ Yan Wenming, “Zhongguo shiqian wenhua de tongyi xing yu duoyang xing” [The unity and diversity of China’s prehistoric cultures], *Wenwu* no. 3 (1987): 38–50.

Xiaohuangshan sites in Zhejiang Province, and Guhu site in Henan Province. Evidence of domesticated millet from around 8000 BP has been found at sites including the Xinglongwa site in Inner Mongolia, Dadiwan site in Gansu Province, Peiligang site in Henan Province, and Yuezhuang site in Shandong Province.

Between 8000 BP and 7000 BP agriculture began to form, population sizes increased, large-scale settlements appeared, and complex societies began to sprout. Eighty storage pits with thick layers of millet remains were discovered at the Cishan site in Hebei Province. At the Xinglongwa site, the settlement of more than 30,000 square meters was surrounded by a moat, within which there were more than one hundred houses arranged in rows. The large building at the center had a complex where humans and pigs were buried together, and jade artifacts were used as ornaments to symbolize rank. Within the large-scale tombs at the Guhu site, bone flutes, turquoise artifacts, turtle shells with carved symbols, and other rank-identifying implements were buried with the deceased.

Between 7000 BP and 6000 BP the economic pattern of dry farming in the north and rice planting in the south was well established. Prehistoric cultures in various places saw vigorous development, and there was a marked increase in the number of settlements. In the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River, the Banpo cultural type of the Yangshao culture had a distinct style of painted pottery that emerged at the core settlement sites of Banpo and Jiangzhai. Early period cemeteries of the Dawenkou culture in the lower reaches of the Yellow River also show clear hierarchical differences. Refined white pottery appeared at the Gaomiao, Tangjiagang, and other cultures in the middle reaches of the Yangzi River, carved with designs that have religious meanings. Rice cultivation developed in the lower reaches of the Yangzi River, and the remains of rice paddies and thick accumulations of rice husks have been found at the Tianluoshan site in Zhejiang Province.

On the economic basis established through agricultural developments, the process of social development in different places saw significant acceleration, nurturing the seeds of major transformation.

The “Initial China” and the Formation of Chinese Civilization (6000–5300 BP). Around 6000 BP China’s various prehistoric cultures simultaneously entered a magnificent transition period of rapid development, and by 5300 BP, as seen from rich archaeological data, the appearance of “early states” as defined by Su Bingqi marked the formation of Chinese civilization.

In the lower reaches of the Yellow River, during the late phase of the early period of the Dawenkou culture, large-scale tombs with abundant grave goods began to appear. In the lower reaches of the Yangzi River large graves with sacrificial altars, cairns, and large amounts of jade and stone funerary objects appeared at the Lingjiatan site in Anhui Province. The highest-ranking tombs of the Songze culture were discovered at the Dongshancun site in Jiangsu Province. In the middle reaches of the Yangzi River there is a distinct hierarchy of the graves from the late period of the Daxi culture at the Longwangshan cemetery in Hubei Province.²⁷ In the western area of Liaoning Province, the Hongshan culture reached its peak of development, emerging at the Niuheiliang group of sites in Liaoning Province.²⁸ In the Central Plains area, investigations into the system of settlements surrounding Zhudingyuan have shown that the surface area of the largest site of Beiyangping covers nearly one million square meters and the secondary settlement center of Xipo site covers more than four hundred square meters. The settlements have a clear social hierarchy. Large buildings at the Xipo site have an interior surface area of two hundred square meters, plus a corridor with a footprint of an extra five hundred square meters. There are significant differences among burials at the Xipo cemetery.²⁹

Interregional exchange and interactions entered a new phase, and gradually a cultural community was formed. The newly emerging upper class in each region established a network of exchange with ritual objects and specialized knowledge as their media in order to defend their position and prestige, which served as a significant driving force to facilitate regional integration.

The jade artifacts from the Lingjiatan site and Hongshan culture, which were separated by a distance of over one thousand kilometers, display profound similarities and provide strong evidence of long-distance trade between the upper classes of society. The phenomenon of including battle axes (*yue*) among funerary objects in large-scale tombs had widespread popularity, indicating that battle axes had widespread acceptance as significant symbols of power and

²⁷ Hubei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, Jingmen City Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, “Hubei Jingmen Longwangshan xin shiqi mudi fajue jianbao” [Brief report on the excavation of the Neolithic cemetery at Longwangshan, Jingmen, Hubei], *Jiangnan kaogu* no. 4 (2008): 23–30.

²⁸ Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, *Niuheiliang-Hongshan wenhua yizhi fajue baogao (1983-12003 niandu)* [Niuheiliang-Hongshan cultural site excavation report (1983–2003)] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2012).

²⁹ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, *Lingao Xipo mudi* [The Lingbao Xipo cemetery] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2010).

status. Without a doubt, exchanges between the upper social classes in different regions were an important cause in facilitating this change. The manufacture of ornaments from rare precious materials like ivory and turquoise was prevalent in all areas and is also strong evidence of exchange between the upper classes of society.

Exchange between the upper classes of society is not the same as cultural exchange in the general sense. The society in each major cultural area simultaneously experienced rapid development with clearly intensifying degrees of social complexity, against a background of newly emerging upper classes of society. The contents of the exchanges included ivory, jade, turquoise, and other rare materials. Even more importantly, a primitive worldview, astronomical calendar, production techniques for prestige goods, representations of authority, and funerary and sacrificial rituals were essential for the advanced cultures of the time.³⁰

In short, during the latter half of the fourth millennium BCE, each of China's major prehistoric cultural regions developed simultaneously, entering the stage of the early state development. Long-distance trade undertaken by the upper classes of society was the nucleus for deeper exchanges and gradually took the form of a shared cultural essence. These ties can be closely and profoundly related to China in the historical period in terms of geography and culture. That is to say, the formation of the "initial China" can be seen as the origination stage of Chinese civilization.

Instability and Reorganization and the Formation of the Early Nation (5300–4300 BP). Between around 5,300 and 5,000 years ago, China's prehistoric era entered a period of instability and reorganization.

In the core area of the Miaodigou type of the Yangshao culture, the number of sites in western Henan, southern Shanxi, and the Guanzhong Basin greatly decreased. The Miaodigou population migrated northward to the Hetao area, forming the Haishengbulang local cultures. The Miaodigou population that crossed Mount Long entered a sparsely populated area in the upper reaches of the Yellow River and the Tao River and Huang River basin, and formed the Majiayao culture characterized by colorful painted pottery. The population of the Majiayao culture also passed through southern Gansu and entered northwestern Sichuan, which had a profound impact on the subsequent

³⁰ Li Xinwei, "Zhongguo shiqian shehui shangceng yuan juli jiaoliu wang de xingcheng" [The formation of a long-distance communications network in the upper layers of prehistoric Chinese society], *Wenwu* no. 4 (2015): 51–58.

development of this area. The Hongshan culture in the Liao River valley also experienced a significant decline, with a rapid reduction in the number of sites. The Niheliang center was abandoned, and the population migrated westward to the Hetao area.

In the middle reaches of the Yangzi River the Daxi cultural center shifted eastward, forming the Qujialing culture in the middle reaches of the Han River where they built a group of city sites. The complex structures and abundant funerary objects discovered in the large-scale tombs at the Chenghe site in Shayang County, Hubei Province, demonstrate the advanced development of this culture. The “northern advancement” of the Qujialing culture is likewise a major event from this period. Elements of Qujialing culture entered the Nanyang Basin and northern Hubei, and its influence was felt at the boundary of Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan Provinces to as far as the Guanzhong Plain.

In the lower reaches of the Yangzi River the Liangzhu culture unified the populations of the Lingjiatan remains and Songze culture and applied their economic, political, and religious resources to form the first political and religious center in prehistoric China. The Liangzhu culture was distributed in the area surrounding Lake Taihu, with secondary centers and a large number of medium and small settlements in Fuquan Mountain in Shanghai and Sidun in Jiangsu Province, and developed a distinct settlement hierarchy. Jade artifacts became the core of religion and beliefs and were widespread within this broad scope. Therefore academic circles generally hold that the Liangzhu culture formed a high-level political system that was equivalent to the early states.

The Liangzhu culture had a profound influence on the development of other cultures. Liangzhu-style jade artifacts influenced the Dawenkou culture to the north and the Qujialing culture to the west, and through these two cultures it even influenced the Jinnan area in southern Shanxi Province and diffused into the far northwestern hinterlands. To the south, jade artifacts modeled after the Liangzhu culture have been discovered at the Shixia site in northern Guangdong Province.

Around 4,300 years ago the Liangzhu culture suddenly declined, initiating another period of instability and reorganization and social development.

The Longshan Period and the Rise of the Early Dynasties (4300–3800 BP). After the decline of the Liangzhu culture, the Yellow River basin became the center of the formation of the early dynasties as they began to unfold with great momentum.

The Dawenkou culture in the lower reaches of the Yellow River developed into the Longshan culture during a phase of social development, with great numbers of city sites.

As the Central Plains region entered into the Longshan period, large numbers of city sites appeared. The Pingliangtai city site had high-level structures. The Wangchenggang site in Dongfeng County matches the description of Yu the Great's capital city of "Yangcheng" in literary records, with discoveries of a large-scale city site and structures.

In the middle reaches of the Han River, the Qujialing culture developed into the Shijiahe culture and the Houshijiahe culture. The Shijiahe site group is made up of more than forty sites with an area of more than eight million square meters.

The most important site from this period is the Taosi site in Xiangfen County, which aligns with the area of activity of the legendary emperor Yao as recorded in literature. Archaeological surveys in the Linfen Basin and nearby area have shown that Taosi was a core settlement within a vast area surrounded by secondary centers, settlements, and smaller settlements. The scale of political control that took shape surpassed other city sites of the time. It can be inferred that the Taosi system of government was the source for early dynastic China.

After the rise of the Taosi culture, in its later period a powerful cultural group formed at Shimao, Lushanmao, and other sites in the northern Shaanxi area. The Shimao population had close exchanges and even conflicts with Taosi, which was likely the key factor that caused the decline of Taosi around 4000 BP. At the same time, the Qijia culture centered in the upper reaches of the Yellow River and Huang River valley reached its peak of development.

There was intense cultural interaction during this period: The population of the Longshan culture moved south, colliding with the populations of the Shijiahe and Houshijiahe cultures. This coincides with the legend of Yu the Great's expedition to Sanmiao in ancient historical records. The population in the northwest region exerted a large influence, bringing wheat, barley, and other crops, as well as cattle, sheep, and other domestic animals one after another into the Central Plains. The Northeastern cultures influenced the rise of early dynastic China and played a major role in cultural exchanges between China and the West. The Taosi culture declined around four thousand years ago. Around 3800 BP, Longshan culture sites in Shandong greatly reduced in number, the central sites were abandoned, and there was a shift to the Yueshi culture period. The Houshijiahe culture likewise declined. The Shimao city site

was abandoned. The Qijia culture continued to develop, and the Lower Xiajiadian culture arose in the area to the north and south of the Yan Mountains. Concurrently, the Longshan culture quickly developed in the area of the southeastern foothills of Mount Song in Henan Province, with its center migrating to the Luoyang Basin where it became the Erlitou culture, the center of activity for the Xia dynasty as recorded in literature. A large metropolitan settlement arose at the Yanshi Erlitou site located at the confluence of the Yellow and Luo Rivers in Henan Province, which is generally considered to be the late Xia dynasty capital. As China's first dynasty came into existence, the development of Chinese civilization entered a new phase.

Xia, Shang, and Zhou Archaeology

Archaeology of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou period has achieved great strides in development. A system of Xia, Shang, and Zhou archaeology with Chinese characteristics has been established.

The Fundamental Construction of a Space-Time Framework of a System of Archaeological Cultures

After close to a hundred years of excavations and research and equipped with basic data on Three Dynasties archaeology, a classification of regional systems and cultural types for archaeological cultures was established, which laid a foundation for the construction of Xia, Shang, and Zhou history from an archaeological perspective.

The System of Xia, Shang, and Zhou Archaeological Cultures and Establishment of Periodization and Chronology Standards

The establishment of a system and standards for the periodization and chronology of Xia, Shang, and Zhou archaeological cultures was the core motivation of archaeological excavations and research at capital sites from this period. Beginning with the founding of New China, the Shang tombs at Liulige, Hui County, Henan Province, were excavated. Since then, a large amount of archaeological work has continuously unfolded at Yinxu in Anyang, the Shang city in Zhengzhou, Erlitou, Fenggao in Xi'an, Yanshi Shang city,

and other core sites that possess representative characteristics from this period, and periodization research has been conducted on the excavated pottery and bronzes.

After the “Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project” was launched in 1996, Three Dynasties chronology research shifted from chronological sequence research on individual sites to a coherent and integrated study of the periodization of major Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasty sites, comprehensively sorting Three Dynasties archaeological cultures into a standardized periodization sequence. This not only promoted integrated research on Three Dynasties chronology, but also played an important role in advancing the discussion of several important issues of the Three Dynasties period, such as the identification of pre-Zhou cultural features, and discussions on the characteristics of Erlitou, Yanshi Shang city, and Zhengzhou Shang city.

For the Eastern Zhou period, the excavation on the capitals of three states (i.e., Zhao, Wei, and Han), Qin, Yan, Chu, Qi-Lu, and Wu-Yue, and other of various Eastern Zhou period states, as well as tombs of various ranks, and periodization and chronology research on ceramic funerary objects has provided a foundational understanding of the features of archaeological cultures from various regions during the Eastern Zhou period. A system of Eastern Zhou archaeological cultures has been constructed, and standards for the periodization and chronology of archaeological cultures from different regions have been used to establish a basis for multidimensional archaeological research.

Through many years of archaeological excavations and research, Chinese archaeology has established a sequence of core archaeological cultures and standards of periodization based on the Erlitou culture, Erligang culture, Yinxu culture, Zhou culture in the Fenggao area, and archaeological cultures of Eastern Zhou states.

The Fundamental Completion of Constructing a Classification of Regional Systems and Cultural Types for Xia, Shang, and Zhou Archaeological Cultures

In addition to the construction of an archaeological cultural sequence from central sites such as Erlitou, the Shang city of Yanshi, the Shang city of Zhengzhou, Yinxu in Anyang, Fenggao, and Zhouyuan, a framework of regional systems and cultural types in the entire region for different periods of the Three Dynasties has been established.

In 1974 the excavation of the Dongxiafeng site in Xia County, Shanxi Province, revealed the Dongxiafeng type, which is similar to the Erlitou culture represented by the Erlitou site but has independent characteristics. Since then, research on local cultural types of the Erlitou culture has deepened.

The early Shang period cultural types of the Erligang culture include the Erligang (or Metropolitan) cultural type, the Liulige cultural type, the Taixi cultural type, the Dongxiafeng cultural type, the Beicun cultural type, the Jingdang cultural type, the Panlongcheng cultural type, the Dachengdun cultural type, and the Daxinzhuang cultural type. The late Shang period cultural types of the Erligang culture include the Yinxu (or Anyang) cultural type, the Subutun cultural type, the Anqiu cultural type, the Qianzhangda cultural type, the Tianhu cultural type, and the Laoniupo cultural type.

Whether the above-mentioned local cultural types of the Erlitou, Erligang, and Yinxu culture periods are in fact vassal states, ethnic groups, or a community of ceramic traditions is not conclusive.

Entering the Western Zhou period, the regional archaeological cultures of the Western and Eastern Zhou periods generally manifested as cultures of related vassal states, as shown by the increase of related textual records and the fact that excavated bronze inscriptions can be corroborated with related documentary records. Archaeological discoveries of Western Zhou regional states include remains from the Yu, Qi, Lu, Teng, Zeng, Wu, Guo, Ying, Yan, Xing, and Jin. In recent years multiple archaeological discoveries related to the Western Zhou regional states were made. The most prominent include the discovery of the elite cemetery and city site of the Qi state at the Chenzhuang site, Gaoqing County, Shandong Province;³¹ the discovery of the Zeng marquises cemetery and nearby city sites at Yejiashan in Suizhou, Hubei Province;³² and the Li state elite cemetery in Licheng County, the Western Zhou Bo clan cemetery in Hengshui Town, Jiang County,³³ and the Western

³¹ Shandong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, “Shandong Gaoqingxian chen zhuang Xi Zhou yicun fajue jianbao” [Report on the excavation of the Western Zhou remains in Chenzhuang, Gaoqing County, Shandong], *Kaogu* no. 2 (2011): 3–21.

³² Hubei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, Suizhou Museum, “Hubei Suizhou shi Yejiashan Xizhou mudi” [The Western Zhou Yejiashan cemetery in Suizhou City, Hubei Province], *Kaogu* no. 7 (2012): 31–52; Hubei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, Suizhou Museum, “Hubei Suizhou Yejiashan M28 fajue baogao” [Excavation report on tomb M28 at the Yejiashan cemetery in Suizhou, Hubei], *Jiangnan kaogu* no. 4 (2013): 3–57.

³³ Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Yuncheng Cultural Heritage Work Station, and Jiang County Cultural Bureau, “Shanxi Jiang xian heng shui Xi Zhou mu fajue jianbao”

Zhou cemetery in Dahekou, Yicheng County, Shanxi Province. The discoveries of two Zhou tombs and cities at Liandaicun in Hancheng city and Liujiawa in Chengcheng County, Shaanxi Province, provided significant materials for research on the location and culture of the Rui state in the late Western Zhou to early Spring and Autumn period.³⁴ The survey of Qin culture and excavations of Dabuzi Mountain, Xishanping, and other sites in Li County, Gansu Province, have allowed for more in-depth research on early Qin culture.³⁵ All of these discoveries provide significant materials for research on Western Zhou regional states, cultural features, and the social and political structures of the time.

Eastern Zhou period archaeology on vassal states has similarly obtained tremendous achievements, particularly in the area of Eastern Zhou vassal state cities. The major Eastern Zhou period cities that have been comprehensively surveyed and analyzed are the Jin capital at Xintian, the ancient cities of Zheng and Han, the Zhao state capital at Handan, the lower metropolis of the Yan state, the ancient city of the Zhongshan state at Lingshou, the Qi state capital at Linzi, the capital of the Lu state in the ancient city of Qufu, the Mudu ancient town of the Spring and Autumn period in Suzhou, the Qin state capitals of Yong and Yueyang, and the Chu state Jinan city site.

[Brief report on the excavation of the Western Zhou Hengshui tombs in Jiangxian County, Shanxi], *Wenwu* no. 8 (2006): 4–18.

³⁴ Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Weinan Municipal Institute of Cultural Relics Conservation and Archaeology, Hancheng Cultural Relics and Tourism Bureau, “Shanxi Hancheng Liangdai cun yizhi M26 fajue jianbao” [Excavation report on tomb M26 at Liangdai village site in Hancheng, Shaanxi], *Wenwu* no. 1 (2008): 4–21; Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, “Zhoudai Fengguo kaogu de xin faxian—Shanxi Chengcheng Liujiawa Chunqiu mudi fajue qu de zhongyao shouhuo” [New discoveries of the Zhou dynasty Feng state archaeology—Important results from the excavation of the Spring and Autumn period Liujiawa cemetery in Cheng City, Shaanxi], *Zhongguo wenwu bao*, January 12, 2018, 8.

³⁵ Joint Archaeological Team on Early Qin Culture, “2006 nian Gansu Lixian Dabuzi shan 21 hao jianzhu ji zhi fajue jianbao” [Report on the 2006 excavation of building site no. 21 at Dabaozi Mountain, Li County, Gansu], *Wenwu* no. 11 (2008): 4–13; Joint Archaeological Team on Early Qin Culture, “2006 nian Gansu Lixian Dabuzi shan jisi yiji fajue jianbao” [The 2006 excavation of the sacrificial site at Dabuzi Mountain, Li County, Gansu], *Wenwu* no. 11 (2008): 14–29; Early Qin Culture Joint Archaeological Team, “2006 nian Gansu Lixian Dabuzi shan Dong Zhou muzang fajue jianbao” [Report on the 2006 excavation of the Eastern Zhou tombs at Dabuzi Mountain, Li County, Gansu Province], *Wenwu* no. 11 (2008): 30–49.

Establishment of the Archaeological Culture Genealogy of the Surrounding Area and the Growing Clarity of Cultural Features

In 1950 the Northeast Archaeological Excavation Team conducted an excavation of the stone cists or stone-lined graves at Xituanshan in Jilin Province. This was the first archaeological excavation conducted on the cultural remains from peripheral regions after the establishment of the People's Republic of China.³⁶

In recent decades, the excavations of the Xiajiadian site in Chifeng and the sarcophagus tomb at Nanshangen in Ningcheng County, Inner Mongolia, have identified the lower Xiajiadian culture and upper Xiajiadian culture distributed in the western portion of Liaoning Province and the southeast portion of Inner Mongolia. The discovery of the Zhukaigou site in Yijinhuluo Banner provided new materials to investigate the features of another archaeological culture of the Xia and Shang period in northern China. This became an important thread to investigate the extent of the northern spread of Shang culture and the origins of Ordos style bronzes.

The discoveries of Xia, Shang, and Zhou period bronze cultural remains at Gaotashan, Miaohoushan, Weiyingsi, Shuangtuozi Phases I to III, and Shuangfang in Liaoning Province provide rich materials for research on the history and culture of the Dongyi,³⁷ Huimo, and other tribes in the northeast, and the relationship between the Central Plains and various cultures of the Shandong Peninsula and Korean Peninsula.

The excavation of sites such as Zhangjiayuan and Weifang in Ji County, Tianjin, and Zhenjiangying in Beijing and the naming and comprehensive research on the Datuotou culture and three phases of the Weifang culture have established a preliminary succession of archaeological cultures during the Xia, Shang, and Zhou period in the Beijing-Tianjin-Tangshan area. The excavation of the Western Zhou tombs at Baifucun in Changping County, Beijing, facilitated our understanding of the features of northern cultures during the Western Zhou period and their relationship to the ruling Zhou dynasty. The excavation of the Qilizhuang site in Yi County, Hebei Province, displays a relatively comprehensive cultural sequence of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou period

³⁶ Northeast Archaeological Excavation Group, "Jilin Xituanshan shiguan mu fajue baogao" [Excavation report on the stone coffin tombs at Xituanshan, Jilin], *Kaogu xuebao* no. 1 (1964): 29–49.

³⁷ Non-Han tribes living to the east of China.—Trans.

in the Yi River basin and extending to the eastern foothills of the Taihang Mountains in the northern region.

The archaeological discoveries at Liujiache in Pinggu County, Beijing, and in Shilou, Baode, and Lingshi counties in Shanxi Province, and other places have Shang cultural elements, but also include remains with local characteristics. Tombs of Shang dynasty vassal princes and nobles were discovered in Jingjie Village, Lingshi County, Shanxi Province; Shang dynasty rammed earth foundations were discovered at Gaohong in Liulin County, Shanxi Province; and a Shang and Zhou period city site was discovered at Lijiaya in Qingjian County, Shaanxi Province. The discoveries at Nianzipo in Changwu County, Liujiacun in Qingjian County, Zhengjiapo in Wugong County, and other sites in Shaanxi Province have provided materials to explore the archaeology of pre-Zhou cultures.

The excavation of a number of ancient Yueshi cultural sites in Shandong Province, including Zhaogezhuang in Muping County, Yinjiacheng in Sishui County, Haojiatai in Yidu County, and the Shijia site in Huantai County, established a foundation for exploring the cultural features of the Dongyi during the Xia dynasty and their relationship to the Xia rulers. The Shang cemetery at Qianzhangda in Teng County, Shandong Province, as well as the Subutun cemetery in Yidu County, is another important archaeological discovery of Shang dynasty vassal states in Shandong Province. The remains of sacrifices made by the Dongyi during the Shang dynasty have been found at the Qiuwan site in Tongshan County, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.

In the lower reaches of the Yangzi River basin, the Maqiao culture, represented by the Maqiao site in Shanghai, fills a gap in the archaeological cultures between the Neolithic era and the Western and Eastern Zhou period in Shanghai and the area surrounding Lake Taihu. A number of Hushu cultural sites were excavated in the Ningzhen area, and the name “Hushu culture” was proposed.

At the joint excavation of the mound tombs at Guanjiucun, Pucheng County, Nanping prefecture-level city, Fujian Province, large quantities of bronzes, proto-porcelain, and stamped hard pottery from the Western Zhou to Spring and Autumn period were unearthed, filling a missing link for this phase of archaeological cultures in the Fujian area.

The discovery of the Wucheng culture in Jiangxi Province provides the means to explore the cultural features of Shang vassal states in the Yangzi River valley and their relationship to the ruling Shang. The large-scale Eastern Zhou

tombs discovered at Lizhou'ao in Jing'an County, Jiangxi Province, have revealed the existence of a regional political group in northwestern Jiangxi at that time.

Native cultural remains from the late Shang to early Western Zhou at Zhouliangyuqiao were discovered in Hubei Province, only a few kilometers away from the Jingnan Temple site where typical Erligang period Shang cultural remains were discovered. This provides a new path to explore the relationship between the Shang dynasty and local native powers. In Chenggu County, Shaanxi Province, Ningxiang County in Hunan Province, and other places, a series of Shang and Zhou period discoveries of bronzeware in pits and other major discoveries convey that the relationship between native cultures in these areas and the Shang and Zhou cultures in the Central Plains is a compelling topic.

In Sichuan Province the Shang dynasty sacrificial pits and Shang dynasty city wall at Sanxingdui in Guanghan County, the timber-frame remains at the Shi'erqiao site in Chengdu, the Jinsha site, and other major discoveries reveal that during the Shang and Zhou period, distinctive and highly developed bronze cultures existed in the Sichuan Basin, and they established some degree of contact with the Shang dynasty in the Central Plains.³⁸

The Bronze Age tombs discovered at Dabona in Yunnan Province have shown that in the Shang and Zhou period the Yunnan area had already entered the Bronze Age. The series of excavations at the Haimenkou site, Jianchuan County, Yunnan Province, have enabled an absolute understanding of the settlement conditions and the production and living conditions for people in this region during the Bronze Age.

The existence of the Siwa, Siba, Xindian, and Kayue cultures in the Gansu-Qinghai area and new discoveries including the Donghuishan cemetery in Minle County, Xujianian cemetery in Zhuanglang County, and Jiuzhan cemetery in Heshui County, Gansu Province, have created the conditions to clarify the cultural genealogy of Bronze Age archaeological cultures in this region.

Large numbers of tombs and sites dating from early Bronze Age to early Iron Age have been discovered within the borders of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Since entering into the new century, these important discoveries include the Haiyang cemetery in Shanshan County, the Liushui

³⁸ Sichuan Provincial Cultural Relics and Archaeology Research Institute, *Sanxingdui jisi keng* [The Sanxingdui sacrificial pits] (n.p.: Cultural Relics Press, 1999).

cemetery in Yutian County, the Xiaohu cemetery in Lop Nur, the Atun Qiaolu site in Wenquan County, and the Husita site.

The discoveries of the east bay (Tung Wan is its local name), west bay (Sha Lo Wan), and Kwo Lo Wan Bay of Lantau Island, and other sites in Hong Kong indicate that over three thousand years ago close ties had already been established between the Pearl River Delta and as far as the Central Plains, illustrating the syncretism with Central Plains culture.

The discoveries of Metal Age archaeological cultures in the Taiwan area include the Shisanhang culture, Fanzaiyuan culture, Kanding culture, Daqiuyuan culture, Niasung culture, Guishan culture, Beiye culture, and Jingpu culture.³⁹

In the Western and Eastern Zhou periods, in the northwest there were the Xindian culture, Siwa culture, and Shajing culture, and in northern China there were the Xiajiadian culture upper stratum, Yuhuangmiao culture, Taohongbala culture, Maoqinggou culture, and Yanglang culture. In the Sichuan area there was the Ba-Shu culture. In the southeast, the earth mound tombs and engraved hard pottery are characteristic features of the Baiyue cultures. In the Yunnan area there were the ancient Kunming and ancient Dian cultures.

The above-mentioned discoveries and research have brought academic circles a new understanding of the multiplex and integrative structure in present-day China, in which multiple cultures interacted, merged, and developed together during the Three Dynasties period.

Seeing People through Artifacts in Three Dynasties Archaeological Research

Around the time of the May Fourth movement, Marxism was introduced into China, and Marxist historiography has had repercussions for the field of Chinese history.⁴⁰ Since 1949, under the guidance of Marxist historiography theory, research results in the field of Chinese archaeology were used to inquire into the existence and nature of primitive society and slave-owning society, and to discuss the origins of the Chinese nation and the transformation from public ownership toward private ownership within the Shang and Zhou social system. Archaeological research of the Three Dynasties has gone from describing

³⁹ Zang Zhenhua, *Taiwan kaogu* [Taiwan archaeology] (n.p.: Yishujia chubanshe, 1999).

⁴⁰ Guo Moruo, "Zixu" [Preface], in *Zhongguo gudai shehui yanjiu* [A study of ancient Chinese society] (n.p.: Renmin chubanshe, 1954).

material culture remains to investigating the groups of people behind them, including their social organization and ideological concepts, and new explorations are driving Chinese archaeology toward even more in-depth strides in the future.

On the other hand, due to the impacts of the social environment and fragmentary archaeological data, in many applied studies there are tendencies to use the existence of a part to construct a whole or to “make the feet fit the shoes” [i.e., stretch the facts]. Moreover, when many historians use archaeological data, they do not take archaeology itself as the starting point, but rather draw a type of direct observation using isolated and superficial lines of evidence and regard it as a method of supplementary evidence for literary documents, failing to break away from the convention of using field archaeological discoveries to confirm historical records.

However, in general, the achievements of Xia, Shang, and Zhou archaeology have thoroughly altered the content of traditional pre-Qin history even to the point of its formulation method, and a Three Dynasties historical system has been formed with the regional systems and cultural types as the framework. Moreover, whether in the area of newly excavated and accumulated materials or the area of expanding research content, whether in the area of introducing and utilizing new methods (archaeological methods of stratigraphy and typology or interdisciplinary strategies) or the area of using various new theories to interpret archaeological discoveries (ranging from universal systems theory to human-land relationship theory), Chinese archaeology has undergone fundamental changes compared to a traditional historiography approach based on documentary records and examinations. Archaeology has developed from a supplementary discipline providing evidence to reinforce history to become an essential historical discipline where archaeology is used to write history. The narrative of pre-Qin history has changed from the history of a traditional system of dynastic politics based on literary documents to a history of comprehensive cultural and social development based on archaeology. From a historical view, the traditional perspective where the Central Plains is regarded as the core has shifted to the perspective of single entity with multiple components. The standard narrative of a political history with the emperor at the core has shifted to a social, economic, and cultural history with ancient society, economy, and culture at the core. The center of emphasis has changed from an elite history to a popular history.

Qin and Han to Ming and Qing Archaeology

Archaeology of Capital Cities and Local City Sites

Capitals, cities, and villages are places inhabited by people of different ranks. They are spaces differentiated by varying levels of government, economics, culture, and everyday activities. Their contents are of the utmost importance for archaeological excavations and research on the Qin and Han to Ming and Qing periods. Together they constitute the main social and political framework for all dynasties of the historical period.

Capital Sites of the Qin and Han to Ming and Qing

Capital cities were the political, economic, military, and cultural centers of the dynasties under a centralized political system. They were a microcosm of society in their time. Among them, Xi'an, Luoyang, and Beijing are world-famous ancient capitals.

The Qin dynasty was the first empire in Chinese history. Xianyang was the capital of the Qin state and Qin dynasty. Between 1973 and 2000 archaeologists in Shaanxi discovered and excavated the palace at the palatial district site in Xianyang. During the 2002–8 excavation of the Efang Palace site, the limits of the palace and the facts of its construction were determined. The excavation of the Qin and Han Shanglinyuan site was a significant achievement in imperial hunting park archaeology.⁴¹ In recent years archaeological surveys and excavations conducted in Yueyang city determined that it had three successive ancient cities, and many large-scale palace structures were discovered. The excavators believe that Ancient City no. 3 was the location of Yueyang city of the middle Warring States to early Western Han period.⁴²

Survey excavation work at the Western Han city of Chang'an began in 1956. By the early 1980s, excavations that included the Xuanping Gate, Bacheng Gate, Xi'an Gate, Zhicheng Gate, and other city gate sites, the southern suburb ritual building complex, arsenal, and building complex surrounding the Weiyang Palace site began to clarify the layout of the Western

⁴¹ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences et al., *Qin Han Shanglinyuan—2004–2012 nian kaogu baogao* [The Qin and Han Shanglinyuan imperial hunting park—2004–2012 archaeological report] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2018).

⁴² Liu Rui et al., “Xi'an Yanliang Qinhan Yueyang cheng yizhi” [The Qin and Han Yueyang city site, Yanliang, Xi'an], in *2017 nian Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian* [Important archaeological discoveries in China from 2017] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2018), 102–6.

Han city of Chang'an.⁴³ Since then, archaeological work on the entire Weiyang Palace site has begun. In addition, the Changle Palace site, Guigong Palace site, eastern and western gate sites, and pottery kiln site have been surveyed.⁴⁴ Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the focus of the archaeological work has shifted to the Changle Palace site, where many large-scale structural remains have been excavated. The Han dynasty watchtower site in Chang'an has also been excavated.

Archaeological work on the Sui to Tang city of Chang'an began in 1957. Using archaeological surveys and probing in combination with historical records, the Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences initially determined the layout of the city of Chang'an. Excavations have been conducted at the sites of Tang dynasty's Daming Palace, Xingqing Palace, the West Market, Qinglong Temple, and outer city wall Mingde Gate. Since the 1980s, the Hanyao Gate of the Daming Palace, Sanqing Hall, Imperial Hanlin Academy, and Hall of Deliberation have been excavated. The Qinglong Temple and Ximing Temple within Dacheng have been partially excavated. The Hanyuan Hall at the Daming Palace was excavated completely.⁴⁵ At the beginning of the current century, Taiyechi and other major sites at the Daming Palace were also excavated.

The capitals of the Eastern Han, the Cao Wei Kingdom, and the Northern Wei dynasty were near the eastern suburbs of present-day Luoyang city; the eastern capital of the Sui and Tang and western capital of the Northern Song were superimposed by the present-day city of Luoyang. Archaeological work on the Han and Wei city of Luoyang began in 1954. After more than half a century of work, the limits of the inner city have been clarified, with confirmation of the city walls, city gates, and roads inside the city; other discoveries include the Yongning Temple site, Circular Moat in the south of the city, Imperial College, Bright Hall, and Observatory sites. Since 1980, there have been a series of excavations on the bastion (*mamian*) of the inner city wall, Jianchun Gate site, the Northern Wei Yongning Temple West Gate site, and

⁴³ Institute of Archaeology, *Xin Zhongguo de kaogu faxian he yanjiu*.

⁴⁴ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, ed., *Zhongguo kaogu xue: Qin Han juan* [Chinese archaeology: Qin and Han] (n.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2010), 178.

⁴⁵ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Xi'an Tang City Task Force, "Tang Daming gong Hanyuan dian yizhi 1995–1996 nian fajue baogao" [The 1995–1996 excavation of the Hanyuan Hall of the Daming Palace of the Tang Dynasty], *Kaogu xuebao* no. 3 (1997): 341–406.

the Dashi site, as well as exploratory excavations of the Taiji Hall and Jinyong city wall. Since the beginning of the current century, the Changhe Gate site at the main entrance of the Northern Wei palatial district, the foundations of the second and third gates of the palatial district, southeast corner site of the palatial district, and western wall site of the palatial district have been successively excavated. In recent years a comprehensive survey and excavation of the Taiji Hall were carried out, confirming that it was first built in the Cao Wei period of the Three Kingdoms, was repaired during the Northern Wei period, and rebuilt during the Northern Zhou period.⁴⁶

Through more than twenty years of archaeological work, the basic layout of the city of Luoyang, the eastern capital of the Sui and Tang dynasties, was tentatively identified, and the Hanjiacang city site was excavated. Since 1980 there have been a series of excavations including the Yongtong Gate of the outer city wall, the Yingtian Gate of the palatial district, the Qianyuan Gate, the Bright Hall of Wu Zetian and Shangyang Palace outside of the Youye Gate of the imperial city, the Jiuzhou pond site inside of the palace, and the site of Bai Juyi's former residence in Lüdao Ward of the southeast corner of the outer city wall.⁴⁷ Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, work has mainly concentrated on the areas of the palatial district, imperial city, and Dongcheng (Eastern City). The 2008–12 excavations were focused on the Bright Hall and Heavenly Hall sites. The Ningrenfang site was excavated in 2013, and the Jiuzhou pond area was excavated in 2014–17.

The Yecheng site situated in Linzhang County, Hebei Province, is made up of northern and southern sections. The northern section was the capital of the Eastern Han dynasty when Cao Cao was crowned king of the Wei dynasty, and the southern section was the Eastern Wei and Southern Qi capital. The plan of the northern section from the Cao Wei Kingdom occupies an important position in the history of ancient Chinese capitals. Through archaeological surveys and excavations, the specific location and scope of the northern section of Yecheng were clarified, and research was conducted to reconstruct the

⁴⁶ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Han and Wei Ancient City of Luoyang, “Henan Luoyang shi Han Wei gucheng Taiji dian yizhi de fajue” [Excavation of the Taiji Palace site in the Han and Wei ancient city of Luoyang, Henan], *Kaogu* no. 7 (2016): 63–78.

⁴⁷ Duan Pengqi, “Sanguo zhi Mingdai kaoguxue wushi nian” [Fifty years of Three Kingdoms to Ming Dynasty archaeology], *Kaogu* no. 9 (1999): 47–58.

layout.⁴⁸ Since the turn of the century, the focus of archaeological work has turned to the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi northern section of Yecheng. A series of excavations outside the inner city in the southern section of Yecheng, including the Buddhist monastic site of the Northern Dynasties in Zhaopengcheng, Buddhist monastic site of the Northern Qi in Hetaoyuan, and the Buddhist sculpture hoard in Beiwuzhuang have produced fruitful results.⁴⁹ Archaeological excavations of the palatial district and structural remains in the southern section of Yecheng have begun in recent years.

Kaifeng Prefecture in Dongjing (Eastern Capital) (present-day Kaifeng, Henan Province) was the capital of the Northern Song dynasty. Long-term archaeological work has clarified the Northern Song Dongjing outer city wall, inner city wall, and imperial city wall, and city gate sites, as well as the Jinming Lake and Guzhou Bridge sites, and tentatively clarified the planned layout of the Northern Song Dongjing city and the central axis for the entire city (the Imperial Way). The excavations of the West Gate and Shuntian Gate of the outer city wall in 2012–17 were the beginning of the planned scientific archaeological excavations of the Northern Song Dongjing City.⁵⁰

Lin'an city (present-day Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province) was the Southern Song capital. The excavations of the Southern Song city wall, large-scale palatial building site, the Deshou Palace site in the northern section of the imperial city, Imperial Ancestral Temple site, Zunsheng Pagoda site and Southern Song Wuguishan kiln site, and Jiaotianxia Guan ware site began in 1983. Since then, archaeological excavations have been conducted at the Seat of Lin'an site, the Southern Song Xiuneisi kiln site at Laohudong, the Southern

⁴⁸ Xu Guangji, "Cao Wei Yecheng de pingmian fuyuan yanjiu" [Research on the plan restoration of Cao Wei's Yecheng], in *Zhongguo kaoguxue lun cong—Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo jian suo 40 nian jinian* [Chinese archaeology collection—40th anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences] (n.p.: Kexue chubanshe, 1993), 422–28.

⁴⁹ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, ed., *Yecheng kaogu faxian yu yanjiu* [The archaeological discovery of and research on Yecheng] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2014).

⁵⁰ Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology and Kaifeng City Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., "Henan Kaifeng Bei Song Dongjing cheng Shuntianmen yizhi 2012–2017 nian kantan fajue jianbao" [The survey and excavation of the Northern Song Shuntianmen site in Dongjing City, Kaifeng, Henan], *Huaxia kaogu* no. 1 (2019): 13–41.

Song residence of Empress Gongsheng at the Renlie site, and the Yanguanxiang site along Yujie (the imperial street) have yielded significant results.⁵¹

Nanjing was previously the capital city of Sun Wu of the Three Kingdoms, the Eastern Jin, and Song, Qi, Liang, and Chen of the Southern Dynasties. At that time, it was known as “Jiankang city.” It was also the capital in the beginning of the Ming dynasty when Nanjing was called Yingtian Prefecture. Archaeological work on the Six Dynasties Jiankang city and Ming dynasty Nanjing city has been relatively limited. Since the 1990s the sites of major excavations have included the altar buildings of the Southern Song dynasty at Zhongshan Hill in Nanjing and the rammed earth wall and roadway of the Daxinggong (temporary imperial residence) site.⁵²

Beginning in the 1980s some of the palace sites of Zhongdu (Central Capital) of the Ming dynasty were surveyed and excavated. A series of excavations at the bell tower site and brick and tile kiln site took place since 2012. Taking the central axis as the core, the sites of the Fengtian Palace Hall, Chengtian Gate, and Waijinshui Bridge were excavated one after another.⁵³

Beijing was previously the location of Zhongdu in the Jin dynasty, Dadu in the Yuan dynasty, and Beijing city in the Ming and Qing dynasties. The Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences began to survey the Jin dynasty Zhongdu site in 1965–66.⁵⁴ While excavating the southern city wall in the 1980s, the Water Gate site and Taiyechi site in the imperial city were discovered. More than ten types of residential sites and architectural remains have also been excavated.⁵⁵ In recent years a series of archaeological excavations have been conducted at the Cining Palace garden at the imperial

⁵¹ Du Zhengxian, *Nan Song Ducheng Lin'an yanjiu—yi kaogu wei zhongxin* [Study on Lin'an, the capital of the Southern Song dynasty: Focus on archaeology] (n.p.: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2016).

⁵² Wang Zhigao, “Liuchao Jiankang cheng yizhi kaogu fajue de huigu yu zhanwang” [Retrospective and future prospects of the archaeological excavation of the Six Dynasties Jiankang city site], *Nanjing Xiaozhuang Xueyuan xuebao* no. 1 (2008): 54–58.

⁵³ Anhui Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., “Da yizhi kaogu rang gudu chongxian liubai nian qian de huihong” [The archaeology of major sites revives the majesty of the ancient capital from 600 years ago], *Zhongguo wenwu bao*, March 9, 2019, 6–7.

⁵⁴ “Jinzhongdu de kaogu diaocha yu fajue” [The archaeological investigation and excavation of Jinzhongdu], in *Beijing kaogu sishi nian* [Forty years of Beijing archaeology] (n.p.: Beijing yanshan chubanshe, 1990), 160–63.

⁵⁵ Xu Pingfang, *Yuan Dadu de kancha he fajue* [Investigation and excavation of the Yuan dynasty Dadu] (n.p.: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015), 107–22; Institute of Archaeology, *Xin Zhongguo de kaogu faxian he yanjiu*.

palace and other Ming and Qing structural remains, which have provided important new materials for studying the Yuan, Ming, and Qing imperial capital sites.

While the four dynasties of the Liao, Jin, Yuan, and Qing established capitals in Beijing, many earlier capitals were established in the steppe regions. The Liao dynasty constructed two capitals, Shangjing (Upper Capital) and Zhongjing (Central Capital), which were in Bairin Left Banner and Daming Town, Ningcheng County in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, respectively. Archaeologists conducted surveys, probing, and excavations at the Liao Zhongjing site in 1959–60⁵⁶ and shortly after conducted probing and exploratory excavations at the Liao Shangjing site. In recent years archaeological surveys and probing conducted at the Liao Shangjing site have applied new concepts and methods, focusing on the imperial city gates, walls, roads, and large-scale building foundations,⁵⁷ and have initially clarified the main layout and development of the Liao Shangjing imperial city over time.

The Jin dynasty built two new capitals. Shangjing was the capital in the early period after the state was established, situated in the Acheng District of Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province. Zhongdu (within Xuanwu District and Fengtai District in Beijing City) was the capital of the Jin dynasty after the third year of Tiande (1151 CE). In recent years a comprehensive survey, probing, and excavation conducted at the Jin Shangjing city have provided a preliminary understanding of its layout and the circumstances of its development over time.⁵⁸

The Yuan dynasty of Kublai Khan built three new capitals. The Grand Capital of the Yuan was in Beijing. The Yuan Shangdu [also known as Xanadu] and Zhongdu were in Zhanglan Banner in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Zhangbei County in Hebei Province, respectively. The Yuan Shangdu was surveyed and mapped in 1977. Beginning in 1990 a series of excavations at the Zhenzishan cemetery near the Yuan Shangdu and the Yuan

⁵⁶ Li Yiyu, “Liao Zhongjing chengzhi fajue de zhongyao shouhuo” [Important achievements of the excavation of the Liao Zhongjing site], *Wenwu* no. 9 (1961): 34–40.

⁵⁷ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences et al., “Neimenggu Balinzuoqi Liao Shangjing Gongcheng chengqiang 2014 nian fajue jianbao” [Brief report on the 2014 excavation of the city wall of the Liao Shangjing Palace, Balinzuoqi, Inner Mongolia], *Kaogu* no. 12 (2015): 78–97.

⁵⁸ Heilongjiang Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., “Ha’erbin shi Acheng qu Jin Shangjing Nancheng nanyuan ximen zhi fajue jianbao” [Excavation report on the West Gate of Nanyuan, Jin Shangjing southern city, Acheng District, Harbin], *Kaogu* no. 5 (2019): 45–65.

dynasty sacrificial site at Yangqun Temple took place. Excavations focusing on the palace site no. 1 within the palatial district, southern gate site of the imperial city, and Nanguan residential site outside of the city wall were conducted.⁵⁹ Since the turn of the century, archaeological excavations have been conducted on various structural remains along the central axis of the Yuan Shangdu.⁶⁰ In 1998–2003 archaeological surveys were conducted at the Yuan Zhongdu site, and the foundation of the southeast watchtower of the palatial district, foundation of the central audience hall, and south gate of the palatial district were excavated.⁶¹

The confirmation of the location of the residential court of Nurhachi, who founded the Qing dynasty, in Shenyang, and other related remains were important archaeological gains on the Qing dynasty.⁶²

Archaeological Discoveries and Research on Qin and Han to Ming and Qing Regional City Sites

There have been many discoveries of city sites from the Qin and Han to Ming and Qing periods outside of the capitals, including administrative districts of county seats, villages, garrisons, and military fortresses. The majority of the discoveries are archaeological survey data, and relatively few city and village sites have been archaeologically excavated. For the Qin and Han, for instance, before the 1980s only around ninety Han dynasty city and town sites had been identified, and at present, more than six hundred have been discovered, most of which are government seats of prefectures and counties. These include the Liye site of the Qin dynasty, the Han city of Changsha, and the Qin and Han city of Panyu in Guangzhou Province. Sandaohao in Liaoyang, Liaoning

⁵⁹ Wei Jian, *Yuan Shangdu* [The Yuan dynasty Shangdu] (n.p.: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 2008).

⁶⁰ Yang Xingyu, “Yuan Shangdu Muqing ge kaogu fajue shulun” [Review of the archaeological excavation of the Muqing Pavilion, Shangdu of the Yuan dynasty], *Beifang wenwu* no. 2 (2014): 38–42.

⁶¹ Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics, *Yuan Zhongdu: 1998–2003 nian fajue baogao* [Zhongdu of the Yuan dynasty: 1998–2003 excavation report] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2012).

⁶² Shenyang Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, “Liaoning Shenyang Hanwang gong yizhi fajue jianbao” [Brief report on the excavation of the Hanwang Palace site in Shenyang, Liaoning], *Wenwu* no. 2 (2018): 39–53.

Province,⁶³ and Sanyangzhuang in Neihuang, Henan Province,⁶⁴ are a few village sites with important materials for understanding the basic social structures and social life in different regions at that time.

Archaeological excavations have been initiated at a few city sites from the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties, as well as the Sui and Tang dynasties. On the whole, they have been in coordination with urban infrastructure construction projects. The most important of these is the Sui and Tang city of Yangzhou, where there was a series of important archaeological discoveries. In addition, archaeological work has been done at Pingcheng in Datong, Quanzhou, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Suzhou.

In addition to carrying on the old cities of the Sui and Tang dynasties, during the Liao, Song, Jin, Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods, new cities appeared along the traffic arteries and trading center zones as the cash economy developed. The Song dynasty Pingjiang prefectural city (present-day Suzhou), Song and Yuan dynasty Quanzhou city, the Southern Song Diaoyu site in Chongqing, the Jin dynasty temporary imperial residence in Chongli County, Hebei Province, and the Yuan dynasty Jininglu city (present-day Jining, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region), as well as the Song dynasty Shashi city on the banks of the Yangzi River and Longzhen site of the Tang, Song, and Qing period in Shanghai, are all typical cities.

Imperial Mausoleum and Tomb Archaeology

Tombs are the most important content in the field of Chinese archaeology. Within a centralized system, the forms of tombs for different social strata reflect distinct differences in rank. After the Song dynasty, differences between the upper and lower classes in the forms and scales of tombs, wall decorations in tombs, and funerary objects were increasingly superseded by differences between the rich and poor. Archaeological materials from tombs have become the most important materials for researching political, economic, technological, cultural, and social issues in the historical period.

⁶³ Northeast Museum, “Liaoyang Sandaohao Xi Han cunluo yizhi” [The Western Han Sandaohao village site in Liaoyang], *Kaogu xuebao* no. 1 (1957): 119–26.

⁶⁴ Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., “Henan Neihuang xian Sanyangzhuang Handai tingyuan yizhi” [The Han dynasty Sanyangzhuang courtyard site in Neihuang County, Henan Province], *Kaogu* no. 7 (2004): 34–37.

Archaeological Research on the Imperial Mausoleums of the Qin and Han to Ming and Qing Dynasties

The tomb of Emperor Shihuangdi of the Qin Empire is the mausoleum of the first emperor of China. Since 1974 excavations at the tomb complex include terracotta army pits 1–3 and a bronze horse-and-chariot pit next to the mausoleum, accompanying pits, subordinate tombs, and tombs of convict labors in the mausoleum and the mausoleum complex, as well as mausoleum architecture. The world has been stunned by these important discoveries. The archaeological work that began at the tomb of the first emperor at the end of the twentieth century advanced comprehensive research on the layout of the tomb complex.

Archaeological work on the imperial mausoleums of the Western Han began in the 1960s. Previously there primarily had been an archaeological survey of the grounds of the Western Han imperial mausoleums, which included archaeological excavations conducted at the Du mausoleum of Emperor Xuan of Han and the Yang mausoleum complex of Emperor Jing of Han. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, comprehensive mapping and probing at Western Han imperial mausoleums have led to important academic achievements. Originally, archaeological work on Eastern Han imperial mausoleums was limited, but since the beginning of the current century, investigations and surveys have been conducted on Eastern Han imperial mausoleums, including a series of excavations of mausoleum building foundations and major tombs, which have greatly promoted research on Eastern Han imperial mausoleums. In addition, the archaeological discovery of the Gaoling mausoleum of Cao Wei⁶⁵ has attracted broad attention.

The Northern Wei Yongguling mausoleum includes the Yonggu tomb of Empress Wenming, surname Feng, the wife of Emperor Wencheng (personal name Tuoba Rui) and the Wanniantang mausoleum of Emperor Xiaowen (personal name Tuoba Hong). After the Northern Wei moved to Luoyang, five imperial mausoleums were built in an area on Mangshan: the Changling mausoleum of Emperor Xiaowen, the Jingling mausoleum of Emperor Xuanwu, the Dingling mausoleum of Emperor Xiaoming, the Jingling mausoleum of Emperor Xiaozhuang, and the mausoleum of Emperor Jiemin. Since the turn of the century, another round of surveying and mapping at the

⁶⁵ Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, *Cao Wei Gaoling kaogu faxian yu yanjiu* [The archaeological discovery of and research on Cao Wei in Gaoling] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2010).

Northern Wei imperial mausoleums has taken place. Surveying was conducted at the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi imperial mausoleum complex in 1986. A mural tomb excavated at Wanzhang in Cixian County, Hebei Province, is attributed as the Wuning mausoleum of the Wenxuan emperor, personal name Gao Yang, of the Northern Qi dynasty.⁶⁶

Since the turn of the century, archaeologists have conducted concentrated archaeological surveys, probing, and mapping work at ten of the eighteen Tang dynasty imperial mausoleums in central Shaanxi. They have excavated parts of the mausoleum, providing a tentative understanding of the structure of Tang dynasty mausoleum parks and their development over time and design concept, achieving important breakthroughs.⁶⁷

Investigations of Northern Song imperial mausoleums began in the late 1950s. In 1992–95 comprehensive probing surveys were conducted at Northern Song imperial mausoleums and mausoleum parks, and the excavation of the architectural foundation of the upper palace and Yongding Chan Monastery of the Yongdingling mausoleum of Emperor Zhenzong of the Song dynasty initially clarified the position and distribution of the mausoleum, the composition of the mausoleum complex, and the basic layout of the mausoleum park.⁶⁸ In recent years archaeologists have conducted archaeological surveys, mapping, and prospecting work on the distribution and arrangement of the mausoleum parks of six Southern Song mausoleums.⁶⁹ They have conducted an archaeological excavation of site no. 1 of the mausoleum park of Emperor Gaozong of the Song dynasty, opening up a new stage in Southern Song archaeology of the six mausoleums.

There are five imperial mausoleums of the Liao dynasty, and in 2007–10 a comprehensive survey, mapping, and archaeological excavations were carried out at the Liao dynasty ancestral mausoleum and mausoleum park in Bairin Left Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. In recent years archaeologists have conducted an archaeological survey and excavation of the Liao dynasty

⁶⁶ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences et al., *Cixian Wan Zhang Beichao bihua mu* [The Northern Dynasties Wanzhang mural tomb in Ci County] (n.p.: Kexue chubanshe, 2003).

⁶⁷ Zhang Jianlin, “Tangdai diling lingyuan xingzhi de fazhan yu yanbian” [The development and evolution of Tang imperial mausoleums], *Kaogu yu wenwu* no. 5 (2013): 82–90.

⁶⁸ Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., *Bei Song huang ling* [Northern Song royal imperial mausoleums] (n.p.: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1997).

⁶⁹ Huang Haode and Luo Rupeng, “Zhejiang Shaoxing Lanruo si mudi kaogu huode zhongyao faxian” [Important archaeological discoveries from the Lanruo temple cemetery in Shaoxing, Zhejiang], *Zhongguo wenwu bao*, January 26, 2018, 8.

imperial mausoleum at Yiwulü Mountain in Beizhen County, Liaoning Province, and have verified the cemeteries at the Liao Xianling mausoleum and Qianling mausoleum, as well as the Qianling sacrificial hall and inner palace, gaining important new archaeological results.

An archaeological survey and excavation of Western Xia mausoleums began in 1972. The excavation focused on the no. 6 mausoleum as well as several axillary tombs and stele pavilions. Between 1986 and 1991 the general layout of the Western Xia mausoleum complex was drawn up, and surveying confirmed that there were nine imperial mausoleums and more than two hundred axillary tombs. In the early years of the new century an excavation of the third imperial mausoleum park was conducted.

Archaeological work on Jin mausoleums began in 1986. From 2001 to 2002 a comprehensive survey and probing were undertaken at the imperial mausoleums of the Jin dynasty in Zhoukoudian, Fangshan County, Beijing. The Ruiling mausoleum of Emperor Taizu and the Xingling mausoleum of Emperor Shizong of the Jin dynasty along with its Sacred Way and peripheral remains were excavated,⁷⁰ however, the layout of the mausoleum park is still not fully understood.

There are five imperial mausoleums of the Ming dynasty. In 1956–58 the Ming dynasty Dingling mausoleum was excavated, and important scientific data was collected. An archaeological survey has been conducted at the Ming dynasty Xiaoling husband-and-wife joint mausoleum of Zhu Yuanzhang in the Xiamafang area.⁷¹

Archaeological Research on Tombs from the Qin and Han through Ming and Qing Dynasties

The tombs discovered from the Qin and Han through Ming and Qing period are abundant in number and rich in results. However, there are clear dynastic and regional imbalances in the numbers of tombs discovered. Many tombs from the Han and Tang dynasties have been discovered, and the research is comparatively robust. The Liao, Song, and Ming dynasties occupy the second tier. Outside of imperial mausoleums, the occupants of tombs are primarily

⁷⁰ Beijing Institute of Cultural Relics, *Beijing Jindai huangling* [Jin dynasty imperial mausoleums in Beijing] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006).

⁷¹ Department of History, Nanjing University et al., “Mingxiaoling Xiamafang quyu kaogu kantan jiaobao” [Brief report on the archaeological survey of the Ming Xiaoling mausoleum in the Xiamafang area], *Nanfang wenwu* no. 2 (2014): 76–82.

nobles and commoners. However, during the Western Han and Ming dynasties there was another type of tomb situated between imperial mausoleums and common burials: tombs of vassal lords. Therefore, the tombs of vassal lords and common tombs are divided into two categories here.

Category 1: Tombs of Vassal Lords. Both the Han dynasty and Ming dynasty have tombs of vassal lords, and their existence is rather specialized. All other royal tombs are not included here.

Dozens of rich Western Han tombs of vassal lords of this type have been discovered.⁷² The tomb of Liu Sheng, Prince Jing of Zhongshan, and his wife in Mancheng, Hebei Province, is representative of the cliff cave tombs. The tomb of Liu Jian, Prince of Guangyang, and his wife in Babaotai, Beijing, is exemplary of the exquisite *huangchang ticou* structure.⁷³ The Western Han tomb of Prince Xiao of Liang and the remains of its mausoleum complex in Yongcheng County, Henan Province, provide important data on imperial mausoleum construction. The tomb of Zhao Mei, King Wen of the Nanyue Kingdom, built along the Xianggang Ridge in Guangzhou Province, reveals the characteristics of the tombs of affiliated kingdoms. Since the beginning of the new century, the tomb of the mother of Emperor Ai of Han, Consort Ding of Liu Kang, Prince of Dingtao, was excavated in Dingtao County, Shandong Province.⁷⁴ The Mawangdui Marquis of Dai family tombs in Hunan Province, the tomb of Liu He, Marquis of Haihun, in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province,⁷⁵ and others are typical examples of Han dynasty marquis tombs. There is a limited number of Eastern Han tombs of vassal lords, and the research is comparatively weak.

Important discoveries of Ming dynasty mausoleums of princes include the tomb (M4) of Zhu Jianlin, Prince Dezhuang, in Changqing, Shandong Province, and the tomb of Zhu Youbin, Prince Yiduan, in Nancheng County,

⁷² Liu Rui and Liu Tao, *Xi Han zhuhou wang lingmu zhidu yanjiu* [Study on the system of tombs of vassal lords in the Western Han dynasty] (n.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2010); Liu Zunzhi, *Handai zhuhou wang ling yanjiu* [Study on tombs of vassal lords in the Han dynasty] (n.p.: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2012).

⁷³ Literally “yellow intestines with gathering heads,” *huangchang* is the heaping of yellow xylem cores of cypresses around the outside of a coffin, while *ticou* is the setting of timbers or logs outside the cypress cores.—Trans.

⁷⁴ Shandong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., “Shandong Dingtao xian Lingsheng hu Han mu” [The Han tombs at Lingsheng Lake, Dingtao County, Shandong Province], *Kaogu* no. 7 (2012): 60–67.

⁷⁵ Jiangxi Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., “Nanchang shi Xi Han Haihun hou mu” [The tomb of the Duke of Haihun of the Western Han Dynasty in Nanchang City], *Kaogu* no. 7 (2016): 45–62.

Jiangxi Province. The tombs of Ming dynasty princes are essentially imitations of royal mausoleums, and their architectural layouts seem to be an imitation of royal mansions and palace architecture.

Category 2: Common Burials. There are relatively few discoveries of Qin tombs, while Han tombs are the most numerous of the historical dynasties. Through several decades of surveys and excavations, archaeologists have essentially constructed a time-space framework of Han tombs and have begun to conduct comprehensive research on them. Since the beginning of this century, scholars have achieved great research results that include the development and evolution of different types of tombs in various regions and periods, characteristics of the era, regional characteristics, and burial systems and funerary customs. From this foundation, the cultural differences and assimilation conditions of different times and places have been revealed, and the differences in development and convergence of cultural development within different regions of the unified Qin and Han Empires are being investigated.

Many northern tombs of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties period have been discovered, centered on the Guanzhong Plain, North China, and the Northeast, with some discoveries in the Hexi (west of the Yellow River) region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and other areas. The Sima Jinlong tomb in Datong, An Ga tomb in Xi'an, and Lou Rui and Xu Xianxiu tombs in Taiyuan are all significant discoveries. Tombs discovered in the south including the Sun Wu tomb in Shangfang Town, Jiangning County, and Zhu Ran and Tianzifen tombs in Dangtu County at Ma'anshan⁷⁶ are all significant high-ranking burials. Several scholars have conducted comprehensive research on these new discoveries and results.⁷⁷

Tang dynasty burials are particularly elaborate, with abundant grave goods and exquisite murals. With the Huai River forming the boundary, Tang tombs are divided into two large regions in the north and south. Based on significant new discoveries from Sui and Tang burials, archaeologists have built a time-space framework of Sui and Tang tombs to thoroughly investigate the types of these tombs, mural themes, and typical funerary objects, as well as the social issues reflected in the tombs.

⁷⁶ Ye Runqing et al., "Anhui dang tu faxian gaodengji Dongwu zongshi muzang 'Tianxifen'" [The high-ranking "Tianzifen" tomb of the Dongwu clan discovered in Dangtu, Anhui], *Zhongguo wenwu bao*, March 10, 2017, 8.

⁷⁷ Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, ed., *Zhongguo kaogu xue—Wei Jin Nanbeichao juan* [Chinese archaeology: Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties volume] (n.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2018).

In the latter half of the twentieth century, there were also a number of significant discoveries of tombs from the Liao, Song, Jin, Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods. The Zhao Daweng tomb from the end of the Northern Song dynasty in Yu County, Henan Province, is an example of the northern tomb structure. The looted tomb of the princess of Chen and her husband in Naiman Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the tomb of Yelü Yuzhi and his wife in Ar Horqin Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and the Baoshan mural tomb are important findings for Liao dynasty archaeology. The royal Qi state tomb in Acheng County, Heilongjiang Province, and the Macun tomb in Jishan County and Feng Daozhen tomb in Datong in Shanxi Province are important discoveries for Jin dynasty archaeology. A mural tomb at Dongercun, Pucheng County, Shaanxi Province, and the tomb of Fan Wenhui in Anqing, Anhui Province, are examples of typical northern and southern Yuan tombs, respectively. The tomb of the parents of Zhang Shicheng, King of Wu, in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, was constructed in accordance with the Southern Song imperial mausoleum system of Cuan Gong in the type of Shicangzi, which is a specialized design that focuses not on the size of the external form, but on the sealing and solidity of the tomb.

The Diversification of Ceramics and Other Industries in Archaeology

Discoveries and Research on Kiln Sites and Other Remains of Industry

Archaeology of industry is an important area of Chinese archaeology. There have been a number of important discoveries of Han dynasty ceramic production. The pottery products of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties period were primarily celadon wares fired in the south. Porcelain manufacturing was inherited from the Eastern Han porcelain industry and developed rapidly. The Yue kiln, Deqing kiln, and Wuzhou kiln in Zhejiang Province, Yuezhou kiln in Hunan Province, Huai'an kiln in Fujian Province, Qiong kiln in Sichuan, and other kiln sites were located in various places in the south. Glazed pottery was mainly fired in the north and absorbed the fundamentals of southern celadon production technology to create white porcelain. The major kiln sites included the Baihe kiln in Gongyi and the Xiangzhou kiln in Anyang, Henan Province; the Xing kiln in Xingtai, the

Gubicun kiln in Ci County, the Zhaili kiln in Zibo, and the Hubushan kiln in Xuzhou, Hebei Province.⁷⁸

The Sui and Tang period was an important phase in the development of Chinese porcelain wares. By the end of the twentieth century, each of the well-known Tang dynasty kilns recorded in literature had been found, the kiln systems in different regions had been clearly differentiated, and the porcelain production industry had generally been separated into a situation of “celadon in the south and white porcelain in the north” (*nan qing bei bai*). The celadon brick kilns in the south followed the precedents of past dynasties and mainly included the Yue kiln and Wuzhou kiln in Zhejiang Province, the Hongzhou kiln in Jiangxi Province, the Shouzhou kiln in Anhui Province, the Yuezhou kiln and Changsha kiln in Hunan Province, and the Qiong kiln in Sichuan Province. The white porcelain brick kilns in the north mainly included the Xing kiln and Ding kiln in Hebei Province, the Baihe kiln and Xiangzhou kiln in Henan Province, and the Huangbao kiln in Shaanxi Province. The white porcelain kilns in the north were circular with horseshoe-shaped entrances. The celadon kilns in the south were dragon-shaped kilns. Tang Sancai wares have been discovered in burials, temple shrines, and ruins. Sancai kiln sites mainly include the Xing kiln in Neiqiu County, Hebei Province, the Huangye kilns and Baihe kiln in Gong County, Henan Province, the Huangbao kiln in Shaanxi Province, and the Jiezhuang kiln in Hunyuan County, Shanxi Province.

As a result of the development of the commodity economy after the beginning of the Song dynasty, ceramic production was promoted and social demand increased, and the porcelain producing industry reached unprecedented heights of development. Between 1950 and 1980 scholars conducted surveys of ancient porcelain kiln sites,⁷⁹ gaining a basic grasp of the distribution of ancient kiln sites and the distinctive characteristics of the products from each major kiln site. Between 1980 and 2000 archaeologists conducted a series of excavations at more than forty kiln sites. The more important northern kiln sites included the Longquanwu kiln in Beijing; the Cizhou kiln in Ci County and the Ding kiln in Quyang County, Hebei Province; the Ru kiln at the Qingliang Temple in Baofeng County and the

⁷⁸ Institute of Archaeology, *Zhongguo kaogu xue*.

⁷⁹ Feng Xianming, “Sanshi nian lai woguo taoci kaogu de shouhuo” [The fruits of Chinese ceramics archaeology in the past thirty years], *Gugong bowuyuan yuan kan* no. 1 (1980): 3–27, 50.

Juntai kiln in Yuzhou County, Henan Province; the Yaozhou kiln in Shaanxi Province; and the Lingwu kiln in Ningxia Province. The southern kiln sites included the Southern Song official kiln at Wuguishan in Hangzhou and the Longquan kiln in Zhejiang Province, the Jian kiln and the Dehua kiln in Fujian Province, the Hutian kiln, City Center Imperial Kiln Yard and the Jizhou kiln in Jiangxi Province, the Fanchang kiln in Anhui Province, the Chaozhou kiln in Guangdong Province, and the Tushan kiln in Chongqing.

Archaeological Discoveries and Research on Mining and Other Industry Sites

There have been important research results for the Qin and Han industries in areas including iron artifact production, bronze artifact manufacturing, lacquerware processing, jade manufacturing, coin casting, and silk weaving. In addition to porcelain wares, the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties period also saw developments in bronze mirror production and lacquerware manufacturing.

There were major discoveries of copper deposits during the Sui and Tang period. Ancient mineshafts, quarries, and smelting remains were discovered within the Tang dynasty copper mining site at Tangshan Township in Jiangning District of Nanjing. There are many remains of industry from the Sui and Tang period. As the casting of bronze mirrors flourished, there was an abundance of mirror types, diverse in shape and decoration.

There were rapid developments in the iron smelting industry during the Song dynasty. The iron-mining and -smelting areas expanded from the traditional areas in the north and northwest to include the south. The development of the iron smelting industry spurred specialized production. Steel-making technology was already extensively used, and perfusing steel technology matured. The reputations of Cizhou steel making and Leiyang nail making were established. Developments in the iron smelting industry in the Song dynasty facilitated improvements in various tools, and a large amount of cast iron artifacts appeared. There were important technological innovations that emerged in the copper smelting industry during the Song dynasty. Copper produced by dipping iron in the solution of bluestone—the *dantong* method—came into use.

There were huge developments in the coal mining industry in the Song and Yuan period. There was a sharp increase in coal extraction, and there was great progress in coal mining technology and methods. Important Song dynasty coal

mining remains were discovered at the Hebi kiln in Henan Province, including pit shafts, tunnels, drainage wells, and coalface, as well as production tools and everyday utensils for transportation and lighting.⁸⁰

The papermaking workshop site at Hualin, Gao'an County, Jiangxi Province, is the most important papermaking site discovered in China to date. Dozens of remains related to papermaking covering the Southern Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties have been discovered.⁸¹

Archaeology of Ethnic Border Regions and Cultural Exchanges between China and Foreign Countries

Frontier Region Archaeological Discoveries and Research

From the Han and Tang through Ming and Qing dynasties, a number of ethnic minorities set up regional powers in current frontier areas. These archaeological cultures had features that can be differentiated from the centralized empires in the Central Plains during the Qin and Han, Sui and Tang, and Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties.

Regional Powers before the Tang Dynasty. The frontier and ethnic minority regions in the Qin and Han period included the Nanyue, Minyue, and Xinan Yi in the south and the Xiongnu, Xianbei, and Wuhuan in the north. Archaeological surveys, excavations, and studies have shown that though the societies and cultures in these areas were influenced by the imperial dynasties in the Central Plains, they still maintained their own ethnic characteristics, and in some instances they underwent different degrees of fusion or assimilation under the influence of the Central Plains civilizations.

The Bohai (Balhae) Kingdom established by the Mohe (Malgal) tribe was an important vassal state in the Northeast during the Tang dynasty. Archaeological work at Shangjing city, Xigucheng, and Baliancheng has made enormous advancements in research on the Bohai Kingdom capital cities.⁸² The more important elite cemeteries include the Liudingshan cemetery in Dunhua

⁸⁰ Henan Provincial Department of Culture Cultural Heritage Task Force, "Henan Hebi shi gumeikuang yizhi diaocha jianbao" [Report on the survey of the ancient coal mining sites in Hebi, Henan], *Kaogu* no. 3 (1960): 39–41.

⁸¹ Jiangxi Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., "Jiangxi Gao'an shi hua lin zaozhi zuofang yizhi fajue jianbao" [Brief report on the excavation of the Hualin papermaking workshop site in Gao'an, Jiangxi], *Kaogu* no. 8 (2010): 53–71.

⁸² Song Yubin, "Bohai ducheng guzhi yanjiu" [Research on the ancient Bohai Kingdom capital site], *Kaogu* no. 6 (2009): 40–49.

County, Jilin Province, and the Shanjuzi cemetery in Hailin, Heilongjiang Province. The Hongzunyuchang cemetery in Ning'an, Heilongjiang Province, is the largest commoner cemetery, with over 320 graves excavated.⁸³

The Nanzhao Kingdom occupied the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau area. Archaeologists have successively surveyed Taihe city, Yangjumie city, and Dali city, in addition to surveying the discoveries of structural remains of the Nanzhao Palace and a number of burial sites in Weishan County, bringing about a number of new developments.

The Tibetan Tubo dynasty occupied the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau region. Archaeologists have surveyed and investigated the tombs of Tibetan kings in Qiongjie County of Shannan area, Tibet Autonomous Region,⁸⁴ which was a major new development in Tibetan archaeology. Since 1982 excavations at the Reshui cemetery in Dulan County, Qinghai Province, ruled by the Kingdom of Tuyuhun in Tibet, were important discoveries for Tibetan archaeology. In recent years a number of important new archaeological discoveries in Wulan County, Qinghai Province, Wuwei, Gansu Province, and other places have been made.

Tusi Archaeology and Regional Powers after the Song Dynasty. The discovery of “Tusi⁸⁵ remains”⁸⁶ can be traced to the 1957 excavation of the Southern Song tomb of Yang Can, the pacification commissioner of Bozhou, in Zunyi County, Guizhou Province.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, archaeologists have begun to conduct systematic scientific excavations of Tusi-related remains in Guizhou, Xiangxi, and other locations, acquiring groundbreaking results. The Hailongtun Fortress in Zunyi County, Guizhou Province, is the largest and most well-preserved Tusi fortress in the southwestern area. The publicizing of the Yang Keng tomb and other Tusi tombs has provided academic circles with

⁸³ Heilongjiang Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, *Ningan Hongzunyuchang: 1992–1995 niandu Bohai mudi kaogu fajue baogao* [Hongzunyuchang in Ningan: 1992–1995 archaeological excavation of the Bohai cemetery] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2009).

⁸⁴ Wang Renxiang et al., “Xizang qiong jie Tubo wang ling de kance yu yanjiu” [Survey and research on the tombs of the Turfan kings in Qionge, Tibet], *Kaogu xuebao* no. 4, (2002): 471–92; Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *Cang wang ling* [Hidden tombs of kings] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006).

⁸⁵ Native chieftaincy system.—Trans.

⁸⁶ Zhou Bisu and Li Fei, “Guizhou zunyi Bozhou Yang shi Tusi yicun de faxian yu yanjiu” [The discovery and study of the remains of the Yang Tusi in Baizhou, Zunyi City, Guizhou], *Kaogu* no. 11 (2015): 88–97.

tremendously important new archaeological materials. Laosicheng in Yongshun County, Hunan Province, was the Tusi governed by the Peng family for hundreds of years. The results of the previous archaeological excavations are important materials for research on the Tusi to the west of the Xiang River.

In 1975 nineteen tombs of Cui Yuan and his clan members were excavated at Nijiatai in Anshan City, Liaoning Province.⁸⁷ This is the most important Ming dynasty archaeological discovery in the Northeast to date. The cemetery had an intact graveyard. Male descendants of the Cui dynasty held the official post of the regional military commissioner in the Liaodong region and were the highest-ranking military official in the area. The content of their epitaphs contained records of their relationship with the Nurgan Regional Military Commission, which gives them high historical value.

Archaeological Discoveries and Research on Cultural Exchanges between China and Foreign Countries

Archaeological Remains of Silk Road Land Routes. Cultural exchanges between China and the surrounding countries and regions began in the above-mentioned prehistoric period, but contacts at the national level must have begun with Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty dispatching Zhang Qian to penetrate the western regions. After this, the Han Empire maintained official dealings and unofficial exchanges with Central Asia, West Asia, and other areas through the Hexi corridor. Cultural relics from foreign lands have continuously been unearthed in China, and Han dynasty cultural relics have been unearthed as far away as West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, and Indochina. These are important materials for investigating the development of the Han dynasty Silk Road and cultural exchanges between China and foreign lands during the Qin and Han dynasties, with particularly important contents for research on the Silk Road.⁸⁸

The Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties period was an important time of ethnic fusion. Along with the unimpeded development of

⁸⁷ Liaoning Provincial Museum Cultural Relics Team, Anshan City Cultural Bureau Cultural Relics Group, “Anshan Nijiatai Ming Cui Yuan zu mu de fajue” [Excavation of the Ming tomb of the Cui Yuan Clan in Nijiatai, Anshan], *Wenwu* no. 11 (1978): 11–34.

⁸⁸ Bai Yunxiang, “Qin Han shiqi de zhongwai wenhua jiaoliu ji tong zhoubian diqu de lianxi” [Chinese and foreign cultural exchanges and links with neighboring regions during the Qin and Han period], in *Zhongguo kaoguxue: Qin Han juan* [Chinese archaeology: Qin and Han] (n.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2010), 905–1024.

the Silk Road, cultural exchange between China and neighboring countries became more frequent. The discovery of Byzantine gold coins in the large tomb at Hengshan Road in Luoyang and the Sui tombs in Xi'an corroborate the reports in literary material of China and the eastern Roman Empire conducting deals and trade. The excavation of a large quantity of Persian and Sassanian coins and the discovery of Sogdian tombs and documents that had entered China demonstrate the frequent cultural exchanges between China and the Central Asian region.⁸⁹

International exchanges during the Sui and Tang Empires were extremely dynamic. Foreign imports of gold and silver wares, glassware, Islamic glazed pottery, Persian brocade, and gold and silver Roman, Sassanian, and Arabian coins have been discovered along the Silk Road, as were remains of people from outside religions and tombs with inscribed stone tablets of foreigners. Furthermore, Chinese porcelain and bronze mirrors have been discovered within the borders of Uzbekistan, Iran, Jordan, and Syria, and Tang Sancai ware (tricolor glazed pottery) has also been discovered within the borders of Iran, Iraq, and Syria.⁹⁰

Within Liao and Song dynasty tombs and stupas, exquisite Islamic glass has been discovered. The Liao dynasty glass was brought via land routes in Central Asia, while the Song dynasty Islamic glass was probably imported by sea routes.⁹¹ Seven pieces of Islamic glassware and an engraved bowl with an Arabic inscription were unearthed from the tomb of Princess Chen Guo of Naiman Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.⁹²

Within the rammed earth foundation of the palaces of the princes of Anxi of the Yuan dynasty (north of present-day Qinjia Street in Xi'an), five cast iron magic squares with Arabic numerals were discovered. These are important materials for showing cultural exchange between China and the West. Inside

⁸⁹ Xia Nai, *Xia Nai wenji* [Collected works of Xia Nai] (n.p.: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000).

⁹⁰ Zhou Baojing and Qiu Ling, *Sichou zhilu zongjiao wenhua* [Religious culture along the Silk Road] (n.p.: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1998); Xia Nai, "Xinjiang xin faxian de gudai sizhipin—qi, jin he cixu" [Newly discovered ancient silk fabrics in Xinjiang—damask, brocade, and embroidery], *Kaogu xuebao* no. 1 (1963): 45–76; Qi Dongfang, Zhang Jing, "Sa shan shi jin yin duoqu changbei zai zhongguo de liuchuan yu yanbian" [Study on Sassanian gold and silver in the Tang dynasty], *Kaogu* no. 6 (1998): 63–73.

⁹¹ Ma Wenkuan, *Yisilan shijie wenwu zai zhongguo de faxian yu yanjiu* [Discovery and study of relics from the Islamic world in China] (n.p.: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006).

⁹² Inner Mongolia Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology et al., *Liao Chen Guo gongzhu mu* [The tomb of Princess Chen Guo of Liao] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1993).

of a Yuan dynasty hoard in Jintan County, Jiangsu Province, more than fifty pieces of silver ware were placed inside of a Qinghua porcelain jar with cloud scrolls configured as dragons. Among them, one silver plate has an Arabic inscription carved on the base with the Hijri calendar date of the first month of the 714th year (1314 CE).⁹³

Recent Findings of the Maritime Ceramic Road. The Han Empire established maritime traffic with Central Asia, South Asia, and other places through Guangzhou and other seaports. During the Southern Dynasties period the majority of contact with India was via sea routes.

During the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties period, in the fifth year of Huang Wu (226 CE), Lü Dai, regional chief of the Jiao region of the Wu Kingdom, sent military officers Zhu Ying and Kang Tai on a diplomatic mission to various countries in Southeast Asia. Advancements in navigation technology allowed them to set off from the southeast coast of China and pass through the Indochinese Peninsula and Strait of Malacca to the Indian Ocean, making contacts as far as West Asia.

Chinese porcelain wares from Tang through the Five Dynasties have been found in present-day Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Egypt, and other countries; Tang dynasty Sancai wares have also been found in Indonesia, Sudan, and Egypt. The structures of tombs and design of capitals on the Korean Peninsula and Japanese Archipelago were influenced by China. The structure of the burial chamber and excavated artifacts from the tomb of King Muryeong of the Baekje Kingdom bear a close resemblance to Southern Dynasties tombs, and its epitaph bears the official position of “Great General Tranquilizing the East,” a title conferred by the Liang emperor of the Southern Dynasties. The design and plan concepts of the Sui and Tang capitals of Chang’an city and Luoyang city clearly had a large impact on the construction undertaken in Japan’s Nara period capital of Heijō-kyō.

During the Liao, Song, Jin, Yuan, and Ming period, porcelain wares replaced silk as the most important trade good, and sea routes gradually became the main channel for foreign exchange. Guangzhou in Guangdong Province and Quanzhou and Mingzhou (present-day Ningbo) in Fujian Province were the main ports for foreign trade at the time. A large quantity of Chinese export

⁹³ Xia Nai, “Yuan Anxi wangfu zhi he Alabo shuma huan fang” [The remains of the Yuan dynasty palace of the Prince of Anxi and the Arabic Numeral Magic Square], *Kaogu* no. 5 (1960): 23–26; Xiao Menglong, “Jiangsu Jintan Yuandai Qinghua yunlong guan jiaocang” [The Yuan dynasty Qinghua cloud dragon jar hoard from Jintan, Jiangsu], *Wenwu* no. 1 (1980): 59–62.

wares have been discovered in Fustat and Cairo in Egypt as well as in Mogadishu, Kilwa, Mombasa, and Malindi in East Africa. A Song or Yuan period shipwreck was discovered on the sea floor in Shinan County in Korea, and 20,000 porcelain artifacts were excavated.⁹⁴ With the exception of a few pieces of Koryo and Japanese porcelains, they were all produced in China. One Venetian silver coin and two Bengali silver coins were unearthed from the tomb of Wei Juan, a eunuch of the Ming dynasty. Between 1971 and 1973 five batches of foreign silver coins were discovered in the Quanzhou area, which were probably transported into China from the Americas via the Philippines by Spain during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. To a certain extent, export porcelain wares in the Song, Yuan, and Ming period promoted the emergence and development of the porcelain industry in other nations, becoming a historical testament to the cultural exchange between China and foreign countries.

Shipwreck Remains and Underwater Archaeology. Shipbuilding flourished in the Song and Yuan period, promoting the development of inland shipping and a boom in maritime exchanges. There are two main types of ancient ships that have been discovered. The first type are flat-bottomed boats, suitable for inland navigation and coastal transport. Important discoveries include the Song dynasty large wooden boat and dugout canoe at Shiqiao Tower in Jiangsu Province; a Southern Song dynasty shipwreck at Fengbang Yangwan in Shanghai; a cargo ship in Nanhui County, Shanghai; a Song dynasty ancient boat in Yuanmengkou Village, Jinghai County, Tianjin; a late Yuan dynasty wooden boat in Nankaihe Village, Ci County, Hebei Province; and a Yuan dynasty shipwreck in Fangzhuang neighborhood, Beijing. The second type are seagoing ships with pointed bottoms, suitable for sea voyages, mainly classified as oceangoing merchant ships and military warships. Important discoveries include the late Southern Song or early Yuan seagoing ship with a pointed bottom from Quanzhou (in Fujian Province); the Song dynasty seagoing ship at Dongmenkou of Ningbo (in Zhejiang Province); the Southern Song shipwreck at Fashi in Quanzhou (in Fujian Province); and the Yuan dynasty seagoing ship at Penglai Water City in Shandong Province. In addition, there have been discoveries from the Song, Yuan, and Ming periods of a number of

⁹⁴ (Korean) Cultural Heritage Administration, *Shin'an kaitei ibutsu: Shiryō hen* [Xin'an underwater remains (data volume)] (n.p., 1985); *Sinan haejō yumul: Chonghapp'gyōn Xin'an haidi yiwu (zonghe pian)* [Xin'an underwater remains (comprehensive volume)] (n.p., 1988).

important remains of shipyards and ports, as well as traces of old river channels, killicks, and anchors.

By the end of the 1980s China had begun underwater archaeology work. The shipwreck of *South China Sea No. 1* is recognized as the official beginning of underwater archaeology in China. It is the most well-preserved twelfth-century shipwreck in the world up to this point, and in 2007 the entire boat was brought out of the water. The most outstanding artifacts were porcelain wares and included nearly all the major Southern Song period export ware kilns and porcelain varieties from the south. In 1990 and 1995 the shipwreck of *Baijiao No. 1* of the Song and Yuan period was excavated at Baijiao in Dinghai County, Fujian Province; and from 1992 to 1997 a Yuan dynasty shipwreck was excavated at the Sandaogang sea area in Suizhong County, Liaoning Province. These projects reflect new developments in China's archaeological pursuits. Since 1989, and especially since entering the new century, the remains of more than thirty shipwrecks and places with underwater cultural relics from the Five Dynasties through Qing dynasty have been found along the coast in Fujian Province.⁹⁵ These provide valuable physical materials for the study of the Maritime Silk Road. At the site of the shipwreck of *Nan'ao No. 1* located at Sandianjin sea area in Yun'ao Town, Nan'ao County, Guangdong Province, over ten thousand artifacts of many types were sorted out, primarily products of the Zhangzhou kiln from the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. These are valuable materials for studying middle and late Ming dynasty period maritime trade and export porcelain wares.⁹⁶

Archaeological Remains of Other Cultural Exchanges between China and Foreign Countries. Quanzhou was a major port during the Song and Yuan period, and a large number of foreigners lived there. A large number of Islamic tombstones were left in that area, as well as ancient Christian and Hindu stone carvings. The stone sculptures not only use Chinese characters, but are also carved with Arabic, Syriac, and Persian. They possess high scientific value and

⁹⁵ National Museum of China et al., ed., *Fujian yanha shui xia kaogu diaocha baogao (1989–2010)* [Report on underwater archaeology in the Fujian Coastal Area (1989–2010)] (n.p.: Wenwu chubanshe, 2017).

⁹⁶ Guangdong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, "Nan'ao I hao Mingdai chenchuan 2007 nian diaocha yu shijue" [Survey and excavation of Nan'ao No. 1 Ming dynasty shipwreck in 2007], *Wenwu* no. 5 (2011): 25–47; "Guangdong Shantoushi 'Nan'ao I hao' Mingdai chenchuan" ["Nan'ao No. 1" Ming dynasty shipwreck at Shantoushi, Guangdong], *Kaogu* no. 7 (2011): 39–46.

are a testament to cultural exchange between China and foreign countries.⁹⁷ The Islamic carvings are most frequently found in Quanzhou and consist of tombstones, tomb capstones, and stone tombs, as well as stone sculptures from within niches at mosques. Among them are over two hundred tombstones. The tombstones of Yelikewen discovered outside of Tonghuai Gate in Quanzhou are material data of relative importance.⁹⁸ Yelikewen was the general designator used for Christians (Nestorians and Catholics) by people in the Yuan dynasty. In addition to Chinese, the tombstones also use the Syriac alphabet to transliterate the Turkic writing. In 1981 a Yelikewen tombstone was discovered at the lotus pond in the southern suburbs of Yangzhou,⁹⁹ and it is also a multilingual tombstone combining Chinese and Syriac. The owner was a Mongolian Nestorian disciple. In 1952 two Yuan dynasty tombstones with Latin inscriptions were discovered in the sluice at the southern gate of Yangzhou.¹⁰⁰ They are the earliest Roman Catholic steles within Chinese borders. These are authentic reflections of trade and cultural exchange conducted between China and Western countries during that time.

In summary, the emerging discipline of Chinese archaeology has seen ample development. The vast amount of Chinese archaeological material has broad practical applications for archaeology and the natural sciences. Not only has it revealed the splendor of China's ancient civilizations and reconstructed the history of remote antiquity, but it has also become essential for scholars studying the history of global ancient civilizations to incorporate the results of Chinese archaeology when discussing theoretical issues related to humans. For that reason Chinese archaeology also has far-reaching global significance.

Translated from the Chinese by Rachel Turner

⁹⁷ Wu Wenliang (author) and Wu Youxiong (revisor), *Quanzhou zongjiao shike (zengdingben)* [Quanzhou religious rock carvings (revised edition)] (n.p.: Kexue chubanshe, 2005).

⁹⁸ Xia Nai, "Liang zhong wenzi hebi de Quanzhou Yelikewen (jing jiao) mubei" [The dual-language tombstone of Nestorianism], *Kaogu* no. 1 (1981): 59–62.

⁹⁹ Zhu Jiang, "Yangzhou faxian Yuandai jidu jiaotu mubei" [The discovery of Yuan dynasty Christian tombstones in Yangzhou], *Wenwu* no. 3 (1986): 68–69.

¹⁰⁰ Geng Jianting, "Yangzhou chenggenli de Yuandai Lading wen mubei" [Yuan dynasty Latin tombstones in Chenggenli, Yangzhou], *Kaogu* no. 8 (1963): 449–51.

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