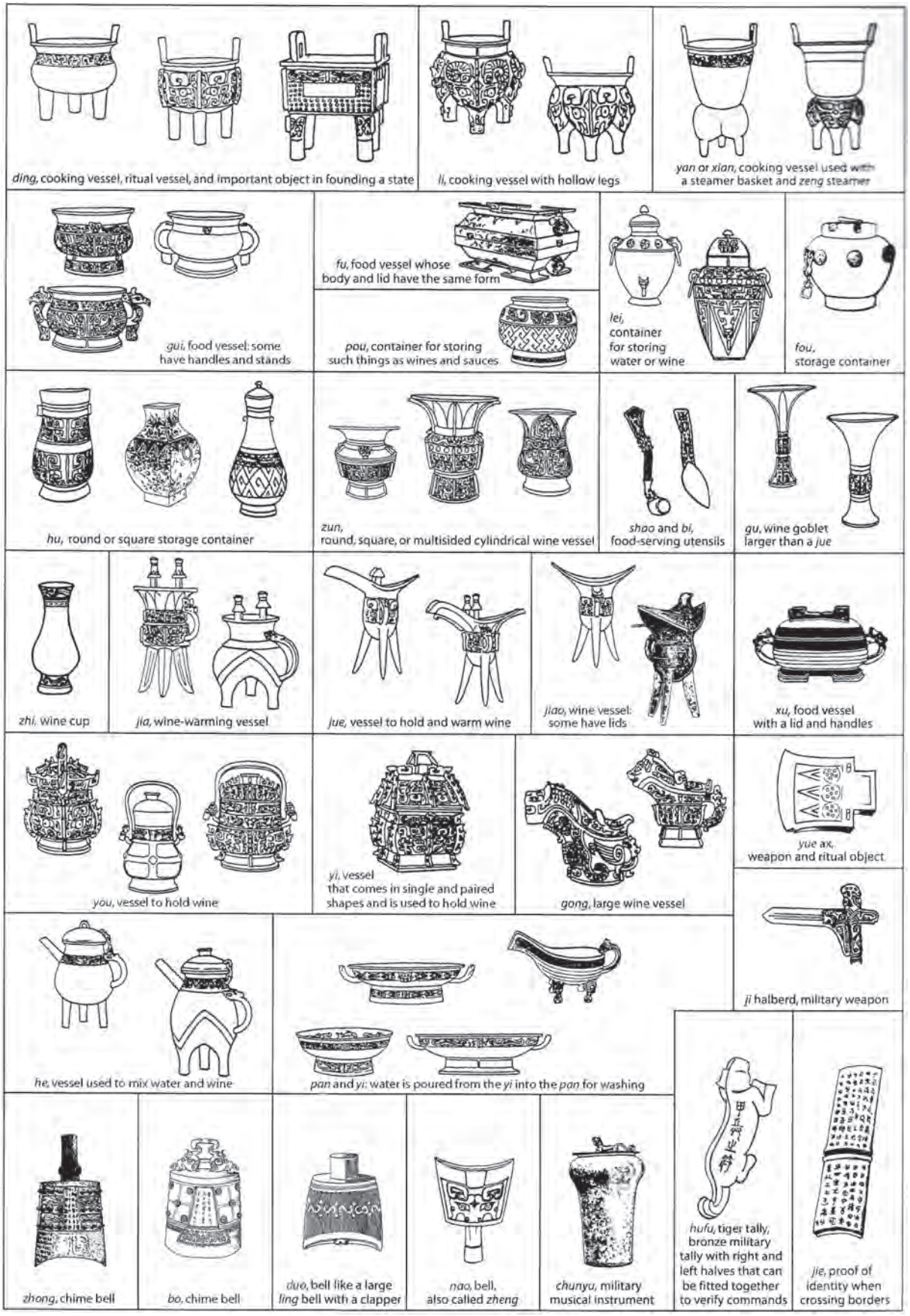

Drawings of some ancient bronze vessels, bells, and weapons of ancient China: (top row) cooking vessels: *ding*, *li*, and *yan* (second row left) food vessel: *gui* (second, third, and fifth rows) wine containers: *lei*, *hu*, *zun*, and *you* (third, fourth, and fifth rows) wine-drinking vessels: *gu*, *jia*, *jue*, *jiao*, and *zhi* (sixth row) water vessels: *he* and *pan* (last row) bronze bells: *yongzhong* or *zhong*, *bo*, and *nao* (far right) bronze weapons: *yue* and *ji*. The rest of the bronzes shown in this table were cast after the Shang period and are, therefore, not covered in the discussions of the thesis. Allan 2005, p. 309.

1

Introduction

In recent decades, archaeological sites revealed in the Yangtze River valleys 揚子江流域, among which bronzes are conspicuous, provide an additional source of data about the territory, which we today call China, during the early Bronze Age (c. 1500–c. 1000 BC). The actual number of Yangtze or southern bronzes that have been found is relatively limited, compared with those excavated from the domains of the Shang civilization in the Henan province, which is located in the mid Yellow River valley, more than 500km north of the Yangtze regions.[1] Nonetheless, the bronzes from the Yangtze themselves are intriguing in at least three ways. First, the Yangtze bronzes were cast with using clay moulds, a technique that was most probably developed in Henan during early second millennium BC.[2] Through what means did this technique transmit from the north to south is not entirely understood; but there was no question the bronze-casting workshops of the Shang society in Henan would have been the original source. Second, apart from borrowing the bronze-casting technique, the southern casters also copied some of the Shang bronze vessels, which were central in the religious performance of the Shang kings and elite. The southern bronze casters also designed their own versions of the *taotie* 饕餮 motif, the face of an imaginary animal typical of bronzes produced by the Shang.[3] Did the Yangtze societies copy for the purpose of imitating the Shang religious activities? Or did they copy the Shang royal articles simply because the vessels and the motifs visually appeared prestigious? The widespread knowledge about the Shang, however indirectly distributed, was astonishingly broad. Third, perhaps the most remarkable discovery is that there appear to have been at least five cultural groups who lived in different parts of the Yangtze River valleys, an extensive region measuring more than 1000 kilometres from east to west and 300 kilometres north to south. Unlike the cosmopolitan Shang civilization, which dominated the Yellow River valleys in the north, none of the identified bronze-using societies in the south was found as dominant. Their territorial extents were relatively limited, so that the Yangtze landscape was divided among different groups in cultural terms. Altogether, these features gathered from the archaeological finds of the Yangtze areas will develop a new picture about the Early Bronze Age of China. The present work begins with a fundamental question: to what extent were these Yangtze groups adapted to the Shang political domination, ritual activities, and religious beliefs? A comprehensive study of the Yangtze finds, as they are presented below, is necessary to resolve this untouched aspect of the studies of the Shang.

Ever since the earliest Shang site at Anyang 安陽, in northern Henan 河南 province was discovered in 1928, it has been central in Shang studies.[4] Between 1928 and 1937, fifteen seasons of excavations were carried out, and revealed sites on both sides of the Huan River 洹河, a tributary of the mid-Yellow River valley. [5] A number of important finds were made: a royal cemetery containing eleven looted but large tombs; hundreds of elite tombs which held bronzes, jades, ivories, and other precious objects; three clusters of architectural structures; and probably most important of all, several caches of burnt and cracked scapulas and turtle shells, bearing inscriptions (fig. 1.1). The inscriptions were fortune-telling records. They are so far the earliest form of writing identified in East Asia.[6] These inscriptions, moreover, loosely resembled the modern Chinese language in grammatical and ideographic structure.[7] The discovery of writing has, thus, given the Shang a central role in the beginning of Chinese history and archaeology. The excavations confirmed the site as the

[1] The distance between Zhengzhou, the provincial capital of Henan and Wuhan, the provincial capital of Hubei is approximately 518km.

[2] For technical aspects of the Shang and southern bronzes, see Bagley 1990b, pp. 7–20.

[3] For example, a bronze *zun* possibly cast in the middle Yangtze regions and found at Sanxingdui in Sichuan carried a dismembered form of *taotie*, which suggests a non-Shang connection (Rawson 1996, pp. 72–74).

[4] Established in 1921, Academia Sinica's Institute of History and Philology was the first official Chinese institute for undertaking excavations in the country. The work at Anyang was one of the organisation's first and most important projects. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, most of the Academia's archaeologists moved to Taiwan, taking with them some of the finds from Anyang, which they continued to study and analyse in their publications (Li Ji 1977, pp. 139–157). In Mainland China, the Institute of Archaeology was established in 1950 and was administered by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) based in Beijing. In each province, an Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology was also established to take charge of local archaeological projects and conservation. As we shall see below, such administration has important bearing on archaeological interpretations. For a discussion of the administration and terminology of Chinese archaeology, see Falkenhausen 1995, pp. 200–208 and Thorp 2007, pp.xiv–xxiv.

[5] For a summary of the finds during the period from 1928–1937, see Li Ji 1977, pp. 49–138.

[6] Oracle bones were used for the purpose of divination. Diviners told fortunes by reading the cracks in the burnt bones. Sometimes the questions, prognostications, and subsequent events were inscribed on the cracked bones themselves. For a brief introduction to the purposes and features of oracle bone inscriptions, see Keightley 1978, pp. 3–55. The form and structure of oracle bone inscriptions was notably well-developed. Despite a lack of evidence discovered by archaeologists, it appears highly possible that writing had been in use for some time before the Anyang period (Bagley 2004, pp.190–249).

[7] For the contents of oracle bone inscriptions, see the comprehensive work by Chen Mengjia 1988; see also Keightley 1978, pp. 63–90 (English). Detailed discussion of the inscriptions on the oracle bones are not within the scope of this thesis, partly because the inscriptions were religious records written entirely from the perspective of the Anyang kings (although from time to time they mentioned some neighbouring groups involved in affairs concerning the kings), and partly because such a study would demand a separate mode of analysis and additional contextual knowledge.

Figure 1.1. An inscribed turtle shell found at Anyang Xiaotun. Anyang period. After Anyang 1994, pl. 21.1. Oracle bone inscriptions. Four sets of inscriptions were found on this piece of turtle shell in private collection. They should be read in the directions of the arrows shown. Anyang period. After Shaughnessy (ed.) 1997, p. 27.

latest royal residency of the Shang kings, who occupied during c. 1200–c. 1045 BC.[8]

The identification of the last capital of the Shang excited further search for the pre-Anyang settlements. The archaeological expeditions of the 1950s managed to identify two major sites: a walled settlement at Zhengzhou Erligang 鄭州二里崗 (c. 1500–c. 1300 BC); and an extensive site at Yanshi Erlitou 偃師二里頭 (c. 1900–c. 1500 BC) near Loyang 洛陽. The last eighty years of work have mainly been focused on the early phases of the Shang, as well as the excavations in Henan.[9] The archaeological finds have substantially filled in the gaps related to the lives of the Shang prior to the Anyang period. In contrast, the archaeological works in the Yangtze areas began relatively late. The amount of archaeological surveys and finds is far less and complete than that of Henan. This imbalance of archaeological focus has shaped the understanding that the developments of the Yangtze societies were relatively late, and rather heavily dependent on the Shang to acquire both bronze-casting techniques, political and/or social organization mechanisms. The present work questions this interpretation of the Shang-period finds. It aims to offer a thorough study of the scattered archaeological finds from the Yangtze areas. In addition, it argues the southern groups were themselves engaged in a complicated network of contacts, in which the Shang may have only taken up a small part, so that the Shang political or religious impacts in the south were not dominant. Evidence is found in the forms, types, decorations, and contexts of archaeological bronzes. Before turning to the discussion of the bronzes, a review of archaeological finds from the period in question is necessary.

'China' during the Second Millennium BC

Scope and Chronology

The 'China' discussed here refers to the valleys of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, as well as to the intermediate regions of the Han River to the west and the Huai River 淮河 near the coast. The 'peoples' concerned included the Shang of the mid and lower Yellow River valleys; and the Zhou, who were based on the upper stream of the Shang in present-day Shaanxi. In c. 1045 BC, the Zhou made an eastward expedition and defeated the Shang king; their founders established a new dynastic era, and adopted the practice of bronze-casting techniques of the Shang, as well as some of the bronze ritual vessels for religious and burial purposes. The Zhou founders identified themselves as legitimate heirs of the Shang. Nonetheless, little is known about the origins of the Zhou people. While historical resources suggest that they may have been a subordinate group of the Shang kings, archaeological evidence indicates their presence only towards the very end of the Anyang period. Jessica Rawson argues the Zhou may have been a formation of semi-nomadic groups who migrated from further northwest. Except for the site at Xi'an Liaoniupo 西安老牛坡, major bronze-casting or bronze-using activities were absent in central Shaanxi. In contrast, the last groups under concern were far more developed than the Zhou throughout the Shang period. That how these peoples addressed themselves is not known. Suggestions have been made that they were migrants from the Shang territory; former subordinates of the Shang kings; or defeated elite in the background of the Shang and Zhou combats. It is uncertain how much we may relate the finds to historical information. In the case of the Yangtze finds, historical accounts may not be applicable at all.

The Yellow River Valleys

The Shang were an extensive group (map A). The stratigraphy in Henan suggests a chronological sequence in several successive phases:

[8] The Shang are also understood through references contained in a number of traditional texts, such as the *Shu jing* 書經 (The Book of Documents) and the *Shi jing* 詩經 (The Book of Songs), most of which were written in a much later period and were edited in the third century BC. Sixteen generations of Shang kings—from Cheng Tang 成湯, the founder of the line, to Zou 紂, the last king—were said to have ruled between c. 16th to the 12th century BC. They were conquered by an inferior group (in terms of the relative size of population and level of technology) called the Zhou 周, who migrated from the upper tributaries of the Yellow River in the west. For reasons still unknown to us, the texts indicate that the Shang probably moved their capital city several times during their period of dynastic rule. It was probably King Pan Geng 盤庚 (c. 13th century BC) who settled in a place called Yin 殷, at site from which the succeeding eleven Shang kings ruled until the conquest of the Zhou in c. 1045 BC. It has therefore been suggested, and is now widely accepted, that Anyang was most probably the Yin capital.

[9] Falkenhausen 1993, pp. 845–848.

1. The Erlitou period (c. 1900–c. 1500 BC)
2. The Erligang period (c. 1500–c. 1300 BC);
3. The Transition period (c. 1300–c. 1200 BC), also known as Middle Shang; and
4. The Anyang period (c. 1200–c. 1045 BC).[10]

The sites at Zhengzhou (c. 1500–c. 1300 BC) and Anyang were very probably two metropolitan centres of Shang society during the Erligang and Anyang phases. The stylistic features of the Erligang and Anyang bronzes indicate that there was possibly an intermediate period between these settlements of about a century.[11] Some small tombs and sites in Henan may be dated to that period, but they are relatively less well-understood.[12] Therefore, the intervening century has been tentatively called the Transition.

Archaeological debates have not resolved whether the Erlitou period belonged to an early stage of Shang civilization. The frustration came from historical records, which suggest the Shang had a predecessor group, who were called the Xia. To what extent the textual records can be trusted has been severely challenged. Neither Zhengzhou Erligang nor Yanshi Erlitou revealed inscriptional or other supporting evidence to facilitate convincing identification. Nonetheless, the connection between Zhengzhou and with Anyang was clear in terms of bronze-casting practices. It is mostly agreed that the Shang kings had been firmly established in Henan by 1500 BC. For such, there was little question that the walled site at Zhengzhou was a major royal residency of the Shang.[13]

Map A. Major archaeological sites of China, c. 1500–c. 1000 BC.

The Shang

The earliest bronze-casting activities have been discovered in Henan and are dated to the Erlitou 二里頭 period.[14] The range of objects cast was limited. There were small clapper bells, knives, and small tools. Perhaps the most remarkable pieces were the bronze *jue* (a three-legged drinking cup) in imitation of the pottery versions. Bronze-casting technique evidently was further developed during the next two centuries, known as the Erligang period (c. 1500–c. 1300 BC). The type site, found at modern-day Zhengzhou, was a large walled settlement, about twenty-five square kilometres in area. Like many settlements in northern China, the city plan of Zhengzhou was rectangular in shape. The city walls were constructed using the *hangtu* 夯土 method, in which numerous hard, thin, horizontal layers of earth were pounded vigorously with wooden logs orsimilar objects, leaving many round impressions of the tools in the profile of the walls (fig. 1.2).[15] Archaeologists have not been able to excavate most of the site, because it lies underneath the modern city. The sheer size of Zhengzhou speaks to its significance. Unlike Anyang, Zhengzhou has not yet revealed major royal tombs.[16]

A few finds at Zhengzhou testify to its sophistication. Outside the walled settlement, archaeologists uncovered two groups of bronze-casting workshops (fig. 1.3)[17] and

[10] Most archaeologists in Mainland China do not subscribe to the three phases of the Shang suggested by scholars in the West. They consider there to be two phases: the Erligang and Anyang periods. Nevertheless, more and more Chinese scholars are coming to accepting the three phases theory (see, for example, Shi Jinxiong 2005, pp. 312–313). However no conventional translation or application of the term 'Transition period' has yet appeared in Chinese writing.

[11] Robert Bagley first proposed the 'Transition' in the exhibition catalogue, *The Great Bronze Age of China*, 1980, pp. 95–117, and established the three phases of the Shang in 1999, pp. 146–155 (see also Tang Jigen 唐際根 「中商」, pp. 175–180). He suggests that there is a stylistic discontinuity between the Erligang and Anyang bronzes, and that the archaeological finds in Henan reveal very little about the Shang after the Erligang period. Surprisingly, as Bagley notes, many refined bronzes from the south seemed to fit well into the stylistic gap between Erligang and Anyang. Therefore, he argues that there was an intermediate phase of the Shang yet to be discovered by archaeologists. Research comparing the bronze vessels from Henan and the south by Robert Thorp has also reached a similar tentative conclusion, 1985, pp. 5–75. This thesis aligns with the Western method of dividing up the Shang period.

[12] In 2003, through the use of a remote sensing device, the Anyang archaeologists discovered a walled city within the northern bank of the Huai River, which istraditionally called Huanbei (the North of the Huai River). A preliminary analysis suggests that the Huanbei city was probably dated from the period immediately prior to c. 1200 BC. It seems likely that this new discovery may shed some light on the Shang during the Transition. For the brief report on Huanbei, see Tang Jigeng et al 2003, pp. 3–16. Roderick Campbell presents an updated account of the Huanbei period and its finds, 2014, pp. 107–119.

[13] The Shang site at Zhengzhou Erligang was discovered in 1952. Since then, many excavations have taken place. A thorough report was published in three volumes (Zhengzhou Shangcheng, 2001). For a summary of the finds from Zhengzhou, see Bagley 1999, pp. 158–168 and Thorp 2006, pp. 21–116.

[14] Some smaller bronze objects were found at earlier Neolithic sites at Qijia, in Gansu in the northwest; for the links between Qijia and Erlitou, see Fitzgerald-Huber 1995, pp. 17–67. When bronze-casting began in Erlitou, the technology was already reasonably advanced—the casters formulated a rather standardised proportion of the alloys of copper and tin. For the origins of metallurgy in ancient China and early evidence of bronze-casting, see Bagley 1987, pp. 15–18.

[15] The full report of the excavations at Zhengzhou is published in three volumes, Zhengzhou Shangcheng 2001.

[16] Bagley 2004, pp. 230─237.

[17] In the 1980s, bronze-casting workshops were found at Nanguanwai 南關外 and Zhijingshan bei 紫荊山北 to the south and north, respectively, of the walled settlement. Among the objects found were large pottery urns for molten bronze, processed copper ores, broken clay moulds, and

Figure 1.2. Top: the extant *hangtu* walls found at Zhengzhou Erligang. Bottom: layers of earth were pounded hard piled up. Erligang period. After Zhengzhou Shangchang 2001, pl. 7 and 39.

three caches of bronze vessels (fig. 1.4).[18] The finds demonstrate that the Erligang casters used techniques developed previously in Erlitou, but surpassed their predecessors in at least three ways: refinement of casting techniques and diversity of vessels, production of large heavy vessels, and development of *taotie* motifs. First, the Erligang casters refined and standardised the shapes of existing vessel categories, mainly the drinking tripods

Figure 1.3. Top: clay moulds and models used for casting a bronze *li*. Found at Zhengzhou Erligang, c. 1400–c. 1300 BC. After Zhengzhou Shangcheng 2001, pl. 58. Bottom: the final step reconstructed, in which the clay was broken to take out the case item.

Figure 1.4. Bronzes buried in a cache found at Zhengzhou Nanshunchengjie. The largest *ding* measures 82 cm in height. After Zhengzhou Jiaocang 1999, colour pl. 2.

called *jue* 爵 and *jia* 斝. They also added more types to the repertoire developed from these pottery categories. The new types included a steamer for food, called *yan* 甗; the round, foot-ringed containers called *lei* 罍, *zun* 尊, and *you* 卣; and the more unusual water basin called *pan* 盤. Robert Bagley estimates that at least twenty-two different

numerous other tools in pottery and bronze (Zhengzhou 1989, pp. 100–122).

[18] The three caches were respectively found at Zhangzai nanjie 張寨南街, Xiangyang Huizu Food Factory向陽回族食品廠, and Nanshuncheng jie 南順城街. These were accidental discoveries made over the period of 1974–1996 and have been published in a single monograph, Zhengzhou Jiaocang 1999. All three caches were located close to the city walls. Although the excavators have tentatively called them the 'hoards', the purposes of these caches are not actually known. I shall discuss the bronzes from these caches in the following chapter on bronze vessels.

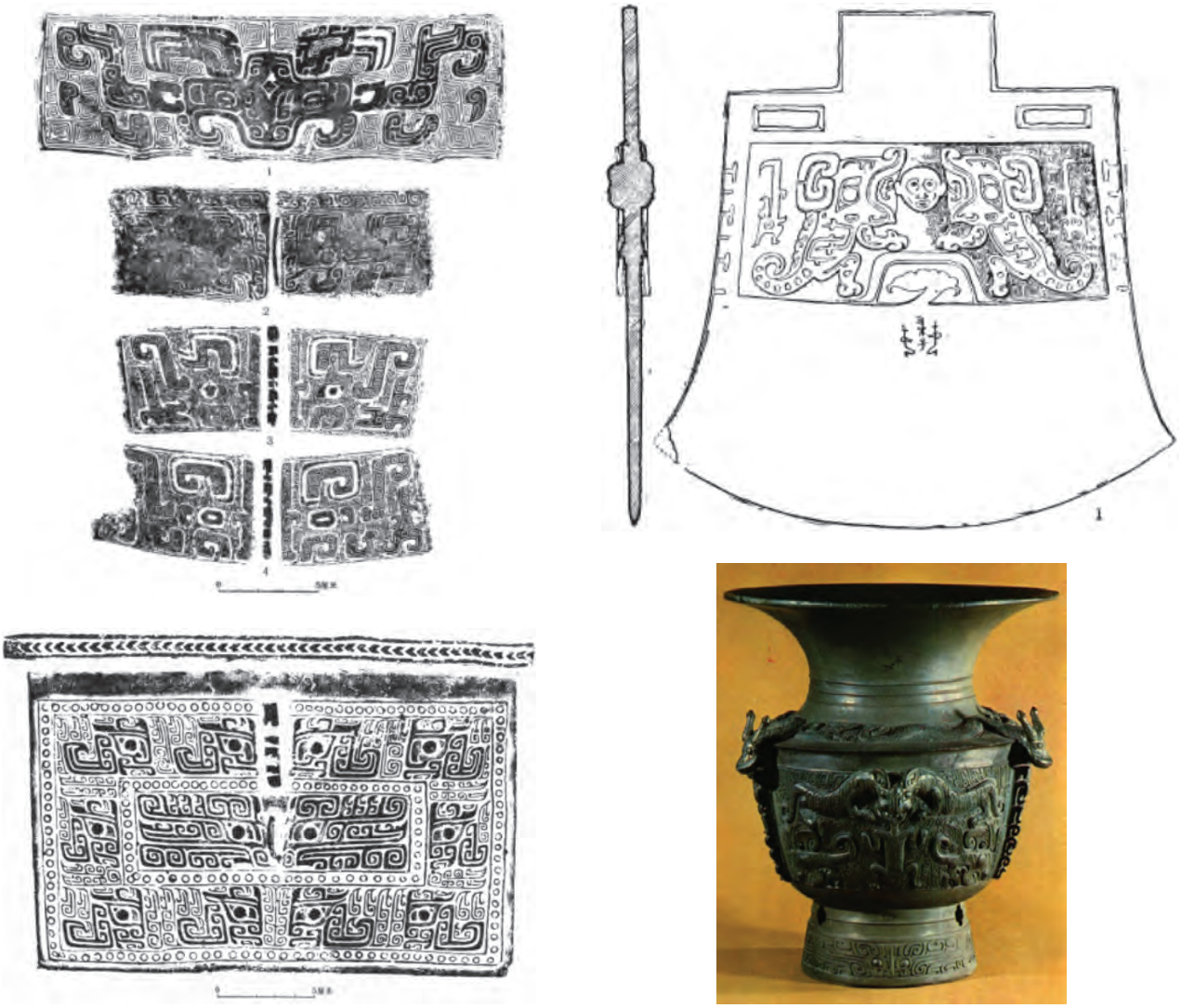

Figure 1.5. Comparisons of *taotie* and southern motifs Drawing of *taotie* motifs on Shang bronzes. The face of the imagined animals was always symmetrical and centred around the eyes; it had been growingly more elaborate and extensive during the Shang period. Rawson 1990, pp. 25–26. Drawing of the *taotie* motifs (copied from Henan) found on a bronze vessel from Xin'gan. Xin'gan 1997, p. 40. Tiger-and-man motif found on a bronze *zun* from Funan, Anhui. Anhui 1987, no.1. Tiger-and-man motif found on a bronze axe from tomb M5 (Fu Hao) at Anyang, Henan. Fu Hao 1980, p. 106.

vessel types were produced during the Erligang period.[19] In addition, the cooking tripod called *ding* 鼎 was cast in a square section, suggesting that bronze casters were growing more independent from pottery traditions. In several publications, Bagley discusses the difficulties involved in the use of the section-mould technique. He argues that the Erligang casters had overcome the technical limitations and that the results of these endeavours were obvious.[20] Second, the Erligang casters succeeded in producing large and heavy vessels. The two bronze *ding* from the bronze cache found at Zhangzai nanjie 張寨南街 in 1974 are both about 62 cm tall. One weighs 64.3 kilograms and the other 86.4 kilograms.[21] Third, the Erligang casters managed to master the piece-mould technique and render the details and forms of the animal-mask, or *taotie* (fig. 1.5). *Taotie* were, therefore, growing progressively more and more complicated, being rendered in fine, curved relief lines that stood out against the background, which was sometimes elaborately filled with regular spirals.[22]

Robert Bagley argues that the Erligang period was remarkable, and significant in terms of the development and expansion of Shang culture. He demonstrates that there was widespread distribution of the Erligang type of bronzes in the north of the Yellow River as well as in the southern regions under present discussion. He suggests that the Erligang culture had expanded outwardly into the realms outside Shang influence, and tentatively describes this phenomenon as the 'Erligang Horizon', as opposed to the rather contracted developments of the Anyang civilisation.[23] The significance of the Erligang period in

[19] Bagley 1987, p. 25. For further descriptions of the Erligang type of vessels, see Bagley 1987, p. 22–27 and Zhu Fenghan 2009, pp. 604–22.
[20] Bagley 1987, pp. 24–28.
[21] Zhengzhou Jiaocang 1999, pp. 75–78.
[22] Rawson 1990, pp. 24–27 and Rawson forthcoming.
[23] Bagley 1992, pp. 226–31 and 1999, pp. 208–212. In his study of the bronze bells (called *nao*) from a southern site at Xin'gan in the

Figure 1.6. Royal tomb no. M1001 excavated at Anyang Houjiazhuang. Left: the tomb was built in a rectangular pit connected by sloping passageways on four sides; right: decapitated human sacrifices found on the southern passageway. After Anyang 1994, pl. 10.

terms of cultural influence may, therefore, be discerned from the widespread distribution of the Henan-related finds in the Yangtze regions.[24]

Anyang was located about 187 kilometres to the north of Zhengzhou. Archaeologists have not yet located its city walls. Sites discovered to date are scattered about the north and south banks of the Huan River. Before the Sino-Japanese War, Li Ji 李濟 (1896–1979) and archaeologists from the former Academia Sinica revealed a royal cemetery at Xibeigang 西北崗 (fig. 1.6) to the north of the river; three clusters of large architectural structures in the south; and thousands of large and small elite tombs, as well as accompanying graves containing chariots, horses, dogs, and human sacrifices.[25] After the war, archaeological work at Anyang resumed, revealing bronze-casting workshops and several large intact elite tombs (most of those discovered before the war had been looted in antiquity).[26] The richest and most important site excavated to date is Tomb M5 at Xiaotun 小屯 (fig. 1.7). It was constructed in a rectangular pit and contained sixteen human sacrifices, 210 bronze vessels, 130 bronze weapons and tools, five bronze bells (called the *nao*), 800 jades and precious stones, 564 ivories and bone objects, as well as 6820 cowries.[27] The inscriptions on the bronzes show that the tomb's owner was called Fu Hao 婦好 (or Lady Hao), the wife of the fourth Anyang king, Wu Ding 武丁 (c. 1200 BC).[28] Because the tomb was found intact, it became useful reference for understanding the Shang rituals during the Anyang period.

Bronze vessels were important in the Shang culture. They were ritual paraphernalia intended for the offering of food and drink during religious ceremonies paying tribute to one's ancestors. Often found in the space between the inner and outer coffins in elite tombs, Shang bronze vessels always comprised several different types. Excavated in 2000, the forty bronze vessels found at the tomb of a major elite member, Tomb M54 at Huayuanzhuang 花園莊, illustrate a typical set of Shang burial vessels (fig. 1.8): nine pairs of drinking vessels, the *jue* and *gu* 觚; one large drinking vessel, the *jia* (66 centimetres tall); six cooking tripods, the *ding*, in two sets—four in one and two in another; a large steamer, the *yan* (79.5 centimetres tall); and finally, a large liquid container, the

mid-Yangtze valley and those of less assertive forms from Anyang, Falkenhausen reaches a similar conclusion: that the essential creations of the Erligang casters are yet to be found. Falkenhausen 1993, p. 25.

[24] Bagley 1999, pp. 229–231.

[25] Headed by Fu Sinian, the Academia Sinica was established in Beijing in 1921 to take charge of all archaeological work within the country. Its members, Li Ji (1896–1979), Liang Siyong (1904–1954), Guo Baojun (1893–1971), and Dong Zuobin (1895–1963) took turns in leading the fifteen seasons of excavations which took place from 1928 to 1937. During and after the war, they published reports in several monographs; for concise accounts of the first generation of archaeologists working at Anyang, see Thorp 2007, pp. 118–120.

[26] In the 1950s, Guo Baojun and Xia Nai (1910–85) took charge of the archaeological work at Anyang. For a summary of the finds from Anyang after 1949, see Anyang 1994, pp. 51–147.

[27] The tomb of Fu Hao 婦好 was uncovered in 1976. The preliminary report was published in Zheng and Chen 1977, pp. 57–97, and the full report in Fu Hao 1980. The finds from the tomb represent standard Anyang productions. Given the elevated and exceptional status of Fu Hao as both a queen and a military leader, it has been argued that the inventory of her tomb contained a number of exotic objects which were likely to have come from or been inspired by societies in the Northern Zone [Is the Northern Zone a technical term? If so, expand. If not, remove capital from 'zone' to indicate that it's just a regular noun.] and from the Yangtze valleys; see Rawson 1992, pp. 1–24, Rawson 1996, cat. entry no. 46–49, and Bagley 1999, pp. 194–202.

[28] For the oracle bone inscriptions that make reference to Fu Hao, see Wang Yuxin et al. 1977, pp. 1–21. On one occasion, King Wu Ding divined about her health in delivering a baby; and on another, he divined about her success in leading a campaign against the Guifang, who were possibly a group to the northwest of the Shang. It is supposed that Fu Hao probably died several decades before the king. Hence, her tomb is dated to c. 1150 BC, which roughly corresponds to the second early strata (Yinxu II period) of the four tombs found at Anyang, Anyang 1994, pp. 25–39.

Figure 1.7. Some bronze vessels found from the tomb of Fu Hao. Top: photograph taken during the excavation in 1976. Middle left: a bronze *ding* (H 80.5 cm) cast in a rectangular shape after its predecessors of the Erligang period at Zhengzhou; middle right: two sumptuous bronze *jia* (H 68.8 cm), which were also of a drinking-cup type popularly used in the Erligang period but became obsolete at Anyang. Here the *jia* were cast in an exaggerated form, probably highlighting Fu Hao's connections with predecessors. Bottom left: a bronze *zun* (H 45.9 cm); and bottom right: a bronze *gong* (H 36 cm). These were cast in what is now conventionally called the animal shapes –a novel design that began to appear during the time of Fu Hao, i.e. the beginning of the Anyang period. Top rows: after Anyang 1994, p. 3, 25 & 29; bottom row, photo courtesy of Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage & Archaeology.

zun (52 centimetres tall).[29] The excavations of the Anyang tombs have suggested that the number of the vessels and the size of the set were commensurate with the political or social ranking of their owners: Tomb M54 contained forty pieces, while Fu Hao's contained 268.[30] We have not yet, however, ascertained the specific rules governing

[29] Anyang 2004, pp. 7–19.

[30] Jessica Rawson has demonstrated the correlation between the status of the tomb owners and the features of their vessels during the Anyang period in 1993, pp. 805–809, which compares the ritual vessels from Fu Hao's tomb and those from Tomb no. 18 (that of a lesser noble in the same geographical area).

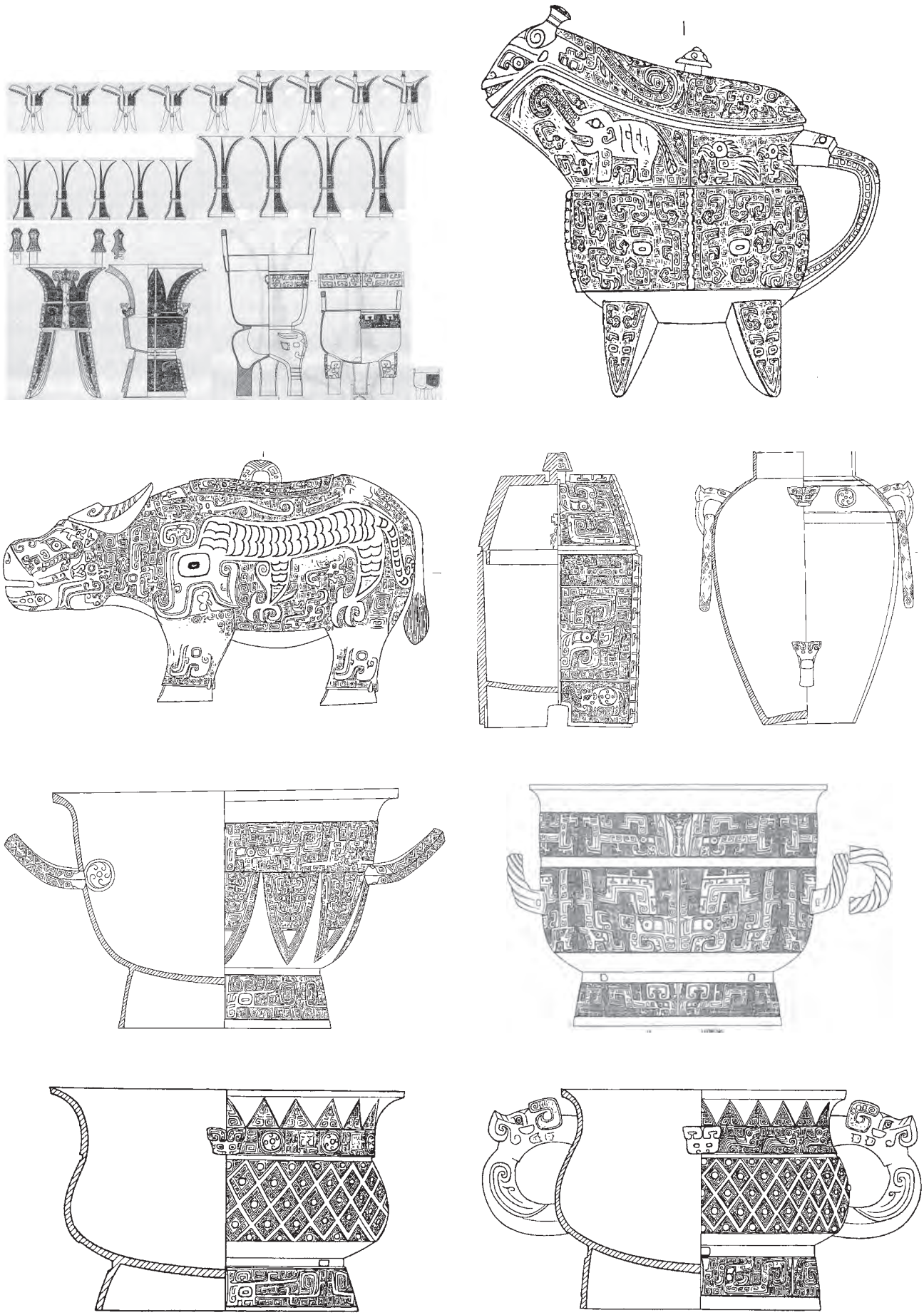

Figure 1.8. Drawings of some of the bronze ritual vessels found at tomb M54 at Anyang Huayuanzhuang. The *jia* (last row, far left) measures 66.6 cm in height. c. 1150 BC. Xu and He 2004, pp. 10–15.

the use of the vessels during ritual ceremonies, such as how the vessels were arranged and installed on the altar, what bodily movements were associated with the use of different types of vessels, and what determined the number and size of the vessels permitted to be used by a specific member of the elite class.[31] All that could be summed up is that bronze ritual vessels were key features of the Shang elite in Henan.

It is clear that the Shang had established the practice of burying a set of bronze vessels along with at least one, but often many more wine-drinking cups in their tombs. As a result of the presence of such a distinctive feature, archaeologists have been able to map the territorial extensions of the Shang populations in northern China; other sites containing this combination of burial goods have been found in Shandong 山東, western Shanxi 山西, and southern Hebei 河北 provinces.[32]

In contrast, many diverse societies existed in the south: some groups produced more bronze vessels than bells; one group in Hunan 湖南 produced many extraordinarily heavy bells; yet another group in Sichuan preferred figures to vessels or bells.[33] Altogether, five different groups are clearly represented in the archaeological records. One of them settled in the Han River valley in southern Shaanxi, in a region called Hanzhong 漢中, an intermediate region which links the Yellow and Yangtze River regions.[34] In the east, small groups of bronzes have been found near the Huai River valleys in Anhui 安徽, which is also an intermediate region.[35] Further south, in the mid-Yangtze regions, a major bell-casting group was found in Hunan,[36] and a different neighbouring group of Wucheng culture 吳城文化 was found in Jiangxi 江西.[37] In the southwest, a remarkable figure-casting group which comprised part of the Sanxingdui culture 三星堆文化 was found in Sichuan 四川, which lies in the remote upper Yangtze regions.[38]

The distribution of these southern societies is suggested primarily by the locations of found bronzes. Most bronzes were chance finds made by local residents and are of unknown or questionable provenance.[39] In each southern province, archaeologists have been making efforts to locate the settlements of the early bronze-casting groups. They have excavated some sites, have revealed a few large architectural structures, and have discovered small numbers of minor tombs. Nevertheless, the amount of archaeological work carried out in southern China to date is still limited.[40] Among all the finds, no major burials or other archaeological features have been able to shed light on the political or social organisation of local societies. All that is known with certainty is that sophisticated bronze casters existed who were in contact with the north. The southern sites described below may suggest the locations of some major social centres. In the extensive Yangtze regions, it is highly possible that even more bronze-using societies were present.

The upper stream of the Shang territory

The Zhou lived to the west of the Shang on the upper plateaus of Shaanxi 陝西. A permanent archaeological team is stationed at Zhouyuan 周原 (The Plains of the Zhou), the acclaimed fabled homeland of the Zhou, to search for anticipated pre-dynastic Zhou remains. But the search has not yet revealed much remarkable evidence.[41]

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[31] Ibid.

[32] For a concise summary of the Shang sites in northern China, see Xia-Shang 2003, pp. 535–566 (northwest) and pp. 575–584 (southern Inner Mongolia).

[33] The features of each group of southern bronzes have been widely discussed. While there are debates over the dates, there is little question that most of them were produced locally. For brief discussions, see Kane 1974/75, pp. 77–92 and Bagley 1992, 215–226. For a survey of most of the existing Yangtze bronzes, see Shi Jingxiong 2005, pp. 41–101 (Jiangxi), 102–160 (Hunan), and 161–220 (Sichuan).

[34] Zhao Congcang 2006.

[35] Kane 1974/75, pp. 78–80. On the other hand, some Chinese archaeologists believe that the bronzes from Anhui were possibly the remains of the Shang, Song Xinchao 1991, pp. 176–191.

[36] On the other hand, Xiang Taochu argues that a bronze-casting society did not seem to have been developed in Hunan. He suggests that most bells and other bronzes were possibly cast by the Shang and carried to the south after the Zhou conquest, 2006, pp. 75–78. But Xiang's argument cannot convincingly explain the remarkable stylistic differences between the Hunan bronzes and the traditional Shang bronzes. Indeed, the Hunan bell type has not yet been found at any Shang site in the north (see Chapter Three), suggesting that the local group was in some way distinguished from the Shang. It seems, therefore, justified to believe that there was a local bronze-casting group in Hunan.

[37] Two bronze-using cultures were found in northern Jiangxi: the Wucheng culture in the northwest and Wannian culture 萬年文化 in the northeast; both were named after their respective type site. The two cultures are distinguished by a slight difference in their pottery types, and the Wannian sites often show larger numbers of glazed ceramics than do most Wucheng sites (Li Jiahe 1989, pp. 26–37 and Liu Shizhong 2000, pp. 26–27). This thesis is mainly concerned with the Wucheng culture, because a large group of bronzes were found at Xin'gan, which is located near the site of Wucheng, whereas only a small number of tiny bronze objects were found at Wannian.

[38] The Sanxingdui culture is one of the most ('distinguished' has a sense of being elegant and refined. Do you mean 'distinctive'?) among all cultures discovered in southern China. This group of people cast many bronze figures, which are unique on the Yellow and Yangtze river regions. In many ways the remains of the Sanxingdui culture show links with the Erlitou 二里頭 culture (c. 1900–c. 1500 BC) in Henan. Sun Hua and Su Rongyu argue that the Sanxingdui people were possibly migrants from the north, Sun and Su 2003, pp. 129–155. On the other hand, Falkenhausen has demonstrated that the Sanxingdui culture also displays many connections to local Neolithic societies. The Sanxingdui people may, therefore, have emerged from the local population, although it is possible that they had acquired some material features or technology through their widespread connections with the outside world, 2006, pp. 191–245.

[39] Gao Zhixi 1992, pp. 76–79. Most southern bronzes were discovered by local residents and sent to the corresponding archaeological institutes. There were occasions when archaeologists were able to visit the spots where the bronzes were found. However, they were very rarely able to make further discoveries. Some other bronzes were simply kept in storerooms for many years before they were published: see, for example, the bells described in Gao Zhixi, 1984a, pp. 129–134.

[40] Unlike Henan, most archaeological work in the southern provinces only began in the 1970s, when the provincial archaeological institutes were given permission to carry out surveys and excavations. For the restructuring of the administration of archaeological work, see Falkenhausen 1995, pp. 200–202.

[41] Archaeologists expect to discover the Zhou royal tombs, because Zhouyuan 周原 was most probably the religious centre of the regime during the Western Zhou period (whereas the Feng 豐 and Hao 鎬 capitals on the east were political centres). The recent discoveries of what were possibly the large tombs of some high-ranking elite members at Zhougongmiao have been much referenced in reportage. The excavations of the tombs are still under preparation. Currently the archaeological teams at Zhouyuan are from the Peking University (Feng Tao 2004).