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ANYANG XIAOMINTUN

Ⅱ – LATE SHANG REMAINS

Volume 1

(*With an English Abstract*)

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Abstract

This volume is the second part of the archaeological excavation report for the Xiaomintun Locus, western Yinxu, Anyang, from the 2003–2004 season. It presents the study of artifacts unearthed from non-burial contexts of the Yinxu period, excluding materials related to bronze casting. While this report primarily focuses on pottery, it also covers bronzes, jades, lithics, bones, horns, teeth, shells, animal skeletons, and wood.

The cultural characteristics of the Xiaomintun Locus are consistent with those of other loci at Yinxu, spanning from late Phase I to Phase Ⅳ of the Yinxu period.

Pottery is the primary artifact of the Yinxu culture, unearthed from the excavations in various loci at Yinxu. This volume presents findings from 662 non-burial units at Xiaomintun. The total count of pottery sherds is over 300,000, with 26,000 rim sherds. These represent 27 types and 144 varieties (and sub-varieties) of pottery vessels, including *li*-tripod, *yan*-steamer, *zeng*-steamer, *jia*-tripod, *ding*-tripod, *gui*-bowl, *dou*-stemmed dish, *pan*-dish, *gu*-goblet, *jue*-tripod, *lei*-jar, *zhi*-jar, *zun*-jar, square-mouthed vessels, *hu*-jar, *bu*-jar, *bo*-bowl, *yu*-basin, *pen*-basin, *guan*-jar, *weng*-jar, *shao*-spoon, vat-shaped vessel, cylindrical vessel, crucible-shaped vessel, and lid. Additionally, drainage pipes were uncovered. Most pottery vessels are made of earthenware, with some *bu* and *guan* vessels made of stoneware, proto-porcelain, and glazed earthenware.

The ordinary pottery vessels at Xiaomintun were primarily locally produced using readily available primary and secondary loess and alluvium, with only a small proportion being non-local. Proto-porcelain, stoneware, and glazed earthenware were most likely imported from the middle and lower Yangzi region, a hypothesis strongly supported by petrographic analysis.

In terms of the style of archaeological culture, the pottery of Yinxu culture, as represented at the Xiaomintun Locus, can be divided into 14 stylistic groups, with some vessels unidentifiable. Group A is the largest in quantity and variety, dominating Yinxu culture, while other groups play a secondary role. Stylistic and petrographic analyses suggest that Group A pottery was locally produced, while other groups originated from various cultural regions outside Anyang, including the late Shang and neighboring cultures. These findings enable further exploration of the dynamic interactions between the late Shang capital at Yinxu and other regions.

Petrographic analysis divides pottery vessels at Xiaomintun into three groups: untempered vessels, sand-tempered vessels, and grit and grog-tempered vessels. The analysis also determines whether the pottery was locally produced or exotic. Among the 35 samples analyzed, 24 are identified as non-local, and 10 as local. Of the vessels with identifiable periods, 23 of the 35 analyzed are non-local, with 14 dating to the early Yinxu period (late Phase I and

Phase Ⅱ). Petrographic analysis was also conducted on high-fired vessels, including 17 stonewares and 1 proto-porcelain *bu*. These differ technically from local daily vessels. The production of high-fired pottery is significantly influenced by the composition of clay minerals, particularly the proportion of refractory kaolinite. Since local loess and alluvium in the Yinxu area primarily contain montmorillonite and illite with little kaolinite, the soil is unsuitable for high-fired pottery. This suggests that the high-fired pottery is likely non-local, a conclusion consistent with typological and stylistic observations of local and non-local vessels, with only minor discrepancies.

The excavation at the Xiaomintun Locus produced various tools of pottery, bronze, jade, stone, bone, horn, shell, clams, and materials used for divination (bones and shells). Some objects bear inscriptions and symbols. These tools served functions ranging from daily life and production to religious activities, offering insight into the Shang social and economic life.

Animal remains at the Xiaomintun Locus include mammals, birds, reptiles such as turtles and tortoises, fish, and shellfish. Research indicates that during the late Shang period, the Taihang Mountains and nearby areas had greater forest coverage and denser vegetation than today, creating a favorable wildlife habitat. The warm climate and natural environment in Anyang contributed to the prosperity of the late Shang population. The development of animal husbandry in the late Shang period likely benefited from the well-developed grasslands in and around Anyang, highlighting the environmental differences between the late Shang period and the present.

Zooarchaeological research shows a diversified use of domestic animals during the late Shang period. By this time, five of the so-called "six livestock" in ancient China – pigs, cattle, sheep, dogs, and horses – had been domesticated, with pigs and cattle being the most common. Sheep proportions remained stable across phases, while horse numbers increased after Yinxu Ⅲ.

The excavation at the Xiaomintun Locus also revealed several sacrificial pits where whole animals were buried. These sacrificial pits primarily contained pig sacrifices, followed by cattle and horses, with dog sacrifices being the fewest. This indicates that pig sacrifices were central to bronze-casting rituals at Xiaomintun, though large animals such as cattle and horses were also used.

Charcoal analysis identified oak, maple, beech, and jujube wood at Xiaomintun. Oak, with its high burning value and long duration, was preferred for cooking and smelting.