

The tomb of the Spring-and-Autumn Period at Jiwang Gu in Yishui County, Shandong

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Abstract

The tomb of the Spring-and-Autumn Period at Jiwang Gu (Jiwang Mesa) is a stone shaft pit tomb with wooden chamber cut out of the rock on the top of the mesa; it consists of the grave, the passageway and the chariot-and-horse pit, and the grave and the chariot-and-horse pit are in the same rock pit. The grave is partitioned into the outer coffin chamber, the inner coffin chamber, two nested coffins, two storage boxes and three human victim pits. From this tomb, large amounts of jades, bronzes and other artifacts about 200 pieces (or sets) in total were unearthed. This tomb has large scale, high rank, special structure and rich grave goods, all of which are significantly meaningful for the researches on the cultures and burial system of this region during the Eastern Zhou Period.

Keywords: Burials—Eastern Zhou Period; Jiwang Gu (Yishui County, Shandong)

Brief introduction of the tomb

The Jiwang Gu Tomb of the Spring-and-Autumn Period is located 40km to the northwest of the seat of Yishui County, Shandong Province, geomorphologically in the Yi-Meng mountain and mesa area. The top of the mesa occupies an area of about 45ha, consisting of three rocky mounds spreading from the south to the north which are called “Leigutai (drum-beating terrace)”, “Wanshou Shan (longevity hill)” and “Feizi Mu (concubine tomb)” respectively. In early January 2012, intact and broken bronzes were discovered on the mesa in a construction project, which led to the confirmation of an ancient tomb at that locus. In February to July 2012, Shandong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology carried out there excavation in cooperation with local cultural heritage institutions.

Structurally the tomb’s distinctive feature is the partition of the rock-cut pit into two parts: the main grave (M1) in the south and the chariot-and-horse pit (K1) in the north. The whole rock-cut pit measures about 40m in length from north to south and 13m in width from east to west. On the southern section of the east wall of the rock-cut pit is a tomb passage. Despite destruction in the past, the main grave remains in quite a good condition.

Main grave M1

1. Shape and structure.

M1 is opened beneath a layer of modern soil and intruded shale rock. It measures 2.2m in depth and 116° in orientation, and is formed of two parts: the grave containing a double wooden chamber and the ramp passageway. The opening is rectangular and the walls are slanting. The length from north to south is unknown because of the destruction, but the width from east to west can be inferred to be 13m by referring to that of the chariot-and-horse pit (Figure 1).

The ramp passageway is located on the eastern side of the main grave. It measures 4m in remaining length from east to west and 3.6m in width from north to south. The remaining ledge is 0.7m below the grave opening. Its western section has a width of 3.4m for the upper part and measures 1 to 1.5m in remaining height. The eastern section left over only a corner.

The outer coffin chamber is built in the center of the main grave. The remaining traces show that it had a rectangular plan and measured 9.24m in length from north to south and 5m in width from east to west. The depth is 1.45–1.5m. The inner coffin chamber is in the center of

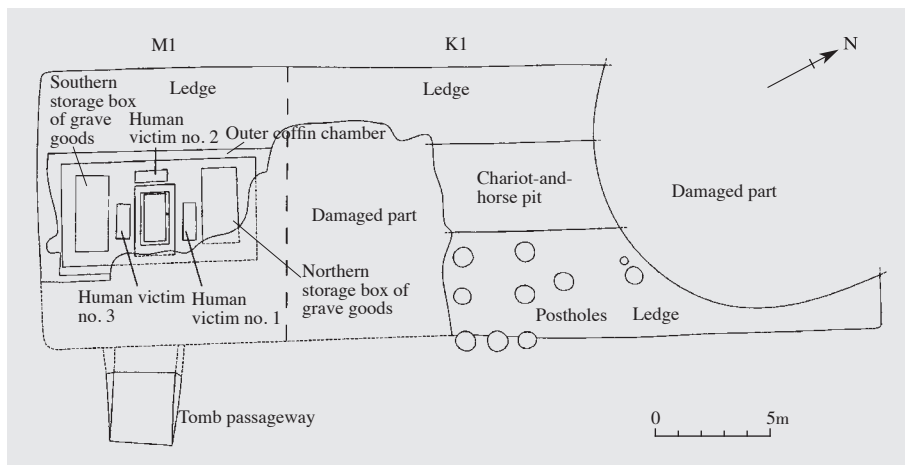


Figure 1 Plan of the main grave M1 and the chariot-and-horse pit K1.

the outer one. It is flanked by two storage boxes of grave goods, one in the north and the other in the south. On the northern, southern and western sides of the nested double coffin are three human victim pits. The inner coffin chamber is 3.26m long from east to west, 1.94m wide from north to south and 0.7m in remaining depth. Its cover is built of transverse wooden planks; at the bottom are two joists lying in north-south direction, which have seriously rotten.

In the center of the inner chamber is the nested double coffin, which left over only traces of wooden board ash. The outer coffin is 2.5m long from east to west, 1.35m wide from north to south and 0.7m in remaining height. The inner coffin measures 2.25m long, 1 to 1.04m wide and 0.7m high (remaining height). Its surface was thickly lacquered into red and black colors. The tomb occupant's skeleton has rotten, but the head can be identified to point to the east as shown by the head and neck ornaments. On the inner coffin bottom, a layer of cinnabar about 0.06m thick was discovered around the tomb occupant, and numbers of jades, agate beads, bone beads, etc. were brought to light from there (Figure 2).

Because the bedrock was difficult to cut, the waist pit underneath the chamber and coffins was made superficially, and no clear margins were discovered. In the pit is the skeleton of a dog victim with the head pointing to the northwest.

The human victims (nos. 1 to 3) were each interred in a coffin. Nos. 1 and 3 lie in an extended supine position, head pointing to the east, and right tibialis and fibulas showing rightward malposition. The human victim no. 1 is about 25 years old; no. 3 is a female, about 35 years old and is associated with a bronze *zhou*-oval vessel at the left leg. No. 2, who was about 7-8 years old, lies on side with limbs flexed, head pointing to the south and facing downward.

The southern storage box of grave goods is 3.6m long from east to west, 1.7m wide from north to south and 0.7m

high as estimated from its board traces. The top board is covered with a 0.05–0.09m thick layer of animal ribs and limb bones, beneath which is a thicker fish bone layer spread eastward from the middle of the cover. In the box are mainly ritual bronzes, pottery vessels and lacquered objects. The northern storage box measures 3.46m in remaining length from east to west, 1.6m in width and 0.7m in depth as known from the board traces. Its contents include ritual bronzes, musical instruments, weapons and bone artifacts.

2. The grave goods.

The grave goods are largely placed in the coffin and the southern and northern storage boxes. Below is a description of the main ones.

(1) Jades in the coffin, 30 pieces.

Jade human figure, one piece (M1:162). It is green with wide-spread white flaws. The body is thin and smooth. It depicts a limb-flexed human being, bearing a relieved dragon on the chest that coiled the body and stretched the tongue. The back is also decorated with a dragon, which has a backward coiled tail and a forked tongue. Both the human body and the dragon designs are adorned with coiled cloud patterns. The height is 6.4cm and the width 3.1cm (Figure 3).

Cong-prismatic tubes, two pieces. They are made of green jade; either has a short cubical exterior and a cylindrical interior. M1:190 has become whitish on the surface owing to erosion. The four sides are decorated with serpent-dragon designs carved in double sunken lines, and the upper rim bears two symmetrical pairs of round holes. The height measures 5.2cm and the width 8.1cm (Figure 4).

Ge-dagger axes, two pieces; both are made of yellowish-brown jade. M1:163 is ridged in the middle of the blade and has two edges either with a lug. The blade surface is plain. The tang is rectangular; its middle part has two parallel vertical lines, and the rear part bears five pairs of raised parallel lines extending to the end of the tang. The frontal part of the tang and the center of the blade end have a round lashing hole each. The whole object is 26.9cm long and 7cm wide (Figure 5).

Tiger-shaped jade pendants, two pieces. They are roughly the same in shape. The material is green with reddish-brown tint and white flaws. Either pendant is wrought thin and shaped like a tiger with serrated fringes. Both the upper part and the tail bear a perforation. M1:193 is adorned with a serpent-dragon design carved in double sunken lines on either side. The length measures 10.4cm (Figure 6).

Jue-earrings, seven pieces, all made of green jade. M1:168 bears white and reddish-brown flaws owing to erosion.



Figure 2 Coffin in main grave M1 (N-S).

The ends are carved into an eagle-head shape and a cloud-and-thunder pattern respectively and bear serrated fringes. Besides, there are three holes perforated in the ends and near an edge. The outer diameter is 7cm (Figure 7).

Huang-semicircular pendants, five pieces, all made of green jade. M1:187 is roughly semi-ring in shape and bears white flaws in some parts. The obverse is decorated with serpent-dragon design carved in double sunken lines; either end has a perforation. The length is 14.3cm.

Xi-bodkins, five pieces. The jade is green with white tint and flaws. The body is flat and curvy. One end is shaped like a dragon-head with open mouth, round eyes, and has a serrated fringe. Either side is decorated with serpent-dragon design carved in double sunken lines. At the dragon back is a perforation. M:183 has a length of 9cm.

Ox head-shaped ornament, one piece (M1:514). It is green with white flaws owing to severe erosion. The obverse has a serpent-dragon design carved in double sunken lines. The middle and the ox mouth have a perforation each. The length measures 3.5cm.



Figure 3 Jade human figure (M1:162).



Figure 4 Jade *cong*-prismatic tube (M1:190).

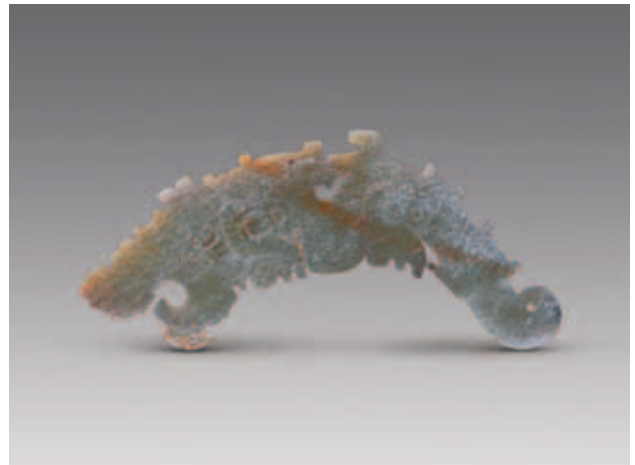


Figure 6 Tiger-shaped jade pendant (M1:193).



Figure 5 Jade *ge*-dagger ax (M1:163).



Figure 7 Jade *jue*-earring (M1:168).



Figure 8 Southern storage box of grave goods (W-E).

(2) Grave goods in the southern storage box.

The bronzes include the *ding*-tripod, *li*-cauldron, *pu*-container, *lei*-wine jar and spoon (each type consisting of seven pieces), the *dui*-turen with identical semispherical body and lid (three pieces) and the small-sized *ding*-tripod (five pieces). The potteries are seven jars. In the western part are lacquered objects, which are all rotten (Figure 8).

(3) Grave goods in the northern storage box.

The main bronzes are nine *yongzhong* (bells with a cylindrical shank on top), four *bozhong* (bells with a flat mouth), nine *niu zhong* (bells with semicircular suspension loop on top), two *chunyu* (bells with bulging shoulder), three *zhou*-oval vessels, five *ge*-dagger axes, three chisels, a *nao* (bells inverted when being played), a *yan*-steamer, a *lei*-wine jar, a round pot, a gourd-shaped pot, a jar, a *pan*-basin, a *yi*-pourer and some swords and arrowheads. The rest objects include ten chime stones, accessories and remnant of a *se*-zither, a jade plaque, a bronze ornament and an implement made of horn. Some bronzes such as the *ding*-tripods, *yu*-basins and swords were disturbed by modern construction and their original positions are no longer restorable. Of these bronzes, the *ding*-tripods and *yu*-basins bore inscriptions.

Bronze *yongzhong*, a nine-piece set. They are the same in shape but graduated sizes. They have lenticular cross-section with the walls outward inclined from the top to the mouth; the mouth corners are curvy. The shank on the top is shaped like a gradually thickening post and has a ring of curb-shaped protrusion that bears a suspension loop with a curved frontal side. The top is flat and bears

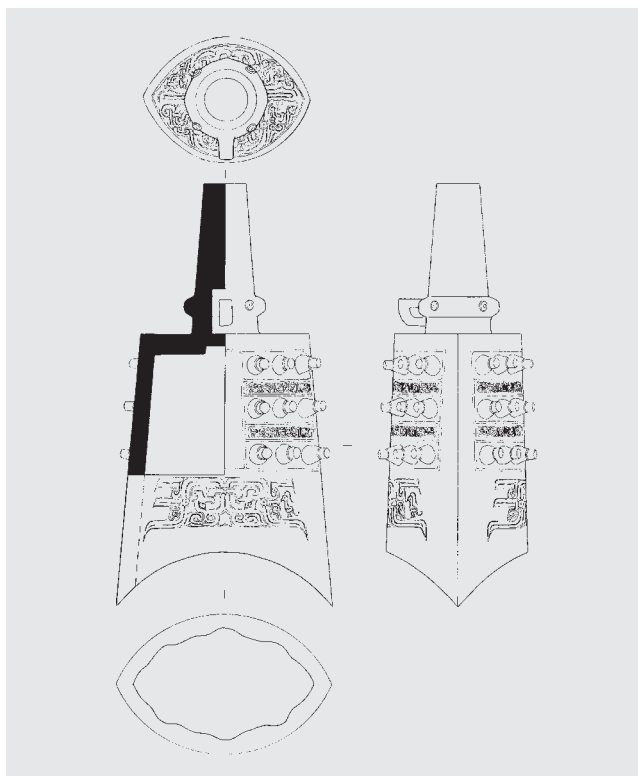


Figure 9 Bronze *yongzhong* (M1:14).



symmetrical coiled dragon designs. Either side of the body has 18 bosses arranged in a 6 by 3 formation. Near the mouth and between the boss rows are dragon designs. Some pieces bear curvy grooves on the inside, close to the mouth. These must be tuning grooves. M1:14 measures 11.4cm in shank length. The whole bell is 32.1cm in height (Figure 9).

Bronze *chunyu* (bells with bulging shoulder), two pieces. They are identical in shape and similar in size. The top is round with a rope-shaped suspension loop; the shoulder is rounded; the waist is contract, and the mouth has an oval plan and a flared rim. On the waist is a slightly raised broad band. M1:1 measures 19.8cm in major diameter at mouth and 40.4cm in height (Figure 10).

Bronze gourd-shaped pot, one piece (M1:50). The



Figure 10 Bronze *chunyu* (M1:1).

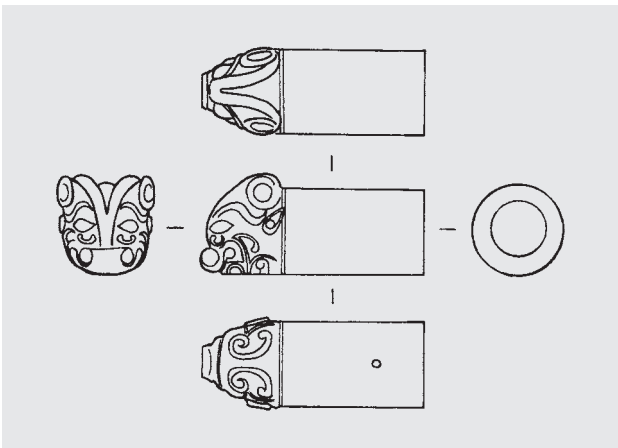


Figure 12 Jade animal (M1:63).



Figure 11 Gourd-shaped bronze pot (M1:50).

mouth is vertical; the lid bears a short vertical spout, a semicircular knob and a small round hole, all in a straight line. Below the rim are two symmetrical round holes. On one side is a swing handle, which is joined to the body by two semicircular loops. The belly is bulging; the bottom is flat and has a short ring foot. The surface is plain. The full height measures 36.8cm (Figure 11).

Jade animal, one piece (M1:63). It is a green jade sculpture. The front part is carved into an animal head with a coiling nose, two oval protruding eyes and two small ears; the rear section is hollowed into a tubular shape. Behind the ears are two rings of bowstring patterns. It has a total length of 4.5cm and a diameter of 1.7cm for the tubular shape rear part (Figure 12).

Chariot-and-horse pit K1

1. The structure of the pit and statuses of the horses and chariots.

K1 is located in the north of the rock-cut pit and measures 7.5m in remaining length, 4.1–4.4m in width for the opening, 3.6m in width for the bottom and 1.1–1.2m in depth.

The western and eastern sides of K1 are each furnished with a ledge. The western ledge measures 3.4m in length for the upper part and 1.1–1.2m in remaining height. The eastern one is a terrace hewn out of the bedrock, actually a shale bench. It is 20.5m long for the remaining section, 5.2m wide and 0.8–1.1m high. Its top is uneven with a lot of grooves between the raised ground, and bears ten postholes (nos. 1–10) arranged in a formation, nine larger and one smaller. Each pit contains a round posthole.

From K1 seven horses were recovered, which are numbered 1–7 from south to north. The horse no. 1 has only its skull preserved, while the others are better in condition. Four chariots were unearthed; they are numbered 1–4 from south to north. The chariots nos. 2 and 3 remain roughly intact, while the other two have been damaged. Each chariot is allotted two horses. The horse skeletons are generally well preserved, but the wooden chariot bodies have badly rotten. All the chariots are single-pole ones, whose structural members include the crossbar, pole, box, wheels, yoke, etc. Usually the horses are each equipped with bridle ornaments and cheek pieces for the head and a circle of strung bronze beads for the neck (Figure 13).

The box of chariot no. 2 contains a *ding*-tripod, a *li*-cauldron and a *dui*-tureen. These vessels and the other ritual bronzes discovered in the chariots are all inverted placed, which is seldom encountered in field archaeology.

(1) The ash trace of the crossbar for fitting yokes is 1.1m long, 6cm wide and 0.5cm thick. Its two ends and the draught pole head have a bronze ring each. The crossbar bears four bronze fittings on top and two yokes with bronze belt buckles below the left and right sections.

The pole head is superimposed by the crossbar and covered by a quite thick layer of black lacquer peel. The whole draught pole measures 1.95m in length from its head to the front of the chariot box, 6–7cm in width and 0.5–1cm in thickness.

The box has been deformed owing to rot and crush, but the surface can be discerned to have been thick lacquered in black as known from the remaining rectangular lacquer peel. Its measures 1.25–1.55m in length from north to south, 1–1.05m in width from west to east, and 0.3m in remaining height. Judged by the lacquer peel, an entrance 0.35–0.4m wide is opened

at the back. In the front is a crossbar for armrest. Its middle has wooden posts that are joined with the frontal lower frame beam of the box. A bunch of arrowheads were discovered in front of the box, above the left front. It must be the remains of the arrow quiver ever hung in front of the box. The shapes and sizes of the lower frame beams, side armrests and railings of the box are unknown because their lacquer peels left over were collapsed and mixed up after rotten.

The wheels are placed in pits at an interval of 1.8–1.85m, and have deformed into irregular oblate remains. Their diameters are 1.3–1.35m; the spokes are 48–52cm long each estimated by the rotten pieces; the axles are 6–8cm in diameter and 2.68m in total length, including the attached axle caps fastened with linchpins.

(2) The horses are buried in pairs in front of the chariot boxes, each pair lying back to back on the north and south flanking the pole, head pointing to the north and south respectively. Their legs are slightly flexed towards the belly; the mouth holds a curb bit, which is fixed with cheek pieces. The head is decorated with round bronze studs, beads and rein joints. The neck also bears a circle of strung bronze beads.

2. The unearthed objects. The main part is described as follows.

Bronze *ding*-tripod, one piece (K1:3). The vertical ears are slightly outturned, the rim out-bent flat, the round belly a little bulging, the bottom round, and three cabriole legs are attached. Each leg has a vertical groove on the inner side. Below the rim is a ring of intertwining curve pattern; the cabriole legs are decorated with *taotie*-animal mask designs on the upper part. The bottom and belly are sooted. The whole object measures 30.8cm in diameter at the mouth and 26.8cm in height (Figure 14).

Bronze *li*-cauldron, one piece (K1:1). The rim is out-bending. The vertical ring-shaped ears are arranged symmetrically on the shoulders. The crotches are curvy. The design on the shoulders has become indistinct owing to rust and weathering. The bottom and legs bear soot traces. The mouth diameter measures 19.6cm, the height 19.2cm (Figure 15).

Bronze *dui*-tureen, one piece (K1:2). It has an oval profile. The cover is tight-fitted in the rim, the belly is round, the outer wall bears two symmetrical loop handles, the bottom is flat, and the surface is plain. It has a mouth diameter of 27.4cm, a bottom diameter of 13.6cm and a height of 19.4cm (Figure 16).



Figure 13 The Chariot-and-horse pit K1 (S–N).

Conclusions

1. The dating of the grave goods from the Jiwang Gu tomb is a complicated issue. The two jade *ge*-dagger axes from the coffin are typical artifacts of the Shang Dynasty. The bronze *li*-cauldron from the chariot-and-horse pit shows the style of the mid Spring-and-Autumn Period, but the set of *ding*-tripods from the southern storage box bear two L-shaped ears, which is a little different from that of the vertical-eared *ding* prevailing in the territory of the Ju 莒 State in the mid Spring-and-Autumn Period. Therefore, it is reasonable to preliminarily attribute the tomb to the late Spring-and-Autumn Period.

2. Being a high-ranking burial, this tomb must have been that of a lord or his spouse. As recorded in the *Yishui Xian Zhi* (Yishui County Gazetteer) published in the eleventh year of the Kangxi Era of the Qing Dynasty (1672), Jiwang Gu “was the residence of Marquis of the Ji State after he left his state.” Nevertheless, once a construction project brought to light from the northern storage box a bronze *ding*-tripod bearing the inscription “Hua Mengzi 华孟子 made this precious *ding* as a dowry for marrying his daughter Zhongzi 中子 to the Zhongjia 中冓 Family...” According to this inscription, the tomb occupant must have been Zhongjia, i.e. Hua Mengzi's son-in-law and Zhongzi's husband. However there is no mention about Zhongjia's state and clan affiliation. Estimated by the distinctive features, this tomb bears a series of typical characteristics of the Ju territory. Therefore the exact determination of the cemetery's state affiliation awaits further study and more archaeological discoveries.

3. As a large-scale, high-ranking, special-structured and rich-furnished burial, the Jiwang Gu tomb of the Spring-and-Autumn Period is one of the most important discoveries in recent Eastern Zhou archaeological studies of Shandong. The combination of the main grave and the chariot-and-horse pit in the same rock-cut pit is unprecedented among the burial types discovered to date in Chinese archaeology. The quantities of bronzes and jades unearthed from this tomb have important academic value to researches on the archaeological culture of this region. As a new discovery, this tomb is of great significance to studying into the history of Jiwang Gu and the politics, economy, culture and burial system of this area in the Spring-and-Autumn Period.

Postscript

The original report authored by Daohua Hao 郝导华, Shan Xu 许珊, Zixiao Zhang 张子晓, Jiliang Yin 尹纪亮 and Jianmei Li 厉建梅 was published in *Kaogu* 考古 (Archaeology) 2013. 7: 33–48 with 35 illustrations. The abridged version is prepared by Daohua Hao and translated into English by Runxian Mo 莫润先.



Figure 14 Bronze *ding*-tripod (K1:3).



Figure 15 Bronze *li*-cauldron (K1:1).



Figure 16 Bronze *dui*-tureen (K1:2).