

The Western Han Tomb No. 2 at Yaoziling, Yongzhou City, Hu'nan

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and
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Key Words: Hu'nan province Tomb No. 2 at Yaoziling wooden-chambered earth shaft tomb late Western Han period

I. Survey of the Cemetery

Yaoziling 鹞子岭 is located in the rectangular highland surrounded by Huanggushan Road 黄古山路, Middle Nanjin Road 南津路 and Lingjiaotang Road 菱角塘路, two kilom northeast of Yongzhou 永州 city proper of Hunan 湖南 province. In this area there are three towering mounds from west to east. In 1984 an intermediate earthen shaft tomb was excavated between the first and the second mounds. In view of the tomb occupant's name revealed on his seal (Liu Jiang) and the clay impression of seal "your subject Chang," this tomb was identified as belong to a noble man of Lingling 零陵 prefecture of the middle Western Han period. In 1992 Hunan Provincial Institute of Antiquity and Archaeology and the local archaeological team conducted an excavation of the northern tomb under the third mound and numbered it 92YM1.

According to the scale of this tomb and the inscriptions on the unearthed lacquer ware archaeologists conclude that the occupant of this tomb is the third Quanling Marquis 泉陵侯 Liu Qing of Quanling 泉陵 state. In 1995 the provincial institute and Zhishan 芝山 District CPAM made a joint excavation of the southern tomb under the same mound and numbered it 95YM2 (Fig. 1).

II. Structure of the Tomb

Tomb M2 is an earthen shaft

tomb with a wooden chamber, whose sealed earth can no longer be seen now. A map drawn in 1987 reveals the mound as about 5 m high. The plan of this tomb is shaped like the Chinese character "甲." The tomb passage faces westwards with a direction angle of 279 degrees. Due to damage done to the stepped passage, its length is unknown now. The end near the tomb chamber is a slope of 4 degrees. The upper section is 0.62 m from the bottom with a width of 4.3 m. Inside the rectangular tomb pit is an outer chamber made up of double-layered wooden beams, which may be divided into a front and a back chambers. The pit is 10.3 m long from east to west and 9.2 m broad from north to south. The remaining depth is 2.06 m. The fill of the pit-charcoal dust and white livid clay is pounded layer by layer (Fig. 2).

The outer wooden chamber is 8.52 m long and

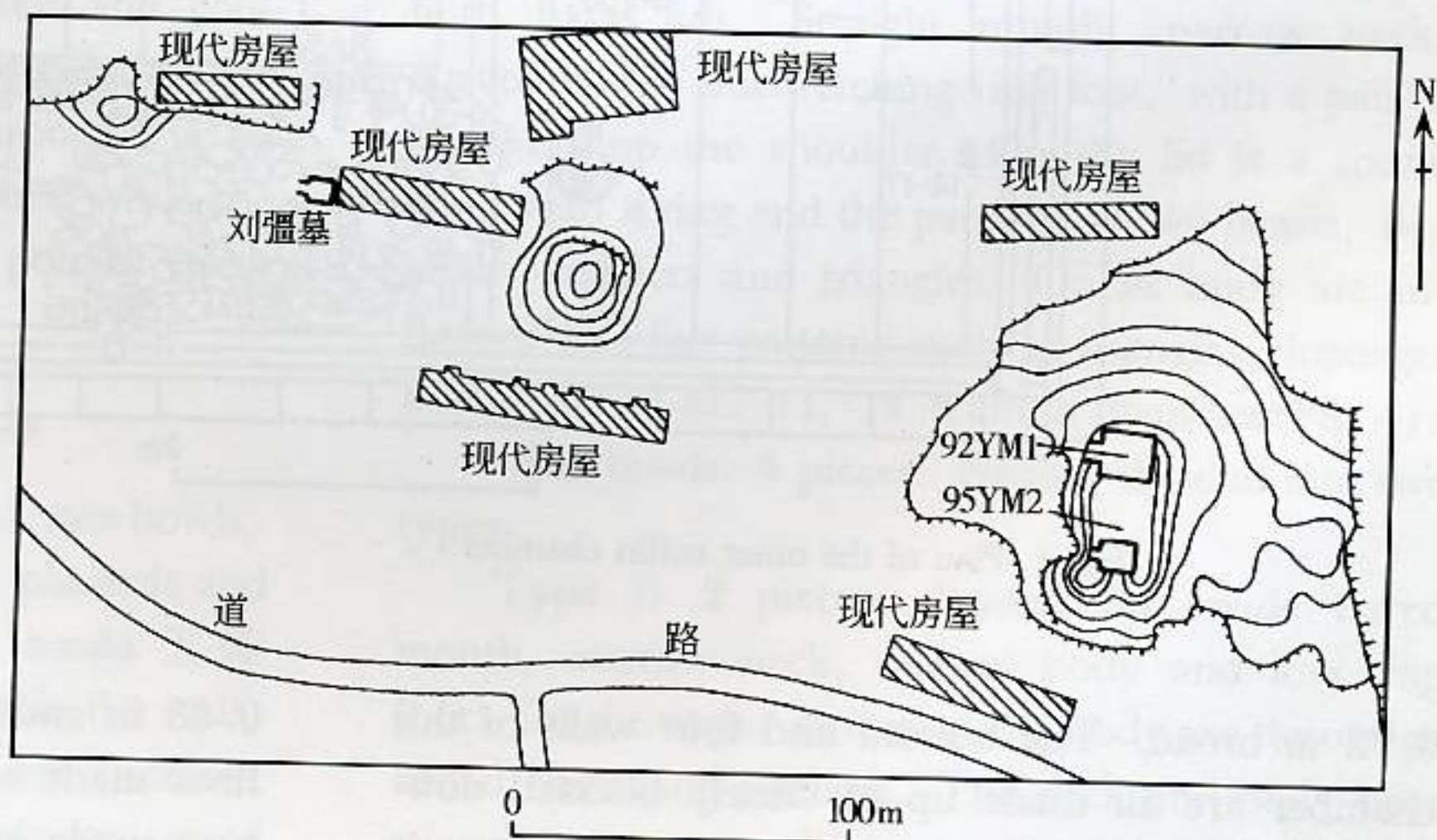


Fig. 1 Earth barrel of the Han Tomb at Yaoziling and its plan

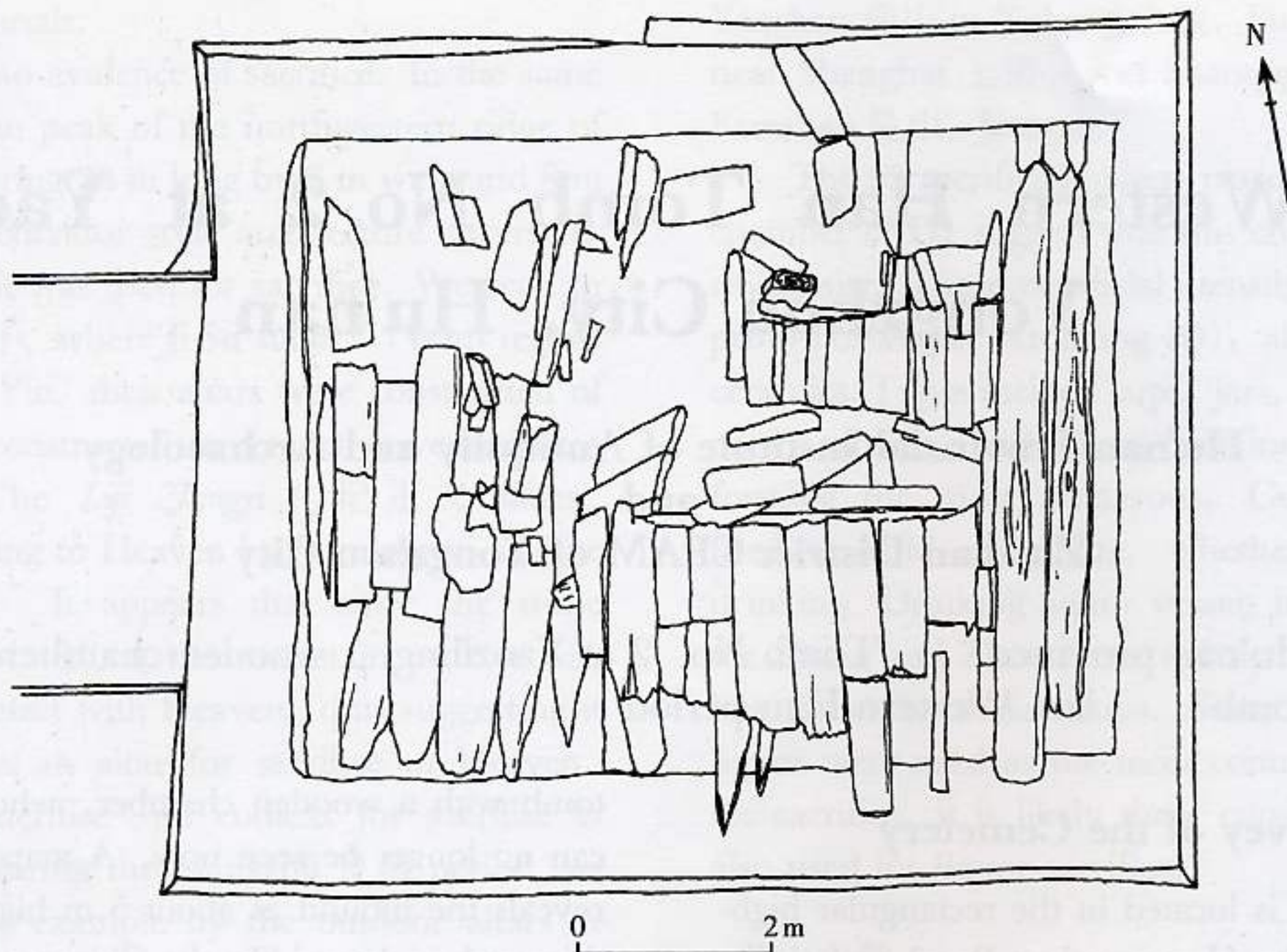


Fig. 2 Plan of burial pit and wooden covers of the outer coffin

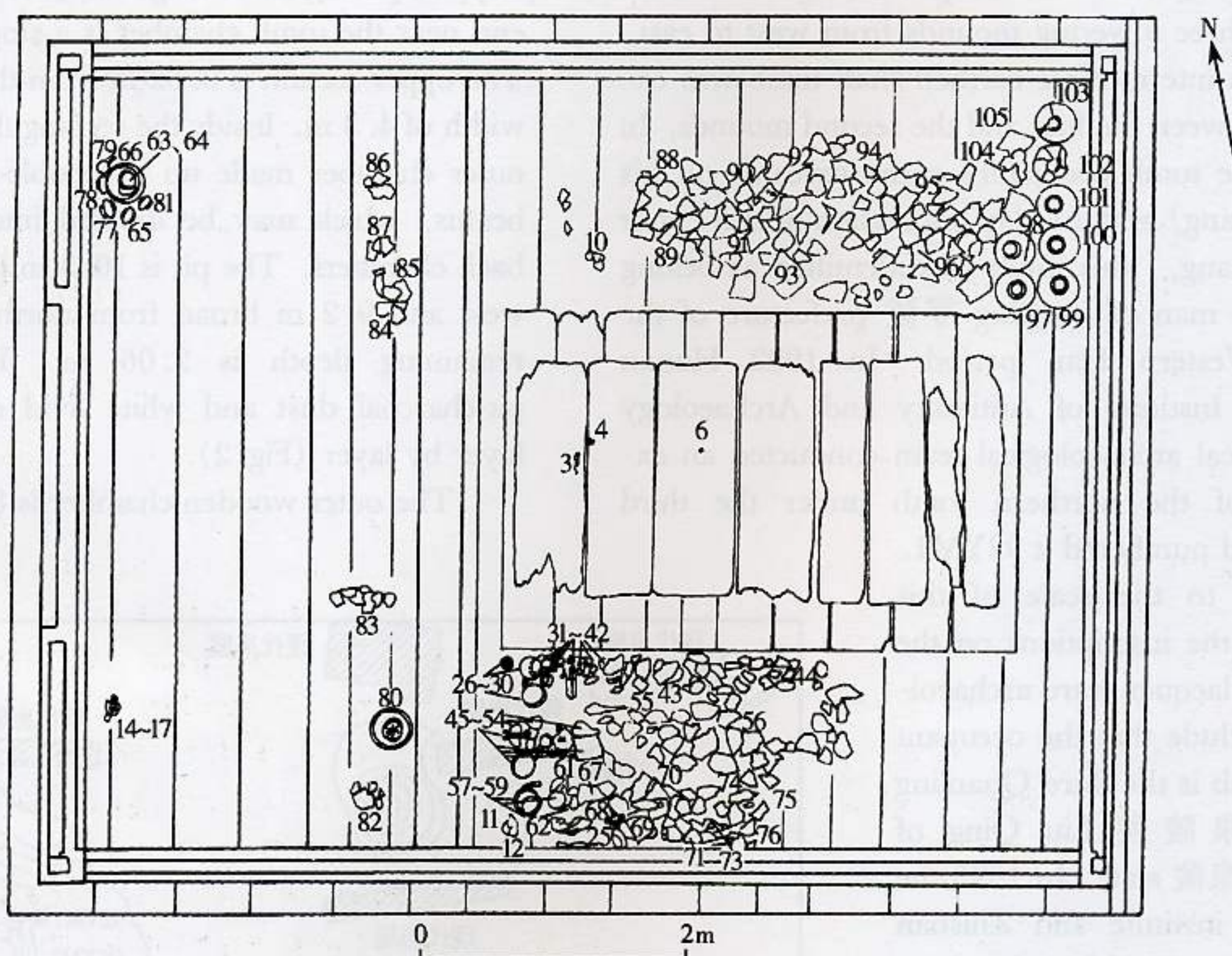


Fig. 3 Plan of the outer coffin chamber

6.72 m broad. The bottom and four walls of this chamber are all made up of closely buckled double-layered wooden beams. The wooden beam is oblong in cross section with a breadth of 0.44 —

0.68 m and a thickness of about 0.26 m. On the floor made of double-layered wooden beam are the base made on four grooved wooden beams. About 130 wooden beams formed the double-layered four

walls of nearly 0.5 m thickness. As for techniques employed in the making of this chamber, butt chisels, half-shouldered tenons and the dragon-and-phoenix tenons are all adopted. The vertical beams at the four corners are used to interlink the tenons for the purpose of fixing them. Due to weathering, the outer wooden chamber is merely more than 1 m high. In the northern section of the front chamber, the back room holding the coffins and the northern storeroom, the wooden beams on the roof are fragmentary and disorderly with traces showing the cutting of sharp edges. Based on these facts, this tomb must have been robbed.

0.3-m-broad wooden beams and partition boards divide the outer wooden chamber into front and back chambers. The lacquer on the surface of the front chamber is uneven; from its northwestern corner are unearthed lacquer plates, winged cups, *zhi*-goblets and *zun*-cups while from the southeastern corner is retrieved an bronze sandalwood burner with patterns of Buddhist warriors and phoenixes. The middle section of the back chamber is the place holding the coffin. The four walls of the inner wooden chamber are all collapsed and the floor, supported by four small wooden beams, is made up of 10 lined wooden beams 2.5 m long and 0.38 to 0.5 m wide. On the floor of the inner chamber are eight 1.75-m-long short wooden beams, which ought to have served as the packing of the coffin. The outer coffin is coated with red lacquer and 2.84 m long; now only partly remains. Inside it there must have been an inner coffin. The two sides of the inner coffin are two storage rooms. The southern storage room is 1.5 m wide. The front section holds bronze pieces, coins, lacquered vessels and containers and the middle and rear sections only contain pottery items. The northern storage room is a bit wider; the front section has been robbed while the middle and rear sections are full of pottery items (Fig. 3).

III. Unearthed Artifacts

1. Bronze. 23 pieces of *hu*-kettles, *wan*-bowls, *xunlu*-sandalwood burners, *pen*-basins, placards and mirrors and some *bailiang* 半两 and *wuzhu* 五铢 coins. The bronze pieces are rather thin in the wall, mostly are 1–2 mm. On some items are inscribed close and fine patterns of triangles, lozenges, grass leaves, beasts and birds.

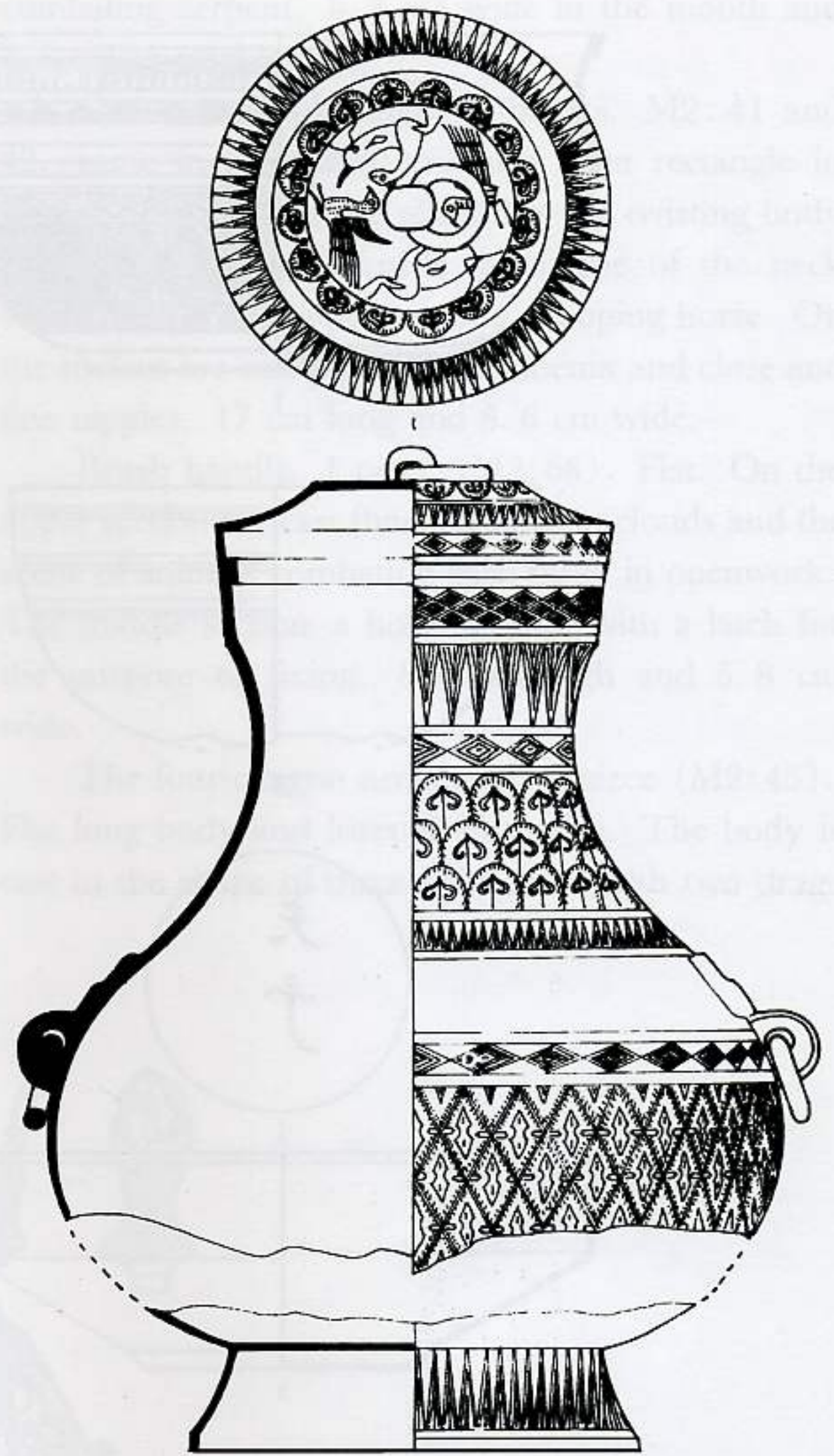


Fig. 4 Bronze *hu*-kettle (M2:11) (Scale: c. 1/4)

Hu-kettles. 3 pieces and all are fragmentary. M2:11 and 12. The two are similar in structure and both have lids. Straight mouth, narrow neck, curved body, outstretching ring foot, with a pair of knockers on the shoulder. On the lid is a round band with a ring and the patterns of two beasts, two birds, feathers and triangles. On its body are inscribed fine-line patterns such as triangles, lozenges and feathers. M2:11, 14.8 cm in diameter (Fig. 4).

Wan-bowls. 4 pieces. Further divided into two types.

Type I: 2 pieces. Round lip, wide flared mouth, narrow neck, curved body and low ring foot. On the upper section of the body are decorated broad bowstring patterns. The neck and body bear triangle patterns and lozenge patterns of fine lines. M2:28, 17.6 cm in diameter, 9.2 cm in height

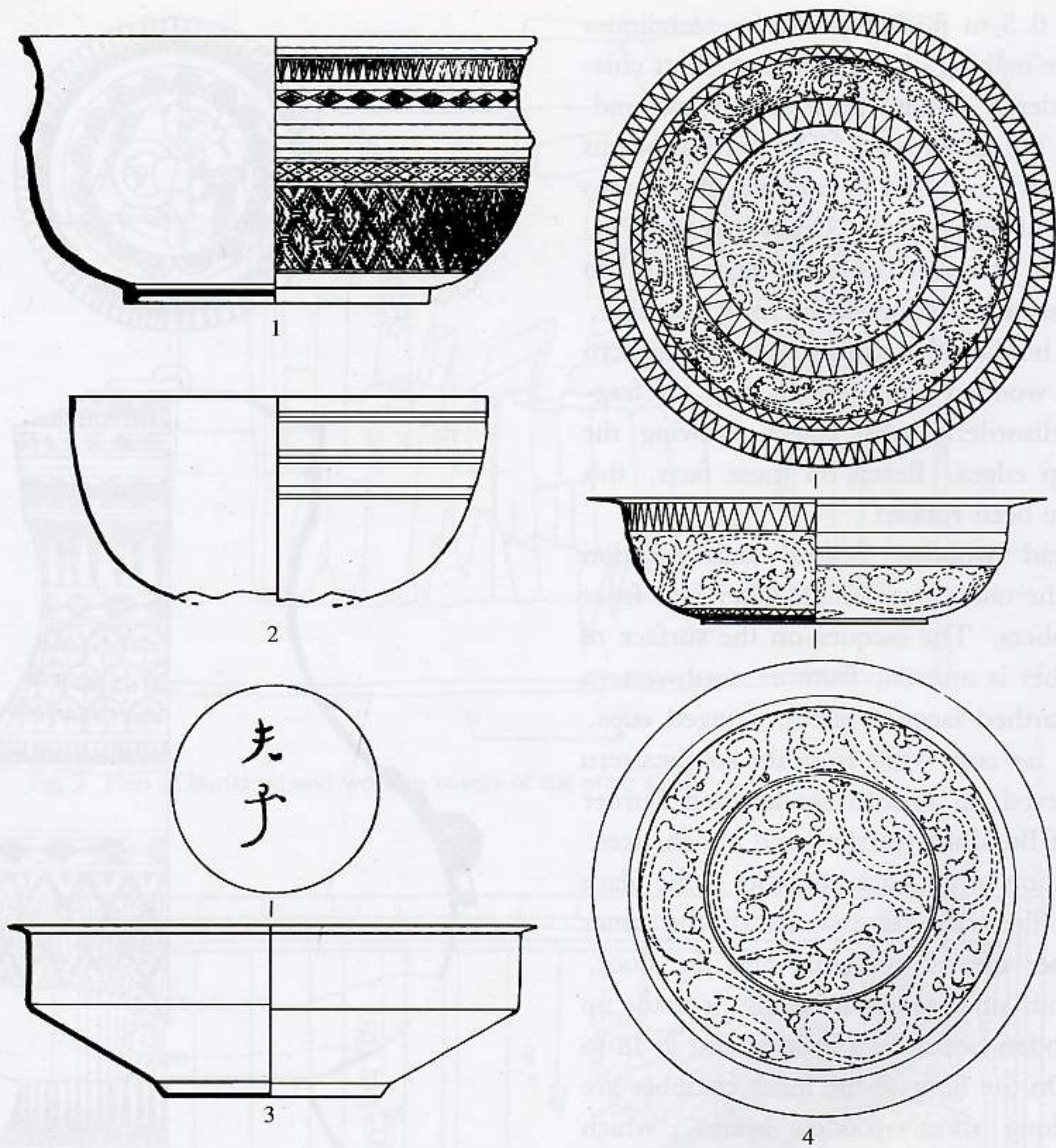


Fig. 5 Bronze objects from tomb M2

1. type I *wan*-bowl (M2:28) 2. type II *bo*-bowl (M2:39) 3. *pen*-basin (M2:57) 4. type II *wan*-bowl (M2:60) (Scales: 1, 2. c. 1/3; 3. c. 1/5; 4. c. 2/5)

(Fig. 5:1).

Type II: 2 pieces. Broad rim stretching outwards. Flared mouth, inclined curved body, low ring foot. Both the interior and exterior are coated gold. On the rim and under the body are inscribed triangular patterns in fine lines. On the surface and the inner side and the bottom are carved entwining vines and phoenix design patterns connected with short lines. M2:60, 15.6 cm in diameter and 4.3 cm in height (Fig. 5:4).

Pen-basins. 2 pieces. Same in form and structure. With angular rim and body, flat bottom, plain surface. M2:57, on the inner wall of the basin are two Chinese characters “夫子.” 28 cm in diameter and 8.8 cm in height (Fig. 5:3).

Bo-bowls. 2 pieces. Fragmentary. Curved

body, round bottom. May be further divided into two types. Type I: M2:35, angular rim, flared mouth, plain surface, 9.4 cm in diameter. Type II: M2:39, round lip, straight mouth. With 3 sets of line patterns, each set containing 3 circles, 14.3 cm in diameter (Fig. 5:2).

Xunlu-sandalwood burner. Two pieces. May be further divided into two types.

Type I: 1 piece (M2:80). A boshan burner with a supporting plate. The whole utensil consists of five parts. A bird stands on the top of the lid. On the surface of the lid are overlapping mountains with running animals on them. Drooping body, the handle is an *akimbo*. On the bottom are four hollowed-out imaginary animals called *bixie* in Chinese. The burner body erects on a round stand inside the

plate. One solid stick penetrates the plate bottom and the burner body. The whole body is covered with carved cloud patterns and animal patterns in fine lines while triangular patterns and diamond patterns decorate the rim. The total height is 28.6 cm and the plate diameter 29.2 cm (Fig. 6).

Type II: 1 piece (M2:37). The lid is shaped like a hill, on which are carved birds' wings, feathers and animal heads in fine lines. Oval-shaped body, slightly bulging body, flat bottom. Carved animals and birds' wings and feathers cover the whole body. On one side of the burner is a knob connected with the lid. At the bottom three sharp claws tightly snatching a long serpent with raised head and tail twisted in the shape of "8." The body of the serpent constitutes the pedestal while the four feet, head and tail form the six supporting pillars. The whole burner forms a cubic pattern of birds

combating serpent, 6.3 cm wide in the mouth and 7.9 cm in total height.

Ornamental placards. 2 blocks. M2:41 and 42, same in form and structure. Flat rectangle in shape. The head of the placard is the twisting body of the dragon while inside the frame of the neck section is cast in the pattern of a galloping horse. On the surface are cast patterns of phoenix and close and fine nipples, 17 cm long and 5.6 cm wide.

Brush handle. 1 piece (M2:68). Flat. On the upper section are cast flying dragon in clouds and the scene of animals combating each other in openwork. The middle section is hollowed-out with a latch for the purpose of fixing, 8.6 cm high and 5.8 cm wide.

The four-dragon ornament. 1 piece (M2:45). Flat long body and lozenge in profile. The body is cast in the shape of three-hole chain with two drag-

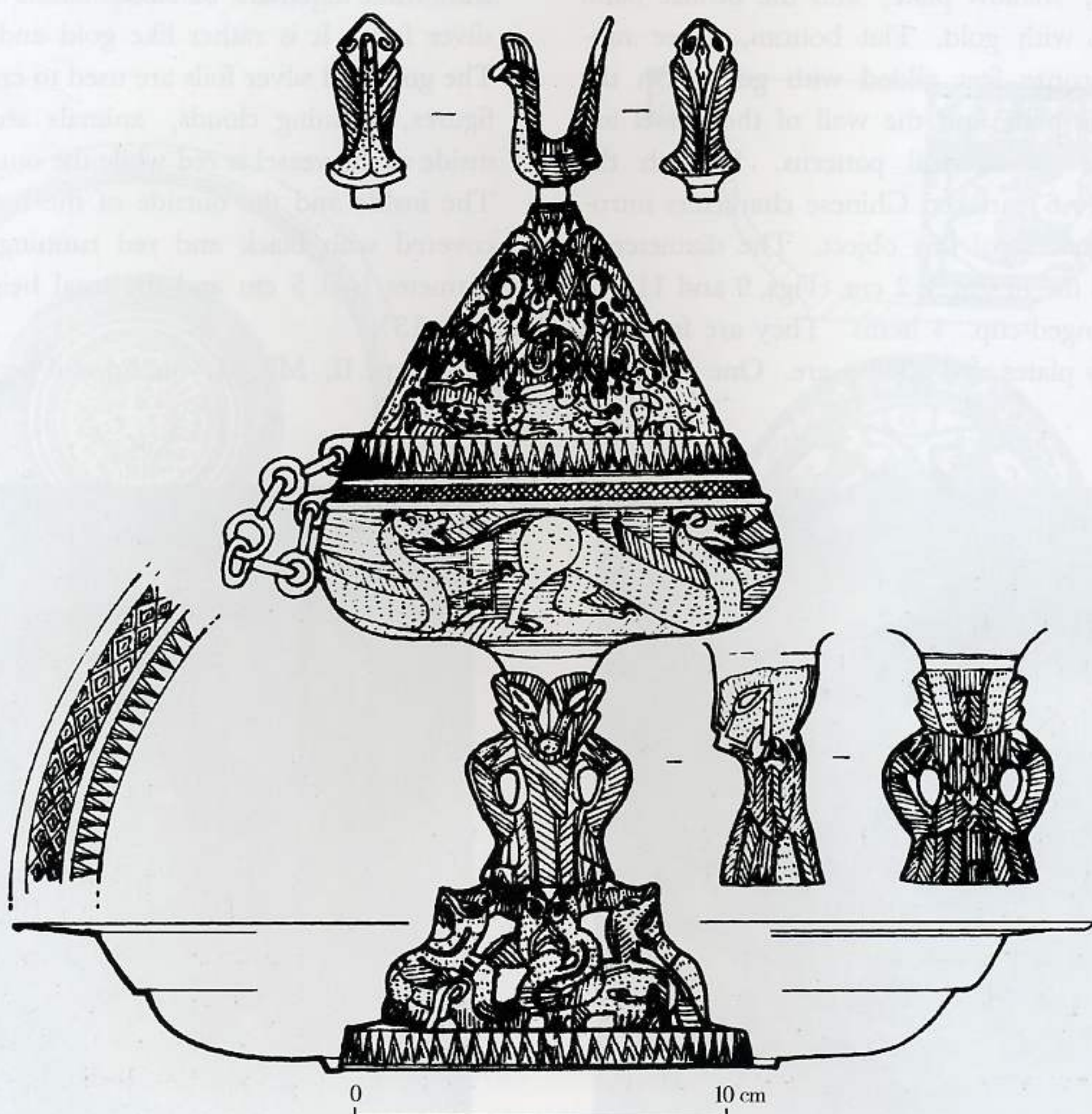


Fig. 6 Type I bronze *xunlu*-sandalwood burner (M2:80)

ons glaring at each other at the two ends. 20.5 cm long, 5.5 cm wide.

Bronze mirror. 2 pieces. M2: 32, *Zhaoming* mirror with running curves. A knob in the form of half a globe with 8-character inscription “内清明以昭光夫日,” 9.6 cm in diameter (Fig. 7). M2: 49, a mirror with design of four nipples and four poisonous serpents and bird design filling in the gaps, 13.2 cm in diameter (Fig. 8).

2. Lacquer ware. The items include *pan*-plates, *erbei*-winged-cups, *zhi*-goblets, *zun*-cups and *he*-boxes. Some are of wooden body while the rest are mingled with ramie fiber. The inside of the lacquer ware is mostly red while the outside is black; the background is coated black while the foreground is red. On six objects are pricked inscriptions of 371 Chinese characters, plus 2 characters in red, there are 373 Chinese characters inscribed altogether.

Pan-plate. 1 object (M2: 66). Also called *xuan*-plate. The body is mingled with ramie fiber. Flat angular edge, shallow plate, and the bronze band being coated with gold. Flat bottom, three nipple-shaped bronze feet gilded with gold. On the bottom of the plate and the wall of the vessel are pricked silver geometrical patterns. Beneath the outer edge are 63 pricked Chinese characters introducing the making of this object. The diameter is 21.3 cm and the height 3.2 cm (Figs. 9 and 11).

Erbei-winged-cup. 4 items. They are from the same place as plates and goblets are. One is not at-

tainable while the 3 obtained are same in form and structure. Wooden body, oval-shaped, with double bronze bands gilded with gold. The inside is coated with red paint while the outer surface is black in background and red-painted in the foreground. Outside the edge and beneath the ears are running cirrus clouds while the body are design of four pairs of phoenixes. The long mouth diameter is 17.1 cm while the height is 3.2 cm. On the outer surface of the edge at bottom are pricked inscriptions, which are of the same depth and very distinct in strokes and reveal consummate skill (Figs. 10 and 12).

Zhi-goblet. 2 pieces. Obtained from the same lacquer plate. Further divided into two types.

Type I, M2: 63. The body is mingled with ramie fiber. Curved lid with a bronze band in the shape of persimmon calyx. The one circular of gold and silver foils came off while being excavated. The several circulars of silver lines all developed ridges. The vessel is shaped like a straight barrel, covered with three circulars of silver bands and gold and silver foils. It is rather like gold and silver inlaid. The gold and silver foils are used to create designs of figures, running clouds, animals and birds. The inside of the vessel is red while the outside is brown. The inside and the outside of the bottom are both covered with black and red running clouds. The diameter is 9.5 cm and the total height is 9.7 cm (Fig. 13).

Type II, M2: 64, the lid and bottom are made



Fig. 7 Bronze mirror (M2:32)



Fig. 8 Bronze mirror (M2:49)

of wood while the body is mingled with ramie fibers. The lid is solid and thick while the single-circular bronze band is coated with gold. On the lid is decorated with a circular of entwining vines and 18 pricked characters. The bronze bands on the body are gilded with gold while the body is decorated with entwining vines in red on the black background. On the outer bottom of the vessel are two Chinese characters “大官” and on the edge are pricked inscription introducing the making of this vessel. The diameter is 8.4 cm while the height is 9.2 cm.

Zun-cup. 2 items. Further divided into two types.

Type I, 1 piece (M2: 61). Fragmentary. The body is mingled with ramie fibers. On the top of the lid is a single-ring knob, the bronze band being coated with gold. On the lid are decorated two circulars of pricked short lines and diamond patterns; inside the circulars are 50 pricked Chinese characters. The body is shaped like a straight barrel and

red inside and brown outside. On the outer surface are pricked diamond and feather patterns in addition to pairs of bronze earrings. The lower section only partly remains, 9.2 cm in diameter.

Type II, 1 piece (M2: 79). The body is mingled with ramie fiber. Barrel-shaped, no lid. On the one side is a bronze earring-shaped handle; at bottom are three hoof-shaped feet. The inside is red while the outside is black. Plain surface, 11.8 cm in diameter and 9.2 cm in height.

Lacquer spinning spindle. 1 piece (M2: 47). Wooden body. The pointed rod in the front end is partly damaged, 6 wheels in the rear. The whole utensil is covered with yellow lacquer. On the rim of wheels is a circular of black lacquer each. The remaining length is 17.1 cm.

3. Pottery. 54 pieces, mainly *guan*-jars. Among the 48 pottery *guan*-jars, 43 pieces are sandy hard ware ones, mostly covered with trellis patterns



Fig. 9 Lacquer *pan*-plate (M2:66) (Scale: 1/4)



Fig. 10 Lacquer *erbei*-winged-cup (M2:77) (Scale: 1/2)

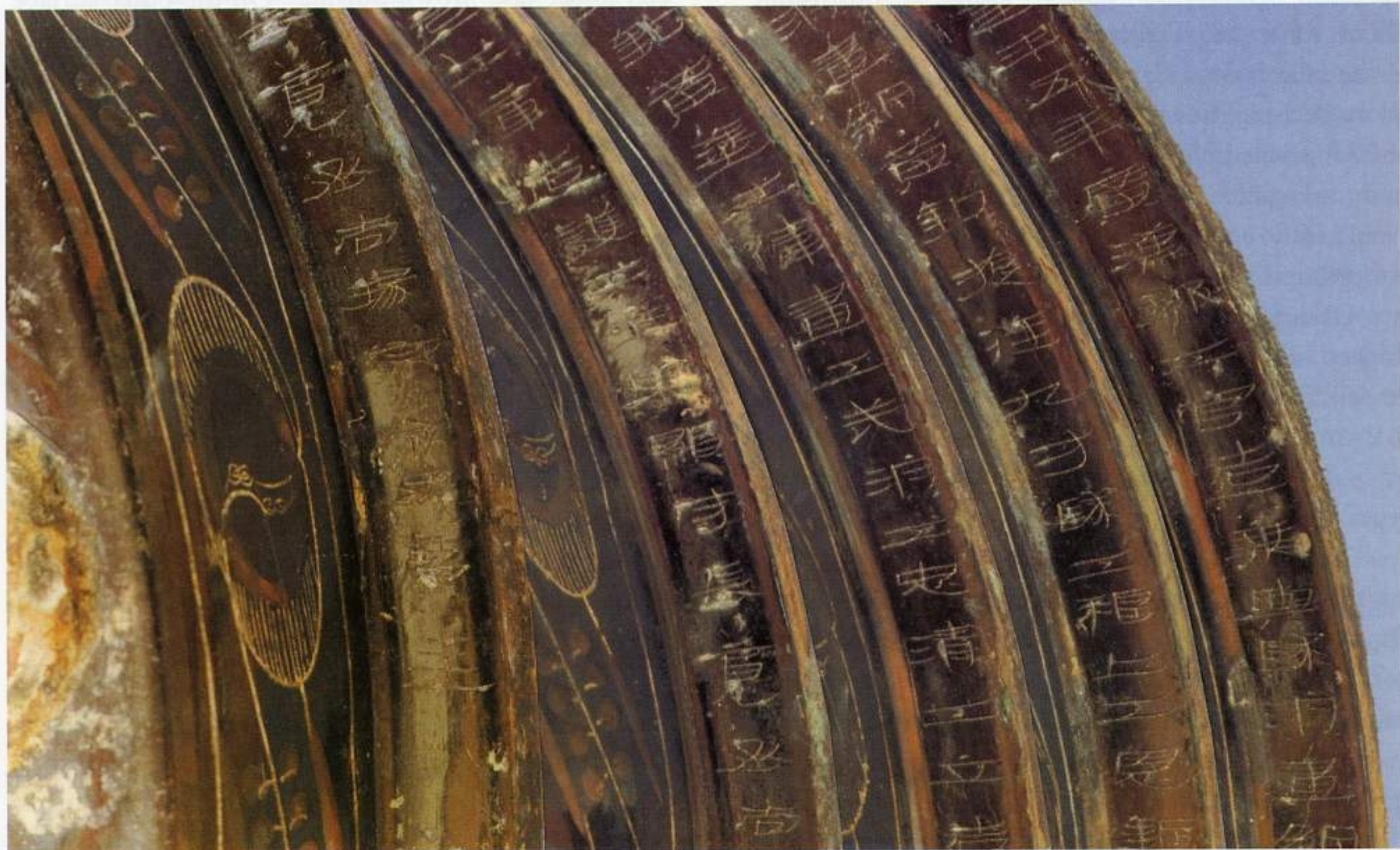


Fig. 11 Inscription on lacquer *pan*-plate (M2: 66)



Fig. 12 Inscription on the bottom of lacquer *erbei*-winged-cup (M2: 77)

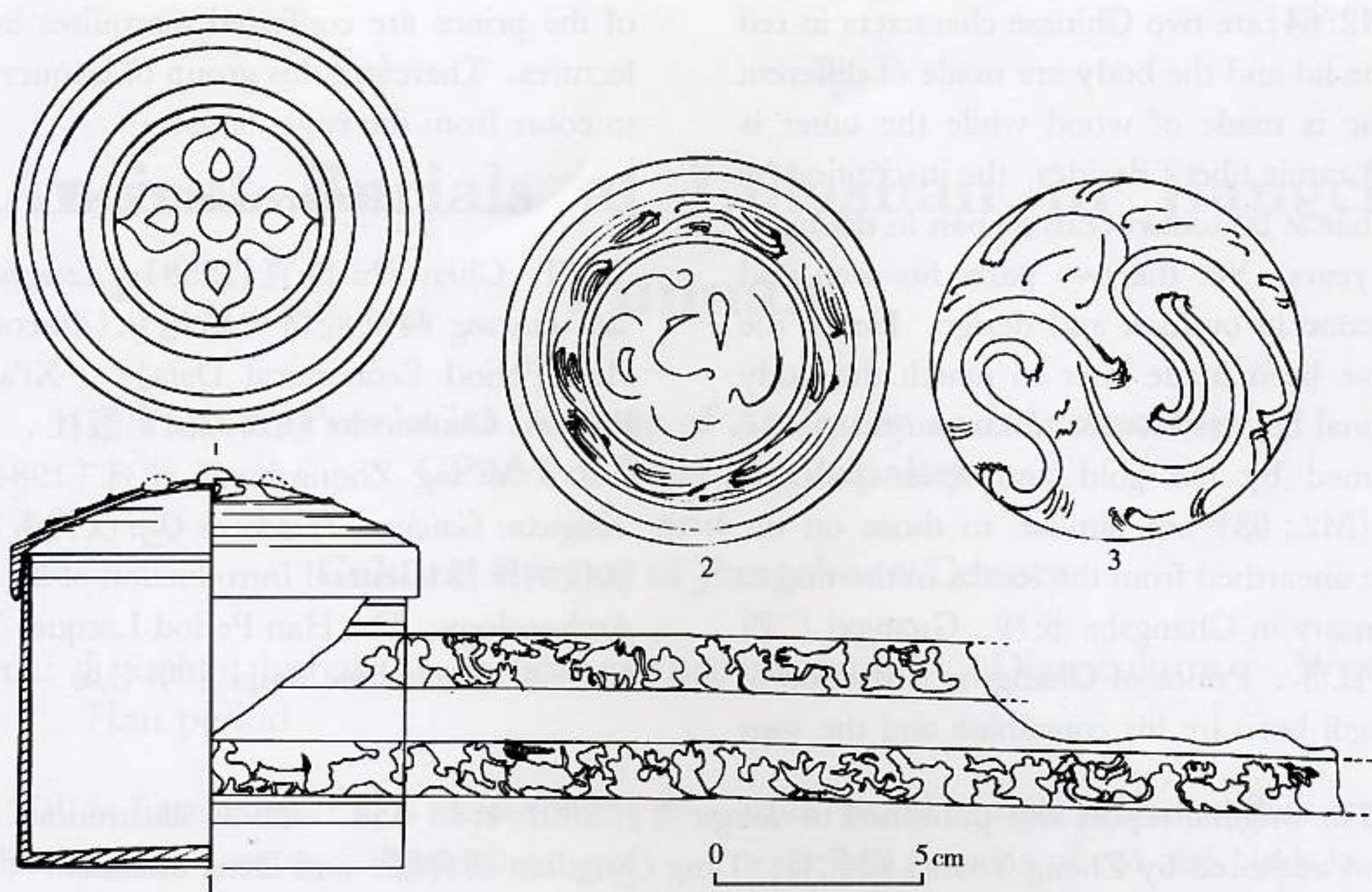


Fig. 13 Lacquer *zhi*-goblet (M2:63)

1. *zhi*-goblet 2. pattern on the exterior bottom 3. pattern on the interior bottom

and rhombic forms. Another 5 pieces are hard ware made of fine clay with comparatively smaller body. Some have ears on the shoulder or body or with slight green glaze on the surface. 2 *weng*-urns, large in structure, gray pottery made of clay with patted trellis patterns and jabbed small square geometrical patterns. From the front section of the northern storeroom are retrieved soft pottery ware made of fine clay with black coating. They are one piece of *ding*-tripod, *fang*-square wine vessel and *hu*-kettle respectively, symbolic ritual pottery vessels. 1 piece of pottery spindle whorl, shuttle-shaped in profile.

Other unearthed objects include gold tortoises, strings of gold ornaments, strings of glass beads and jade *bi*-discs. There are also the remaining Chinese medicinal herbs, plants and kernel.

IV. Conclusion

Tomb M2 adjoins tomb M1 with only a distance of 19.2 m. The passages of both tombs face the same direction. The making technique of the coffins and wooden chambers are the same. Only the chamber of tomb M2 is smaller in scale than that of tomb M1. Unearthed objects from tomb M2 such as pottery spindle whorl, lacquer powder box, lacquer spindle and strings of gold ornaments and glass beads indicate the occupant is a female, the wife of

Marquis Qing Liu Qing, the third ruler of the Quanling state. The special structure of the coffin and wooden chambers are high-standard burial utensils for marquises of the Han dynasty.

The date in the inscriptions unearthed from M2 is later than those of M1. This indicates that the occupant of M2 was buried later than that of M1. The coins retrieved from M2 include *bazhu banliang* 八铢半两 and various types of *wuzhu* 五铢 coins, yet *quanhuo* 泉货 coins are absent. Hence it is inferred that the burial time of the occupant ought to have taken place before the fourth ruler of this state ascended — “Marquis Gu” succeeded. Wang Mang usurped the throne of the Han dynasty and this state came to its end.” In other words, the burial date is the last days of the Western Han dynasty.

Quite a number of precious artifacts are discovered from the tomb. Among the bronze there are bowls with carved flowers on the interior and exterior, the dragon-headed placard with the design of galloping horse and the big and small sandalwood burners. Among the lacquer ware pricked inscriptions are especially noteworthy. On *erbei*-winged-cup (M2:65) are 72 characters. In the inscription the lacquer plate is described as 9- *cui* long while the actual length is 21.3 cm. Hence we may infer that one *chi* in the Han dynasty equals 23.66 cm. On

zhi-goblet (M2: 64) are two Chinese characters in red “大官.” The lid and the body are made of different material: one is made of wood while the other is mingled with ramie fiber. Besides, the inscription on the lid and that at bottom reveals a span in dating as long as 10 years. Yet the two parts fits well and appear the same in outlook and design. Hence the lid must have been made later to match the body (whose original lid was lost for unknown reasons). Designs formed by the gold and silver foils on *zhi*-goblet (M2: 63) are similar to those on the lacquer ware unearthed from the tombs of the mid to late Han dynasty in Changsha 长沙, Guangxi 广西 and Jiangsu 江苏. Prince of Changsha is the son of Emperor Jingdi born by his concubine and the sons

Note: The original report was published in *Kaogu* 考古 2001. 4: 43–54, with 24 illustrations and 3 pages of plates, and authored by Zheng Yuanri 郑元日, Tang Qingdiao 唐青雕, and Deng Shaonian 邓少年. The English version is abridged in Chinese by the first author, translated by Wang Shufang 王淑芳, and revised by Su Nü 苏女.

of the prince are conferred marquises in some prefectures. Therefore this group of lacquer ware ought to come from the royal house.

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