

Identity and Status at an Eastern Zhou Cemetery of the Luhun Rong

By John Mahoney

Chinese and Japanese Department

Vassar College

May 5th, 2022

Introduction

In June of 2013, the Luoyang Archaeological Research office received an anonymous tip that looters had been raiding tombs in Xuyang township, Yichuan county. Upon prompt intervention and examination, it was discovered that the looters had stumbled upon tombs dating to the Eastern Zhou period (770-221 BCE). When preliminary salvage excavations and surveys led by Luoyang archaeological office researcher Wu Yehuan began in November that same year, researchers discovered at least 200 tombs in the region.¹ As excavations continued through 2016, archaeologists discovered archaeological sites dating to the Western Zhou period (1045-770 BCE), the Han dynasty, and, most prominently, the Spring and Autumn period (770-481 BCE).² While excavating the Spring and Autumn period tombs, researchers discovered typical artifacts for the period: bronze and earthenware goods as well as pits filled with horses and chariots, which often accompany high status tombs from this period. However, within the chariot and horse pits, and even within some tombs, the researchers found something that they had not been expecting: large numbers of goat, sheep, and cow bones.³ While these are rarely, if ever, found in Eastern Zhou period tombs in China, they are common in roughly contemporaneous tombs from Western China and Mongolia, both of which were outside the Zhou political and cultural sphere during the Eastern Zhou period.⁴ This discovery led the excavators to believe that they had found a cemetery belonging not to people who were culturally affiliated with the Zhou world (*Huaxia* people), but rather people

¹ Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Dongzhou Mudi Xiqu 2013-2015 Nian Fajue (河南伊川徐阳东周墓地西区 2013-2015 年发掘),” *Kaogu Xuebao*, no. 4 (2020), 547-548. “‘Luhun Rong Tanmi’ Shangji” (‘陆浑戎探秘’上集), CCTV, January 9th, 2018, YouTube, 7:22.

² Zhengzhou and Luoyang, 2013-2015 fajue, 547-548; Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi Dongqu 2015-2016 Nian Fajue Jianbao (河南伊川徐阳墓地东区 2015-2016 年发掘简报),” *Huaxia Kaogu*, no. 3 (2020): 23-24.

³ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue,” 548; Zhengzhou and Luoyang, 2015-2016 fajue, 28.

⁴ Xiaolong Wu, *Material Culture, Power, and Identity in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 84.

who had originated from outside the Zhou world, people the *Huaxia* would likely have seen as barbarians.⁵

The discovery of non-*Huaxia* burial tombs close to Luoyang, the Zhou capital during the Eastern Zhou period, while exciting, was not exactly surprising. Researchers had long suspected that they would find archaeological sites associated with non-*Huaxia* peoples in the Yichuan region. In Xi 22 of the *Zuozhuan*, an ancient narrative history of the Spring and Autumn period, the compilers of the text note that the states of Jin and Qin moved groups of Rong people to Yichuan in the year 638. Other sections of the *Zuozhuan* refer to groups, such as the Luhun Rong, who are believed to have lived in the general area that the tombs were found.⁶ Indeed, during the same excavations that uncovered the Spring and Autumn period tombs, archaeologists discovered the remains of the county seat of the Han dynasty Luhun county, which was presumably named for the Rong tribe that occupied the area.⁷ If these tombs are in fact the tombs of the Luhun Rong, as they seem to be, they will provide unprecedented insight into the lives of groups of non-*Huaxia* people who lived within the confines of Zhou society during the Eastern Zhou period. Especially when combined with written sources, these archaeological sources provide insight into how non-*Huaxia* groups created hybrid Rong-*Huaxia* identities that allowed them to survive and (at least temporarily) thrive in a world ruled by powerful, expansionist states that were culturally different from them.

The Eastern Zhou Period

⁵ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue,” 576-577.

⁶ Yan Hui (严辉), “Luhun zhi Rong Diming Diwang Tongkao (陆浑之戎地名地望通考),” *Luoyang Kaogu*, no. 3 (2015), 60-62.

⁷ Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi Chubu Yanjiu (河南伊川徐阳墓地初步研究),” *Qingtongqi yu Jinwen* 2, 430.

The Eastern Zhou period began in 770 BCE, when King Ping moved the Zhou court East from the Zhou homeland in Shaanxi province to the city of Chengzhou, modern day Luoyang.⁸ This move was necessitated by increasingly destructive invasions of Quan Rong peoples from the West, as well as internal division and decay within the Zhou feudal system itself. In the centuries that followed this move, called the Spring and Autumn period, the feudal states that had been historically established by the Zhou court to rule its eastern territories began to jockey among themselves for power, prestige, and land. Originally competing for the title of *Ba*, or hegemon, of the Zhou states, the Zhou communities eventually settled into an uneasy multistate system headed by the four main powers of Qin, Jin, Chu, and Qi, each located on a periphery of the Zhou world, who, with their own spheres of influence, balanced the other states out.⁹ In the year 481 BCE, the state of Jin began to be divided into three smaller states (Zhao, Han, and Wei), marking the transition to the second half of the Eastern Zhou, the Warring states period, which would end with the unification of China under Ying Zheng, later the first Qin emperor, in 221 BCE.

The Eastern Zhou period is important in Chinese history because it established social, political, and intellectual foundations of imperial China. During the Spring and Autumn period, China began a transformation from aristocratic, feudal kingdoms to centralized states possessing greater social mobility, from a manorial economy to a market economy, and began an intellectual flowering that would bloom into the hundred schools of the Warring States period.¹⁰ Most pertinent to this thesis, however, is the transformations that occurred during the Spring and Autumn period as regards to Chinese or *Huaxia* views of non-*Huaxia* peoples. During the Western Zhou period, China was home to highly fragmented, diverse

⁸ Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds, *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 303, 545.

⁹ Cho-yun Hsu, "The Spring and Autumn Period," in Loewe and Shaughnessy ed. *Cambridge History of China*, 551, 565-566.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 545.

ethnic groups, which were dispersed both at the edges of, and within, the Zhou world. However, as the Western Zhou period progressed into the Eastern Zhou, the interior of the Zhou world became increasingly homogenous and interconnected. The elite began to see themselves as forming a discrete identity of *Huaxia* people who were different from people who were not *Huaxia*.¹¹ At the same time, Zhou states began to expand outwards, increasingly coming into contact and conflict with people beyond the borders of the Zhou world.¹² By the Eastern Zhou period, non-Zhou peoples were given an increasingly binary choice between being entirely like the Zhou/*Huaxia*, or radically different.¹³ As such, the differentiation of *Huaxia* from non-*Huaxia* during the Eastern Zhou period was a thing in flux; a process that was becoming increasingly strict and significant, but that was not yet fully formed.

Historical texts from the Eastern Zhou period tell us eloquently about *Huaxia* views of non-*Huaxia* people. There is, first and foremost, a sense of difference; non-*Huaxia* peoples' have different diets, clothing, and customs than *Huaxia* peoples.¹⁴ Importantly, in the *Zuozhuan*, non-*Huaxia* peoples are associated with ritual impropriety; they wear their hair unbound and sacrifice improperly.¹⁵ During the Eastern Zhou period adherence to or ignorance of proper ritual behavior and social custom, as defined by Western Zhou ritual, was the defining line between *Huaxia* and other, and, in some schools of thought, between moral and immoral. The result of this is that non-*Huaxia* people, who did not adhere to proper ritual

¹¹ Lothar Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006), 164-167.

¹² *Ibid.*, 244.

¹³ Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 250-252.

¹⁴ Xiang 14.1b in *The Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan Reader: Selections from China's Earliest Narrative History*, tr. And ed. Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Lee, and David Schaberg (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 1008-1011.

¹⁵ Xi 22.4 in *The Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan Reader*, 353.

behavior, were seen as morally inferior and even as sub-human.¹⁶ Since non-*Huaxia* peoples were morally inferior, they were not protected by the same codes of conduct that *Huaxia* people were, and so could be conquered with relative impunity. This meant that Non-*Huaxia* peoples were particular appetizing targets for expansionist *Huaxia* states; rulers had a built-in justification to take and loot their lands, thus expanding the territory, power, and prestige of the state.¹⁷ That said, non-*Huaxia* peoples could also be valuable to the state in an unconquered, or semi-conquered, state. Not only were often warlike non-*Huaxia* peoples valuable military assets to *Huaxia* states, they could also develop marginal, frontier land into arable fields.¹⁸ The Luhun Rong are one of the semi-conquered, allied groups of non-*Huaxia* peoples.

There are clear benefits for *Huaxia* people to ally with, or subjugate, non-*Huaxia* peoples. However, beyond a simple assumption of obliging force, it is difficult to understand what non-*Huaxia* peoples got out of allying with *Huaxia* people, or even what that experience was like. The historical texts that are available to us are all written from the perspective of *Huaxia* peoples and carry their negative biases against non-*Huaxia* peoples. Additionally, the *Zuozhuan* and other contemporaneous texts all focus on recounting the histories of *Huaxia* states; any description of non-*Huaxia* peoples is incidental. As such, it can be hard to understand the complexity of non-*Huaxia* lives, agency, and history based solely on these texts, even when those texts are read against the grain. Archaeological discoveries like those at Xuyang promise to provide deeper nuance to our understandings of non-*Huaxia* peoples; they provide insight into how these people saw themselves and constructed their own power and identity. When archaeological sources are combined with historical sources, they can

¹⁶ Yuri Pines, “Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of the ‘Sino-Barbarian’ Dichotomy,” in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden, Boston : Brill, 2005), 64-67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

¹⁸ Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 123

illuminate each other and provide deeper insight into the past than either source could separately. The goal of this thesis will be to analyze the Xuyang tombs and then examine the findings of that analysis alongside a historical text in order to better understand how the Luhun Rong navigated, acquiesced to, and resisted pressure to conform to *Huaxia* ritual and cultural norms.

Methodology and Structure of this Thesis

The possibility of and method for combining archaeological and written sources to study ancient China has been a subject of some debate. In historical and contemporary Chinese archaeology, there has been a tendency to privilege written sources over archaeological sources. This has meant that Chinese archaeologists have been primarily concerned with using archaeological sources to identify specific locations, persons, or ethnic groups described in written texts. This can relegate archaeological sources to mere supporters of what are essentially text-based analyses, thus losing out on insights that might contradict, or provide information outside of, traditional written narratives.¹⁹ In his book *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence*, German American archaeologist Lothar Von Falkenhausen attempts a corrective to this trend by interpreting archaeological sources in isolation from written sources. Von Falkenhausen sees analyzing written and archaeological sources together as premature; to his mind both written sources and archaeological sources are too fragmentary and incomplete at this point to combine them.²⁰

While Von Falkenhausen's book adds greatly to methodological discussions about ancient China, I ultimately disagree with his reluctance to interpret archaeological and written sources together. Instead, I follow more closely Xiaolong Wu's methods in analyzing the

¹⁹ Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 13-14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 14

history of the Zhongshan state in his book *Material Culture, Power, and Identity in Ancient China*. Wu describes textual and archaeological sources as both complex “images” that embody the products of complex social processes. Archaeological and textual sources should not be analyzed in isolation from each other, but at the same time, they should not be held to necessarily occupy the same realms of knowledge. The messiness of the relationship between archaeological and textual sources does not mean that one source is correct and the other is wrong, rather these seeming contradictions should be embraced, because when put together they provide a multifaceted image of the past.²¹

With these methodological insights in mind, my analysis will proceed in this manner. I will begin in the second chapter with an overview of the excavations and analysis that has been done on the Xuyang tombs to this date, and how the current state of excavations restricts my findings. In my third chapter, I analyze the bronze and ceramic vessels found so far at Xuyang. Bronze ritual vessels were items of the utmost ritual and political importance in Eastern Zhou China, and so their discovery and apparent use at Xuyang indicates that the Luhun Rong elite engaged, to some degree, in Zhou rituals. Ceramic vessels, however, tell a different story. Since some of these ceramic vessels, including some used for ritual purposes, are specifically Rong style ceramic vessels, they indicate that the lower classes may have retained more, or different aspects of Rong rituals. In my fourth chapter, I turn to the animal sacrifices discovered at Xuyang. These sacrifices, with their connection to both ritual and subsistence lifeways, are an intriguing insight into how some Rong customs continued for some people and ceased for others. Finally, in my conclusion I attempt to tie my findings together by analyzing them in the light of a significant passage from the *Zuozhuan*.

²¹ Wu, *Culture, Power, and Identity*, 21-22.

An Introduction to the Xuyang Cemetery, the Luhun Rong, and Issues of Ethnicity

On a cool fall day, a community gathers on the high tableland above the river to bury one of their own. They lay them down in a wooden coffin, nested within a larger wooden coffin, that sits at the bottom of a pit deeper than a person is tall. They carefully place clay pots and cauldrons in the space between the two coffins, and then begin to slowly fill in tomb with earth. After they have filled in the bottom third of the pit, just enough to cover the tops of the coffins, they stop. That night, they have a funeral feast. They sacrifice a horse, a cow, and a few goats. After the ritual of sacrifice, they strip the animals' bones of their flesh and cook the meat in great three-legged, two handled, earthenware pots over a fire. As the community eats the meat, they laugh and weep, talking late into the night. The next day, they take the animal skulls and hooves that were set aside the previous night after being stripped of their flesh, and they carefully place them in the bottom of the pit. Then, they fill the rest of the grave with earth, and when it is full, they return to their fields and herds, leaving behind the grave but not the memory of a beloved neighbor.

What I have just described is an imagined funeral for a tomb that was excavated at the Xuyang cemetery.²² This exercise of description is useful for several reasons. First, it reminds us that these tombs are places where people were buried. It is easy to dehumanize the people who are found in archaeological excavations, to simply see them as “remains.” But they were once people, who lived and died, ate and drank, laughed and wept. They almost certainly had people who grieved their deaths. By trying to paint this picture, I hope to evoke a greater degree of empathy with the people buried in these tombs. Second, this description can help us remember what does not leave archaeological remains. There was a whole world of ritual,

²² See tomb 16M8, Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi Dongqu 2015-2016 Nian Fajue Jianbao (河南伊川徐阳墓地东区 2015-2016 年发掘简报),” *Huaxia Kaogu*, no. 3 (2020), 29.

meaning, and emotion surrounding these burials that leaves no physical trace but was as important as the physical objects whose remains have been found. In the description, the only things we can be certain of is that the individual in the tomb was buried with animal sacrifices and a selection of earthenware pots inside a double coffin. Besides this and that the animal sacrifices were buried in a layer of dirt above the other grave goods, the rest of the description is educated guesswork. While I will try to explore the worlds of ritual, meaning, and ideas that accompanied these burials, I must first begin with what we indisputably know about Xuyang: what physical artifacts people were buried with.

The Xuyang Cemetery

The tombs spread over a large area surrounding the village of Xuyang in Henan province. As of winter 2021, excavators have discovered 400 tombs, 15 horse and chariot pits, and numerous smaller sites, of which 150 tombs, four horse and chariot pits, and nine sacrificial deposits have been excavated.²³ The cemetery spreads along the high tablelands on either side of the Shunyang river as it flows Southeast. 132 of the tombs date to the Eastern Zhou period, six date to the Western Zhou period, and an undisclosed amount date to the Song dynasty.²⁴ Alongside the tombs and chariot and horse pits, excavators also discovered sacrificial pits and kilns from the Eastern Zhou period as well as a settlement that has been dated to the Han dynasty.²⁵

²³ Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), and Ma Zhanshan (马占山), “Henan Xuyang Mudi you Xian Luhun Rong Wangji Damu: Jinyibu Zhengshi ‘Rongren Neiqian Yiluo’ (河南徐阳墓地又现陆浑戎王级大墓: 进一步证实‘戎人内迁伊洛’),” *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, no. 8 (February 2021), 1.

²⁴ Wu and Ma, “Xuyang Mudi you xian Luhun Rong,” 1; Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi de Zushu (河南伊川徐阳墓地的族属),” *Kaogu Qianyan*, 26.

²⁵ Wu and Ma, “Xuyang Mudi you xian Luhun Rong,” 1; Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Dongzhou Mudi Xiqu 2013-2015 Nian Fajue (河南伊川徐阳东周墓地西区 2013-2015 年发掘),” *Kaogu Xuebao*, no. 4 (2020), 547.

During the excavations, Wu Yehuan and his team of archaeologists used the Shunyang river to divide the excavated area into three sections. They dubbed the southern bank of the Shunyang river the western section. They then named the area directly across the river from the western section the central section, and the area to the east of that the eastern section.²⁶ The western section was excavated between 2013 and 2015, and the eastern section was excavated between 2015 and 2016.²⁷ While excavations continue to this day, I have only been able to obtain detailed reports on the excavations conducted between 2013 and 2016. While the discoveries made between 2016 and 2020 are referenced in several preliminary reports and articles written by researchers involved in the excavations, they do not provide site maps or detailed lists of each type of artifact found in each tomb.²⁸ As such, my discussion of the tombs will be largely focused on those excavated between 2013 and 2016, with data brought in from the other excavations when it is available.

However, this means that I only have detailed information about 19 of the 150 excavated tombs. This small sample is further complicated by the extensive looting that had occurred in three of the 19 tombs that were reported in detail. On top of this, the researchers did not fully report their sampling and excavating regimen, so it is unclear if the researchers excavated systematically, randomly, or with a focus on larger tombs, as has often been the case in Chinese archaeology.²⁹ Indeed, the report of the excavations between 2013 and 2015 privileges large tombs, reporting all the large tombs excavated while only reporting half of the excavated smaller tombs, indicating that a similar bias may have guided the excavations at Xuyang.

²⁶ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2015-2016 fajue,” 23-24.

²⁷ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2015-2016 fajue”; Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue.”

²⁸ See Wu and Ma, “Xuyang Mudi you xian Luhun Rong”; Wu, “Xuyang Mudi de Zushu”; “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi 2020 Niandu Kaogu Fajue (河南伊川徐阳墓地 2020 年度考古发掘),” CNKI (2020).

²⁹ Lothar Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006), 77.

I state all these reservations not with the intent of disparaging the archaeologists involved, who have struggled through difficult excavations to make significant finds available to the public, but rather to lay clear the limitations on any conclusions made on the basis of the sources currently available to the public. Any statistical analyses based on these findings cannot be considered as representative of the entire cemetery. Furthermore, any analysis of the artifacts available currently should restrict itself primarily to discussing the presence, rather than the absence, of certain artifacts and burial customs in the tombs. It is always possible that “absent” objects were looted from the tombs or can be found in tombs that have yet to be excavated. That said, fully excavated and reported, un-looted tombs can be treated as complete samples themselves, and statistical and artifact analyses can be used within that individual tomb to draw conclusions about that individual tomb.

On a more general level, it is also pertinent at this time to discuss the general methodological approach that I will take to investigate the Xuyang cemetery. Tombs are not direct representations of an individual’s life or their place in society. Rather, tombs are loci of complex rituals, and as such, any statement about the individual in the tomb is filtered through religious and ritual practice. As such, tombs are depictions of an ideal society, and tell us more about how an individual, and their descendants, wished to represent themselves than how they actually lived their lives.³⁰

The 2013-2015 Excavations

Now that a basic informational and methodological foundation has been laid, we can begin to discuss the tombs and what was found in them. Between 2013 and 2015, archaeologists excavated a total of 18 Eastern Zhou tombs and one Chariot and Horse pit dating to the same period.³¹ The tombs seem to represent a cross section of society. Using

³⁰ Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 74-77.

³¹ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue,” 548.

tomb size as a simple analog to the status of the person in the tomb, the fact that the burial chambers range in size from 1.54 to 37.41 meters squared indicates that individuals with a wide range of social statuses were buried at Xuyang. The variation in assemblages seems to uphold this assessment; while the larger tombs often contained double coffins and large panoplies of bronze, precious stone, and gold objects, some of the smaller tombs contained single coffins and grave goods consisting primarily of ceramics with some bronze objects included. The cemetery also includes both men and women; in fact, according to the most recent reports, there are more women than men buried in the Eastern Zhou cemetery.³²

The two most prominent finds during these excavations were a large, wealthy tomb dubbed “M2,” and a chariot and horse pit containing evidence of burial customs associated with *Rong* peoples from the North and Northwest of China. In the M2 tomb, the occupant, a man who died around the age of 35, was found within two nested coffins. In between the inner and outer coffins, excavators discovered a wealth of grave goods. The person in the tomb was buried with five bronze *ding* and four *dou* as well as sets of bronze bells and stone chimes. In Eastern Zhou society, this specific combination of ritual vessels and bells indicated that the individual in a tomb had the rank of *zi* or *hou*, roughly equivalent to a viscount or marquis, respectively.³³ This ritually correct bronze vessel assemblage indicates that the person in the tomb and or those who buried them fully participated in *Huaxia* rituals and was part of the Zhou cultural and political sphere. This image, however, is complicated by the artifacts found in a chariot and horse pit in the same cemetery. The chariot and horse pit, which is associated with tomb M6 not M2, was found to contain not only the expected

³² Wu, “Xuyang Mudi de Zushu,” 27.

³³ For a dramatic and engaging retelling of these early excavations see the CCTV documentary. See Zhengzhou and Luoyang, 2013-2015 fajue, 548-549; Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Faxian Dongzhou Luhun Rong Guizu Mudi (河南伊川徐阳发现东周陆浑戎贵族墓地),” *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, no. 8 (April 2016), 2; Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 51.

horses and chariots, but also three horse skulls, eight cow skulls, 21 *yang*³⁴ skulls, and an unspecified number of animals hooves.³⁵ This burial custom of burying cow, *yang*, and horse skulls in tombs is never seen in Zhou tombs, but it is common in burials from Mongolia and Western China.³⁶

2015-2016 Excavations

In 2015 and 2016, researchers conducted excavations in the Eastern section, on the North bank of the Shunyang river. During the excavations, archaeologists unearthed six tombs dating to the Western Zhou period as well as 14 tombs and two chariot and horse pits dating to the Eastern Zhou period.³⁷ The six western Zhou tombs were dated, based on the similarities of their layout and grave good assemblages, to be of the same age as other tombs from the Luoyang area that are known to date to the western Zhou period. The Western Zhou period tombs found at the Xuyang cemetery tend to be smaller than the later tombs; they only range from 1.05 to 2.75 square meters in size. In addition, the grave good assemblages tend to be less rich; they primarily contain ceramic vessels and cowrie shells, with only one tomb containing bronze objects, which are limited to two *ge* and four bronze bosses.³⁸

The western Zhou tombs at the Xuyang cemetery seem to belong to a different sort of society than the one present at Xuyang in the Eastern Zhou period. There is a greater variety in grave good assemblages and tomb size among the Eastern Zhou tombs than there is among the Western Zhou tombs, implying that there was less wealth, and possibly less social stratification, during the Western Zhou period. Additionally, while the eastern Zhou tombs reflect a degree of cultural hybridity that unlike any other tombs from the neighboring region,

³⁴ The Chinese word *Yang* can refer to both sheep and goats.

³⁵ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue,” 550.

³⁶ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, 2013-2015 fajue, 577; Xiaolong Wu, *Material Culture, Power, and Identity in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 84.

³⁷ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2015-2016 fajue,” 23-24.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25-28.

the western Zhou tombs closely resemble other Luoyang region tombs from the western Zhou period.³⁹ Indeed, there seems to be a degree of discontinuity between the western and eastern Zhou tombs at Xuyang. One of the eastern Zhou tombs actually cuts through a portion of a western Zhou tomb, implying that the people who dug the tomb during the eastern Zhou period were not aware of, or did not care about, where people had been buried during the western Zhou period.⁴⁰ This desecration seems to indicate that the people who lived in the Xuyang area during the Eastern Zhou period had tenuous, and possibly no, connections with the people who had lived there during the Western Zhou.

The excavators also continued to discover eastern Zhou period tombs. A number of the eastern Zhou period tombs discovered during these seasons were totally or partially looted, making some of the data collected incomplete. Like the eastern Zhou tombs in the western section, those in the eastern section range widely in size, from 6.65 to 30.528 square meters in size. Additionally, they contain a variety of grave goods, with an emphasis on bronze weapons, bronze vessels, and ceramic vessels.⁴¹ The custom of animal sacrifice also took place in these tombs. Not only did excavators continue to find livestock skulls in the chariot and horse pits, but they also found animal skulls buried within individual tombs, a practice that has direct analogs in Western and Northern China during the same period.⁴² Additionally, excavators also observed similarities between ceramics found in these tombs and ceramics found in eastern Zhou tombs from Ningxia and Inner Mongolia.⁴³

2016-2020 Excavations

³⁹ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2015-2016 fajue,” 38-40.

⁴⁰ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2015-2016 fajue,” 25.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴² Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2015-2016 fajue,” 30-31; Xiaolong Wu, “Female and Male Status Displayed at the Maoqinggou Cemetery,” in Kathryn M. Linduff and Yan Sun, eds., *Gender and Chinese Archaeology* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press), 205.

⁴³ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2015-2016 fajue,” 39.

Since 2016, excavators have continued to discover tombs and chariot and horse pits dating to the eastern Zhou period. These discoveries have not been fully reported, but according to preliminary reports written by excavators, they have continued to find tombs that contain assemblages that emphasize ceramic vessels, bronze vessels, and bronze weapons. Of particular interest are a recently discovered large tomb, 17AM15, and a series of sacrificial and chariot and horse pits. The large tomb 17AM15 is interesting because it contains the remains of six individuals, indicating that it contained human sacrifices.⁴⁴ This is the first and, so far, only, instance of human sacrifice discovered at the Xuyang cemetery. Additionally, the recently discovered sacrificial and horse and chariot pits have expanded our understanding of animal sacrifice at the Xuyang cemetery. Both kinds of sacrificial pits, those containing horse, chariot, and livestock remains as well as those only containing livestock remains, have been discovered in association with medium and small tombs. Additionally, within some tombs, livestock remains have been found within ceramic vessels buried in the tomb. This seems to indicate that the practice of animal sacrifice was more widespread than earlier excavations would have suggested. Previously, animal remains had only been found in chariot and horse pits and a very small number of tombs. Additionally, there have been new kinds of animals discovered associated with the tombs; pigs and dogs in addition to horses, cows, and *yang*.⁴⁵

The Xuyang Cemetery, the Luhun Rong, and Issues of Ethnicity

Ever since archaeologists discovered the animal sacrifices in the Chariot and Horse pits at the Xuyang cemetery, researchers have been eager to categorize the people buried in the cemetery as belonging to a specific ethnicity. Based on historical and archaeological evidence, researchers have argued that the people buried at Xuyang were members of the

⁴⁴ Wu and Ma, “Xuyang Mudi you xian Luhun Rong,” 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Yun lineage of Rong, also known as the Luhun Rong. The Luhun Rong are mentioned in multiple sections of the *Zuozhuan*. According to the *Zuozhuan*, the Luhun Rong were originally from a place called Luhun in the region of Guazhou, which seems to have been somewhere in modern day Gansu province. When the Eastern Zhou state of Jin was expanding on its western frontier, it came into conflict with the Luhun Rong and their neighbors, eventually forcing them out of their homeland around 638 BCE. These various Rong lineages then sought help from the state of Jin, which settled them along its southern border. The Luhun Rong survived there for around a hundred years, until they were destroyed by the state of Jin for allying with Jin's enemy the state of Chu in 525 BCE.⁴⁶ The evidence for a connection between the Luhun Rong and the Xuyang cemetery is manifold. Once relocated to Jin's southern border, the Luhun Rong are recorded as living in Yichuan, an area that matches up with the area in which the Xuyang cemetery is located. Furthermore, the Luhun Rong's origins in modern day Gansu province and later migration to central China corresponds well with the Western Chinese burial customs and the discontinuity between the Western and Eastern Zhou periods observed in the archaeological record at Xuyang.⁴⁷

This research is important; it identifies that the people buried at Xuyang were likely the people who were historically recorded as the Luhun Rong. While I agree that the Xuyang cemetery was likely a burial place of the Luhun Rong, I would like to take a slightly different tack on the issue of ethnicity as regards these tombs than previous researchers have. Ethnicity is not an objective category; it is a social structure that undergoes constant negotiation and change. As such, physical objects cannot have a one-to-one connection to a specific ethnicity. For example, bronze vessels that are considered characteristic of *Huaxia* tombs are

⁴⁶ See Xi 22.4, Xiang 14.1, and Zhao 17.4 in *The Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan Reader: Selections from China's Earliest Narrative History*, tr. and ed. Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Lee, and David Schaberg (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 353, 1008-1011, 1546-1547.

⁴⁷ Wu, "Xuyang Mudi de Zushu," 30-32; Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2015-2016 fajue," 38-39.

sometimes found outside of *Huaxia* areas. As such, it is perhaps more productive to consider archaeological finds not as proving that a group belonged to a specific ethnicity but rather as playing a role in constructing a cultural and ethnic identity specific to a time, person, and place. On top of this, we cannot assume that modern categories of ethnicity are truly applicable to the past, and so it is important to understand how individuals used objects (and texts) to construct their identities within the context of how broader narratives of similarity and difference were outlined in their social context.⁴⁸ In the context of the Xuyang cemetery, this means trying to understand how social and historical context may have influenced the assemblages of objects seen in the tombs, and what those assemblages meant for the people who put them together. What kinds of identities were the people in the Xuyang tombs constructing for themselves? How do those identities differ from those from other cemeteries? Or from other tombs within the Xuyang cemetery? And why did they construct their identities in these ways? To try to provide some answers to these questions, I will discuss a selection of objects found within the tombs, and study how they interact with issues of ethnicity and class.

⁴⁸ This discussion of ethnicity is drawn from Wu, *Culture, Power, and Identity*, 18-21.

Ritual Vessels, Cultural Adaptation, and Status at Xuyang Cemetery

When archaeologists began excavating the largest tombs at the Xuyang cemetery, they were excited when splendid bronze artifacts emerged from the earth. As Wu Yehuan, leader of the excavations, recalled in a 2018 CCTV documentary, the discovery of such objects meant that the people in tombs could not have been commoners or even low-level aristocracy. The presence of bells and ritual vessels indicated that the people in the tombs were associated with a palace, a center of economic and political power.⁴⁹ During the 2013 to 2015 seasons, archaeologists discovered two large tombs, each with five bronze *ding* as well as a variety of other bronze vessels and, in one tomb, two sets of bronze bells.⁵⁰ Other, smaller tombs discovered during the same season as well as the 2015 and 2016 seasons also contained a variety of different kinds of bronze vessels, although in smaller numbers.⁵¹

During the Shang and Zhou periods, bronze, an alloy of tin and copper, was not just used for making tools and weapons, it was also a prestigious substance that was central to rituals that legitimized political power.⁵² Bronze was most closely linked to political rituals in the form of bronze vessels and bronze bells. During the Spring and Autumn period, the usage of bronze vessels in ritual contexts communicated the user's connections to the former Zhou political order thereby reaffirming their own political authority.⁵³ Similarly, bronze bells were central to the music that accompanied ancestral sacrifices and ritual banquets, both important

⁴⁹ “‘Luhun Rong Tanmi’ Shangji” (‘陆浑戎探秘’上集), CCTV, January 9th, 2018, YouTube, 19:12-19:35.

⁵⁰ Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Dongzhou Mudi Xiqu 2013-2015 Nian Fajue (河南伊川徐阳东周墓地西区 2013-2015 年发掘),” *Kaogu Xuebao*, no. 4 (2020), 549-551.

⁵¹ Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Dongzhou Mudi Xiqu 2013-2015 Nian Fajue (河南伊川徐阳东周墓地西区 2013-2015 年发掘),” *Kaogu Xuebao*, no. 4 (2020); Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue.”

⁵² Department of Asian Art. “Shang and Zhou Dynasties: The Bronze Age of China,” *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2004, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shzh/hd_shzh.htm.

⁵³ Jenny So, *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1995), 11.

venues for demonstrating political power and legitimacy.⁵⁴ Indeed, bronze vessels and bells were so closely linked to political power that rules were made to specify how many bronze vessels and bells could be buried with a person depending on their rank. Only the highest-ranking court officials could be buried with nine *ding*, eight *gui* or *dou*, and multiple sets of bronze bells and chimes.⁵⁵

With this in mind, we can see why the discovery of bronze vessels in large numbers at the Xuyang cemetery was exciting; it indicated that the people buried in the tombs had commanded political prestige and power during their lifetimes. Furthermore, when the panoply of bronze vessels is juxtaposed with other artifacts that indicate a non-*Huaxia* origin to the people of the tombs, it raises the possibility of studying how the elite of Luhun Rong combined *Huaxia* and non-*Huaxia* symbols to articulate their identities and their power. The following chapter will attempt to interrogate and better understand the possible usage and origin of the bronze vessels, as well as comparing them to ceramic vessels also found at the Xuyang cemetery.

Limitations to Bronze Vessel Analysis

My analysis of bronze vessels at the Xuyang cemetery is limited by the fact that the Xuyang cemetery has not been fully excavated or reported. Many of these limitations are mirrored in my analysis of other artifacts discussed in my thesis, and so were discussed in the introductory chapters. Others, however, are unique to bronze vessels and so will be discussed here.

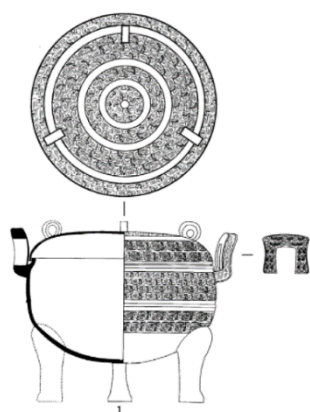
⁵⁴ Lothar Von Falkenhausen and Thomas D. Rossing, “Acoustical and Musical Studies on the Sackler Bells,” in Jenny So, *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1995), 434.

⁵⁵ ⁵⁵ Lothar Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006), 51.

All the limitations on my analysis of bronze vessels hinge around the simple fact that I do not have access to the actual, physical vessels. In conducting analysis of bronze vessels, the small details and idiosyncrasies within decorative patterns are often used to draw connections between individual vessels, which will sometimes allow a researcher to, for example, argue that two vessels share a regional, or even specific, origin.⁵⁶ While I have attempted this in certain circumstances, the reproductions that I have access to are not always clear enough to allow for the smallest scale pattern analysis. Additionally, physical and chemical analysis of bronze vessels can often reveal important information. For example, the quality of bronze casting in an individual vessel may indicate if it was intended for repeated ritual use or only to be buried in a tomb.⁵⁷ If the bronzes from the Xuyang cemetery have been subjected to this type of analysis, the results have yet to be published. With these limitations in mind, I will continue with caution while attempting to make pertinent and illuminating analyses when possible.

Bronze Vessels Discovered at Xuyang

In the excavation reports so far published, a total of 44 bronze vessels and 14 bronze bells have been reported as having been excavated. Most of those artifacts have come from the large M6 and M2 tombs discovered in the western section of the cemetery. The M6 tomb



contained 14 bronze vessels while the M2 tomb contained 16 bronze vessels and 13 bronze bells.⁵⁸ Given that these tombs are also the largest tombs discovered, this indicates that the presence of bronze vessels and bells tended to be associated

Figure 1: M2:27 ding found at Xuyang. Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 566.

with status. This tracks well with

⁵⁶ So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 11-13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 13-16.

⁵⁸ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 2015-2016

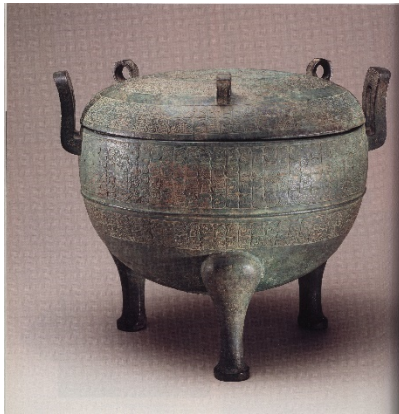


Figure 2: S1987.296 ding. So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 136.

the role of bronze vessels and bells in *Huaxia* society, where, as previously stated, they were important political symbols. Indeed, the bronze assemblages in the M2 tomb corresponds to the assemblage of bronzes that Zhou ritual prescribed be buried with people with the status of viscounts or marquises.⁵⁹ Together, this information suggests that the

Luhun Rong elite command prestige and power, and that

they, to an extent, adopted the Zhou rituals associated with such bronze vessels. However, besides this fairly broad analysis, we can also look more closely at the individual bronze vessels, and so possibly gain a more detailed understanding of what they meant to the people who were buried with them.

Based on preliminary visual analysis, the bronze vessels from Xuyang reflect the styles of bronze vessels that were common at that time in north-central China, that is, the broader geographic region around Xuyang. Take, for example, a *ding* cauldron excavated from the M2 tomb (M2: 27, figure 1). This *ding* is very similar in shape to a *ding* (accession number S1987.296, figure 2) in the Arthur M. Sackler Collection of the Smithsonian Institution. While both vessels adhere to the basic form of a *ding*, they share some unique stylistic elements. Namely, these are handles in the shape of squared off, inverted u's that rise at right angles from the body of the vessel, and flattened dome lids with three, slightly squared off, loops spaced at even intervals on the top of the lid.⁶⁰ This basic shape seems to

⁵⁹ Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), "Henan Yichuan Xuyang Faxian Dongzhou Luhun Rong Guizu Mudi (河南伊川徐阳发现东周陆浑戎贵族墓地)," *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, no. 8 (April 2016), 2; Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 51.

⁶⁰ So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 136-137, Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 566

have some connection to north-central China; the other *ding* from the Sackler collection that most resemble the S1987.296 *ding* are from the same broad geographic region.⁶¹

More striking than the structural similarities, however, are the similarities in decoration. The M2:27 *ding* is decorated with a repeated, raised dragon design in which a dragon is bent into the shape of a c with its tongue hanging out of its mouth and bisecting its body (figure 3).⁶² This design is very similar to the dragon design that can be seen on the



Figure 3 (above): rubbing of decoration on M2:27 *ding*. Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 563.

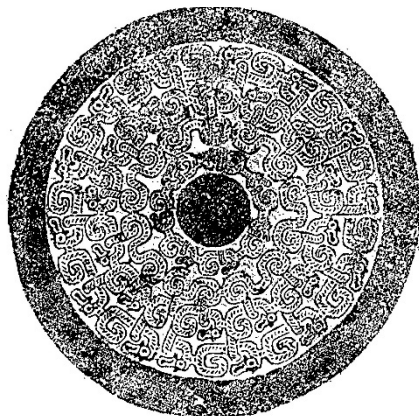


Figure 4: rubbing of the decoration on the center of the lid of the S1987.296 *ding*. So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 137.

S1987.296 *ding* (figure 4). The only differences are in small details, like the patterning on the dragons' bodies and the directions in which their heads face.⁶³ Additionally, the decoration on the S1987.296 *ding* is distributed in a similar way to the decoration on the M2:27 *ding*. On both vessels, the dragon designs are distributed on the body of the vessels in two concentric bands separated by raised ridges. Within those concentric bands, the top layer contains four rows of dragon designs, and the bottom band contains another two rows.⁶⁴ The type of dragon design that can be found on the S1987.296 *ding* is described as being fairly common, with many of the examples listed having been found in either in Henan, Shanxi, or Hebei, that is, in the broad geographic region of north central China.⁶⁵

⁶¹ So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 140-141.

⁶² Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 558, 563, 566.

⁶³ So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 138.

⁶⁴ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 566; Sackler 136.

⁶⁵ So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 136-139.



Figure 5: rubbing of the flared handle on the lid of the V-151 dou. So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 180.



Figure 6: detail from the lid of the M6: 38 dou. Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 567.

This is not the only connection that can be seen between the bronze vessels found at Xuyang and other bronze vessels from north-central China. Other *ding* that are similar in shape to both the M2:27 and S1987.296 *ding* have been discovered at Xuyang alongside other *ding* styles that are linked to north-central China.⁶⁶ Additionally, bronze *dou* have been discovered in the M6 tomb of the western section of the Xuyang cemetery that have similar decorations to *dou* in the Sackler collection from north central China. Three *dou* from the M6 tomb (M6:13, 38, and 43; figure 6) have a loose, serpentine decoration on the top part of their flared handles.⁶⁷ In many ways, this resembles the decoration on the top part of the flared handle found on a *dou* (accession number V-151) in the Sackler collection (figure 5). Intriguingly, this serpentine motif is rare; perhaps indicating a connection between these examples of *dou*.⁶⁸

While connecting the bronze vessel assemblage at Xuyang to other vessels from the broad geographic region of north central China may seem vague, I believe the similarities to be important. They indicate that, for some reason, the Luhun Rong elite had similar bronze vessels as their neighbors. This to say, they *adopted* the kinds of prestigious bronze vessels that their neighbors also used. This may indicate that the Luhun Rong obtained bronze

⁶⁶ See S1987.317, V-62, and S1987.319 in the Sackler Collection and Western Section M6: 8,9 and M12: 1 from the 2013-2015 Report. Sackler 131-133, 141, 158-161; Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 566.

⁶⁷ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 567.

⁶⁸ So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 178-181.

vessels from similar workshops as their neighbors did, or it may indicate that they obtained them from their neighbors. On a deeper level, the fact that the bronze vessel assemblage mimics those broadly from north central China, as opposed to Rong bronzeware styles, may indicate that the rulers of the Luhun Rong felt a pressure (or desire) to present their power in a way that was similar to their *Huaxia* neighbors. Did they want to make their state legible to their neighbors? Or did they maybe want to adopt some of their power? With our current data, the answers to these questions are elusive. However, by looking at one particular bronze object from the Xuyang cemetery, we can begin to unravel one question: where did they get their bronze vessels from?

The bronze object in question is a bronze *bozhong* bell found in the M2 tomb (M2:2,

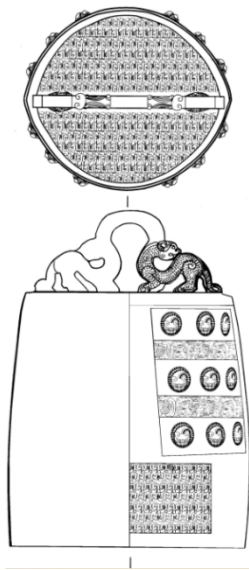


Figure 7: M2:2 bozhong bell. Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue,” 561.

figure 7). This bell is one of a set of four *bozhong* bells found in the



Figure 8: S1982.282 Bozhong bell from the Sackler collection. <https://asia.si.edu/object/S1987.282/>

tomb. The most intriguing part of this set is their handles, which come in the shape of two felines standing chest to chest with their heads turned backwards. The bodies of the felines are decorated with a dotted pattern.⁶⁹

These handles are interesting because they are very similar in both shape and decoration to the handles of three *bozhong* bells in the Sackler

collection (accession numbers S1987.282 (see figure 8), S2012.9.2202a-b, and S1987.287).

According to the online catalogue of U.S. National Museum of Asian Art, all three of these bells can be traced to the foundries at Houma in Shanxi, which were associated with the state

⁶⁹ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue,” 557-558, 561-562.

of Jin.⁷⁰ This matters because it places an object from the Xuyang cemetery in connection with other objects that seem to have been part of the political system of the state of Jin. This raises the possibility that this set of bells may have been obtained through the Luhun Rong's vassal relationship with the state of Jin. Indeed, historical records show precedents for the gifting of bronze bells and vessels as a political gesture. Xiang 11.5 of the *Zuozhuan* recounts that in 562 BCE, Lord Dao of Jin gifted his minister Wei Jiang a set of bronze bells in thanks for his meritorious service. Were these bells a similar gift? Did these bronze bells help the Luhun Rong express their legitimacy to the state of Jin? Did they show others the legitimacy and power they were given by the state of Jin? Once again, the more information that we gain, the more questions we encounter.

We should, however, avoid the assumption that these bronzes were only used or interpreted in ways that were equivalent to the ways they were in *Huaxia* states. After all, while the physical artifacts remain, we have little information about what rituals may have accompanied the use of these objects. While the accordance of the assemblages discovered with ritual assemblages elsewhere in the Eastern Zhou world does indicate that they were used in Zhou-style rituals, it is possible that *Huaxia* rituals and meanings co-existed with Rong rituals and meanings. Indeed, there are not only *Huaxia*, but also Rong precedents for the use of these kinds of ritual bronzes. Zhou-style bronze ritual vessels that date to the early Western Zhou period have been discovered at sites located outside of the Zhou cultural sphere, including Inner Mongolia, Gansu, and Shaanxi.⁷¹ At some of these sites,

⁷⁰ So, *Eastern Zhou Bronzes*, 369-370; “Bell (bo) with felines and dragons; probably from a set of four (S1987.287),” Collections, National Museum of Asian Art, accessed May 2nd, 2020, <https://asia.si.edu/object/S1987.287/>; “One of a set of bells (bo) with felines and dragons (S2012.9.2202a-b)” Collections, National Museum of Asian Art, accessed May 2nd, 2020, <https://asia.si.edu/object/S2012.9.2202a-b/>; “One of a set of bells (bo) with felines and dragons (S1987.282).” Collections, National Museum of Asian Art, accessed May 2nd, 2020. <https://asia.si.edu/object/S1987.282/>.

⁷¹ Gideon Shelach, *Prehistoric Societies on the Northern Frontiers of China: Archaeological Perspectives on Identity Formation and Economic Change during the First Millennium BCE* (London, Oakville: Equinox, 2009), 127; Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 246-248.

archaeologists have argued that the bronzes were adopted and adapted to local traditions since the discovered artifacts do not constitute a full Zhou ritual assemblage.⁷² As such, these bronze vessels may not only testify to an adoption of Zhou rituals, but also an expansion of pre-existing ritual use among Rong peoples.

Ceramic Vessel Analysis

Given their role in the performance of power and social status, these bronze vessels provide important insight into the lives of the political elite. However, by that same token, they provide limited information on the lifestyles and perceptions of the lower classes. These are the individuals who are buried in smaller tombs, usually with an assemblage of pottery vessels. Since we have spent considerable time examining the bronze vessel assemblages of the elite at Xuyang, it makes sense that we should also study the vessels found in the tombs of lower status people.

That said, we should be careful about assuming that bronze and ceramic vessels are interchangeable objects of analysis. Bronze vessels were not simply fancier versions of ceramic vessels, they were ritual objects with powerful political connotations. Ceramic vessels, on the other hand, were primarily daily use items. In many ways this should make us cautious about using them to discuss issues of identity, since some archaeologists have theorized that daily use objects are less likely to have been important to the performance of identity.⁷³ However, other archaeologists have argued that daily use objects can be significant for demonstrating identity, with the key deciding factor being what an individual society describes as being important for identity construction.⁷⁴

⁷² Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 246-248.

⁷³ Shelach, *Prehistoric Societies*, 78-79.

⁷⁴ Geoff Emberling, "Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives." *Journal of Archaeological Research* 5, no. 4 (1997): 311.

So, then, would pottery have been important for identity construction among the Luhun Rong? While I have yet to find direct, decisive information on whether pottery played a role in Rong identity construction, there is evidence that indicates that it was a factor. As will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, food consumption and methods subsistence seem to have played an important role in defining status among the Rong. Given its usage, pottery was likely semantically, and possibly ritually, connected to food preparation and consumption. Indeed, in some smaller tombs at Xuyang offerings of animal bones have been found in pottery vessels. A 2021 summary of excavations at Xuyang notes that in smaller tombs many single eared pots contain *yang* bones and many *li* pots contain pig bones.⁷⁵ Given the importance of animal sacrifices elsewhere at Xuyang and in Rong cultural areas, this combination of pottery and bones seems to indicate that there was some connection between pottery and identity. So, then, with this pairing of pottery and bones in mind, we can proceed with caution to draw some degree of information about the identity and values of these people from their earthenware vessels.

Ceramic Vessels at the Xuyang Cemetery

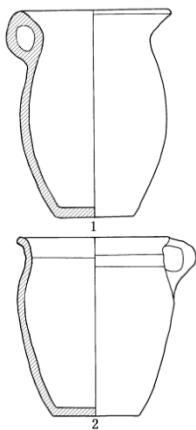


Figure 9: Single eared pots (from top to bottom: M7:2, M10:1) discovered at Xuyang cemetery. Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 560.

As previously mentioned, many of the medium and smaller size tombs at Xuyang contain pottery assemblages. Many of the styles of pottery discovered are not significantly different from either Huaxia or Rong models. For instance, the 2015 to 2016 report notes that in tomb 16M8 the ceramic vessels discovered bear strong

similarities to ceramic vessels discovered in a presumably Huaxia tomb in the nearby city of

⁷⁵ Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), and Ma Zhanshan (马占山), "Henan Xuyang Mudi you Xian Luhun Rong Wangji Damu: Jinyibu Zhengshi 'Rongren Neiqian Yiluo' (河南徐阳墓地又现陆浑戎王级大墓: 进一步证实'戎人内迁伊洛')," *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, no. 8 (February 2021), 2.

Luoyang.⁷⁶ Indeed, many of the ceramic vessel types found at Xuyang, like *li* and *dou*, are found in both Rong and *Huaxia* tombs.⁷⁷ As such, even as these vessels may have been influenced by local *Huaxia* models, they also likely stem from Rong precedents. However, at least one type of ceramic vessel found at Xuyang is definitively non-*Huaxia*: the asymmetric, single -eared pot (figure 9).

Single-eared pots have been found in smaller tombs in the Xuyang cemetery. These pots are marked by the fact that rather than having two looped handles on either side of the rim, they only have one looped handle on one side. This style of pot is markedly similar to pots discovered in tombs from the Eastern Zhou period in Ningxia and Inner Mongolia.⁷⁸ This style of pot, then, seems to constitute a direct link between the people at Xuyang and their ancestral culture. How are we to understand the use of this type of pot? While we should be cautious about using daily use pottery to talk about identity, it seems pertinent in this case given pottery's connection to food and this type of vessel's connection to animal sacrifices at the Xuyang cemetery. As previously mentioned, a 2021 summary of the excavation relates that many single ear pots in smaller tombs contained *yang* bones.⁷⁹ The combination of a very Rong style pot and a very Rong tradition of funerary sacrifice is intriguing. I am tempted to say that this may indicate some sort of adaptation of old traditions to new conditions in which it was less practical to sacrifice an entire *yang*. In this way, the continued use of this pot, especially in a sort of ritual context, could be seen as a statement of identity that draws on Rong rituals, beliefs, and food habits. However, I can't help but feel that this argument is a bit tenuous. In any case, the presence of single eared pots at Xuyang indicates that there was some degree of continuity in the production and use of ceramic vessels among the Luhun

⁷⁶ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 39.

⁷⁷ Shelach, *Prehistoric Societies*, 18-21, Von Falkenhausen, *Age of Confucius*, 85-89, 524.

⁷⁸ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2013-2015 fajue," 577; Zhengzhou and Luoyang, "2015-2016 fajue," 38-39.

⁷⁹ Wu and Ma, "Xuyang Mudi you xian Luhun Rong" 2021, 2.

Rong after they moved to Xuyang. Once again, while it is tempting, it is still slightly tenuous to argue that the presence of these pots, and especially their use in ritual circumstances, constitute a deliberate statement of a Rong identity.

Conclusion

Together, the bronze and ceramic vessels discovered at Xuyang cemetery paint a picture of cultural adoption and adaptation that was enacted differently at differing levels of social status. The presence of Zhou style ritual bronze assemblages in larger, higher status tombs indicates that, among the elite, there was a pressure to at least partially conform to Zhou and *Huaxia* norms of ritual and political behavior. However, the continuing presence of Rong style ceramics in smaller tombs, especially when paired with sacrifices of *yang*, indicates that the rituals and behaviors of those of lower status may have been influenced less by their new *Huaxia* neighbors.

Subsistence and Animal Sacrifices

During the Eastern Zhou period in China, what people ate, and how they ate it, was thought to indicate how civilized they were and, therefore, how “other” they were. In the *Liji*, or *Book of Rites*, which describes the ritual and administrative systems of the Zhou dynasty, non-*Huaxia* ethnic groups are described based on their dress and their diets. According to the *Liji*, these diets are very different from those of Central China; the Eastern Yi ate “their food without it being cooked with fire” while the Rong “did not eat grain-food.”⁸⁰ Diet, it seems, was a defining characteristic of difference in Zhou China. The Rong, specifically, could be differentiated from their *Huaxia* counterparts by the fact that they rarely, and possibly never, ate grains, a staple of diets in the central plain of China. What you ate was an analog to who you were. Given the historical importance of diet in defining cultural difference in Zhou China, it is pertinent to consider what the Luhun Rong actually subsisted on at Yichuan as well as what they represented themselves as eating.

Fortunately, we have some insight into the diets of the people who were buried at the Xuyang site. In his description of the preliminary research conducted on the Xuyang cemetery, Wu Yehuan summarizes the results of Strontium isotope testing that was conducted on 13 individuals whose burials were found at the site.⁸¹ Since different kinds of plants and animals contain different levels of strontium, the ratio of strontium in an individual’s bones can be used to infer the staples of a person’s diet during their life.⁸² Aside from the individual buried within the large and opulent M2 tomb, all other individuals buried at Xuyang ate diets that predominantly consisted of millet. The occupant of the M2 tomb,

⁸⁰ *Liji* as cited in Gideon Shelach, *Prehistoric Societies on the Northern Frontiers of China: Archaeological Perspectives on Identity Formation and Economic Change during the First Millennium BCE* (London and Oakville: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2009), 148.

⁸¹ Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi Chubu Yanjiu (河南伊川徐阳墓地初步研究),” *Qingtongqi yu Jinwen* 2, 429.

⁸² “Trace Element Analysis,” Credo Reference, accessed March 3, 2022, https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/estarch/trace_element_analysis/0

however, had strontium levels in their bones that reflected a diet consisting of a mixture of meat and rice.⁸³ These findings indicate two important and intriguing pieces of information. First, it further confirms and fleshes out the class difference between the occupant of the M2 tomb and the other people buried at Xuyang. Second, it indicates that when these individuals who were tested were alive the Luhun Rong did not survive primarily by mass stock herding as nomadic pastoralists do.⁸⁴

Coexistent with this compelling chemical analysis, however, is the presence of large animal sacrifices throughout the Xuyang cemetery. At other sites in Northern China and Eastern Eurasia, the presence of similar funerary animal sacrifices is considered indicative of a pastoralist lifestyle, that is, a mode of subsistence based on living off herded, domestic animals. Indeed, throughout the Gansu, Ningxia, and Ordos regions of Western and Northern China, an increase in the number of animal sacrifices in graves during the late 2nd millennium and early 1st millennium BCE is thought to indicate that those regions were becoming increasingly dependent on herding as an economic activity. While earlier graves in those regions did contain animal sacrifices, the sacrifices were primarily pigs, which are not herded animals and so indicate settled agriculture as opposed to shifting pastoralism. The new sacrifices from the turn of the millennium, however, show an increased emphasis on animals, like *Yang*, that are primarily herded.⁸⁵ In many ways, the animal sacrifices in these graves are similar to the ones at the Xuyang cemetery. Indeed, based on the first two excavation reports, *yang* made up two thirds of the sacrificed animals found in the chariot and horse pits. Furthermore, the animal sacrifices found in the three chariot pits that have been excavated and reported are, on their own, comparable to the amounts of animal sacrifices found in

⁸³ Wu, Chubu Yanjiu, 429.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 51-52.

cemeteries from roughly the same time in the Ordos region, though smaller than those found in Gansu and Ningxia.⁸⁶

We thus seem to have some contradictory information. On the one hand, we have chemical testing that indicates that diets among the majority of Luhun Rong consisted primarily of millet. On the other, we have evidence that the Luhun Rong had access to, and so probably raised, large numbers of herded animals. This locus of information, when properly parsed, can give us insights into how the Luhun Rong's methods of subsistence may have changed over time while they were at Xuyang, and how those subsistence changes may reflect not just assimilative Sinicization, but a creative process of cultural adaptation.⁸⁷

A History of Subsistence in the Northern Zone

Historically, it has been assumed that pastoral nomadism arose as an intermediary, and less advanced, developmental step between hunting and agriculture.⁸⁸ In this theory of subsistence, hunting, nomadism, and agriculture existed as discrete rungs on a developmental ladder. While the idea that nomadism is a primitive precursor to agriculture has been disproved on multiple fronts,⁸⁹ until recently many Sinologists continued to take for granted that pastoral nomadism and agriculture in China existed as separate modes of life. This belief manifested itself in their assumption that the split between steppe and cultivated land in ancient China was one that was rooted in diametric differences of subsistence and therefore geographically pre-ordained as opposed to historically constructed.⁹⁰ However, as Gideon Shelach argues in his book *Prehistoric Northern Frontiers of China: Archaeological Perspectives on Identity Formation and Economic Change during the First Millennium BCE*,

⁸⁶ Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 52.

⁸⁷ Xiaolong Wu, *Material Culture, Power, and Identity in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 24.

⁸⁸ Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21-22.

⁸⁹ See Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*, 22-23.

⁹⁰ Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 3.

recent archaeological research has shown that the development of agriculture and pastoralism in the frontier regions of China was more intertwined and gradual than previously thought.

Rather than nomadic pastoralism preceding agriculture, in the Northern frontier regions of China it seems that agriculture preceded, and may have even enabled, nomadic pastoralism. Archaeological evidence indicates that agriculture was widely practiced throughout the Northern frontiers of China as early as the fourth millennium BCE. At this point in time, archaeological excavations have revealed the sites of large sedentary villages where people lived off domesticated grains and animals.⁹¹ In the third and second millennium, it seems the in Western part of the Northern frontier of China people lived off millet, wheat, and domesticated pigs.⁹² This began to change during the end of the second millennium BCE and the beginning of the first millennium BCE.

During the turn of the second millennium BCE to the first millennium BCE, excavations from the Ordos and Gansu regions show an increased reliance on pastoral herding. In graves found in both regions, *Yang* replaced pigs as the dominant animal sacrifices found. At the Ordos cemetery of Maoqinggou, which dates to between the seventh and fifth centuries BCE, 80.3% of the animal sacrifices discovered were *Yang*, while only 19.5% were pigs.⁹³ Conversely, at the second millennium Zhukaigou site, also located in the Ordos region, *Yang* consisted of 36.1% of the animals recovered and 33.5% were pigs.⁹⁴ Horse remains also became more common in graves at the same time.⁹⁵ The increase of horse and *Yang* skeletons and the decrease in pig bones is important because horses and *Yang*, as well as cattle, require herding, while pigs do not. Therefore, an increase in the prevalence of the bones of herded animals, especially when accompanied by a decrease in the number of bones of sedentary

⁹¹ Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 47.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

animals, indicates a subsistence change away from sedentary agriculture to an increased focus on some degree of shifting pastoralism.⁹⁶

This increase in a reliance on pastoralism was not a complete shift to nomadic pastoralism. As previously stated, pigs continue to be found in tombs dating to this period, and, additionally, some preliminary research in the Gansu region indicates that at least some communities in the region were practicing advanced agriculture involving the cultivation of barley, wheat, and millet.⁹⁷ This evidence points to a blurry line between agriculture and pastoralism, rather than a strict division between “steppe” and “sown.” It makes sense that there would be no clear division between agricultural and nomadic pastoral societies. Archaeologists have theorized that for nomadic pastoral societies to arise in the first place, they needed to either originate from agricultural societies or be in close contact with them.⁹⁸ Furthermore, people cannot survive on pastoral products alone, so some degree of contact with agricultural societies is a necessity for nomadic pastoralists.⁹⁹ Ethnographic and historical evidence indicate that many nomadic pastoralist groups engage in some agriculture, and often are capable to transitioning from pastoralism to agriculture and vice versa.¹⁰⁰ Rather than being a strict dichotomy, in the Northern Zone of China pastoralism and agriculture likely existed as a sliding scale, with the place a group occupied within that spectrum reflecting their geographic and social location.

Questions of Pastoralism and Agriculture at Xuyang

With this information, we can begin to create an idea of what the Luhun Rong’s methods of subsistence were like prior to their move to Xuyang. While they likely relied in

⁹⁶ Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 48.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹⁸ Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*, 22.

⁹⁹ Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 68-69

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

part on herding sheep, goats, horses, and cattle, they also likely grew some crops, probably different types of millet. Additionally, while it is possible that the ancestors of the Luhun Rong were fully nomadic, it is more likely that they were semi-nomadic or even sedentary. With this in mind, it seems that the lifestyles of the Luhun Rong did not undergo a change in type so much as a change in degree when they settled at Yichuan. Given the prevalence of herding animal remains, it is likely that some degree of pastoralism remained part of the economy, but, given the strontium analysis, that agriculture predominated. This speaks to a degree of flexibility in the Luhun Rong economy. Rather than simply abandoning their own subsistence techniques for Zhou ones, the Luhun Rong adjusted their subsistence economy to better suit the conditions of their new home. Indeed, it does seem that this was a continuous process. So far, the older tombs have tended to place more emphasis on animal sacrifices than more recent tombs, implying that while pastoralism remained part of the economy it decreased in importance over time.¹⁰¹

However, the animal sacrifices at Xuyang are not simple indications of subsistence, they are also tied closely to ritual. As we have discussed, ritual does always have a one-to-one correspondence with reality. Therefore, while the presence of herding animal bones does indicate information about subsistence, is important that we also interrogate the ritual aspect of these animal sacrifices and how they interacted with issues of subsistence.

Animal Sacrifice and Identity at Xuyang

As previously stated, beginning around the turn of the first millennium BCE, sacrificed herding animals began to appear in increasingly large numbers in graves in the Gansu and Ordos regions of China.¹⁰² These animal sacrifices often appear as specific parts

¹⁰¹ Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi de Zushu (河南伊川徐阳墓地的族属),” *Kaogu Qianyan*, 28-30

¹⁰² Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 51-53.

of the animal, such as skull, scapulae, or hooves, placed within the grave pit. Depending on the type of bone in the burial, they would sometimes be placed in the fill of the tomb above the body and the other grave goods, or alternatively alongside the body.¹⁰³ The specific combination of species within the graves varied by geographic area and time period.¹⁰⁴ One example of animal sacrifice outside of the Xuyang cemetery is the Maoqinggou cemetery in the modern Inner Mongolia. At Maoqinggou, around half of the graves contain animal sacrifices, which largely consist of cow, goat, and horse bones.¹⁰⁵ However, the variety of animals found in graves across different cemeteries is highly variable. Even in other cemeteries excavated in Inner Mongolia, red deer and elk are found alongside domesticated cow, goat, and horse bones.¹⁰⁶

The presence, number, and variety of animal bones within a grave seem to indicate important information about the person's social status and affiliations during life.¹⁰⁷ Within pastoral societies, livestock are more than a major food source, they are also the primary source of wealth.¹⁰⁸ In this way, the quantity of sacrificed animal bones within a tomb can be considered indicative of wealth or high status during the person's life, and may also be associated with defining the cultural affiliation of the person in the tomb.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, research into pastoralist societies have shown that livestock often play an important role in mediating social relationships and exchanges. One example of this is how the transfer of livestock in the form of bride price is a common way of re-affirming social relationships in pastoralist societies.¹¹⁰ The role livestock play in affirming social relationships also seems

¹⁰³ Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 84.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Xiaolong Wu, "Female and Male Status Displayed at the Maoqinggou Cemetery," in *Gender and Chinese Archaeology*, ed. Kathryn M. Linduff and Yan Sun (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 203, 209-211.

¹⁰⁶ Linduff, 59.

¹⁰⁷ Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 85.

¹⁰⁸ Wu, "Maoqinggou," 209.

¹⁰⁹ Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 84.

¹¹⁰ Wu, "Maoqinggou," 209-211.

evident in the burial of animal sacrifices in Northern China. Since the sacrifices are almost always buried in parts rather than whole skeletons, it is believed that they may have played a role in a feast that happened in conjunction with the burial.¹¹¹ Indeed, osteological analysis of bronze age horse sacrifices in Mongolia, which often occur as heads and hooves and sometimes in burials, have revealed that the bones were stripped of flesh in a way that indicates that they sacrificed animals were eaten.¹¹² Given the significance of livestock in pastoral societies and food consumption in Ancient Chinese societies in defining status and cultural affiliation, it is likely that these feasts functioned as significant expressions of identity for the person being buried and the people who were burying them.¹¹³

The animal sacrifices found at Xuyang bear significant similarities to those found throughout the Northern Zone at the time. Indeed, one burial found during the 2015 and 2016 seasons fits the archetypal animal sacrifice found in the Northern zone, with the bones of cattle, horses, and *yang* buried in the grave fill above the inhumed person.¹¹⁴ While most of the animal sacrifices found at Xuyang deviate from this archetypal model, they still bear the imprint of Northern Zone animal sacrifices. The most significant example of this is how the animal sacrifices tend to only consist of the skulls and hooves of animals. This indicates the continuation, in some form, of the ritual of a funeral feast that seems to have been present in many Northern Zone cultures. Additionally, the presence of animal sacrifices at Xuyang seems to still be associated with wealth and status. The largest numbers of animal bones are often associated with large tombs with rich grave goods. That said, there are differences between the animal sacrifices found at Xuyang and those elsewhere in the Northern Zone,

¹¹¹ Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 84.

¹¹² William Taylor, Marcello Fantoni, Charlotte Marchina, et al., "Horse Sacrifice and Butchery in Bronze Age Mongolia," *Journal of Archaeological Science Reports* 31 (2020): 2, 6.

¹¹³ Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 84. Shelach, *Identity Formation and Economic Change*, 47.

¹¹⁴ Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), "Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi Dongqu 2015-2016 Nian Fajue Jianbao (河南伊川徐阳墓地东区 2015-2016 年发掘简报)," *Huaxia Kaogu*, no. 3 (2020), 34.

most significantly in placement. Aside from the few tombs in which animal sacrifices were placed in the grave fill, animal sacrifices at Xuyang tended to be placed either in sacrificial pits or in horse and chariot pits. In smaller tombs, some animal sacrifices were also found within ceramic vessels.¹¹⁵ I have yet to find reference to animal sacrifices being buried in this way elsewhere in the Northern zone.

Together, these similarities and differences imply that funerary rituals were adapted to new conditions once the Luhun Rong settled at Yichuan. This adaption appears most saliently in the animal sacrifices that were buried in chariot and horse pits. So far, all the reported horse and chariot pits have also included large numbers of horse, cow, and *yang* skulls and hooves. This is intriguing because this constitutes a fusion of *Huaxia* and Rong burial rituals. The horse and chariot pit was an element of high status *Huaxia* burials, in which elite individuals would be buried with a number of horses and chariots equivalent to their rank.¹¹⁶ As such, the burial of animal sacrifices within horse and chariot pits shows how two rituals of power and status from two different cultures were fused together to create a new, potent, ritual. Furthermore, the fact that the animal sacrifices (excepting the horses associated with the chariots) consist of heads and hooves implies that the burial of the elite, possibly leaders, of the Luhun Rong was accompanied by the same type of feasting that accompanied burials in the Northern Zone. Yet, these feasts would also have been associated with the strongly *Huaxia* imagery of the chariot and horse pit. Given the importance of food in identity in ancient China, as well as the fact that meat was not a common aspect of people's diets at Xuyang, such a meat centric feast must have been at once a powerful expression of status and a powerful expression of a Rong identity. It is intriguing to imagine what the actual wording

¹¹⁵ Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), and Ma Zhanshan (马占山), "Henan Xuyang Mudi you Xian Luhun Rong Wangji Damu: Jinyibu Zhengshi 'Rongren Neiqian Yiluo' (河南徐阳墓地又现陆浑戎王级大墓: 进一步证实'戎人内迁伊洛')," *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, no. 8 (February 2021).

¹¹⁶ Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 81-82.

and actions of the rituals were that would have accompanied this feasting; did they somehow address the different origins of the two types of animal sacrifice?¹¹⁷

However, not all the animal sacrifices at Xuyang appeared in chariot and horse pits. In an excavation report from 2021, Wu Yehuan and Ma Zhanshan report having discovered a series of sacrificial pits, filled with bones from horses, cattle, *yang*, dogs, and pigs. They believe that some of these pits are associated with groups of medium sized tombs. In addition to these sacrificial pits are a number of animal sacrifices found within earthenware vessels buried in smaller tombs.¹¹⁸ Both customs seem to be shifts from the sacrificial tradition of the Northern Zone, where bones were buried primarily in the fill of individual graves.¹¹⁹ I believe that this shift may speak to the questions of subsistence that were discussed earlier in this chapter. Since meat was only part of the diets of the elite, it makes sense that it would have been difficult for more middling individuals to obtain animals to sacrifice in individual burials. It is possible that these sacrificial pits and small sacrifices in earthenware pots represent an adaptation to a new kind of subsistence, which in turn was an adaptation to the strictures of a new environment.

Conclusion

By combining an analysis of the strontium isotope results and the animal sacrifices, we gain an interesting and nuanced image of how actual diets intersected with ritual or ideal diets, providing further insight into how identities were adapted as the Luhun Rong settled at Yichuan. While we do see a shift from a reliance on pastoral products to a reliance on agricultural products, as well as an increasingly class-restricted access to meat, we also see the continuation of animal sacrifice rituals, though in adapted forms. This combination of

¹¹⁷ This analysis is indebted to Wu's discussion of animal sacrifice in the Eastern Zhou tombs of the Zhongshan state, Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 84.

¹¹⁸ Wu and Ma, "Xuyang Mudi you xian Luhun Rong," 2.

¹¹⁹ See Wu, "Maoqinggou," also Wu, *Culture, Identity, and Power*, 84.

adaptation and continuity speaks to how the Luhun Rong were able to draw on their own cultural history to adapt their subsistence to a new environment, while also continuing other aspects of their subsistence and diets that they felt were important to their identities. It is interesting that we see this fusion prominently in the large, rich tombs at Xuyang, which combined large animal sacrifices alongside Zhou funerary elements like horse and chariot pits and ritually correct assemblages of bronze vessels and bells. This combination allows us to imagine the complexities of ruling a Rong tribe in the middle of the Zhou heartland; it seems to have required a complex combination of Rong and *Huaxia* symbols, thus projecting an identity that was both *Huaxia* and Rong. In the next section, a close reading of a text from the *Zuozhuan* can help us understand the exigencies and underlaid and shaped this elite identity.

Conclusion

It is the year 599 BCE Fan Gai, a court minister in the state of Jin, is not happy. In the spring of that year, Jin's ally Wu had been defeated in battle by Jin's archenemy, the state of Chu. As a result, Lord Dao, leader of Jin, and his ministers have called a meeting of their allies under the pretense of discussing a counterattack against Chu. In reality, they aim to solidify their power over their allies. However, not all has gone according to plan. Someone with connections to the Jin court has been leaking state secrets and spreading rumors that have undermined the loyalty of Jin's allies, and Fan Gai believes he knows who it is. In the Jin court, Fan Gai publicly accuses Juzhi, master of Jiang Rong lineage, and orders that he be arrested if he comes to the allied meeting the next day. Rather than quietly taking the insult, Juzhi replies by underlining the service the Jiang Rong have given to the state of Jin so eloquently that Fan Gai cannot but retract his accusation and allow Juzhi to attend the meeting.

This incident, which is related in Xiang 14.1 of the *Zuozhuan* provides crucial insight into the cultural and political context in which the artifacts at Xuyang existed.¹²⁰ The Jiang Rong lineage that Juzhi led was closely tied to the Luhun Rong. The two lineages of Rong were forced out of Guazhou by the state of Qin at the same time and both were resettled on marginal lands by Lord Hui of Jin in the 630s BCE.¹²¹ But the Jiang Rong and the Luhun Rong did not only share an ancestral homeland, they also occupied similar positions as culturally “other” vassals of the state of Jin. As a result, the encounter between Fan Gai and Juzhi, between the Jin state and the Jiang Rong people, described above can be used to

¹²⁰ *The Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan Reader: Selections from China's Earliest Narrative History*, tr. And ed. Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Lee, and David Schaberg (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 1007-1011

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1008.

interrogate the complicated political and cultural situations that leaders of the Luhun Rong found themselves in once established in Yichuan.

When Fan Gai accuses Juzhi, he expresses anger that the Jiang Rong have supposedly acted disloyal, even though they are indebted to Jin. According to Fan Gai, prior to receiving land from Lord Hui of Jin, the Jiang Rong were destitute and backward; even their leader wore a “white rush cape and... a headdress made of brambles.”¹²² In his response, Juzhi pushes back on the idea of indebtedness. Lord Hui was virtuous to protect them, but the various Rong lineages had done him and descendants great service in return. The land they had been given was marginal wilderness, a place where “jackals and wolves howled.”¹²³ Even so, the Rong “removed and cut down their brambles and drove away their foxes and wild cats, jackals and wolves, and became subject of the former lord,”¹²⁴ that is, they made the land habitable and brought it under state control. Additionally, the Rong had proven themselves invaluable assets during wartime.¹²⁵ Had the Jiang Rong ever done anything but show loyalty to Jin?

Continuing, Juzhi turns to the question of cultural difference which was linked to moral worth in the context of Zhou China. Juzhi does not ignore the differences between the Rong and the *Huaxia*. Indeed, Juzhi notes that “our drink, our food, our clothing, and our regalia are different from those of the central domains. We do not exchange gifts with them, and our language and theirs do not allow communication.”¹²⁶ While Juzhi explicitly uses these differences to argue that the Jiang Rong would not be able to effectively scheme with other lords against Jin, I believe that the implied meaning of this statement goes deeper.

¹²² *The Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan Reader*, 1009.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1009-1011.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1011.

During the Eastern Zhou period, a lack of ritual propriety was seen as animalistic¹²⁷ and associated with a lower moral worth. As such, an alleged lack of ritual propriety could be used by Zhou states to justify attacks on their opponents. Indeed, the same cultural differences between the Rong and the *Huaxia* that Juzhi describes had been used to justify attacks by *Huaxia* states on Rong peoples.¹²⁸ It seems odd that Juzhi would emphasize these potentially damaging differences. However, Juzhi's conclusion to his speech reveals the meaning behind this earlier statement. Before withdrawing, Juzhi chants a poem from the *Book of Odes*. By reciting the ode, Juzhi exemplifies his engagement with and mastery of the ritual system that he seems to be outside of. In doing so, Juzhi forces Fan Gai to see him as a moral equal, and by all accounts is successful. The passage from the *Zuozhuan* concludes with Fan Gai rescinding his accusation out of a desire to appear like the virtuous man described in the ode that Juzhi recited.¹²⁹

The implications are clear; to be safe as a Rong community in a *Huaxia* world, you needed to engage at some level with *Huaxia* culture and ritual. Demonstrating an understanding of ritual propriety could force *Huaxia* leaders to recognize your moral worth, especially given that the dialogue of legitimacy at the time was couched in discussions of ritual propriety. At the same time, Juzhi does not erase his Rong qualities. Rather, he suggests that they are part of what make him and his people so valuable to the state of Jin. After all, prior to the Rong, the state of Jin had been unable to settle and therefore control its southern border.¹³⁰ It is as if Juzhi insists on being seen as both *Huaxia* and Rong at the same time.

¹²⁷ Yuri Pines, "Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of the 'Sino-Barbarian' Dichotomy," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), 67-68.

¹²⁸ Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112-114.

¹²⁹ *The Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan Reader*, 1010.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1008.

While we should be cautious about treating the compilers of the *Zuozhuan*'s account of a speech they did not hear as "authentic," the connections between Juzhi's speech and the material evidence at Xuyang is striking. At Xuyang there is a deep engagement with *Huaxia* rituals. Archaeological evidence shows that the Luhun Rong elite participated in Zhou rituals enough that they ensured that they were buried with ritually correct bronze assemblages and with the horse and chariot pits that usually accompanied high status Zhou burials. When combined with the fact that the bronze vessels, and bells in particular, have possible connections to the state of Jin, we can begin to imagine how the Luhun Rong elite may have felt pressured to represent their power in a way that was legible to their new Zhou allies, overlords, and neighbors. That said, we should not discount the possibility of internal motivations for these cultural adaptations. Perhaps the Luhun Rong elite wanted to endow themselves a kind of political power over their own people that was similar to the power held by Zhou elites. Or, perhaps, they were attracted to aspects of Zhou culture simply because they liked them. In reality, all of these motivations, and likely more, interacted and were held to differing degrees by different individuals at different times.

However, the Rong style animal sacrifices found in the horse and chariot pits at Xuyang also speak to how the Luhun Rong elite staunchly continued some Rong rituals even as they were adopting Zhou ones. The Luhun Rong elite did not present themselves as being *Huaxia*, they presented themselves as being both *Huaxia* and Rong, with those two identities blurring together so much so that they could be combined in one sacrificial pit. Does this speak to a desire to hold on to ancestral culture? That seems to me to be the most obvious explanation. After all, the animal sacrifices associated with medium and small tombs indicate that lower class Luhun Rong doggedly held on to their rituals and culture, adapting them when necessary, even when they became difficult to enact. There are other explanations though. For example, given the lower classes' seeming conservativeness in comparison to the

Luhun Rong elite, it's easy to wonder if the fusion of Rong rituals with *Huaxia* rituals made new forms and expressions of power legible and appealing to the more conservative Rong people. Additionally, Juzhi emphasizes that it is the Rong's own cultural traditions that make them so useful to the state of Jin. Was some of the cultural retention utilitarian, then? After all, the complexity of the subsistence data that we get from Xuyang indicates that the Luhun Rong economy was flexible, which makes me wonder if elements of Rong subsistence culture enabled the Luhun Rong to make a home in an area that Juzhi describes as a wilderness. As many times before in this thesis, new findings raise further questions, questions that do not have simple answers. It is likely that some combination of the factors described above, and probably more, interacted to create the complex combination of cultures and expression of identities that we see at Xuyang.

Further Directions

There is, of course, much more research that could be done on the Xuyang cemetery. Of course, as excavations continue, increasingly large amounts of data will become available and will allow for more and new types of analysis. However, even with the data currently available there are avenues of analysis that could have been pursued that I did not have time to entertain. While there are many such topics, I will focus on the two that I think would have been the most fruitful to investigate.

The first topic I would have liked to analyze is objects that were personal adornments. Given the importance of fashion and appearance in constructing and projecting identity, archaeologists have theorized that personal adornments are the most representative of identity among other types of archaeological artifacts.¹³¹ Alongside this theoretical

¹³¹ Gideon Shelach, *Prehistoric Societies on the Northern Frontiers of China: Archaeological Perspectives on Identity Formation and Economic Change during the First Millennium BCE* (London, Oakville: Equinox, 2009), 80-81.

imperative are some intriguing personal ornaments that have been found at Xuyang. For example, the man buried in Western section tomb M6 was buried with gold earrings, something that is uncommon in *Huaxia* burials but has been found in Rong tombs.¹³² Looking at personal adornment would have opened another avenue for exploring how identity was expressed by different people at different levels in the Xuyang cemetery, in a way that may have allowed for an analysis of public versus personal expression of identity.

Second, I would have liked to do an in-depth analysis of gender at the Xuyang tombs. Intriguingly, there are several tombs at Xuyang in which women were buried with weapons, something that is uncommon in Rong and burials.¹³³ This begs the question: were gender roles different in Xuyang than they were elsewhere? Had they been influenced by the migration from Guazhou to Xuyang? How did women negotiate identity in comparison to men? In addition to these interesting archaeological questions is the important role that Rong women play in historical texts. Rong women seem to have been central to the relationship between Jin and the various non-*Huaxia* peoples; the historical sources note multiple instances of political marriages between Jin rulers and Rong women.¹³⁴ Hampering the exploration of these questions, however, is current limitations on the data. For example, in his article “Female and Male Status Displayed at the Maoqinggou Cemetery,” Xiaolong Wu analyzes gender relations at the Inner Mongolian Maoqinggou cemetery by conducting a statistical analysis of what kinds of objects appear with what genders. Since a statistically representative sample is not yet available from the Xuyang cemetery, such an analysis cannot

¹³² Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Dongzhou Mudi Xiqu 2013-2015 Nian Fajue (河南伊川徐阳东周墓地西区 2013-2015 年发掘),” *Kaogu Xuebao*, no. 4 (2020), 551; Kathryn M. Linduff, “An Archaeological Overview,” in *Ancient Bronzes of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, ed. Emma C. Bunker (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997), 20.

¹³³ Xiaolong Wu, “Female and Male Status Displayed at the Maoqinggou Cemetery,” in Kathryn M. Linduff and Yan Sun, eds., *Gender and Chinese Archaeology* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press), 213-214.

¹³⁴ Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*, 110-111.

be conducted. Finally, it would be remiss not to mention the difficulties with assessing gender and sex in the archaeological record. Only half of the excavated and reported tombs contained skeletons that were in good enough condition to allow for sex identification.¹³⁵

Implications

The events that I discussed here are ancient, over two thousand years old. Given their age, it is easy for them to feel remote and to question their importance. Why study such an ancient past when the world is full of pressing issues? I cannot help but feel that this type of analysis is important, even if it is not “practical.” While the Eastern Zhou period may be ancient, it is also a formative period in Chinese history. Taking this into account, many scholars have studied *Huaxia* perspectives on the divide between *Huaxia* and non-*Huaxia* people, with the aim of understanding how later understandings and dichotomies between Chinese and non-Chinese people arose. While these works are important, this work adds to their findings by providing a new perspective; it allows us to see how understandings of identity and culture were navigated not just by the *Huaxia*, but also by the non-*Huaxia*. Additionally, the fact that the people at Xuyang existed in an uneasy state as vassals of Jin means that studying their material culture can gain insights into cultural adaptation and resilience in the face of outside pressure. Finally, I also believe that there is much to be gained simply from the process of deeply engaging with people from the past. So doing allows us to think outside ourselves, our societies, and our times, and thus gain new perspectives on the world.

¹³⁵ Zhengzhou and Luoyang, “2013-2015 fajue,” Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院), “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi Dongqu 2015-2016 Nian Fajue Jianbao (河南伊川徐阳墓地东区 2015-2016 年发掘简报),” *Huaxia Kaogu*, no. 3 (2020).

Works Cited

- “Bell (bo) with felines and dragons; probably from a set of four (S1987.287).” Collections, National Museum of Asian Art, accessed May 2nd, 2020.
<https://asia.si.edu/object/S1987.287/>.
- Cho-yun Hsu, “The Spring and Autumn Period.” In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, edited by Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, 545-586. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Di Cosmo, Nicola. *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Department of Asian Art. “Shang and Zhou Dynasties: The Bronze Age of China.” *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2004.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shzh/hd_shzh.htm.
- Durrant, Stephen, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg. *Zuo Tradition / Zuozhuan: Commentary on the “Spring and Autumn Annals.”* University of Washington Press, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvcwn3pr>.
- Emberling, Geoff. “Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives.” *Journal of Archaeological Research* 5, no. 4 (1997): 295–344.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41053148>.
- Linduff, Kathryn M. “An Archaeological Overview.” In *Ancient Bronzes of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, ed. Emma C. Bunker. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997.
- Loewe, Michael, and Edward L. Shaughnessy, editors. *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

“Luhun Rong Tanmi’ Shangji” (‘陆浑戎探秘’上集), CCTV, January 9th, 2018, YouTube, 7:22.

“One of a set of bells (bo) with felines and dragons (S2012.9.2202a-b)” Collections, National Museum of Asian Art, accessed May 2nd, 2020.

<https://asia.si.edu/object/S2012.9.2202a-b/>.

“One of a set of bells (bo) with felines and dragons (S1987.282).” Collections, National Museum of Asian Art, accessed May 2nd, 2020. <https://asia.si.edu/object/S1987.282/>.

Pines, Yuri. “Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of the ‘Sino-Barbarian’ Dichotomy.” In *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, edited by Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran. Leiden, Boston : Brill, 2005.

Shelach, Gideon. *Prehistoric Societies on the Northern Frontiers of China: Archaeological Perspectives on Identity Formation and Economic Change during the First Millennium BCE*. London, Oakville: Equinox, 2009.

So, Jenny. *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*. New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1995.

“Trace Element Analysis.” Credo Reference, accessed March 3, 2022.

https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/estarch/trace_element_analysis/0

Von Falkenhausen, Lothar. *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006.

Wu, Xiaolong. “Female and Male Status Displayed at the Maoqinggou Cemetery.” In *Gender and Chinese Archaeology*, edited by Kathryn M. Linduff and Yan Sun. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Wu, Xiaolong. *Material Culture, Power, and Identity in Ancient China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Wu Yehuan (吴业桓). “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Faxian Dongzhou Luhun Rong Guizu Mudi (河南伊川徐阳发现东周陆浑戎贵族墓地).” *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, no. 8 (April 2016): 1-7.

Wu Yehuan (吴业桓). “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi Chubu Yanjiu (河南伊川徐阳墓地初步研究).” *Qingtongqi yu Jinwen* 2: 423-431.

Wu Yehuan (吴业桓). “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Mudi de Zushu (河南伊川徐阳墓地的族属).” *Kaogu Qianyan*: 26-32.

Wu Yehuan (吴业桓), and Ma Zhanshan (马占山). “Henan Xuyang Mudi you Xian Luhun Rong Wangji Damu: Jinyibu Zhengshi ‘Rongren Neiqian Yiluo’ (河南徐阳墓地又现陆浑戎王级大墓: 进一步证实 ‘戎人内迁伊洛’)” *Zhongguo Wenwu Bao*, no. 8 (February 2021): 1-5.

Yan Hui (严辉). “Luhun zhi Rong Diming Diwang Tongkao (陆浑之戎地名地望通考).” *Luoyang Kaogu*, no. 3 (2015), 60-62.

Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院). “Henan Yichuan Xuyang Dongzhou Mudi Xiqu 2013-2015 Nian Fajue (河南伊川徐阳东周墓地西区 2013-2015 年发掘).” *Kaogu Xuebao*, no. 4 (2020): 547-578.

Zhengzhou Daxue Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (郑州大学文物考古研究院), and Luoyangshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiuyuan (洛阳市文物考古研究院). “Henan Yichuan Xuyang

Mudi Dongqu 2015-2016 Nian Fajue Jianbao (河南伊川徐阳墓地东区 2015-2016 年发掘简报).” Huaxia Kaogu, no. 3 (2020): 23-40, 110.