



EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
The Columbia University Seminars

Investigating the Anyang Bone Industries: Technologies, Standardization, and the Missing Royal Workshop

Yung-Ti Li
The University of Chicago

The technology of making bone artifacts differs categorically from bronze casting. If bronze technology is additive, as in pottery making, bone technology is reductive, as in lithic technology. Bone technology, however, also differs from lithic technology in the sense that while a flintknapper can prepare the raw material to the desired shape in order to retrieve blades or flakes in the subsequent manufacturing stages, a bone worker, when making larger bone artifacts, needs to take into consideration the shape and curvature of the bones. Bone technology is therefore “Form after Shape”, as bone artifact makers consciously choose skeletal elements of particular shapes and fashion them into tools and equipment for various activities such as hunting, hide processing, wood working, and even skating. Bone workers in Anyang faced similar constraints in making bone artifacts. Depending on the intended objects, the craftsperson either had to choose skeletal elements with the suitable shape, such as metapodials for making hairpins with long and straight bodies, or design the objects according to the shapes and curvatures of the bones, such as the spatulas made from ribs, radius, and tibia. A third option is to process the bones into smaller blanks to make small objects with standardized form, as in the making of arrowheads and hairpin caps. Each of the technological choices results in different kinds of manufacturing process and different degrees of standardization. A closer look at the Anyang bone artifact assemblages shows that the repertoire of bone artifacts in Anyang is diverse and wide-ranging. Archaeologists have long realized that there must have existed a separate royal workshop that produced the intricately carved and inlaid beakers and spatulas from the royal tombs. After sieving through the archaeological materials excavated by the Institute of History and Philology in the 1930s, we now may have some clues about where the royal workshop was located.

November 11th, 2016 (Friday) 4:30-6:30pm

**Garden Room 2, Faculty House
64 Morningside Drive, Columbia University**

Seminar Co-Chairs: Jue Guo, Barnard College, Columbia University; Roderick Campbell, Institute for the Study of Ancient World, New York University

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