



ART FRONTIER

An International Art Journal / Vol. 3, No. 3 (Total Issue No. 10) Published: 2025-09-30

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Yang Yuan, Hu Yuanyuan

To cite this article: Yang Yuan, Hu Yuanyuan, "Study on Hairstyles in Anthropomorphic Jade Artifacts from the Shang to the Western Zhou Dynasties," ArtFrontier 3, no.3(Sep. 2025): 77-87 DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.64212/HDDK1093](https://doi.org/10.64212/HDDK1093).

DOI:10.64212/HDDK1093

ISSN: 2835-5490

EISSN: 2836-841X

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This article has undergone double-blind peer review.

Website: <https://www.cafontierpress.org/>

Email: editorial2023@artfrontier.org

Publishing Frequency: Quarterly (March, June, September, December)



Study on Hairstyles in Anthropomorphic Jade Artifacts from the Shang to the Western Zhou Dynasties

Yang Yuan, Hu Yuanyuan

Abstract

Hairstyles, as a significant manifestation of human beauty, are often endowed with a primitive aesthetic sensibility. The hairstyles on Shang Dynasty anthropomorphic jade artifacts include loose hair, braided hair, tied buns, and short hair. The Western Zhou Dynasty essentially inherited these hairstyle types from the Shang Dynasty, though short hairstyles became less common, and specific stylistic forms continued to evolve. This transformation reflects the evolutionary relationship between the hairstyles of the two periods, helping us recognize that hairstyles not only visually represent personal identity and regional characteristics but also carry profound cultural connotations and folk customs. Furthermore, they suggest continuous interaction and integration among different ethnic groups over prolonged exchanges, collectively giving rise to a new cultural form characterized by both diversity and inclusiveness.

Key Words

Anthropomorphic jade artifacts, hairstyles

Hairstyles, also referred to as coiffures, represent personalized forms of hair arrangement created through various techniques and methods, such as tying, braiding, coiling, and layering, based on individual preferences, aesthetics, cultural traditions, or fashion trends. The hairstyles depicted on anthropomorphic jade artifacts from the Shang to the Western Zhou dynasties are particularly remarkable. They not only reflect the ritual practices of early Chinese civilization but also vividly illustrate the social customs, aesthetic concepts, and cultural practices of the Shang and Zhou periods. Shi Zhangru systematically categorized and analyzed various types of head ornaments from the late Shang Dynasty,¹ while Song Zhenhao conducted case studies on hairstyles seen in Shang Dynasty jade and stone human figures.² With the accumulation of archaeological data on anthropomorphic jade artifacts, more evidence has become available for studying the evolution of hairstyles from the Shang to the Western Zhou dynasties. This study attempts to systematically organize the hairstyles found on jade figures from the Shang and Western Zhou periods to explore the process

of ethnic and cultural integration during these early eras.

1. The Principal Discoveries of Hairstyle-Bearing Anthropomorphic Jade Objects from the Shang to Western Zhou Periods

Based on current archaeological findings, a total of twenty-two anthropomorphic jade artifacts with depicted hairstyles have been discovered from the Shang Dynasty, while thirty-four such artifacts date to the Western Zhou period.

Major discoveries from the Shang Dynasty are as follows. In 1937, A jade ornament depicting a human head with a high crown was unearthed from Tomb M331 at Xiaotun.³ In 1952, A human-headed, bird-bodied jade pendant was discovered at Dalaidian, Xun County, Hebi City, Henan Province.⁴ In 1976, eight jade artifacts with depicted hairstyles were excavated from the Tomb of Fu Hao at Yinxu, Anyang. These include six jade figurines in the round (M5:534, M5:577, M5:371, M5:372, M5:374, M5:375), one human face ornament in relief

(M5:576), and one standing nude jade figure (M5:373).⁵ In 1996, four nude female jade figurines were unearthed from the Dongshui Canal in Gaoliu Town, Qingzhou, Shandong Province.⁶ Additionally, eight anthropomorphic jade artifacts are held in museum collections, both domestic and international. The Palace Museum in Beijing holds two green jade human heads.⁷ The Shaanxi History Museum holds one jade female figurine.⁸ The Arthur M. Sackler Museum at Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts, US, holds three pieces: two standing female jade figurines in the round,⁹ and one jade ghost/deity mask.¹⁰ The Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, New York, US, holds one relief jade human ornament.¹¹ The Musée Cernuschi in Paris, France, holds one relief jade human ornament.¹²

Major discoveries from the Western Zhou Dynasty Period are as follows. In 1956, three anthropomorphic jade artifacts were unearthed from the Guo State Cemetery at Shangcunling, Sanmenxia. These include one jade human figure in the round (M2009:190), one jade Zhang blade with human-dragon motifs (M2009:153), and one jade Zhang blade with combined human-phoenix motifs (M2001:685).¹³ In 1959, one standing figure made of green jade was excavated from a tomb in the eastern suburbs of Luoyang, Henan.¹⁴ In 1972, one jade spade with a human figure (M1:99) was discovered in a Western Zhou tomb at Baicaopo, Lingtai, Gansu.¹⁵ In 1973, A jade crown ornament was unearthed from the Western Zhou Yan State Cemetery at Liulihe, Fangshan District, Beijing.¹⁶ In 1981, three jade human figures (M1:85, M1:86, M1:92) were excavated from Tomb No. 1 at Qiangjia, Fufeng, Shaanxi.¹⁷ In 1984, four anthropomorphic jade artifacts were found at the Zhangjiapo Western Zhou Cemetery. These include one openwork carving of a figure in profile, squatting (M163:043), two squatting figures depicted in profile (M157:102, M163:15), and one jade carving combining dragon, phoenix, and a human head (M157:104).¹⁸ In 1986, one human-shaped jade pendant (M1:110) was discovered in the Ying State Tomb at Pingdingshan, Henan.¹⁹ In 1990, two anthropomorphic jade artifacts were excavated from the tomb of Guo Ji (M2001) at the Guo State Cemetery. These include one jade human figure in the round (M2001:647) and one jade ornament with combined human-dragon motifs (M2001:503).²⁰ In 1991, one jade pendant in the form of a monkey-faced human figure (M2011:452) was unearthed from the tomb of the Guo Crown Prince (M2011) at the Guo State Cemetery.²¹ In 1992, during the second excavation of the Jin Marquis Cemetery at Beizhao, Tianma-Qucun Site, three anthropomorphic jade artifacts were discovered. These include one standing jade figure depi-

cted frontally (I11M8:184), one green jade pendant ornament (I11M8:202), and one yellow jade human figure (I11M8:203).²² In 1993, the fourth excavation at the Jin Marquis Cemetery, Beizhao, Tianma-Qucun Site, yielded twelve jade humanoid figures, comprising seven jade humans and five jade dragon-human hybrids.²³ In 1996, one human-shaped ornament (M6:105) was excavated from Western Zhou Tomb No. 6 at Liutaizi, Jiyang, Shandong.²⁴ In 2002, one squatting jade figure was unearthed from the Caomenwan tomb within the Guojiagang Cemetery of the Zeng State, Zaoyang.²⁵ In 2005, one standing human figure (M26:186) was discovered in Tomb M26 at the Liangdai Village site, Hancheng, Shaanxi.²⁶

2. Typologies of Hairstyles on Shang and Western Zhou Anthropomorphic Jade Artifacts

Based on the archaeological findings of anthropomorphic jade artifacts mentioned above, significant changes in hairstyles can be observed between the Shang and Western Zhou periods. These changes are reflected not only in the diversity of hairstyle types but also in innovative developments in specific stylistic forms.

2.1 Typology of Shang Dynasty Hairstyles

Based on currently excavated or inherited anthropomorphic jade artifacts, the main hairstyles observed in the Shang Dynasty can be categorized into four types: loose hair, braided hair, tied buns, and short hair, which are detailed as follows.

2.1.1 Loose hair

Loose hair (披髮) refers to a hairstyle where the hair is left loose or naturally falls down the back of the head, commonly worn by ancient people. Throughout human history, people in prehistoric times generally retained the custom of not cutting their hair, allowing it to grow freely and fall naturally over their shoulders. Sometimes, this long hair would inadvertently cover the face, a phenomenon known in ancient times as “disheveled hair covering the face.”²⁷ The custom of wearing loose, unbound hair is corroborated by numerous archaeological sources.

On Shang Dynasty jade artifacts, many vivid and distinctive depictions of figures with loose hair can be observed. For instance, the yellow jade male head in the Palace Museum collection shows long hair naturally falling down, with the ends curled outward (figure 1, A). The green jade openwork pendant of a female figure, also in the Palace Museum, features long hair flowing

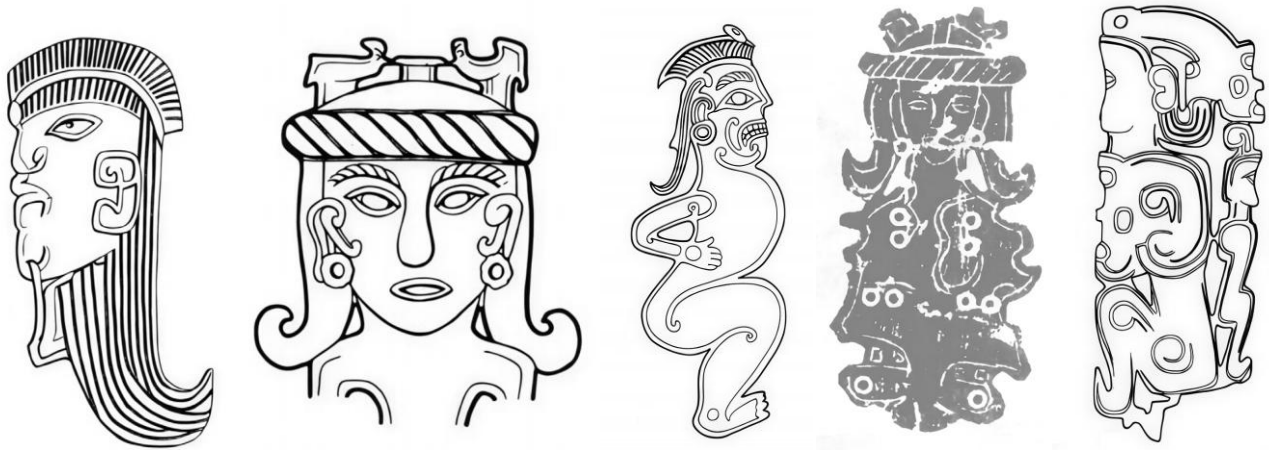


Figure 1. (A) Yellow jade male head sculpture, the Palace Museum Collection; (B) Green jade openwork pendant of a female figure, the Palace Museum Collection; (C) Relief-carved anthropomorphic jade ornament, Musée Cernuschi Collection; (D) Jade female figurine, Shaanxi History Museum Collection; (E) Relief-carved jade ornament with two figures depicted back-to-back.

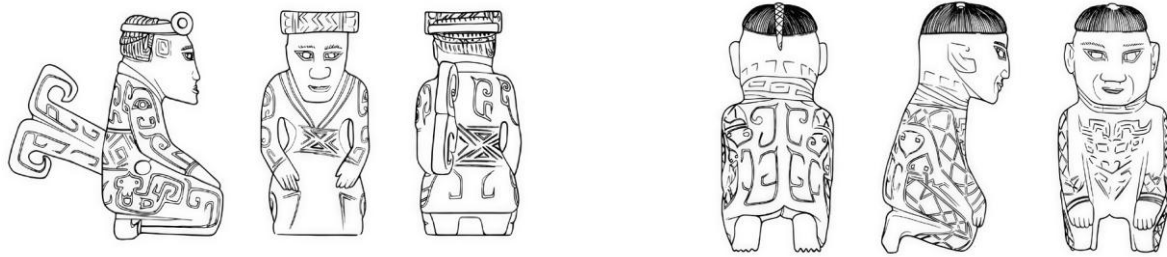


Figure 2. (A) Jade human figure sculpted in the round (M5:371); (B) Jade anthropomorphic figurine carved in the round (M5:372).

down the back, curled outward on both sides of the ears (figure 1, B). Similarly, a Shang Dynasty relief jade human ornament in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France (figure 1, C), displays curled hair ends, short hair on the top of the head, and an outer headband. A Shang Dynasty jade female figure in the Shaanxi History Museum shares this style but has a topknot on the head (figure 1, D). Additionally, a transmitted Shang Dynasty relief jade ornament depicting two figures back-to-back shows a larger figure on the left and a smaller one on the right.²⁸ The main larger figure is depicted in a seated position, with loose, unbound hair falling down the neck and curled ends, while the smaller figure on the right is crouching, with short hair covering the ears and a curled topknot on the head (figure 1, E).

2.1.2 Braided hair

Braided hair, also known as plaited hair, refers to the styling of retained long hair into various forms of braids. During the Shang Dynasty, the observed braided hairstyles primarily consisted of three forms: single braids, double braids, or multiple braids.

Among the Shang Dynasty anthropomorphic jade artifacts, the single braid is the most commonly depicted style, primarily discovered at the Yinxu Fu Hao tomb site. For example, a jade figure carved in the round (M5:371), unearched from the Fu Hao tomb, is depicted kneeling with hands resting on knees and what appears to be a single long braid on the head (figure 2, A). The excavators described it as: “The root of the braid is behind the right ear, coiled upwards to the top of the head, circling from the top to behind the left ear, then extending from the left side to the right ear, with the end of the braid connecting to its root.”²⁹ Another jade figure carved in the round (M5:372) is also shown kneeling, with arms slightly bent inward, hands on knees, and the body leaning slightly forward. A small braid is depicted precisely at the center of the head, falling to the neck, and what appears to be a hair tie adorns the braid as decoration (figure 2, B).

2.1.3 Tied buns

The tied bun (Shuji) refers to a hairstyle created by securing the hair at the top or back of the head through



Figure 3. (A) Malachite human figure (M5:377); (B) Androgynous jade figure (M5:373); (C) Jade human face ornament (M5:576); (D) Standing figure of a child, Anyang Cultural Center Collection; (E) Anthropomorphic jade ornament, Buffalo Museum of Science Collection.

techniques such as coiling, braiding, twisting, gathering, layering, or knotting. On Shang Dynasty anthropomorphic jade artifacts, two forms of this bun are observed: the single bun and the double bun.

The single bun involves hair coiled into a single knot at the top or back of the head. An example is the malachite figure carved in the round (M5:377) from the Fu Hao Tomb at Yinxu. Depicted kneeling with hands on knees and head slightly raised, the figure has a single bun hanging on the left side at the back of the head. A small hole is present in the center of the bun, which is also carved with a semi-circular hair ornament (figure 3, A).

The double bun features two symmetrical buns, arranged either side-by-side or front-and-back on the

head. Known examples include:

1. The androgynous standing jade figure (M5:373) from the Fu Hao Tomb, which presents a male image on one side and a female image on the other. The head exhibits two symmetrical, upward-curving, horn-like buns. A short tenon projects from the base, likely for insertion and mounting (figure 3, B).

2. The relief-carved jade human face ornament (M5:576) from the Fu Hao Tomb, which has two buns with ends similarly flipped upwards. An angled hole in the top center was probably used for insertion or wearing (figure 3, C).

3. Two other museum pieces: A Shang Dynasty jade standing figure of a child, housed in the Anyang Cultural Center, showing hair tied into two topknots on either



Figure 4. (A) Jade Figure with monkey-like face (M5:375); (B) Jade human figure in the round (M5:374); (C) Anthropomorphic jade sculpture in the round (M5:534); (D) Jade figure combining human and beast features (M5:577).

side of the head (figure 3, D); and a Shang Dynasty relief jade human ornament in the collection of the Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, New York, US, depicting the hair swept up into two buns—one in front, high and curling backwards and downwards, and another at the back, slightly smaller and protruding (figure 3, E).

It is noteworthy that archaeological discoveries from Shang Dynasty tombs and sites have yielded a significant number of hairpins (簪). At the Yinxu site in Anyang, these hairpins were predominantly found positioned directly atop the skulls, indicating that the hair buns were likely dressed centrally at the crown of the head. Specifically, the hair was gathered and tied into a bun at the top, with a hairpin then inserted horizontally through it. This practice demonstrates that the tied bun was not only highly fashionable during the Shang Dynasty but also consistently held significant importance.

2.1.4 Short hair

Short hair refers to a hairstyle where the hair length does not extend beyond the neck. Four examples of this hairstyle are found on Shang Dynasty anthropomorphic jade artifacts:

1. The round-carved jade figure with a monkey-like face (M5:375) unearthed from the Fu Hao Tomb at Yinxu is depicted kneeling, with arms slightly bent inward and hands resting on the knees. The head features a full circle of short hair, with relatively thick strands (figure 4, A).

2. Two round-carved jade heads from the Fu Hao Tomb (figure 4, B and C) also exhibit a full circle of short hair.

3. Additionally, a jade head combining human and beast features (figure 4, D) displays the same hairstyle.

4. The transmitted relief jade ornament of two figures back-to-back shows the smaller figure on the right with short hair covering the ears (figure 1, E).

5. The Shang Dynasty relief jade human ornament in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France, also depicts a figure with short hair on the crown of the head, covered by a headband (figure 1, C).

2.2 Hairstyles of the Western Zhou Period

Based on currently excavated or inherited anthropomorphic jade artifacts, the main hairstyles observed in the Western Zhou Dynasty can be categorized into three types: loose hair, tied buns, and braided hair, which are detailed as follows.

2.2.1 Loose hair

In the Western Zhou period, the style of loose hair partly continued earlier traditions. For example, a bluish-white jade crown ornament unearthed from the Yan State Cemetery at Liulihe depicts a frontal human figure with shoulder-length hair, the ends of which are slightly curled upward. The figure wears a tall crown adorned with serrated edges and curled decorations at the top (figure 5, A and B). Similarly, seven anthropomorphic jade artifacts excavated from the Jin Marquis Cemetery at Beizhao, Tianma-Qucun Site, all display figures with upward-curling hair ends (figure 5, C, D and E). However, this hairstyle also saw further development. A jade Zhang blade with human-dragon motifs from Tomb M2009 at the Guo State Cemetery in Shangcunling, Sanmenxia, and a human-shaped jade pendant from the Ying State Tomb in Pingdingshan, Henan, showcase more refined depictions. In one case, long hair flows down the back, with individual strands clearly delineated (figure 5, F). In another, long hair cascades down to the neck, seamlessly integrated with the headdress (figure 5, G).

2.2.2 Tied buns

Due to the prevalence of the ritual and musical system during the Western Zhou Dynasty, capping ceremonies



Figure 5. (A,B) Jade crown ornament, excavated from the Yan State Cemetery of the Western Zhou Dynasty at Liulihe; (C, D,E) Jade human figures, excavated from the Jin Marquis Cemetery at Beizhao, Tianma-Queun Site; (F) Jade Zhang blade, excavated from the Guo State Cemetery at Shangcunling, Sanmenxia; (G) Anthropomorphic jade pendant, excavated from the Ying State Tomb at Pingdingshan.



Figure 6. (A) Jade human figure, excavated from the Western Zhou tomb at Baicaopo; (B) Jade anthropomorphic figurine, excavated from Qiangjia Village, Fufeng; (C) Jade human sculpture, excavated from Liangdai Village, Hancheng; (D) Jade figure, excavated from the Jin Marquis Cemetery, Quwo; (E) Human-headed bird-bodied jade pendant, excavated from Xun County, Henan).

were highly valued among the nobility. At that time, upon reaching adulthood, men would bind their hair and don a crown, while women would coil their hair and insert hairpins. Thus, the evolution of hairstyles across different periods was closely linked to contemporary environmental or political factors. Although other hairstyles existed, the tied bun predominated. According to current archaeological sources, the hairstyles depicted on anthropomorphic jade artifacts from the Western Zhou period are mostly high-tied buns, which also exhibit some changes compared to the bun styles of the Shang Dynasty. The buns observed in the Western Zhou period can also be divided into two forms: the single bun and the double bun.

Single Bun

Only two examples of the single bun have been disco-

vered, each with a distinct style. A jade figure carved in the round, nude and standing, unearthed from the Western Zhou tomb at Baicaopo in Lingtai, Gansu, features a bun coiled around the head like a turban, adorned with a tiger head (figure 6, A). Another jade figure from Tomb No. 1 at Qiangjia Village in Fufeng, Shaanxi, has a prominent bun carved on the head (figure 6, B).

Double Bun

The double bun appears in three examples, each with a unique form. A standing jade figure unearthed from the Zhou Dynasty cemetery at Liangdai Village in Hancheng, Shaanxi, has two braided buns on the head, standing upright and folded over to hang down onto the shoulders (figure 6, C). A standing jade figure from Tomb No. 63 at the Jin Marquis Cemetery in Quwo,

Shanxi, is depicted in a semi-kneeling posture, with two forward-protruding horn-shaped buns on the head, spiraled in form, and hair at the back of the head hanging down slightly curled (figure 6, D). A human-headed, bird-bodied jade pendant unearthed in Xun County, Henan, shows a standing figure with two high, towering buns (figure 6, E).

2.2.3 Braided hair

Due to the popularity of tied buns, braided hairstyles were relatively uncommon, with only one example identified so far. For instance, a frontal-standing jade figure unearthed from Tomb M63 at the Jin Marquis Cemetery in Quwo, Shanxi, exhibits hair that falls straight down around the head, with the ends reaching the forehead. A small braid hangs down the back of the head to the neck (figure 7).

During the Western Zhou period, ritual systems gradually permeated all aspects of material and spiritual life, including capping ceremonies, weddings, funerals, sacrifices, banquets, and offerings. The “ritual and musical culture” existed to adapt to the hierarchical system of the Zhou nobility, using rites and music to implement education and cultivate moral character. As Jia Gongyan’s commentary on the *Yili: Shiguanli di yi* [Etiquette and Rites: The First Chapter - Capping Rites of the Scholar-Officials] states: “The hairpins of the feudal lords should also be made of jade... Zheng Xuan’s note clarifies: ‘Those for ministers and scholars ought to have black silk threads and crimson edges.’ Their hairpins, likewise, should be made of ivory.”³⁰ Similarly, the *Book of Rites: Translation and Annotation, Quli 1* records: “At twenty, a man is capped; at fifteen, a girl assumes the hairpin.”³¹ Both the capping and hairpin ceremonies required the hair to be tied up. Tying the hair neatly secured it at the crown or back of the head, facilitating the wearing of crowns or other head ornaments, thereby ensuring a tidy and orderly appearance that aligned with the Western Zhou emphasis on dignity and composure in ritual conduct. This shift is reflected in hairstyles, with fewer depictions of short or braided hair and a predominance of tied buns.

Overall, the hairstyles of the Western Zhou period exhibited both continuity and innovation compared to those of the Shang Dynasty. For instance, the jade figure from Tomb M63 at the Jin Marquis Cemetery, with its hair ends level to the forehead and a small braid hanging down the back of the head to the neck, closely resembles the hairstyle of the jade figure (M5:372) from the Fu Hao Tomb at Yinxu, demonstrating a fundamental consistency in hairstyle traditions. Specifically, the Western Zhou period not only retained the Shang-

style upward-curling hair ends but also introduced new images of long hair flowing naturally down. Depictions of short and braided hair became relatively less common during this period, while the presentation of tied buns grew more diverse, with richer and more refined expressions and decorations.

3. Hairstyles as Reflections of Social Hierarchy and Cultural Practices

Hairstyles, which embody both the spiritual temperament



Figure 7. Braided hairstyle on a western Zhou jade figure, Jin Marquis Cemetery M63, Quwo.

and aesthetic tastes of individuals, reflect both collective preferences and personal expression. Yet, they often serve as a visible manifestation of lifestyle trends within ethnic groups or residential communities.³² Through hairstyles, it is possible to uncover aspects of social hierarchy, beliefs, and customs of the time, as well as evidence of ethnic integration and development.

3.1 Hairstyles and The Hierarchy-Ritual System

In ancient Chinese history, the slave society and feudal society stages accounted for a significant portion of time, both characterized by a rigid hierarchical system akin to a pyramid. At the pinnacle were the ruling elite, followed by aristocratic families, and further down, the majority comprised commoners or enslaved households. Under such a system, individuals were born with an indelible social status, which manifested in all aspects of life, including hairstyles. Hairstyles symbolized one's identity and position within society.³³

From the aforementioned excavated or inherited anthropomorphic jade artifacts, we observe the upper-class elites of the Shang to Western Zhou periods, who enjoyed high social status and political power. Differences in identity and status were markedly reflected in distinct hairstyles or headdresses, illustrating how the social hierarchy led to stratified variations in the craftsmanship and adornment of hairstyles. Based on the carved attire and hairstyles on jade artifacts, high-ranking male nobles are depicted with shoulder-length hair, the ends slightly curled upward, and wearing tall crowns adorned with decorations (figure 5, A). Alternatively, their hair was styled high and secured with a gelatinous substance.³⁴ Noblewomen, on the other hand, often wore their hair braided into a long braid behind the ears, coiled around the top of the head, passing over the left ear, with the braid end fastened behind the right ear. For instance, the jade figure in the round from the Fu Hao Tomb (figure 2, A) is interpreted by scholar Song Zhenhao as follows: "The jade figure from the Fu Hao Tomb...depicts a noblewoman wearing a circular crown with a cylindrical ornament at the front, likely corresponding to the 'Wu' headdress mentioned in historical texts."³⁵

Among the middle-ranking nobility, some wore long hair reaching the neck with upturned ends (figure 1, E), while others tied their hair into two buns, one at the front and one at the back (figure 3, E). The front bun was large, tall, and curled backward, while the back bun was smaller yet equally prominent, creating a harmonious visual effect. Additionally, some close courtiers of the nobility sported short braids atop their heads, hanging down to the nape of the neck (figure 2, B), or had a ring

of short hair trimmed around the head (figure 4, A-D), presenting a neat and efficient appearance.

The middle and lower classes, represented by commoners and enslaved individuals, constituted a considerable proportion of the social structure. Scholars have noted that "the clothing of enslaved people lacked decorative patterns, and their hairstyles varied—some with long braids coiled around the head, others with short braids hanging down the back of the head, some wearing circular bands, and others with upward-twisted buns."³⁶ Most common women tied a hanging bun at the back of the head, secured with a hairpin, and some added a semi-circular hair ornament to the bun (figure 3, A), exuding a distinctive feminine charm. Others opted for a single bun atop the head (figure 6, A), double buns on either side (figure 6, D), or horn-like tied knots on both sides (figure 3, B). Meanwhile, some men adopted distinctly different styles; some chose simple flat-top haircuts,³⁷ while others had long hair at the back reaching the ears, with coiled hair atop the head forming a bun (figure 1, E). Additionally, some depictions show hair at the back flowing down to the neck and curling outward, with short hair on top covered by a headband, representing ethnic groups such as the Rongqiang from the west, the Huaiyi from the southeast, or the Jingman during the Shang period³⁸ (figure 1, C). These hairstyles not only reflected their wearers' social status but also illustrated the diversity and complexity of the society at the time.

3.2 Hairstyles and Ethnocultural Fusion

During the Shang and Western Zhou periods, the hairstyles of ancient people evolved or were inherited due to various subjective and objective factors. *The Book of Rites: Royal Regulations* records: "The central states and the Rong and Yi peoples—the inhabitants of the five regions—each have their own nature, which cannot be altered. Those in the east are called Yi; they wear their hair unbound and tattoo their bodies; some do not cook their food. Those in the south are called Man; they tattoo their foreheads and have interlocking toes; some do not cook their food. Those in the west are called Rong; they wear their hair unbound and dress in animal skins; some do not eat grain. Those in the north are called Di; they dress in feathers and fur and dwell in caves; some do not eat grain." It further states, "Each has their own settled abodes, suitable flavors, appropriate clothing, practical tools, and well-prepared utensils,"³⁹ indicating the distinctiveness of different ethnic groups in terms of lifestyle, dietary habits, clothing culture, and production tools. In the process of ethnic integration, not only did cultures interpenetrate, but even subtle elements of daily

life, such as hairstyles, quietly blended and borrowed from one another, gradually evolving into a shared trend in ethnic hairstyles that incorporated the strengths of various traditions. This transformation was not merely a change in personal appearance but also a microcosm of the grand cultural integration of the Chinese nation.

During the Shang Dynasty, the central capital region centered on Zhengzhou and the Yinxu site in Anyang primarily featured braided hair, tied buns, and short hairstyles. The braided hairstyle of M5:371 is rather unique, and some scholars believe it represents a female slave. This hairstyle inherits the tradition seen on the Majiayao culture painted pottery basin with dancing figures from the Neolithic period. "Since the main targets of conquest during the Shang Dynasty were the Qiang and Rong peoples from the west, many captured prisoners were enslaved, and thus they retained their original hairstyles, which differed from the Central Plains practice of braiding long hair and coiling it around the head."⁴⁰ The custom of wearing loose, unbound hair likely persisted in ethnic minority regions. *The Classic of Mountains and Seas, Juan 7: The Classic of Regions Beyond the Seas: The West* records the ancient practice of wearing loose hair, such as the people of the "White People's Country" north of Longyu, who had fair skin and wore their hair unbound, described as "white-bodied and wearing loose hair."⁴¹ Additionally, the people of the "Long-Thigh Country" also commonly wore their hair unbound. *The Book of Zhou: Records of the Tujue* states "They wear their hair unbound and their garments fastened to the left, like the ancient Xiongnu,"⁴² while *Han Feizi: Forest of Sayings I* notes, "They wear white silk hats, yet the Yue people wear their hair unbound."⁴³ This indicates that the custom of wearing loose hair was prevalent not only in the north but also among ethnic cultures in the south and west. Examples include the female head with unbound hair depicted on a painted pottery jar from Yongchang Yuanyangchi in Gansu⁴⁴ and the pottery sculpted human face with unbound hair excavated from Chaijiaping in Tianshui County. Based on facial features, the excavators analyzed that the figure "exhibits Mongoloid characteristics."⁴⁵ As for the unbound hair on the human-shaped jade ornament in the Musée Cernuschi, Shen Congwen speculated that it might represent the Rong and Qiang peoples from the west or the Huaiyi or Jingman peoples from the southeast during the Shang Dynasty.⁴⁶ From the variations in these hairstyles, it is evident that regional characteristics remained prominent during the Shang Dynasty. However, styles such as unbound and braided hair had already become widespread among various regions and ethnic groups, reflecting the gradual

intensification of ethnic cultural integration.

During the Western Zhou period, while inheriting Shang traditions, hairstyles across regions and ethnic groups tended toward unification while retaining their regional distinctiveness. Braided hairstyles were popular in the Central Plains and also prevalent in the southwest and north. *Records of the Grand Historian, Juan 5: Account of the Southwest Barbarians* states "Beyond them, from Tongshi in the west to Yeyu in the north, were the Xi and Kunming tribes, all of whom wore braided hair and moved with their livestock."⁴⁷ Meanwhile, *Jin Shu, Juan 97: Records of Tuyuhun* vividly describes the appearance of Xianbei women: "They adorned themselves with golden flowers as head ornaments, their braided hair coiled at the back, embellished with pearls and shells."⁴⁸ Some scholars believe that braided hairstyles originally belonged to nomadic peoples who migrated from the northwest.⁴⁹ As for tied buns, they exhibited more complex and diverse characteristics, commonly seen on jade human figures excavated in Shaanxi, Gansu, and Shanxi. These included double buns and single buns, with single buns taking spiral or conical forms, and double buns appearing as hanging, horn-shaped, or double-loop styles. This indicates that tied buns were widely popular among ethnic groups in these regions, yet they also displayed significant ethnic distinctiveness, reflecting a trend toward gradual cultural integration. Particularly noteworthy is the emergence of the unique spiral hairstyle in Gansu, a region where unbound hair was prevalent. This style later evolved into the luoji (spiral bun). The changes in hairstyles during this period reveal that tied buns and braided hair had spread across multiple regions and ethnic groups, to some extent confirming the increasing trend of cultural exchange and integration.

3.3 Hairstyles and Social Customs

"Archaeological discoveries indicate that during the Neolithic Age, human adornment practices among various residential communities were already well-developed, exhibiting regional or ethnic group differences. Moreover, these customs were not static but evolved."⁵⁰ The diverse hairstyles discussed above reveal the distinct cultural characteristics of different periods. They served not only as visual representations of personal identity and regional traits but also carried profound cultural connotations and folk customs.

Hairstyles varied significantly throughout different stages of life. Three months after a baby's birth, families would select an auspicious day to hold a hair-shaving ceremony, symbolizing new life and purity. During this

ritual, male infants would retain hair on both sides of the fontanelle, while female infants would keep a cross-shaped patch of fetal hair on the crown, with the rest carefully shaved. As children grew older and began learning rites and etiquette, their hairstyles would change accordingly. Their hair would be neatly gathered at the top of the head and braided into symmetrical buns on both sides—a style affectionately called *zongjiao* (總角), symbolizing their entry into a new phase of growth. Upon reaching adulthood, men underwent the capping ceremony, marking their formal entry into adult society and their responsibilities in ancestral temple sacrifices, hunting, and other social activities—their hairstyles accordingly shifting to more solemn adult styles. Women, through the hair-pinning ceremony, declared their maturity by tying up their long hair and inserting a hairpin (笄), signifying their eligibility for marriage and their impending transition to a new stage of life.

People from different regions displayed rich and diverse regional characteristics in their hairstyles, each with unique features. In the Central Plains, the cradle of Huaxia civilization, the custom of tying hair and inserting hairpins prevailed. Men meticulously combed their long hair and skillfully inserted an elegant hairpin into their buns, securing the hairstyle while enhancing their overall dignified appearance. In contrast, tribes in the southern frontier regions maintained more primitive and natural hairstyles—“disheveled hair and body tattoos” (披髮文身). According to the *Book of Zhou: Records of the Tujue* and *Han Feizi: Forest of Sayings I*, both the ancient Tujue and Yue people practiced wearing disheveled hair. They also adorned their bodies with intricate totems or patterns, which, combined with their loose hairstyles, formed unique cultural markers for these tribes. These hairstyles and adornments were not only adaptations to the natural environment but also reflections of their cultural and spiritual heritage.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, an analysis of anthropomorphic jade artifacts reveals that hairstyles from the Shang to the Western Zhou dynasties, while limited in variety, exhibited consistency amid diversity and embodied ethnic distinctiveness within a unified tradition, ultimately becoming an indispensable part of aesthetic expression. Examining the typology and evolution of these hairstyles demonstrates how human representations in sculptural art served as markers of social stratification, carriers of cultural customs, and testaments to ethnic exchange and integration across regions. With ongoing archaeological discoveries, more evidence will continue to enrich our understanding of ancient peoples' appearances and living contexts—including the increasingly diverse and dynamic evolution of their hairstyles.

Zhengzhou University of Light Industry

YANG YUAN (1975-), PhD, is a professor and master's supervisor at the School of Art and Design, Zhengzhou University of Light Industry, with a research focus on ancient Chinese art history and the theory of arts.

HU YUAN YUAN (2000-) is a graduate student at Zhengzhou University of Light Industry, with research that focuses on ancient Chinese art history and the theory of arts.

Editor: Liu Ge

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商至西周人形玉器上的髮式研究

楊遠, 胡媛媛

摘要: 髮式作為人體美的重要表現形式, 常常被賦予一種原始審美情趣。商代人形玉器的髮式有披髮、辮髮、束髻、短髮等, 西周基本繼承了商代的髮式類型, 但少見短髮髮式, 而且在具體的髮式形制上也有發展變化。這種變化反映了兩個時期髮式的演變關係, 可以幫助我們認識到髮式不僅是個人身份與地域特色的直觀展現, 更承載著深厚的文化內涵與民俗風情, 也暗示了不同民族在長期的交流過程中不斷的互動與融合, 共同孕育出了一種兼具多樣性和包容性的新文化形態。

關鍵詞: 人形玉器; 髮式