

Anyang

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Anyang is a modern municipal in northern Henan province of China. In the late 19th century, an accidental discovery of inscribed oracle bones at Anyang led to the beginning of the archaeological excavations in 1929. Nearly-a-century archaeological discoveries and inscribed oracle bones confirm that Anyang was the location of the ancient ruin of Yin, dated to 14th - 11th century BCE. For more than 250 years, Anyang was a political and religious centre of Shang Kingdom (ca. 1600 - 1046 BCE), the earliest known state that controlled the lands of Yellow River and Yangtze River valleys. Divinations by processing turtle shells and ox bones and then application of incised texts onto shells and bones after divining had been a major state affair exclusive to royal houses and elites. Shang people worship the Di or God literally in English, as a supernatural being, thus the Heavily Above. The Di, or Heavily Above, could be represented by deceased kings, thus ancestral worships, as tradition of Chinese ritual since prehistoric periods, was a core of Shang's ritual endeavours. Shang ritual process for state affairs from wars to marriage, have produced oracle bones as documentation. Inscribed oracle bones, survived nearly 200,000 pieces, provide the first written history of religious activity in China. Archaeologically, Anyang is well known for its abundance of ritual bronze vessels, that can be viewed in major museums worldwide. The ritual bronze vessels were evident that Shang rituals were in wide various forms and objectives. Shang people worshiped gods or supernatural beings from mountains and rivers, as well as natural phenomena like rains, winds, thunders. Anyang yields a wider variety of archaeological evidences suggesting that it was a largest and populated city in East Asia at the time for over 250 years.



Date Range: 1300 BCE - 1046 BCE

Region: Anyang

Region tags: China, Henan Province

territory of Shang Dynasty region: Hebei, Hennan, Hubei, Anhui, Shandong province

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

General Variables

Sources and Excavations

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Goldin, Paul R. (editor) 2018 Routledge Handbook of Early Chinese History. Routledge, London and New York.
- Source 2: Shen, Chen 2002 Anyang and Sanxingdui: Unveriling the Mysteries of Ancient Chinese Civilizations. Royal Ontario Museum Press, Toronto.

Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

– Source 1 URL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anyang>

– Source 2 URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Anyang-China>

Has this place been the focus of excavation (pre-modern, illicit, or scientific):

Answer 'Yes' for each period or type of excavation.

– Yes

↳ Type of excavation:

– Scientific

Notes: Anyang is an archaeological site that was first excavated by the Institute of History and Philology, Academic Sinica, Republic of China before 1949, than continued by the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academic of Social Science, People's Republic of China

↳ Years of excavation:

– Year range: 1929 - present

↳ Name of excavation

– Official or descriptive name: Anyang Archaeology

Notes: Permanent Archaeology Workstation Unit from the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Science, China is responsible for continuous excavations of Anyang sites in response to urban development plan.

Topographical Context

Is the place associated with a feature in the landscape

– Other [specify]: River Valley - Heng River a tribute to the Yellow River

Does the place involve human-made features besides structure:

Other features might be ground clearing, terracing, other modifications of the local environment.

– No

Is the place situated in an urban or significantly urbanized area:

– Yes

↳ Is there a distinct boundary between the place and the urban fabric:

– Yes

Notes: Anyang is a designate /inscribe World Heritage Site, so there is a defined prediction boundary between the site and the urban fabric

- ↳ Is the place located significantly within the urban fabric:
Is the place centrally located, or at the crossroads of significant pathways?
– Yes

Is the place situated in a rural setting:

– No

Notes: The place was situated in the rural setting when it was discovered in 1920s. With urbanization and city development since later 20th century, the place is now completely within the city limit

Is the place situated far removed from non-religious places of habitation:

– Yes

- ↳ Is there an established route of travel connecting it to a wider transportation network:
– Yes

Notes: a high-speed train station in the city that connects Beijing and Zhengzhou.

Structures Present

Are there structures or features present:

Instructions: Answer once for each structure/feature or group that can be differentiated.

– Yes

- ↳ A single structure
– No

- ↳ One single feature
– Other [specify]: architectural complex

- ↳ A group of structures:
– Yes

- ↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:
– Yes

↳ A group of features:

– Yes

↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:

– Yes

↳ Is it part of a larger place/sanctuary:

– Yes

↳ What is the function of the structure/feature or group:

Answer "Yes" once for each distinct function

– Sacrificial

↳ Is the structure/feature finished:

– Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature intended to last beyond a generation:

– Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature modified through time:

– Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature destroyed:

– Yes

↳ How was the structure/feature destroyed

– Buried

↳ With ritually deposited medium/material:

This might consist of pure sand, or a medium that has been consecrated.

– Field doesn't know

↳ Was it destroyed deliberately:

– Other [specify]: all of the above

↳ Was it destroyed by accident/natural phenomena:

– Human-caused accident

↳ Has the structure/feature been reconstructed:

– Yes

↳ In antiquity

– More than once

↳ In modernity

– Post-Renaissance

Reasons for Creation/Construction/Consecration

Is the place used for the worship of/communication with non-human supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Dedicated to a supernatural being:

– Yes [specify]: Wind

↳ Dedicated to more than one supernatural being:

– Yes [specify]: Thunder, mountain, sea

Is the place used for the worship of a semi-divine human being:

– Yes

↳ Is it a cenotaph:

– No

↳ Does it commemorate a family/clan/group:

– Yes

Is the place used for the worship of non-divine ancestors:

– Yes

↳ Is it a cenotaph:

– No

↳ Does it commemorate a family/clan/group:

– Yes

Was the place commissioned/built by an official political entity:

A political entity is a local power structure that leverages a workforce.

– Yes

↳ Specify

– King or emperor

Were the Structures built by specific groups of people:

– Yes

↳ Groups:

– Corvee labourers

Was the place thought to have originated as the result of divine intervention:

– No

Was the place created to mark or commemorate the birthplace of a supernatural or human being:

– No

Was the place created as the result of an event:

– Yes

↳ Specify

– Oracle

Was the creation of the place sponsored by an external financial/material donation:

– Field doesn't know

Was the establishment of the place motivated by:

– Other [specify]: Divine

Was the place built specifically for housing scriptures/sacred texts:

– No

Design and Material Remains

Overall Structure

Is the place made up of multiple built structures:

– Yes

↳ Are any of the structures attached to or associated with a landscape feature:

– Yes

↳ Are any of the structures attached to other structures:

– Yes

↳ Is there a hierarchy among the structures:

– Field doesn't know

Is monumental architecture present:

Monumental architecture is defined here as a built structure that surpasses average human proportions and in general is larger and more complex than is necessary to fulfill the structure's utilitarian function(s). Examples of monumental architecture include Mesopotamian Ziggurats, Egyptian Pyramids, Greek and Roman temples, Mesoamerican Pyramids, North American and Aegean burial mounds, etc.

– No

Is the structure/feature made out of natural materials:

Answer [Yes] for each material type

– Yes

↳ Earth

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– Yes

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– No

↳ Sand

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– Yes

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– No

↳ Clay

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– Yes

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– No

↳ Plaster

– Field doesn't know

↳ Wood

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– Yes

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– No

↳ Grass

– Field doesn't know

↳ Stone

– Yes

Notes: Stone is not primarily building materials, but applied to some components of the buildings

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– No

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:
– Yes

↳ Other
–Other [specify]: Plant

Is the structure/feature made out of human-made materials
– Field doesn't know

Decoration

Is decoration present:
– Field doesn't know
Notes: Assuming yes, but no archaeological evidence to indicate

Iconography

Are there distinct features in the places iconography:
– No

Beliefs and Practices

Funerary Associations

Is this place a tomb/burial:
– Yes
Notes: Burial for divining text archival
– No
Notes: The multiple structure include temples

Is this a place for the worship of the dead:
– Yes

↳ For the worship of a deceased person(s):
– Yes

↳ For the worship of a deified human:
– Yes

↳ For the worship of a deceased hero:

– Yes

Is this a place for treatment of the corpse:

– Yes

↳ Cremation:

– No

↳ Mummification:

– No

↳ Interment:

– Yes

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

↳ Exposure to the elements:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

↳ Secondary burial:

– Yes

↳ Re-treatment of corpse:

– Yes

↳ Other intensive (time/resources expended) treatment [Specify]:

– Other [specify]: Ceremonial event

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

Co-sacrifices are animal/human sacrifices prompted by the death of the primary occupant of the tomb/burial.

– Yes

↳ Human:

– Yes

↳ How many humans are present:

– Number of human sacrifices:: Hundreds but no specific

↳ Out-group humans are sacrificed:

– Yes

↳ In-group humans are sacrificed:

– Yes

↳ Other humans are sacrificed:

– Other [specify]: Royal family

↳ Animal:

– Yes

↳ How many animals are present:

– Number of animals:: Hundreds but no specific

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

↳ Personal effects:

– Yes

↳ Valuable/precious items:

– Yes

↳ Significant value:

Gold, jade, intensely worked objects, or meaningful symbolic value

– Yes

↳ Some value, valuable or useful objects:

– Yes

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: Persona adornment, drink and food offering

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

↳ As cenotaphs:

– No

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

↳ Family tomb/crypt:

– No

↳ Domestic context:

Interred beneath floors of house, or in areas of domestic activity

– No

Supernatural Beings

Is a supreme high god is present:

– Yes

↳ Are they anthropomorphic:

– Yes

↳ Are they sky deity:

– Yes

↳ Are they chthonic (underworld)

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are they fused with king/kingship role (king = high god)

– Yes

↳ Are they the monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:
– Yes

↳ Are they kin relation to elites:
– Yes

↳ Are they other type of loyalty or connection to elites:
– Yes

↳ Are they unquestionably good:
– Field doesn't know

Does the supreme high god communicate with the living at this place:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:
– Yes

↳ In dreams:
– Field doesn't know

↳ In trance possession:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Through divination practices:
– Yes

↳ Only through religious specialists:
– Yes

↳ Only through monarch:
– Yes

Are previously human spirits present:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can be seen:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:
– Field doesn't know

Do human spirits communicate with the living at this place:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:
– Yes

↳ In dreams:
– Field doesn't know

↳ In trance possession:
– No

↳ Through divination practices:
– Yes

↳ Only through religious specialists:
– Yes

↳ Only through monarch:
– Yes

Are nonhuman supernatural beings present:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can be seen:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:
– Field doesn't know

Do nonhuman spirits communicate with the living at this place:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

↳ In dreams:

– Field doesn't know

↳ In trance possession:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Through divination practices:

– Yes

↳ Only through religious specialists:

– Yes

↳ Only through monarch:

– Yes

Are mixed human-divine beings present:

– Yes

↳ Mixed human-divine spirits can be seen:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Mixed human-divine spirits can be physically felt:

– Field doesn't know

Do mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living at this place:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

- ↳ In dreams:
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ In trance possession:
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Through divination practices:
 - Yes
- ↳ Only through religious specialists:
 - Yes
- ↳ Only through monarch:
 - Yes

Is the supernatural being/high god present in the form of a cult statue(s):
– No

Supernatural Interactions

Is supernatural monitoring present:
– No

Do visitors communicate with the gods or supernatural beings:
– No

Ritual and Performance

Sacrifices, Offerings, and Maintenance

Are sacrifices performed at this place:
– Yes

- ↳ Are there animal sacrifices:
 - Yes [specify]: Ox, deer, sheep, pig, any exotic

- ↳ Are there human sacrifices:

– Yes

↳ Adults

– Yes

↳ Is biological sex available from evidence:

– Male

– Female

↳ Children

– Yes

↳ Is biological sex available from evidence:

– Male

– Female

↳ Foreigners and/or slaves

– Yes

↳ Is biological sex available from evidence:

– Male

– Female

↳ Elites

– Yes

↳ Is biological sex available from evidence:

– Female

↳ Are the sacrificed humans associated in some way:

– Yes [specify]: Separate burials

Are there self-sacrifices present:

– Field doesn't know

Are material offerings present:

– Yes

↳ Are material offerings mandatory:

– Yes

↳ Are material offerings composed of valuable objects:

– Yes

↳ Are material offerings composed of daily-life objects:

– Yes

↳ Are material offerings interred at this place (in caches):

– Yes

Is attendance to worship/sacrifice mandatory:

– Yes

↳ By all the community

– Yes

↳ By specific individuals

– Yes [specify]: King /diviners

Is maintenance of the place performed:

– Field doesn't know

Pilgrimage and Festivals

Are pilgrimages present:

– Field doesn't know

Is this place a venue for feasting:

– Field doesn't know

Are festivals present:

– Field doesn't know

Divination and Healing

Is divination present:

– Yes

↳ Divination by examination of the exta:

Animals remains, internal organs, answer this question and subsequent question once for each species

– Yes

↳ Species

– Yes [specify]: Ox and turtle

↳ Part

– Yes [specify]: Bone

↳ Remains are consumed:

– Yes

↳ Remains are disposed of:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Divination through human communication:

– Yes

↳ Is a human being the vehicle for the oracle:

– Yes

↳ Is a human being the interpreter of the oracle:

– Yes

↳ Are the oracle interpreters of a specified sex/gender:

– Yes

↳ Are the oracle interpreters of a specified ethnicity:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are the oracle interpreters of a specified class:

– Yes

↳ Is sex-deprivation required:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are intoxicants required:

– No

↳ Physical ordeal required:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Divination through animal-behavior:

– No

↳ Divination through non-living material:

– Bones

Is healing present/practiced at this place:

– No

Do rituals occur at this place:

Rituals are visibly enacted behaviors by one or more people for the purposes of religious observance.

– Yes

↳ Do large-scale rituals take place:

– Yes

↳ Do small-scale rituals take place:

– Yes

↳ On average how many participants are present in large-scale rituals:

– specify: Hundreds

↳ How often do these rituals take place:

– specify: Annual or event-specific (wedding, outing, hunting etc)

- ↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:
 - Yes
- ↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:
 - Yes
- ↳ Are there synchronic practices:
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Are there intoxicants used during the ritual:
 - No

Institutions and Scriptures

Religious Specialists

Are religious specialists present/in charge of this place:

Religious specialists are individuals whose primary duties within a population group are not concerned with subsistence or craft production but the maintenance of the religious landscape and culture of the group.

– Yes

- ↳ Present full time
 - Yes
- ↳ Present part time
 - Yes
- ↳ Are the religious specialists of specific sex/gender:
 - No
- ↳ Are the religious specialists of specific ethnicity:
 - No
- ↳ Are the religious specialists of specific class/cast:
 - Yes
- ↳ Are religious specialists dedicated to the place for life:

– Yes

↳ Are the religious specialists stratified in a hierarchical system:

– Yes

↳ Is access within the space segregated by this hierarchy:

– Yes

Does this place incorporate a living space for religious specialists:

– Yes

Is this place used for the training of religious specialists:

– Yes

Are there formal institutions for the maintenance of the place:

Institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders

– Yes

Bureaucracy

Is there a formal bureaucracy present at this place:

A bureaucracy consists of a hierarchical system of accounting and rule maintenance primarily concerned with material wealth.

– Yes

↳ Is a bureaucracy present permanently:

– Yes

↳ Is a bureaucracy present on a temporary or seasonal basis:

– Yes

Does this place control economic resources (land, goods, tools):

– Yes

↳ Is this control the primary supporting income of this place:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Does this place lease out land:

– No

↳ Does this place lease out tools:

– No

Public Works

Does this place serve as a location for services to the community:

– No

Writing/Scriptures

Is non-religious writing stored at this place:

Economic documents, records etc.

– No

Are there scriptures associated with this place:

– No

Bibliography

General References

Reference: Chen Shen. *Sanxingdui and Anyang: Unveiling Mysteries of Ancient Chinese Civilizations*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum Press.

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Reference: Paul R. Goldin. *Routledge Handbook of Early Chinese History*. Routledge. isbn: 9781317681915.