Chapter 28
Female Scholars and their Contributions to Chinese Archaeology

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Abstract Most China archaeologists known abroad tend to be male; however, women have long contributed significantly to archaeological practice in China and make up an increasingly larger proportion of archaeology students. This does not mean, of course, that there is a level playing field for men and women. Men more often lead field projects, and research institutions focusing on fieldwork tend to employ considerably more men, while women rarely hold high-level positions. This chapter introduces female pioneers in the field of Chinese archaeology who are internationally hardly recognized, starting with the early forerunners in palaeography and then moving on to the first women involved in excavations during the first half of the twentieth century. We then turn to the first generation of university graduates after the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), and end with a discussion of the place of women in the archaeology boom in China since the 1990s. Our focus will be on women in the People's Republic of China (PRC) actively involved in fieldwork. Additionally, non-PRC-nationals who work with archaeological material from China will receive mention.

Keywords: Chinese archaeology

Introduction

Textbooks on Chinese archaeology and other publications providing an overview of the history of Chinese archaeology tend to recount the accomplishments of an exclusively male cast (e.g. Liu 2017; Shelach 2018). These publications mention early foreign explorers such as Johan Gunnar Andersson and foreign-educated professional archaeologists, such as Liang Siyong, Li Ji (Li Chi), and Xia Nai, including internationally known figures educated in China such as Su Bingqi, or who published and taught abroad such as KC Chang, and maybe even a few well-known foreign archaeologists focusing on China such as Lothar von Falkenhausen. Female

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archaeologists are lacking from these general accounts. That does not mean that they do not exist or that they did not have significant influence on the way the field has developed. Indeed, there were women even among the earliest Chinese archaeologists, probably most notably Zeng Zhaoyu 曾昭燏 (1909-1964), graduate of Nanjing University and UCL, president of Nanjing Museum, and influential politician during the early Republican Period (Yue 2011). Furthermore, one of the most remarkable internationally known excavations of the grave of Fu Hao –a female general, shaman, and politician of Bronze Age fame– was led by a woman, Zheng Zhenxiang 郑振香 (*1929), who is widely known as an important figure in the field and is often compared to Fu Hao in terms of fierceness and accomplishments (McGuire 2014).

This chapter provides an overview of the history of Chinese archaeology from the perspective of these women, starting with female pioneers, first considering early forerunners in palaeography, then moving on to the first women involved in fieldwork during the first half of the twentieth century. We then turn to the first women to pursue a university education after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and finally, we discuss the situation of female scholars during the boom in archaeology from the 1990s to the present. We strive to be comprehensive for the early pioneers (though some may have escaped our notice); however, from the 1980s onward, the number of women in the field has increased exponentially and we thus only cover a few examples that illustrate broader trends. Thus, this chapter focuses on women in the People's Republic of China (PRC) actively involved in fieldwork and briefly mentions non-PRC-nationals who work with archaeological material from China. However, before delving into the history of the discipline, we will provide an overview of the broader political context across this period and to investigate the conditions under which they did and do work, focusing on how these conditions have changed over time.

Background: a Brief Historical Overview

There is some disagreement on the exact beginnings of Chinese archaeology; some scholars start their accounts with early historiography during the early empires (c. 1st c. BCE), which sometimes involved observations about sites and objects (Falkenhausen 1993). Others cite older traditions of antiquarianism of the Tang and Song periods (seventh–fourteenth c. AD) (Shelach 2018). Others begin with the earliest systematic excavations conducted in China, naming a variety of dates, projects, and researchers. These include the 1895 survey work on the Liaodong Peninsula by the Japanese anthropologist Ryūzō Torii (1870-1953) [Chen 1997:21]; the discovery of Zhoukoudian, the site where the Peking Man, a sub-species of *homo erectus* was found in 1921 by Austrian paleontologist Otto Zdansky (Chang 1963 and Grimberg 2019); the work at the last Shang dynasty capital of Yinxu/Anyang by Li Ji from 1928 (Liu 2017; Liu and Chen 2012); or the political date of the founding of the PRC in 1949 which was followed by the establishment of

increasingly more regulations and the establishment of institutions for archaeological research (Tong En-zheng 1995). In 2022, the PRC government declared the discovery of Yangshao, a Neolithic site famous for its painted pottery, by Swedish geologist JG Andersson in 1922 to be the official birth of Chinese archaeology, making 2022 the centenary anniversary and laying the debate to rest – at least from an official point of view.

Whatever its official "birth year", modern archaeology in China, involving systematic fieldwork and scientific analyses, is built on older traditions of antiquarianism, historiography, paleography, and new concepts and practices imported from the west in the first half of the twentieth century -during intense political turmoil. For decades, the Qing government struggled to respond to external and internal threats. During the 1890s, intellectuals grew vocally disillusioned with the imperial system of governance (see Spence 2013 for an overview of modern Chinese history). In 1912, the dynasty was overthrown by a revolutionary insurrection, giving birth to the Republic of China; but regional militarists fragmented central power within five years.

After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles generated the passionately anti-imperialist, nationalist protests known as the 1919 May Fourth Movement. Chinese intellectuals swept up in this Movement combined intense curiosity about the outside world (many sought to learn from the West by studying abroad, some of them in archaeology departments) with nationalism. Between the 1920s and 1940s, two mass political parties struggled for control of the country: the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) which, under Chiang Kai-shek, established a state in Nanjing in 1928; the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which founded rival states in southeast and then northwest China (the latter under Mao Zedong) both of whom came to be concerned with and tried to control cultural relics and archaeological work. The civil war between Nationalists and Communists continued throughout Japanese occupation of the Second World War. Four years after Japanese surrender, the CCP defeated the Nationalists and established the PRC in 1949; the Nationalists fled to Taiwan, re-establishing a Republic of China which, until 1971, represented China at the United Nations. The Academia Sinica, founded in 1928 in Nanking (now Nanjing), at that time the capital of the Republic of China, was a national research center for a broad range of fields, including archaeology. When it moved to Taiwan in 1949, many cultural relics and documents were transferred there as well. The PRC government thus had to start anew to structure and develop archaeological research, building new institutions, including university departments, museums, and publications, as part of broader efforts by the new state to define and build China's identity and place in the world.

This period was far from peaceful. Between 1949 and 1976, Mao's government launched successive political campaigns which ultimately sought to eliminate those seen as 'enemies' of the new regime, mainly landowners, businesspeople, those with Western education and contacts. Two of the most radically violent movements were the Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957-1959) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), which sought to isolate and punish any criticism of one-party rule. Both attacked

'bourgeois elements among the educated. Millions of intellectuals were imprisoned, killed, or exiled to the countryside or factories for re-education in the late 1960s and 1970s. The Cultural Revolution brought most education, research, social, and economic life to a standstill. The movement ended formally with Mao's death in 1976, though the early 1970s already saw some return to normalcy.

In 1978, following a power struggle, Deng Xiaoping became 'Paramount Leader' and introduced reforms that loosened party control on daily life and the economy, including reinstating education at all levels. After the crisis of 1989, during which student and wider civilian protests were violently suppressed by the People's Liberation Army, through the 1990s and early 2000s, China saw a period of opening up to Western investment and influence, significant improvement in living conditions, and unprecedented economic growth. However, in the 1970s, when funding was limited, the government invested heavily in education and research, including archaeology. Scientific proof of Chinese civilization's origins was crucial for boosting national self-confidence and enabling China to find its unique place in the world. The last ten years, in particular, have seen significant investment in lab equipment, the founding of new research institutions, museum building, as well as new funding for fieldwork, publications, and many new positions in all kinds of archaeology-related work units (*danwei*).[2]

The Beginnings of Chinese Archaeology in the Early Twentieth Century

For pre-twentieth century China, there are hardly any references to women antiquarians. However, the names of female paleographers emerged in the early twentieth century. While paleographers were mainly interested in finding text-bearing artifacts to fill lacunae in transmitted accounts, the interest in inscribed oracle bones led to first surveys and then scientific excavations at Anyang that are ongoing today. Accounts of the history of paleography, oracle bone studies, and textual criticism seem largely devoid of women. However, there are a few notable exceptions, above all **Rong Yuan** 容媛 (1899-1996) and **You Shou** 游寿 (1906-1994), both born into influential scholarly families with the means and drive to provide higher-level education for all their children, both male and female (He 2014). The same seems to apply to most women of that generation who became archaeologists – or academics in other disciplines, for that matter. Women were allowed to enrol in universities in China from the late 1920s (Lee 1995), but it took longer for them to be accepted

[2] The term *danwei* 单位 (sometimes translated as "work unit") refers to one's place of work. Until recently one would not apply for a job but be assigned to a *danwei* who would also take care of the employees' housing and other aspects of life. Until the present, archaeological *danweis* (most often provincial or city archaeological institutes, sometimes universities or other research institutions), control access to sites, materials, and is listed as the main author of publication reports.

into prestigious institutions such as Peking University as students, let alone faculty members. At first, there were usually confined to attending separate women's institutes, as was the case for Rong Yuan while her brother Rong Geng (1894-1983), likewise a palaeographer was accepted into Peking University to study with the famous oracle bone scholar Luo Zhenyu (1866-1940) at Peking University. Nevertheless, Rong Yuan came to join Peking University as an archivist and compiled several catalogues and reference works that remain important for palaeographers today (Rong and Rong 1936; Rong 2009). You Rong studied at the co-educational Jinling University (1934-36) rather than at a women's college (He 2014). Like Rong, she first worked in an academic auxiliary role as a librarian and helped set up the Central Museum, the earliest central public museum in China established in 1933. In 1951, however, Shou became a professor of palaeography and pre-Qin literature (Li 2017). Her specialty was paleography, but she also wrote about archaeological material and conducted surveys of medieval sites, albeit not until the 1970s and 1980s, and she did not excavate herself.

Excavations on Chinese soil had commenced already in the 1920s, but were conducted by entirely male teams, in the beginning largely geologists, many of them foreigners (Fiskesjö and Chen 2004). Much of their work had the air of adventurous exploits involving physical hardship; while devoid of female participants, these expeditions were also almost completely lacking in professional archaeologists from China. The earliest Chinese archaeologists were all trained abroad, be it in the US such as Li Ji (1896-1979), Liang Siyong (1904-1954), and Feng Hanyi (1839-1977), or in the UK such as Wu Jinding (1901-1948) and Xia Nai (1910-1985). One of the few women to study archaeology abroad was **Zeng Zhaoyu** who became one of the most famous female archaeologists in China and the only female archaeologist mentioned in the 1986 edition of the Encyclopaedia of China (Xia 1992).

Like other early female university graduates in any field, Zeng was from a prominent and highly educated family (Yue 2011). She first studied at Nanjing Central University and then attended University College London (UCL), making her one of the very few Chinese women to study archaeology abroad (Yue 2011). She learned excavation techniques under Sir Mortimer Wheeler alongside Wu Jinding and Xia Nai (until his death in 1985 the dominant archaeologist in China). In 1937, Zeng graduated from UCL with a master's degree and planned to attain a doctorate but broke off her studies due to turmoil of World War II (Yue 2011). Upon her return to China, Zeng joined the preparatory group to establish the Central Museum (with You Yu working under her). Working on projects by the Central Museum and Academia Sinica, from 1938 to 1941, Zeng conducted early excavations in Southwest China, an area that had seen hardly archaeological work before (Tang 1986). In 1941, Zeng was appointed director of the preparatory offices of the Central Museum. After the end of the war, Zeng moved to Nanjing as the second in command of the Central Museum (from 1949 the Nanjing Museum), with Xu Pingyu as director. In 1950, she became Vice-President and in 1955 President of the Nanjing Museum and served on a variety of committees, among them the editorial board of *Kaogu* 考古, one of the three big archaeological journals. She published several

book-length reports and studies, though often under the *danwei's* name (e.g., Nanjing 1957; Wu et al. 1942).

In 1951, Zeng was politically targeted, wrote the required self-criticism, was sent to do manual labour but was soon rehabilitated. She went on to serve on various political bodies (National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; third National People's Congress). Nevertheless, her family background made her a figure of suspicion to the CCP (Yue 2011). Her brother, Zeng Zhaolun, was labelled a rightist in 1957, his wife, Yu Dayin, committed suicide and he died shortly after. Other relatives suffered similar fates, and in 1964 Zeng Zhaoyu committed suicide by jumping off the pagoda of Linggu Temple.

There are many other scholars whose lives were severely impacted by political turmoil, sometimes quite tragically as in the case of Zeng, other times mostly impacting their careers. One of the latter is **Zhou Yongzhen** 周永珍 (1926-2018), who was one of the few women of this generation who obtained a position at the most prestigious research institution for archaeology, the Institute of Archaeology (subsequently, the Institute) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS; in 1977 the Institute moved to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, CASS). She came from a prominent and highly-educated Manchu family with all siblings going to university. Zhou graduated in Chinese Studies from Yenching University in 1952 and was recommended by Chen Mengjia (1911-1966, paleographer, archaeologists, and expert for oracle bones) for a position at the Institute. There, she became Chen's assistant, excavated at numerous sites, served as head of the highly important Anyang workstation from 1958-1961, and secured a position also for her husband, Zhang Changshou (1929-2020), who had been one of her classmates at university. It was Zhou who loved fieldwork, though, and worked tirelessly, seeing her children little but leaving them in childcare most of the time (pers. Comm. Zhang Xiaozhou). Nevertheless, in the end it was Zhang who rose through the ranks all the way to director of the institute while Zhou's career was cut short because she was close to Chen and did not cut ties with him even when he was labelled a Rightist and capitalist intellectual, being persecuted and dying as a result in 1966. For Zhou, having been Chen's student and assistant, together with her noble Manchu background made her highly suspect, and she received severe criticism. Subsequently, she was moved from active field archaeology and research to the editorial department. She did continue helping with analysing finds and writing reports, but is largely not listed as author or contributor (e.g. Chen 2004).

It is interesting to note that Zhou's fieldwork and career does not seem to have been interrupted too much by marriage or child-rearing both of which made a career in archaeology difficult for other women of her generation. **He Zhenghuang** 何正璜 (1914-1944), for instance, though continuing working after the birth of her two children, did no longer take part in fieldwork. Having been born into a wealthy scholarly Chinese family in Tokyo, she had studied art history at Wuchang College of Fine Arts (graduate 1934) and Tamagawa Art School in Japan until the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) cut her studies short (He 2014). In 1940, she joined the Northwest Cultural Relics Survey established by the Ministry of Education. The

only woman in this group of ten scholars, she served as administrative assistant rather than researcher. Still, she seems to have played an important role in this first large-scale survey to record the now-famous Buddhist grottoes of Luoyang Longmen and Dunhuang as well as numerous Han to Tang period tomb murals (3rd through 8th c. CE), making use of her art-historical training and drawing skills (Cai 2014). She worked side-by-side with her husband, the survey director and fellow art historian Wang Ziyun (1897-1990; married in 1940). They moved together from institution to institution, first to Northwest University in Xi'an, then to the Chengdu Arts College in Sichuan, and finally back to Xi'an because He Zhenghuang was assigned to the Xi'an Forest of Stele Museum in 1950 while Wang joined her in 1952 to settle at Northwest University. She had stopped active fieldwork after the birth of their first child in 1943 and came to work largely as a curator but also writing numerous books and papers about stone inscriptions, stone carving, and museology, appearing also on TV in a series about Chang'an (Cai 2014). Her travel diaries have been published (He 2010) and provide insights into her life as well as into the beginnings of archaeological and art historical research on Han-Song period Northwest China, and she remains a major figure in the field. She was just able to have a notable career, albeit retreating from active fieldwork much earlier than any man would have done.

Other women were less fortunate, be it due to circumstances or due to less-supportive partners and families, such as **Zhou Yingxue** 周英學 (1911-?). As the only women on the excavations at Anyang in the early 1930s, she is quite well-known but had a short career. She graduated from Beijing Art College, and was immediately assigned to the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica to help with drawings (Shih 2017:179-182). Soon, however, she came to organize everything related to finds processing, and she apparently took somewhat of a leadership role (Lishi 2021). However, after marrying in 1933, Zhou left archaeology and not much is known about her later life (Liu 2017). Other women such as **Wang Jiechen** 王介忱 (dates unknown) were much involved in fieldwork but remained a helping hand in the shadows. Wang was married to the famous archaeologist Wu Jinding and she is frequently mentioned in connection with is work but does not seem to have received formal training in archaeology or had an independent career of her own (Li 2018; Lin and Chen 2003). She was part of the survey near Dali, Yunnan, followed by several seasons of excavation from 1938-1940 that also involved Zeng Zhaoyu (1913-1999); this was a highly important project laying the foundations of field archaeology in Yunnan (Deguo 2021). Zeng and Wang co-authored the site report with Wu Jinding (Wu et al. 1942), creating a cornerstone of the archaeology of Southwest China. In 1942-43, both women were also part of the Chuankang Historic Sites Investigation Group that involved a two-year excavation project of cliff and chamber tombs (Li 2018). After Wu passed away from cancer in 1948, nothing more is known about the whereabouts of his widow or potential children. While Wang seems to have been instrumental in recording and sorting finds and even writing the report, she thus always remained in the shadow of her husband. There might well be other wives, daughters, and female local assistants who helped in

archaeological projects or and/or worked in the background in field stations, museums, or libraries but did not come from well-known families, did not have higher-level education, or lacked sufficient personal stature to be widely remembered.

The First Generation of China-trained Archaeologists graduated in the 1950s and early 1960s

From the beginning of the Republican Period there was a strong drive to systematize the local training of young talent in archaeology. Two early archaeological teaching and research units had been established in the 1920s: in 1921 at Peking University and one at Tsinghua University in 1925, but both lasted only briefly (Beijing 2010). At Peking University, in 1923, the Archaeology Society was founded in the Department of History to engage in fieldwork in various regions; all were entirely male enterprises, and led by philologists, palaeographers, and historians. Other universities also established archaeological research units, but formal training was established only in the 1950s. After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, archaeological work became systematized and controlled by the State Bureau of Cultural Relics in Beijing (dormant during the Cultural Revolution then re-established in 1973; later National Administration of Cultural Heritage; NCHA). Furthermore, in 1950 the Institute of Archaeology –dominated by Xia Nai for most of his active years– was established at CAS. In 1952, as the first university in China, Peking University established archaeology as a major under Su Bingqi (1909-1997) in the History Department who employed archaeologists trained abroad such as Liang Siyong and Xia Nai. It was only in 1982 that an independent Department of Archaeology was established, adding a Museology major in 1988. In 2000, it was renamed the School of Archaeology and Museology (Beijing 2010). In 1956 and 1960 respectively, Northwest University (Xibei 2021) and Sichuan University (Lishi 2020) founded archaeology programs too, however, establishing full-fledged archaeology programmes took too long to train up the fieldwork personnel immediately required for excavations. Therefore, in 1952-55, the Institute, the State Culture Bureau, and Peking University co-organized four three-month training courses consisting of six weeks each of classroom teaching and field training, followed by a shorter course in 1956. University courses in archaeology also emphasized fieldwork training. The number of trained archaeologists in the country thus increased rapidly from only a handful at the beginning of the Republican Period to over 500 in 1956 (Liu Li 2017).

One of the few women on these early short courses – in her case the third one in 1954 – was **Wang Jin** 王劲 (1926-2020) who became a leader in fieldwork. She had previously served briefly as deputy curator of the Changyang County Cultural Centre, and after the short course she was assigned to the Hubei Provincial Museum. There she rose through the ranks, serving first as research librarian, then becoming Vice Director and finally Director. Not much is known about her family or how she fared during the political upheavals of the Mao era. She lost her husband in 1970 but never remarried and had no children, devoting her life to archaeology. In the

late 1970s, she co-founded and became the first head of the Chinese Archaeological Society (1979-1996), a non-profit academic association of Chinese archaeologists established in 1979 (CASS 2015). She spent decades in the field, more than even most of her male colleagues, leading many archaeological excavations at important sites that shaped the field and our understanding of the prehistory and early history of China (Zhang and Pan 2019). This includes culture-defining sites such as Jingshan (Qujialing culture) and Shijiahe (Shijiahe culture), the copper mining site of Tonglüshan, the Shang-period Panlongcheng site, the famous water-logged Chu tomb Manshan M 1 at Jiangling, which revealed well-preserved textiles and other organic remains. Her key achievements include establishing the chronological framework for the Neolithic at the middle Yangtze, exploring the relationship between that region and the Central Plain, and researching metal exploitation and production in early China (e.g. Hubeisheng 2001 and 2008). However, she published largely under the name of her *danwei*, making her contributions difficult to trace. Nevertheless, she is one of the few women mentioned in the *Great Dictionary of Chinese Archaeology* (Wang 2014:91), and one of the few archaeologists to be listed in the *Dictionary of Famous Chinese Women* (Huaxia 1988:39). She retired only in 1990 and continued serving in advisory capacities for years after.

Another highly influential female archaeologists of this generation who is still alive and has been much interviewed is **Zheng Zhenxiang** 郑振香 (*1929), born into an academically minded family (Zheng 2013; Zheng and Li 2014). She worked at Peking University Museum from 1950. After the restructuring of the archaeology degree in 1952, she became one of the first students of archaeology there, studying Shang and Zhou archaeology with Su Bingqi and Yin Da (1906-1983), thus obtaining credentials from study with some of the most significant figures in the field.[3] After graduation in 1959, she was given the choice to either teach at Peking University or work at the Institute; she opted for working at the research-focused Institute because she felt that fieldwork was the key to understanding archaeology (Zheng and Li 2014). There she took the lead at several excavation projects, helping in particular to develop the local chronology while also training a next generation. As her first project, she was leading excavations and training Peking University students at Wangwan and organizing publication of the excavation report (Zhongguo 1989). Wangwan (Luoyang, Henan) is a particularly important site as it helped clarifying the transition period from early/middle Neolithic Yangshao to late Neolithic Longshan cultures. In 1962, she was assigned to the Anyang excavation team, establishing the four-phase chronology which is still employed today.

Archaeological work was largely suspended during the Cultural Revolution, with exception of rescue excavations, but in the winter 1975-76, Zheng and her husband and fellow archaeologist Chen Zhida (1927-?, employed at the Institute from 1958 and assigned to Anyang alongside Zheng) discovered a group of Shang royal graves at Xiaotun, which came to be the site of a major excavation project over 1,000 m^2, uncovering 46 building foundations, 165 pits, and 54 tombs. Among

[3] See Evasdottir 2004 for the role of the 'oligarchs' in archaeology.

them was the tomb of Fu Hao 妇好 (c. 1200 BC), consort of Shang king Wu Ding, military general and caster of oracles who is mentioned on oracle bone and bronze inscriptions as well as transmitted historical texts. To date, her grave is the only high-ranking Shang grave that was found intact, allowing archaeologists a rare glimpse at a complete burial assemblage of a Shang royal (Zhongguo 1980). The excavation report was published under the name of their *danwei* but co-authored by Zheng and Chen, as were many subsequent excavation reports from Anyang. She remained head of the Anyang Archaeological Team for many decades and served as head of the Chinese Archaeological Society, receiving numerous awards for her work (Wang 2018). Her meticulous excavation work and subsequent publications made Zheng famous as "First Lady of Chinese Archaeology", but many emphasize her strictness (McGuire 2014). She married and had children, but that did not keep her from conducting fieldwork and staying in the field for months at a time. Only in her fifties did she move on to focus on publishing as most archaeologists will, leaving the fieldwork to younger colleagues (Zheng and Li 2014).

The Institute, while until the present male-dominated, enabled many women of this generation to make their careers. Until the present, the Institute is the most prominent archaeology *danwei* in the PRC, conducts large-scale excavations all across China, and has substantial funds, thus allowing its researchers to gain access to large amounts of first-hand material at highly important sites. Furthermore, it promotes its scholars via print and online media, making them appear even more prominent. The difference between working at the Institute and working at another fieldwork-oriented *danwei* is best illustrated by **Zheng Xiaomei** 鄭笑梅 (1931-2014) and **Ye Xiaoyan** 叶小燕 (*1933), both of them from Wenzhou, Zhejiang, classmates at Peking University graduating in 1956 and immediately joining the Institute. While Ye stayed there until her retirement, Zheng was transferred to the Shandong Provincial Institute of Archaeology in 1962, simultaneously serving as Vice Chair of the Archaeological Society and Director of the Chinese Archaeological Society (Ye 2014; Zhongguo 2014). She is known to have devoted her life to archaeology (probably meaning that she had no husband or children), taught on many of the training courses for archaeological professionals run by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (one of the few if not the only woman alongside Su Bingqi, Yu Weichao, Zhang Zhongpei, Yan Wenming, and other famous male colleagues), and was involved in excavations at many important Neolithic sites. These include Banpo and Miaodigou (both Yangshao-culture sites in the Yellow River Valley famous for their sophisticated painted pottery and crucial to research on ceramic technology in China) and especially Dawenkou where she took a leading role (Zhongguo 2014). Dawenkou is the name-giving site to the Dawenkou culture, partially contemporaneous with Yangshao, known for its fine black pottery and jades, and of particular interest to research on emergence of social complexity. In spite of this important work, it is difficult to gain a full overview of Zheng's contributions as most of her publications appeared under the name of her *danwei*.

Ye worked at Midaodigou, too, and also at numerous other excavations conducted in the 1950s, but then she moved toward sorting and publishing previously

excavated materials finds from various projects including Anyang (1958-1959), and Warring States and Han tombs in various locations, returning to fieldwork briefly only in 1983-4. This break may have been caused by a combination of political unrest and potential child-rearing responsibilities. In spite of this break, as she analysed and published finds from major sites, she had a major influence in the field, her impressive publication list including many excavation reports (largely under the name of her *danwei*), book-lengths studies, and research papers. Her most important work includes research on the Han tombs of Manchang (Zhongguo 1980) and the Great Wall (Ye 2011). Nevertheless, she never became as famous as her female contemporaries at the Institute Zheng Zhenxiang and Shao Wangping.

Like Zheng Zhenxiang, **Shao Wangping** 邵望平 (*1937) got married to a fellow archaeologist and Institute colleague (Gao Guangren, *1938), but was majorly involved in a large number of excavations throughout her career, without needing to retreat from active fieldwork due to childcare concerns as Ye and others have done. Shao emphasizes the importance of conducting fieldwork over decades as the basis for in-depths archaeological research, and the support from and partnership of her husband (Shao and Li 2011). Shao and Gao were both Peking University graduates, studying there from 1945-59, and at the Institute they came to work together a lot focusing on the archaeology of Shandong Province. Her career was probably dampened a bit by her being the daughter of a landowning family (Shao and Li 2011:17); this may also be the reason why it took until 1990 for her to become a fully-fledged research associate and professor at the Graduate School of the Institute in spite of her leading many excavations and compiling numerous excavation reports. With her husband, based on decades of fieldwork, she wrote a longue-durée history of Shandong from the Palaeolithic to the Western Han which is authoritative in the field (Gao and Shao 2005). Additionally, Shao did quite innovative collaborative research on other topics such as paleoenvironmental reconstruction and the history of astronomy (Shao 2014). Her work on one of the most prestigious topics in the field, the origins of Chinese civilization, is also much-quoted. Furthermore, she contributed to various volumes in both English and Chinese providing overviews of Chinese archaeology consulted by students and scholars alike (e.g. Chang et al. 2005; contributions to Xia 1992; Xu and Zhang 2004; Zhongguo 1962), thus exerting much influence in the field, by far more than her husband, in fact.

Fan Jinshi 樊锦诗 (*1938) is another scholar whose husband –also an archaeologist and fellow classmate at Peking University – ended up being less of a big name in the field than them; in Fan's case, her husband Peng Jinzhang (1937–2017) even changed his direction of research (he used to work on the highly-prestigious field of Shang and Zhou archaeology, teaching at Wuhan University) and left his main career path to follow her, albeit after decades of living in separate locations (Fan and Gu 2019). That it took so long probably had a lot to do with the unstable political situation (he moved only in 1986) and the fact that Dunhuang where she worked had no suitable schools for their two children. When Fan was first assigned to work in Dunhuang, her father urged her not to go because the living and working conditions were so rough, and while she insisted on going, she assumed she would

not stay long. Nevertheless, she remained there her entire career and is now called "daughter of Dunhuang" in reference to her lifetime of work at and for Dunhuang, and there is a Shanghai opera of that name telling the story of her life (Qu 2019; Zhou 2019). The area around Dunhuang in Gansu Province, Northwest China, is home to numerous Buddhist cave sites, the most famous one being Mogao Grottoes which are known for their large number of Buddhist sculptures, frescos, and manuscripts dating from the 4th to the 13th c. CE. In 1962, Premier Zhou Enlai initiated a conservation project at Mogao Grottoes and Fan was one of the students sent there to conduct initial fieldwork and then return after graduation (Fan and Gu 2019).

At the Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics (since 1984 the Dunhuang Research Academy), Fan rose from low-level employee to deputy director (1984-1997), then director (1998-2014), and later honorary director. She was a driving force in recording and preserving the caves using a wide range of techniques including early photogrammetry and working with the Getty Conservation Institute in Losa Angeles to develop conservation protocols (Makinen 2014). She also established a chronology of the caves and laid the foundation for the current understanding of Buddhist art in the region. Some of this work is now published in a 26-volume series under the name of the Dunhuang Institute (Dunhuang 1999-2005). She also published many stand-alone books and papers on Dunhuang. At the same time, she did much to promote and protect the site. In 2015, a tourism company applied for permission to make the site a theme park which Fan strongly opposed, so the plan was dropped (Wong 2015). Instead, Fan initiated the digital documentation of Dunhuang both for research purposes and visitor experience. Digital Dunhuang, launched in 2016, allows anyone to see the caves from anywhere without endangering them (Dunhuang 2015-2021). The list of her additional roles is log, including student supervisor at Lanzhou University, vice-president of the Dunhuang Turfan Society, and Head of the Yangzi River Civilization Archaeology Research Institute (Qu 2019). From 1987-2013, she also held various political positions and received many awards. Despite being highly decorated, she reflects bitterly on people calling her stern and even inhumane (CCTV 2019). Similar vocabulary has been used for Zeng Zhaoyu and probably other successful women in various fields.

Zhuo Zhenxi 禚振西 (*1938) is one of the female figures in the field who is described by students and colleagues as nurturing, good-natured, and fun-loving (Wang 2020). She herself emphasizes that she was lucky, having a supportive husband and working with excellent colleagues and students, which helped mitigate the hard conditions in the field (Yan 2008). She also worked closely with her husband, Du Baoren, likewise an archaeologist, but he is difficult to trace. They took turns with childcare and fieldwork until the children were old enough for both parents to leave on fieldwork together (Zhao 2012). Like in the case of Fan, it was Zhuo rather than her husband who took the lead in research. She was one of the earliest and highly influential archaeologists to conduct systematic research on high-fired ceramic wares, combining decades of fieldwork with scientific analyses and conservation work, things that are usually done by separate specialists. She was an early archaeology graduate from the Department of History of Northwest University

(1957-1961) and was then dispatched to the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology where she remained until her retirement in 1998 – though with a break during the Cultural Revolution when she was sent to the countryside for "social education activities" (Zhou 2008). Already in 1973, when the Cultural Revolution was not quite over yet, she was put in charge of excavations at Yaozhou kiln site at Huangbaozhen, Shaanxi Province (Wang and Zeng 2008). Yaozhou was a major centre for production of high-quality stone ware during the Tang and Song period (seventh-thirteenth c. CE), first producing three-colour *sancai* ware and later chiefly celadon/greenware which is also sometimes referred to as Yaozhou ware. Zhou contributed significantly to understanding the development of both technology and organization of production at Yaozhou and has been much sought after for distinguishing the wares from different kilns and periods. Besides writing numerous excavation reports (eg Shaanxisheng 1992; Shaanxisheng and Yaozhou 1998), she also contributed to volumes on the history of Chinese ceramics, though they are mostly published under the name of various *danweis* (Zhongguo 1982). As customary in the field, once she had reached an advanced career stage, she also started publishing articles in her own name, many collaboratively involving scientific analysis of archaeological ceramics. She has been more invested in teaching than many of her contemporaries, probably because her expertise in ceramics was much sought after. Even after officially retiring in 1998, she continued serving as curator and researcher at Yaozhou kiln, is still a member of various committees for evaluating art, and standing director and academic committee member of the Chinese Ancient Ceramic Society. She has received a considerable number of awards within China and abroad (Wang 2020).

It is remarkable that all successful female archaeologists of this generation seem to have had leading roles in archaeological excavations at important sites and hence access to what Evasdottir (2004) identified as the most important currency in the field of archaeology in China (and elsewhere): access to archaeological data. While not mentioning the power dynamics involved, Evasdottir points out that fieldwork allows archaeologists to make connections not only with other archaeologists but with people from all walks of life both in the city and the deep countryside, living under often extremely hard conditions. Like Zheng Zhenxiang, Shao emphasized that fieldwork was essential for doing archaeological research. As Evasdottir has shown, this is the traditional way of making one's way in the field that men have to follow, doing the grunt work of excavating under harsh conditions for months and years, organizing the material and reports into publications published under the name of the *danwei*, and starting single-author broad-brush opinion-shaping work on large questions only in one's fifties or sixties. The careers of the women discussed above ran along these very lines and through the same stages as that of her male colleagues. It is also noteworthy that nearly all of them seem to have attained high ranks and have become influential in the field. They are/were revered, often feared figures who have received high honours and governmental recognition. They went through the same kind of career progression as their male contemporaries, first excavating for decades under difficult circumstances, writing reports that would not

always mention their names, and in later career stages finally publishing their own insights in article form and going in new directions, often combining this writing work with teaching and political engagement. Sometimes they would start a little lower and take a little longer to reach the top than their male peers, but eventually they got there and stayed there. That was only possible because many of them found a solution for combining family life and field research, mostly with the support of husbands who were likewise in the field. Of course, successful male archaeologists largely also had supportive families in the background, but this traditional split of gender roles (the husband having the higher-level position and full career, the woman taking on more flexible work that allowed her to take on more childcare and household responsibilities) is often assumed without looking further into the actual role and career of the partners in question. Interestingly, some of the women mentioned above do remain a step behind their husbands in terms of official position yet are often able to be equal to or even surpass them in academic achievement.

Overall, while the number of women in this early generation of archaeologists was small, making up less than 10% (Evasdottir 2004:246), those who were trained in archaeology nearly all stayed in the field, were able to direct their own research projects and rise in the ranks, in way generally equal with their male counterparts. As Zhang and Meng (2014) and Evasdottir (2004) have pointed out, this is likely the outcome of a combination of factors: 1. the absolute need for archaeologists; 2. the societal view in the 1950s through 1970s which emphasized gender equality which for a short time allowed women to make a career in a broad range of fields. This changed for later generations. Both men and women born in the 1940s rarely managed to attain higher-level education due to the Cultural Revolution while in later generations societal attitudes shifted and positions increasingly more filled with men. Even though from the 1990s women made up at least 50% of each undergraduate archaeology class, hardly any of them became field archaeologists and were able to participate in excavations (Evasdottir 2004:246). In the 1950s, women had high positions in party politics, but also here their number dwindled in later decades. The transition seems to have occurred after the Cultural Revolution, though many of the first generation of female graduates still made a name for themselves and are important in the field until today, their remarkable resilience having been partially honed by the difficult times they lived through in their youth.

The Classes of 1977 and 1978: a new Beginning after the Cultural Revolution

Much of China's education system came to a halt during the Cultural Revolution. This movement stopped university education from 1966-1972; academically competitive university entrance examinations restarted only in 1977. The first group of students to pass this exam are referred to as the class of 1977, while the students who enrolled in September of the same year are referred to as the class of 1978. Many of them had not been able to finish high school due to the Cultural Revolution

and were thus past the usual age when the examination resumed, so these older cohorts were given special dispensation to participate in the exam until 1979 (Xin and Gregory 2002). The six classes of middle and high school students of 1966-68 (at the time aged between 13 and 18) are generally referred to as *laosanji* (or old third class). When they finally were able to enter university in 1977-79, they were thus quite a bit older than some of their classmates who came to start their studies at the standard age of 17-19. University freshmen classes from those years were thus diverse in age and experience of the Cultural Revolution: some had done agricultural work in remote areas, others had worked in factories, and many had witnessed or engaged in political movements. Most of them graduated in 1982 but a few of the *laosanji* who had been away from schooling for an extended period graduated a year or two later. The number of universities that offered archaeological training and degrees increased dramatically, as did their graduates (both male and female). More of these received both undergraduate and graduate degrees, some going on to obtain doctorates. However, the number of female archaeologists with a master's or doctoral degree in this generation remains relatively low (Zhang and Meng 2014). There are too many to introduce all of them in detail, but the '77 and '78 cohorts from Northwest University, who had a high female student intake (based on a photo for the '77 cohort, 21 men vs 5 women; Qiao 2016) can serve as an example (Table 1).

It becomes immediately clear that a shift has taken place in terms of research topics, most of the women in these two cohorts focusing on Tang-Song material, and most of them concentrating on documentation, archiving, and publishing rather than conducting their own fieldwork. For most of them, their fieldwork involvement seems to have been limited to the earlier part of their career, possibly before marriage and children, but their lives are not as well-documented via interviews as that of the early female pioneers. It is noteworthy that some of the 1977-78 graduate generation, those who went on to do further studies, went abroad, namely Ye Wa Liu Li, and Huang Xiaofen (Qiao 2016), as did at least one of their contemporaries from Peking University, Bo Xiaoying 薄小莹 (*1950, BA (1978-1982) and MA (1987-1990) from Peking University), who, like Liu Li, came to study with KC Chang at Harvard, albeit without attaining a degree. She focused on the Wei to Tang period and later worked on Dunhuang material, teaching at the History (not Archaeology) Department of her *alma mater* until retirement, and publishing numerous books and articles (Bo 2017). Bo and Ye were both born into prominent families whose offspring all attained higher education but also suffered to varying degrees during the political upheavals of the twentieth centuries. Much information can be found about both families, and thus indirectly (though much less) on their archaeologist daughters (Ye 2014). All students of this generation spent time on the countryside and/or with factory work, suffering hardship but also growing resilient (if they survived). Compared to these hardships, fieldwork in poor and remote locations was probably not too daunting. Nevertheless, there was much more pressure on them to stay at home to raise children than was the case for earlier generations. Evasdottir (2004:238) cites a case of a woman who had studied archaeology at

Beida in the 1960s and met her husband there, and they took their children into the field twice, but this was seen as dangerous to the children and bad parenting reflecting poorly on both parents, so they finally gave up and the woman became a librarian at the archaeological *danwei* that continued sending her husband to the field.

Nevertheless, several female archaeologists of this generation have come to lead highly successful field projects, though some of them were able to do so only after their children were grown or by remaining childless. Among them are Liu Li and Ye Wa. Teng Mingyu 滕铭予, BA (1982), MA (1989), and PhD (2001) graduate in archaeology of Jilin University, now professor at Jilin University, is another example. Her research focuses on the classical periods of the Warring States, Qin and Han Dynasties, with a regional focus on Northern China (fitting with the location and focus of her university). It is engaged with the application of natural science methods and spatial analysis in archaeology until and beyond her retirement in 2020 (Sang 2020; Teng 2021). Like Liu Li, she directs large projects, often in international collaborations, most frequently with scholars from the US and Israel involving both fieldwork and lab analysis. This interest in archaeological sciences seems to mark the beginning of a trend that continues among later generations of women in Chinese archaeology, a trend toward a focus on lab research and archaeological sciences. Another early and highly prominent example is Wu Xiaohong 吴小红 (*1964), a Beijing Normal University graduate in physics rather than archaeology (BA 1981-85, MA 1985-88, PhD 1993-1996), who took over the radiocarbon lab at the School of Archaeology at Peking University (established only shortly after the first such lab at the Institute in 1965) in 1997, becoming the go-to person in China for radiocarbon dating as well as for other types of scientific analysis including isotope studies and material analysis. She was involved in and often led high-profile projects, producing an awe-inspiring number of publications under her own rather than her *danwei's* name (Wu 2021), while also spending time the field and training a new generation of archaeological scientists.

The number of female archaeologists born in the 1950s and 1960s is considerably larger. Zhang and Meng (2014) count a total of 110 women actively engaged in archaeological fieldwork but making up probably less than 20% of the archaeological workforce. As their data is largely based on the 2009 Compendium on Chinese Cultural Heritage Experts, these reflect only the workforce and not the number of archaeology graduates. Zhang and Meng's data clearly shows that for the generation born between 1950 and 1970, the majority of women tend to be employed in museums and/or engaged in library or organizational work in various cultural institutions, attaining higher ranks less often than their older female peers, let alone their male colleagues, often in local-level cultural heritage institutions, presumably allowing them to combine family obligations and work. It would be valuable to compile information on university entrance/graduation by gender and subsequent area of occupation, both for this generation and for later generations which are not included in Zhang and Meng's study.

The Boom of Archaeology and a new Crop of Female Archaeologists: 1990s to the Present

Over the last decades, the number of universities that offer archaeology degrees, the range of specializations, the number of scholars employed at degree-granting institutions, and the number of students admitted to the programmes have risen dramatically. Today, in China alone 25 universities offer archaeology teaching, some in stand-alone departments, others in history departments, and a very few in anthropology departments (following the US tradition). The highest-ranked programmes are at Peking University, Jilin University, Northwest University, Shandong University, Sichuan University, and Nanjing University. Additionally, the Institute of Archaeology also offers graduate training. Each of these institutions produces many graduates, making university positions increasingly competitive. Posts at the Institute, the most prestigious of all units involved in archaeological research, are even more difficult to attain. However, there are plenty of positions within cultural heritage administration including roles in the NCHA, and provincial, county, and city level cultural heritage units, including museums and other research and heritage protection units. The NCHA is in charge of museum development and management, cultural relics protection, and is the main body granting permits for planned field research. Rescue excavations do not require NCHA permission but are overseen by the large number of cultural-heritage related *danweis* on provincial, county, or local level. All of them employ graduates from archaeology, conservation, and museum studies programmes. Provincial and City Institutes of Archaeology are the most active in day-to-day fieldwork, mostly rescue excavations, and –as in previous decades– recent recruits end up spending much time in the field. Higher-level research institutions and universities have the luxury of doing planned excavations that are often shorter, though most archaeology programmes require students to spend a half-year in the field, and younger teachers are often in charge of overseeing these training excavations and thus end up being in the field for months as well.

Many graduates also find employment in libraries, archives, and storage facilities at all the institutions named above but also at publishing houses and journals. These include the big publishing houses with long histories mostly since the 1950s such as the Cultural Relics Publishing House, Science Publishing House and People's Press as well as regional- and local-level publishing houses. There are the big three journals (*Kaogu xuebao* 考古学报, since 1929; *Wenwu*, since 1950; *Kaogu*, since 1955), and since the mid-1970s an increasingly large number of local journals at various levels, so many, in fact, that not a single library in China has complete runs of all of them. Compared with most other countries, where archaeologists have difficulty finding employment, in the PRC there is a wide range of employment opportunities, even if not always in the most coveted locations.

Since the 1990s, growing numbers of students have decided to study archaeology abroad. Trying to avoid a brain-drain in all fields, since 1996 the Chinese Scholarship Council has offered fellowships to support graduate students studying

abroad, who after graduation must return to the PRC to work for two years (CSC 2021). Outside the PRC, there are several universities in various countries with faculty specializing in Chinese archaeology, though some students are advised by faculty who specialize in other areas of the world, and a growing number of Chinese students also decide to focus on the archaeology of places other than China.

Indeed, over the last ten years especially, the Institute of Archaeology and some of the larger universities have started research projects not just in neighbouring regions of Asia but also as far afield as the Americas, Africa, and recently Egypt and the Mediterranean world. This trend started in the early 2010s and the Institute of Archaeology established a designated Research Center in Foreign Archaeology in 2017 (CASS 2017). Abroad, besides China-archaeologists affiliated with archaeology/anthropology departments, there are also scholars in art history or Chinese studies whose research speciality is Chinese archaeology or who deal in part with archaeological finds. Indeed, in Europe, for instance, most students who want to learn about Chinese archaeology have to get training in Sinology and/or Art History to be able to pursue their studies; the latter department in particular tends to have high numbers of female students. Additionally, there are some scholars at museums with a sizable Chinese collection, and several researchers with changing affiliations depending on research projects. Since 2000, the DAI (German Archaeological Institute) has had a female China-focused archaeologist (Mayke Wagner) as scientific director for the Eurasian Archaeology Division. Female China-archaeologists like her with a non-Chinese workplace will require separate study.

Given the large number of archaeology graduates, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive overview of the percentage, focus areas, and career progression of female vs male archaeologists even for the PRC since the 1990s. Here we take the leading degree-granting research institutions, namely, Peking University, Jilin University, Northwest University, and the Institute at CASS, as case studies, compiling the number of female vs male scholars and listing the female scholars with information on name, rank, age, and research focus (Tables 2-3). It is notable that all of them have recently branched out, creating sub-sections for archaeology, conservation, cultural heritage management, and museum studies. By percentage, women (though more numerous than in previous decades) are still in the minority (on average 15-20%), though at Northwest University they make up over 35%. In all cases, the number of women is particularly high in science, conservation, and cultural heritage management, which probably explains the high percentage of women at Northwest University which is particularly strong in these areas. The field research stations of CASS, however, entirely lack female archaeologists, and women are also rare among CASS-affiliates at excavating *danweis* (eg Provincial or lower level Institutes of Archaeology), suggesting that these still hesitate to employ women.

In her study undertaken in the 1990s, Evasdottir (2004:166) observed that while they are young, unmarried, and childless, women are expected to go to the field as much as men, but women between 21-40 years of age are expected to marry and have children and are thus no longer taken to the field. In a *danwei* whose main task is excavation-related, having many women among the employees may thus pose

difficulties. Furthermore, in the 1990s, especially in local-level *danweis* in smaller cities and towns and in field stations, living and working facilities were often cramped, making it even more difficult to accommodate women, even if they themselves were willing to take on the hardship. Other types of social behaviour between archaeologists (and indeed government employees more generally speaking), are likewise considered culturally inappropriate for women. Men smoke and drink at banquets until late at night and reach agreements over work only in the early morning hours; it is not considered appropriate for a woman to smoke or drink to the same extent or stay out that late with the men. They thus face a career handicap. Foreign women can sometimes get away with such behaviour (as observed by Evasdottir and the non-Chinese women among the authors of the present paper), but Chinese women may not. Men who do not drink (be it for health or religious reasons) may be similarly disadvantaged, as Evasdottir points out. Given that over 20 years have passed since Evasdottir's research, these issues will require further research. For instance, the importance of late-night banqueting and smoking during fieldwork has diminished in recent years. For one, smoking on site is now frowned upon as it may contaminate C-14 dates. Also, ever fewer urban men smoke. Furthermore, since Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign, banquets involving large amount of alcohol can no longer be charged to institutes' expense accounts (*baoxiao*), meaning that such events may become less important for establishing and maintaining networks, launching projects, and gaining access to material.

Looking at the individual scholars (Table 3), it is notable that many of them are relatively young, partially because the scholars who graduated in the late 1970s and 1980s are now of retiring age, partially because archaeology departments have grown substantially, allowing for the hiring of many new scholars, and partially because the number of female archaeology graduates have increased dramatically, women usually making up over 50% and sometimes as much as 80% in a first-year undergraduate cohort (Da 2021). Interestingly, within CASS, in publishing, data curation, and archaeological sciences, a considerable number of women obtained their MA or sometimes BA in the 1990s and then settled in a steady position that did not require or even allow for fieldwork or much career advancement, presumably because such posts are more easily combined with perceived family obligations. Among more recent PhD graduates, there is a strong tendency for women to focus on Cultural Heritage Management, Museology, or lab work, be it archaeological sciences broadly speaking or conservation work. Positions in newer disciplines involving a lot of lab work, training in the hard sciences, and statistical analysis such as scientific dating, human osteology, palaeobotany, zooarchaeology, and material analysis are if not dominated then at the very least equally represented by women, again possibly because of the lack of a need for extensive travel or work away from home for lab-based work. Another factor may be the general perception in China – quite different from most western countries – that women are better at "spatial matters, detailed work, and mathematics" (Evasdottir 2004:240), so they are commonly asked to do organisational, statistical and computer work, and artifact drawings, meaning that they are more likely to get jobs at museums, in libraries, and tourist

attractions, often in quite good locations but with no access to original field data which Evasdottir has rightly identified as the main currency for archaeologists.

Nevertheless, in recent decades lab results have become increasingly important relative to excavated material, especially as the former can be published in high-ranking foreign journals which have come to be of major importance in career advancement. Indeed, the old structure of archaeologists mostly focusing on excavation reports published under their *danwei's* name until their late 40s and only then starting to publish papers under their own name has been dissolving. China has jumped onto the publish-or-perish bandwagon established by western (mostly US-driven) academia, taking it to new levels by requiring doctoral students to publish a certain number of papers before being allowed to graduate and making career progression so dependent on a point-system of publications and other achievements that even established scholars may be downgraded if they fail to publish in high-ranking journals for several years. In this world, people directing archaeological science labs have a clear advantage as they can publish large numbers of articles in group-research relatively quickly, placing them in high-ranking international journals and thus helping the career of everyone on the author list. While this might be to the advantage of the many women involved in lab research, it will require larger-scale data mining to establish who leads which labs and who ends up citing whom.

The more traditionally prestigious topics in Chinese archaeology – debating the emergence of 'Chinese Civilization' and developments in Neolithic, Three Dynasties, and less commonly Warring States and Han China – have always been the focus of the big and nearly exclusively male names in the field. This part of the discipline seems to cling still to the older convention of scholars only slowly stepping out of their teacher's shadows in their late 40s to publish their own opinion pieces. Also, the line-up of officials and speakers at the recent celebrations of 100 years of Chinese Archaeology has been nearly exclusively male, as is the cast of actors at major archaeological conferences in China that are all by invitation only. If anything, the percentage of women in senior positions in the field of archaeology seems to have decreased rather than increased (see Zhang and meng 2014, comparing women born in the 1950s-60s to earlier generations). For the 1990s, Evasdottir (2004:245) concluded that women can attain high positions in mid-level *danweis* up to provincial institutes of archaeology in less important provinces, but not at the lowest or highest levels as national leadership roles are still firmly in the hands of men while on a small-town level female leadership is generally not accepted. But things have changed considerably in recent years, and further research is necessary to understand the changed networks of obligations. For instance, it would be interesting to conduct a large-scale survey of the employment structures at local archaeological institutes who usually do most of fieldwork and thus hold power over the raw data. Likewise, gender statistics on first-year undergraduates in archaeology and their career progression over time would provide deeper insights. Issues with harassment in the field also need to be explored further (Schneider et al. 2020), although the PRC has had several examples of senior male professors who were recently demoted for harassing students (Sun and Hu 2014). The way forward to

understand the situation of female and other minority archaeologists in China is ethnographic research, interviews, broad data collection on student numbers, gender ratios, career progression, and publication and citation patterns. The insights gained from such in-depths and broad-based work will help highlight issues and develop ways for improving the situation of women and other minorities in the field as well as enhancing the visibility of their contributions.

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