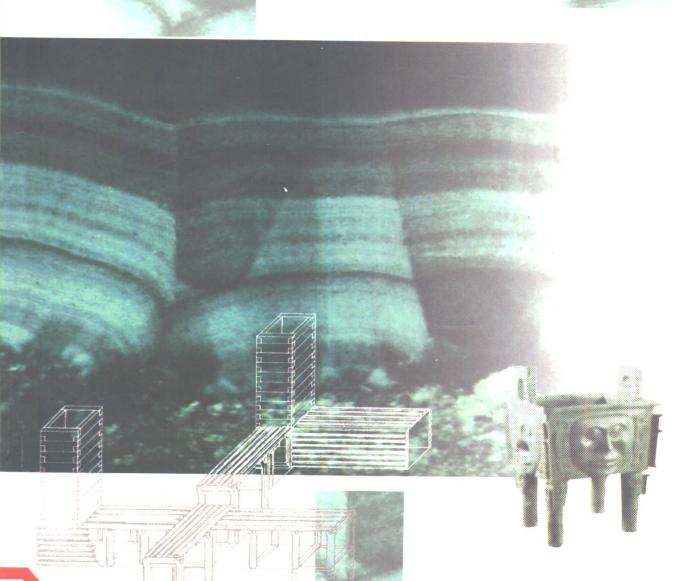
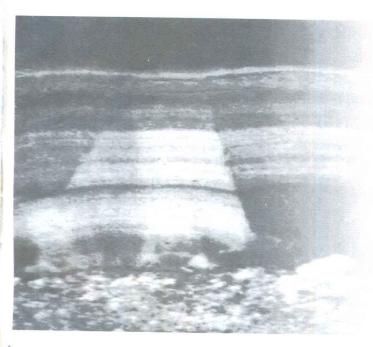
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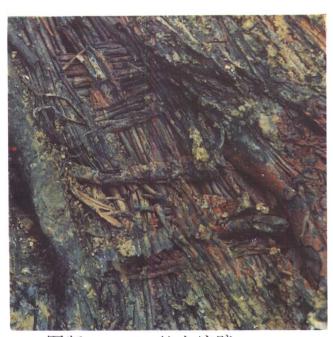
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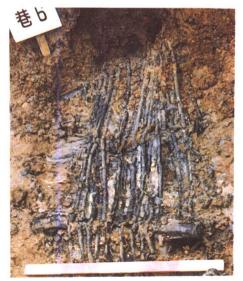
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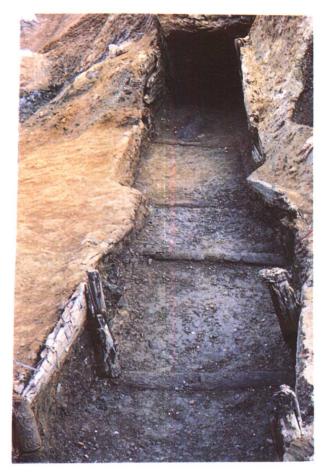
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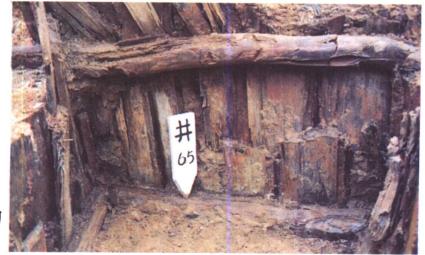
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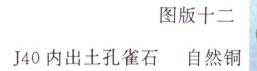
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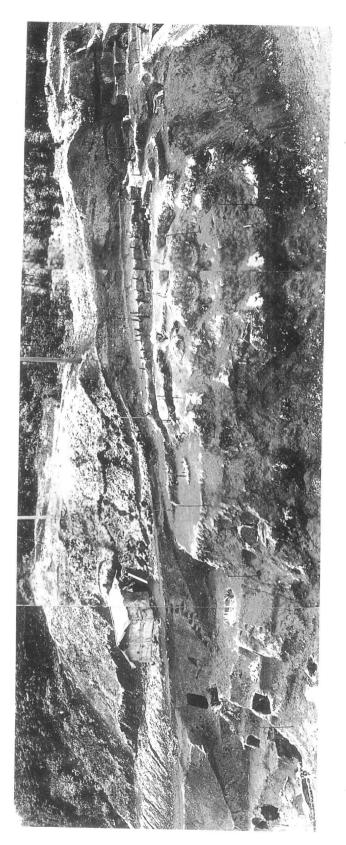
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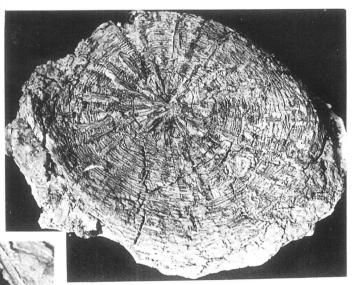
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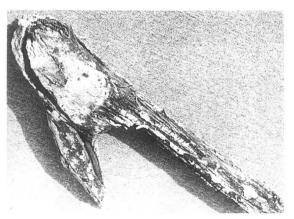
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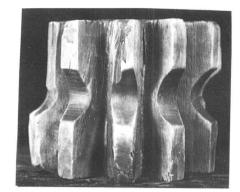
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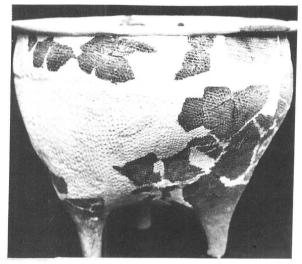
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EXCAVATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE TONGLING ANCIENT MINE: THE REMAINS OF AN ANCIENT COPPER MINE English Abstract

Tongling is an ancient mine site located along the southern bank of the Yangtze River at Xiaban village, Reichang city, Jiangxi province. The site was discovered in 1988 and subsequently excavated for four years (1988—1992) by The Jiangxi Archaeological Institute and The Reichang Museum. Important archaeological data pertaining to ancient mining have been recovered from the site. The ancient mine dates to ca. 2500—3300 B.P.

The site consisted of both a mining and smelting area. The mining area occupied more than 60,000m², and the smelting area occupied about 10,000m². An ancient cinder deposit, about 2-3 meters thick and weighing more than 300,000 tons was located near the smelting area. Many archaeological data have been obtained from the mining area; they pertain to open—pit features, shafts and gallerys propped up by mine timbers, an ore—dressing area, and work sheds. Among the artifacts recovered were mining tools, mine haul, and articles for daily use. The analysis of the stratigraphy, ¹⁴C dates obtained from the mine timbers, and pottery classification indicate that the ancient copper mine was used from the middle Shang period to the early Eastern Zhou Dynasty.

During the early period mining focused on the open pits and the upper levels within the shafts. During the later period mining activity occurred mainly in the lower levels of the shafts. Some of these shafts were as deep an 30—40 meters below the current surface. Several techniques found in the ore—dressing area were advanced compared with those found in other ancient mines in the world. These techniques included the use of wooden sluice, draw water washing, and ore—dressing circuits. Some of the hoisting machines found in the mining area are the earliest of their kind. These machines include wooden leverage, wooden pulley, and wooden winch types.

The Tongling ancient mine is the earliest large mine found in China to date, and its discovery is significant for Chinese archaeology. The recovery and analysis of Tongling ancient mine should be extremely valuable for studying the history of metallurgy and reconstructing ancient mining techniques in China and comparing them with techniques used elsewhere in the world.

Today the lower and middle Yangtze area of China is famous for its rich copper mineral resources. Since the 1970s, several large copper mines have been exploited in the area, among them Tonglushan mine and Gangxia mine in Hubei province, Tongling mine and Nanling mine in Anhui province, and Mayang mine in Hunan province. The location of these modern copper mines suggests that the lower and middle Yangtze area was an important source of raw materals for the bronze industry in Chinese history. The discovery of the Tongling ancient mine indicates that Chinese Bronze originated and was independently developed in China.

This collaborative study was directed by Liu Shizhong, Associate professor in Jiangxi Archaeological Institute, and the study was supported by the Chinese Social Science Foundation. The book, published by Jiangxi Scientific Press, consists of three parts; archaeological findings, archaeological analyses, and appendix. The archaeological findings report on the excavations, which document in detail the data recovered from the site. The archaeological analyses consist of several multidisciplinary research papers, including such subjects as the nature of the copper mine, mining techniques, ore—dressing techniques, reconstruction of mining machines, the trade of raw materials, testing the depth of the shafts. The appendix includes C¹⁴ dates, the wood identification of mine timber, the metal identification of raw materials, and the identification of the cinder.