A000-Asia-China-Sichuan-Sanxingdui-Maskette-Bronze-3700-2100 BCE



Figs. 1-2. China-Sichuan-Sanxingdui-Maskette-Bronze-3700-2100 BCE

**Case No.: 5**

**Accession No.**

**Formal Label:** China-Sichuan-Sanxingdui-Maskette-Bronze-3700-2100 BCE

**Display Description:**

**Accession Number:**

**LC Classification:**

**Date or Time Horizon:**

**Geographical Area:**

**Map:**

**GPS coordinates:**

**Cultural Affiliation:**

**Media:**

**Dimensions:**

**Weight:**

**Condition:**

**Provenance:**

**Discussion:**

**References:**



Sanxingdui site (30° 59′ 34.8″ N, 104° 12′ 0″ E). Left, Location in Sichuan Province; right map of city wall enclosing ca 2.6 sq. km. and 4 major cultural areas.

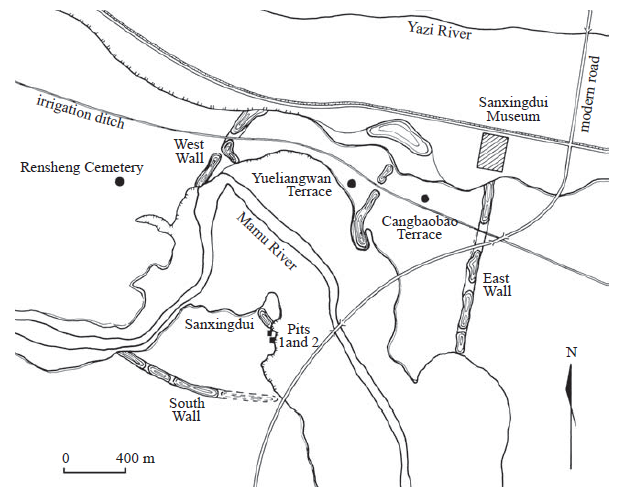


Figure 1. Map of the Sanxingdui site. After Bagley 2001: 24, fig. 1.

Sanxingdui-三星堆 (three star mound) is located about 10 km west of the city of Guanghan

廣漢, which is about 40 km northeast of Chengdu 成都, the capital of

Sichuan province (Sichuan 1999: 9, 15). Spread along the southern

bank of the Yazi River 鴨子河 and both sides of the Mamu River 馬

牧河, the site is presently known to cover an area of 10 to 17 sq. km as

determined by the distribution of artifacts.2 The center of the site is a walled enclosure that measures about 3.5 sq. km (350 ha) (Chen De’an

et al. 1998: 1) (Figure 1). The site is named after Sanxingdui because

of the major excavations in that area in 1980–1981, which established

the basic framework of periodization and cultural definition of the site,

and because of the discovery there in 1986 of K1 and K2, two “sacrificial

pits” filled with immense material wealth. These two pits revealed

the site to be a center of an early Bronze Age civilization previously

unknown.3

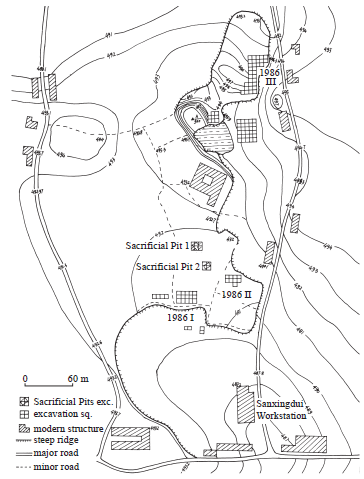


Figure 2. Excavation loci at Sanxingdui in 1986. Adapted from Sichuan 1999: 13, fig. 4.

For the absolute dating of the Sanxingdui site, the report of the

1980–81 excavations (including remarks about the 1982 excavations)

relied on the following evidence (Sichuan 1987a: 249). A calibrated

radiocarbon date was obtained from a sample of charcoal from Phase

I remains, which gives the uncalibrated radiocarbon date of 4075}100

BP (with 5730 half-life) and the calibrated date of 4500}100 BP.22 The

fine spiral pattern decorating some of the pottery vessels of Phase III are similar to the *leiwen* 雷紋 (rectilinear spirals) on Shang bronzes. Besides,

the upper stratum of the 1982 excavations yielded pottery vessels with

pointed bottom, the likes of which had appeared in abundance at the

Shuiguanyin 水觀音 site in Xindu 新都 County, a site that can be dated

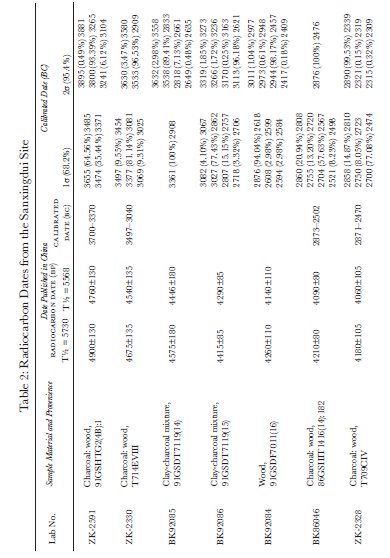
to the end of the Shang period or the beginning of the Western Zhou

period through associations in bronze.23

3700–3370 calBCE (ZK-2591, Charcoal: wood)

3497–3040 calBCE (ZK-2330, Charcoal: wood)

2873–2502 calBCE (BK86046, Charcoal: wood)



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