

Piecing Together Sha Po

Archaeological Investigations and Landscape Reconstruction

Mick Atha and Kennis Yip

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Front cover image: Lamma Island today and artist's impression of late Qing to early twentieth-century landscape of Sha Po. Illustration by Dina B. Knight.

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Preface

This book and the synthetic research it presents was the work of two archaeologists who, both separately and together, excavated and monitored various of the more recent parts of Sha Po's multi-period archaeological 'mosaic.' It was as a result of our practical involvement in Sha Po's journey of archaeological discovery that we came to recognise just how diverse, interesting, and important its human past really was. We also realised that if we were to have any hope of doing justice to the rich—but also huge and highly variable—archaeological archive, we would need to invest a significant amount of our time and find some serious funding to support the research and eventual publication of the results. We were therefore incredibly fortunate that the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust were able to generously support the project and wholeheartedly 'bought into' our overriding goal of sharing our findings with the widest possible scholarly *and* general readership. That sounds—and is—a wonderful ideal, but its practical realisation has been a far bigger challenge than we at first, naively, imagined it would be. Nevertheless, we sincerely hope that learned scholars and inquisitive students alike will find archaeological depth and detail more than sufficient for their needs. While for the non-specialists, in particular those with a more general interest in history and archaeology, we hope our 'story' is also an informative, interesting and, above all, entertaining read that helps 'bring to life' the succession of communities that inhabited ancient Sha Po and, by extension, the entire coastal region of Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta, and Lingnan.

Sha Po Tsuen: Hong Kong Archaeology in Microcosm

Introduction

For many people living in or visiting Hong Kong, archaeology is not something they readily associate with the affluent commercial metropolis. Profound surprise therefore often greets the news that Hong Kong's riches also extend to archaeology. Despite its more rural setting, the same is also often true of the territory's second largest outlying island, the tourist 'hotspot' of Lamma Island.

On the north-west coast of Lamma Island lies the popular weekend and holiday destination of Yung Shue Wan¹ (榕樹灣, Banyan Tree Bay), which is well-known for, among other things, its green environment, ethnically diverse Chinese-foreign community, eclectic range of shops, bars, and restaurants, and its contrastingly laid-back atmosphere when compared with the frenetic pace of downtown Hong Kong. It is also often the starting point for scenic walks to the island's other main settlement at Sok Kwu Wan (索罟灣)—itself famous for its seafood—via the bathing beach of Hung Shing Yeh² (洪聖爺) and, with short diversions, other beaches near the villages of Tai Wan (大灣) and Lo So Shing (蘆鬚城). However, few residents and fewer still among the many thousands of visitors passing through Yung Shue Wan each year will know that—like the three beaches to the south—it also gives its name to an Antiquities and



Plate 1: Yung Shue Wan seafront, Lamma Island



Map 1: Yung Shue Wan Site of Archaeological Interest (YSWSAI) with smaller maps showing study area location on Lamma Island and in Hong Kong region. Source: Survey and Mapping Office (SMO). 1:1000 Scale Topographic Map, Sheet Nos. 14-NE-10D and 14-NE-15B. Hong Kong: Lands Department, 2015. Reproduced with permission of the Director of Lands. © The Government of the Hong Kong SAR. Licence No. 59/2015.

Monuments Office (AMO) Site of Archaeological Interest.³ At the heart of that site lies the village of the book's title, Sha Po Tsuen (沙埔村)—literally, 'sand spit village'—which is very appropriately named given that the settlement's Old Village was built on top of an ancient storm beach or 'backbeach' full of archaeological remains.⁴

As early as the 1930s, Hong Kong's archaeological pioneers recognised that the backbeaches were some of the richest sites in the region and had been a magnet for maritime-focused prehistoric peoples.⁵ A myriad of post-war investigations—some research-driven but many more recent ones in the form of pre-development 'impact assessment' excavations—eventually confirmed that many backbeach sites, including those on Lamma, had in fact been used from prehistory right through into later historical periods, albeit discontinuously. The Hong Kong Archaeological Society was particularly active during the 1970s to early 1990s and carried out a number of backbeach excavations on Lamma, most famously at Sham Wan under the direction of Solomon Bard and later William Meacham, but also at Lo So Shing, and, of course, Sha Po Tsuen.⁶ In 1991, a Chinese University of Hong Kong team also revisited the important backbeach site at Tai Wan, which had been first highlighted by Father Daniel Finn in the 1930s.⁷

Sha Po is actually one of a small number of rich backbeach sites within areas of expanding village development,⁸ which have consequently seen a relatively high frequency of often small-scale pre-development investigations but with only limited publication and a general absence of synthetic analysis and interpretation. Their archaeological stories thus remain largely untold. It was while conducting archaeological investigations at Sha Po between 2008 and 2010 that the writers came to appreciate the area's true research potential and archaeological significance.⁹ A review of the results of almost forty trenches excavated in Sha Po since the early 1970s confirmed that the Old Village backbeach had deeply stratified archaeological deposits reflecting some 6,500 years of human history spanning the Middle Neolithic to



Plate 2: Sha Po's modern semi-urbanised setting: house arrowed with black, white, and green roof canopy marks approximate centre of backbeach, while the plateau site is marked by the low tree-covered ridge extending from the upper middle of the photo to the right-hand side of view. Yung Shue Wan's coastal market and bay are to the left, while Hong Kong Island is in the right background.

World War II, but with regionally important remains of Bronze Age and Six Dynasties–Tang date. But what makes the area doubly special is that overlooking the backbeach site from its low plateau to the north is a second, fascinatingly different, Bronze Age site at Sha Po New Village, which boasts traces of settlement and a craft workshop in which fine polished quartz earrings were made.¹⁰

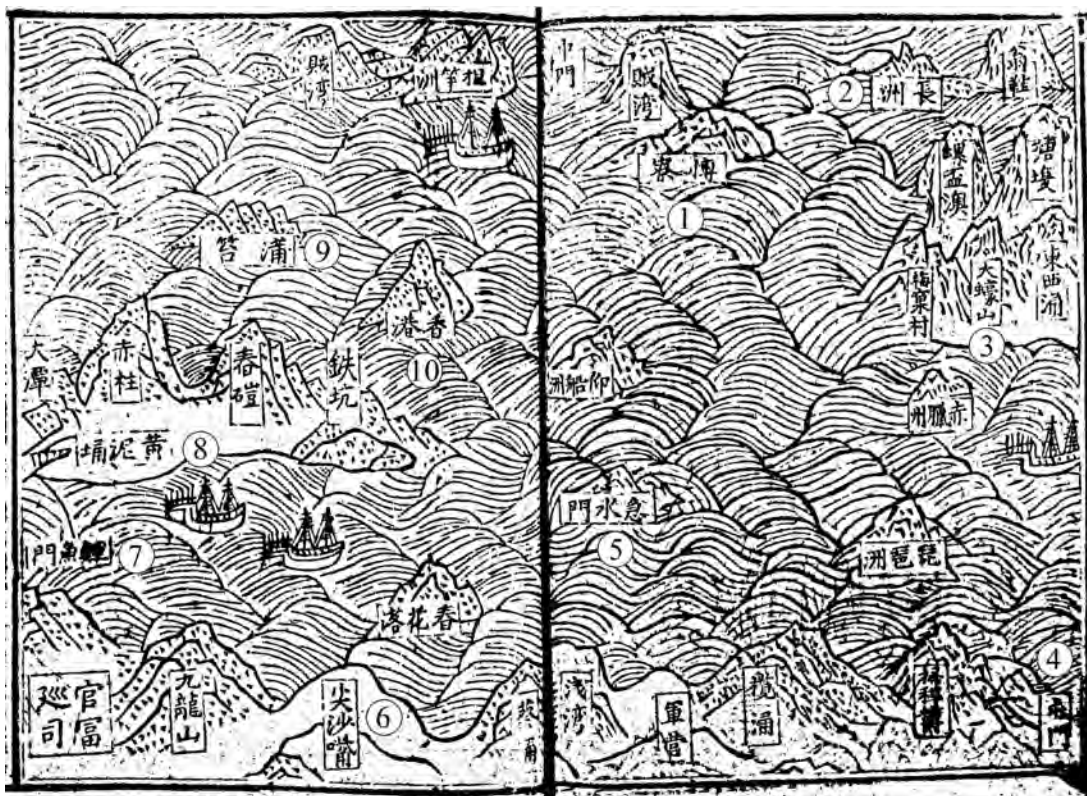
Moreover, the archaeological evidence suggested that at different stages in Sha Po's human story local communities had made very different uses of the backbeach, plateau, and surrounding landscape. This raised the possibility of reconstructing the changing lifeways and contrasting social landscapes of Sha Po's communities over their six millennia history.

We now continue by introducing the study region's recent socio-economic history, geographical context, and landscape character.

Sha Po's Local Context

Yung Shue Wan's recent socio-economic history

The earliest historical mention of Lamma Island occurs in a gazetteer of 1464,¹¹ where it is named 'Pak Lo Mountain' (泊濤山) and on a late sixteenth-century map of the Guangdong coast where it is marked as 'Pok Liu' (博寮).¹² The name 'Lamma Island' is itself an Anglicisation of the modern Cantonese name (南丫島) (literally, 'southern forked island') which, like Sha Po, is a good example of the Chinese's love of place names reflecting the local physical environment.



Map 2: Late sixteenth-century map of the Guangdong coast: (1) Pok Liu (Lamma Island), (2) Cheung Chau, (3) Tai Ho Shan (Lantau Island), (4) Tuen Mun, (5) Kap Shui Mun, (6) Tsim Sha Tsui, (7) Lei Yue Mun, (8) Wong Nai Chung, (9) Po Toi, and (10) Hong Kong. Source: Guo Fei, 'Coastal Map of Kwang Tung', in *Yue Da Ji*. Place and publisher unknown, c. 1598. Reproduced courtesy of the University of Hong Kong Libraries.



Plate 3: 1960s' overview of Yung Shue Wan and Sha Po Old Village with terraced plateau in background. Photo by Lee Kwan Wing (李坤榮).

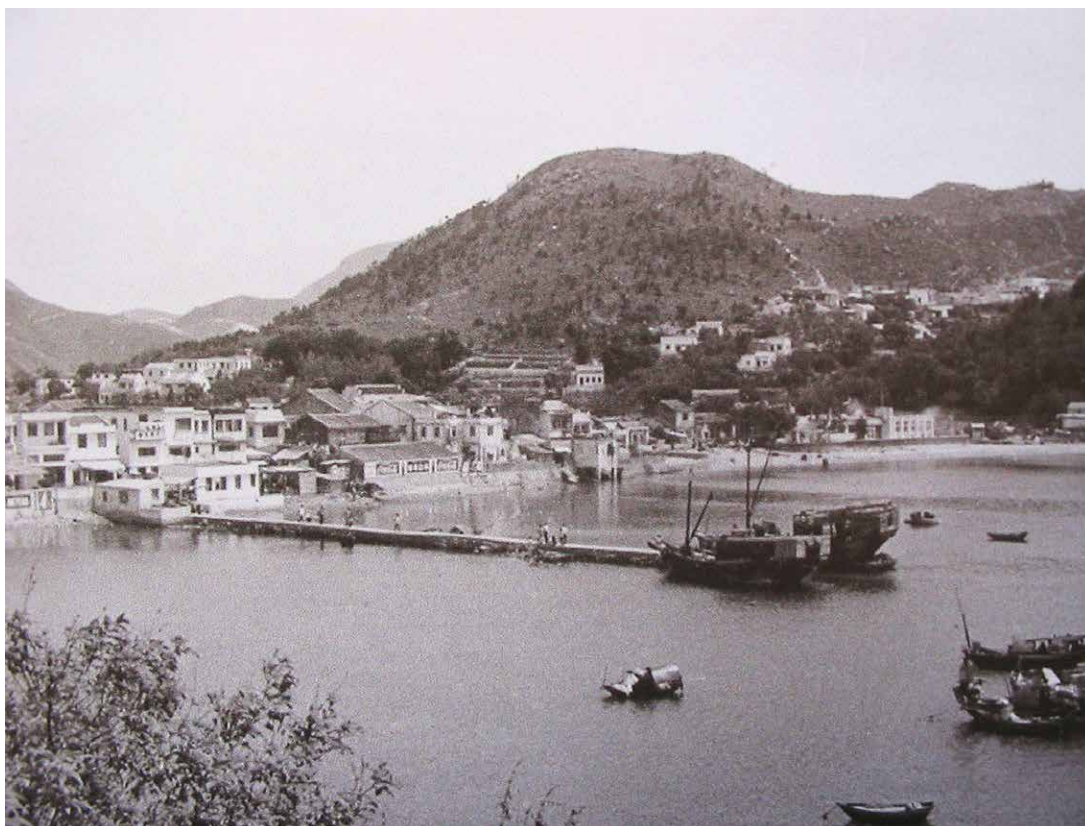


Plate 4: 1960s' view of Yung Shue Wan fishermen's pier and waterfront. Photo by Lee Kwan Wing (李坤榮).

The first records mentioning settlement and landholding in the hinterlands of Yung Shue Wan date back to the Qing dynasty, but in turn refer to an imperial land grant dating back to the Ming, when Yiu Cho of Nantou (南頭姚祖)—just across Deep Bay to the north-west of modern Hong Kong—took possession of the island. His descendants formed the Yiu Yi Yin Tong ancestral trust through which they acted as landlords to Lamma's rice-farming and fishing communities.¹³ Among Lamma's main resident clans, the earliest were the Chaus of Wang Long (橫壟)—three brothers originally of Hong Kong Wai (香港圍)—closely followed by the Chans of Tai Wan, both of whom settled and began farming in the earlier eighteenth century as tenants of the Yius.¹⁴ Their fuller story is presented in Chapter 7's discussion of the later historical archaeology of the study region, but here it will suffice to say that Sha Po Old Village was probably a late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century 'offshoot' of earlier Chau clan settlements originating at Wang Long.

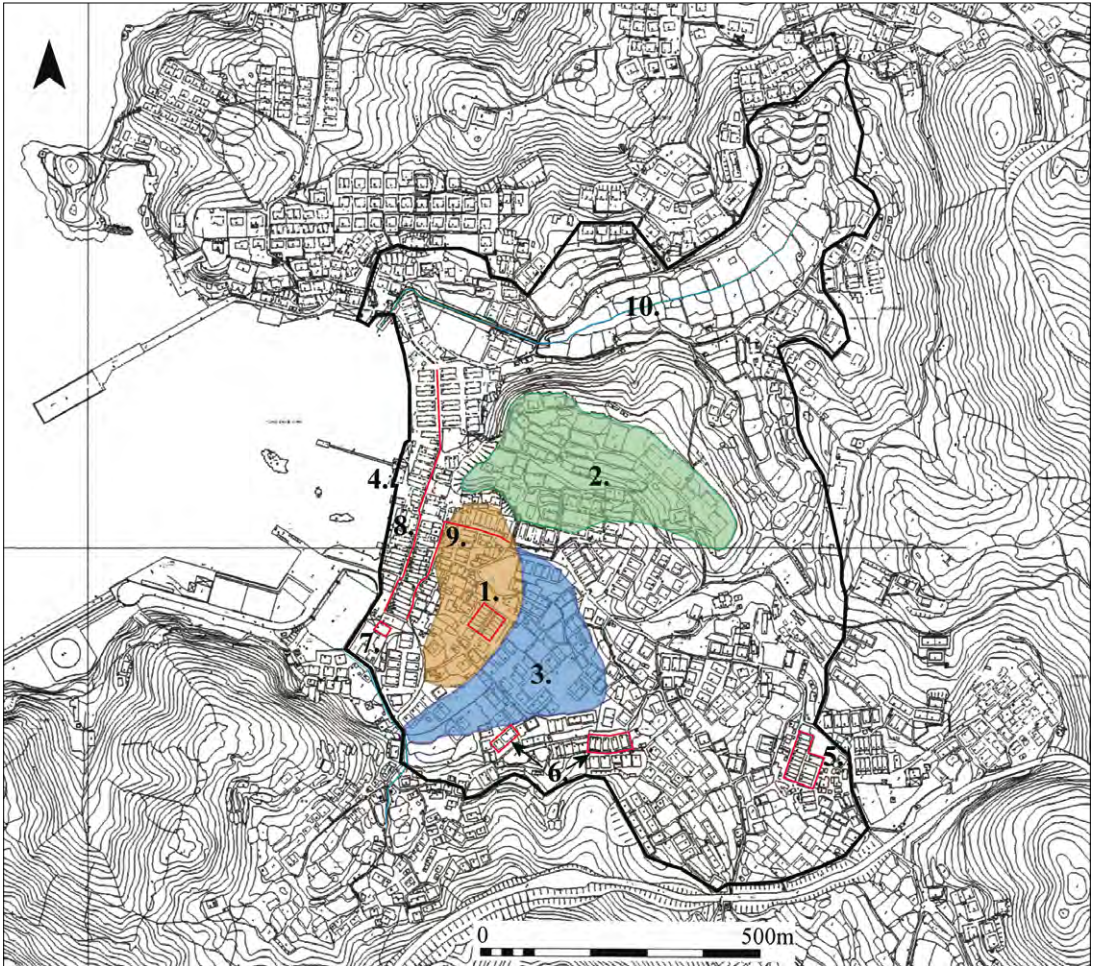
As we will see in later chapters, fishing has been an important economic activity centred on Yung Shue Wan's sheltered sandy bay from the present day back into prehistory. The more recent fishing community's Tin Hau temple was most likely erected in the later eighteenth or early nineteenth century and provided a focus for later developments.¹⁵ With the temple in place the bay's pivotal position between the fishing and farming communities encouraged the establishment of a small coastal market at Yung Shue Wan and the settlement's present form evolved from those early beginnings.

Today, the old and new settlements of Sha Po have been largely subsumed within the built-up village landscape of the larger 'commuter settlement' of Yung Shue Wan, which is now just a 25-minute fast ferry ride from the metropolitan bustle of Hong Kong's central business district. Forty years ago, though, the Yung Shue Wan area was still essentially rural in character, but had evolved into a 'satellite market gardening suburb' following the decline of the traditional rice-farming economy.¹⁶ Much of that agricultural landscape still survived until as recently as twenty-five years ago, when the patches of vegetable fields still under cultivation today at Yung Shue Long (榕樹壟) and behind Tai Wan To (大灣肚)¹⁷ were mirrored in extensive plots stretching from Sha Po all the way back to Wang Long (see further discussion in Chapter 3).

A socio-topographically defined study area

Our study area is centred upon the two Sha Po sites on the backbeach and plateau but it also embraces their wider landscape setting, which includes the Yung Shue Long valley to the north and the Wang Long valley to the south and east (see Map 1). That broader study area corresponds with the Yung Shue Wan Site of Archaeological Interest, which like many others was focused on known archaeological sites but was delimited by the sea and the topographic interface between lowlands and surrounding mountains. In truth, though, past human activities transcended those interfaces, for example through the widespread use of hillsides for cultivation terraces, fuel gathering, and burial grounds. Moreover, while local topography clearly influenced past patterns of human inhabitation and land use, the hills dividing separate 'watershed communities' were—by later historical times at least—also criss-crossed by trackways that interconnected such neighbouring communities and gave them access to local and more distant markets.

By adopting a landscape approach, we acknowledge that throughout Sha Po's human history local communities inhabited, engaged with, and experienced their local domain as part of a larger social landscape encompassing Lamma Island and its inshore waters, while at different periods in history that might also extend to the wider Hong Kong–Pearl River Delta coastal zone, and—perhaps through travel, trade, and exchange—out into the rest of Lingnan and beyond. These notions of wider connections and bigger social landscapes are then used to guide and frame interpretive narratives in later chapters.



Map 3: Map of YSWAI study area showing: (1) backbeach with Sha Po Old Village highlighted, (2) plateau, (3) lagoon (former), (4) Yung Shue Wan (YSW) market and fishermen's pier, (5) Wang Long, (6) Ko Long villages (both in Wang Long Valley), (7) Tin Hau Temple, (8) YSW Main Street, (9) YSW Back Street, and (10) Yung Shue Long Valley. Source: SMO. 1:1000 Scale Topographic Map, Sheet Nos. 14-NE-10D and 14-NE-15B. Hong Kong: Lands Department, 2015. Reproduced with permission of the Director of Lands. © The Government of the Hong Kong SAR. Licence No. 59/2015.

The physical environment

While backbeach sites are prominent topographic features on less developed coastlines around Hong Kong, the example at Sha Po Old Village is far less obvious, hidden as it is among village houses and narrow lanes behind Yung Shue Wan Back Street. Although masked by modern development, older maps, and physical traces on the ground allow the backbeach to be traced as a roughly crescent-shaped area of raised ground mirroring the curve of the pre-reclamation shoreline (Map 3 brown shading). It measures approximately 150 m north-east–south-west by 50 m north-west–south-east and has a maximum height of around 5.1 mPD.¹⁸

While reclamation works and development have obscured the natural topography of the Yung Shue Wan coastline, the seaward face of the backbeach is still visible in places. This is especially true where it slopes down towards the sea at the southern end of Back Street. Here at a distance of some 50 m seaward

or west of the highest central plateau of the backbeach, the ground is between 1.2 to 1.5 m lower, while to the rear of the backbeach there is a flat low-lying (3.7 mPD) area latterly used as vegetable fields, paddy fields before that, and earlier still it is thought to have contained a shallow—but perhaps periodically quite extensive—freshwater lagoon (blue shading on Map 3).¹⁹ An even lower area (2.4 mPD)—reportedly once flooded at high tides—formerly existed between the southern backbeach and the sand spit upon which the Tin Hau Temple and North Lamma Clinic now sit, but it is now filled in and developed.

To the north of the backbeach the top (25 mPD) and gently sloping southern flank of the Sha Po New Village plateau—known locally as Yung Shue Ling (榕樹嶺) (Map 3 green shading)—have been much altered by housing development, while the foot of its southern side and western end have both been cut back to accommodate development. Before such changes, it seems likely that the plateau's western end would have effectively divided Yung Shue Wan into a larger southern bay, with the backbeach, lagoon, and valley behind rising gently towards Wang Long, and a smaller northern bay leading into the Yung Shue Long valley. Beyond the southern end of the backbeach the land rises steeply towards the heavily wooded crest of Tai Shan (大山) at an elevation of 56 mPD.

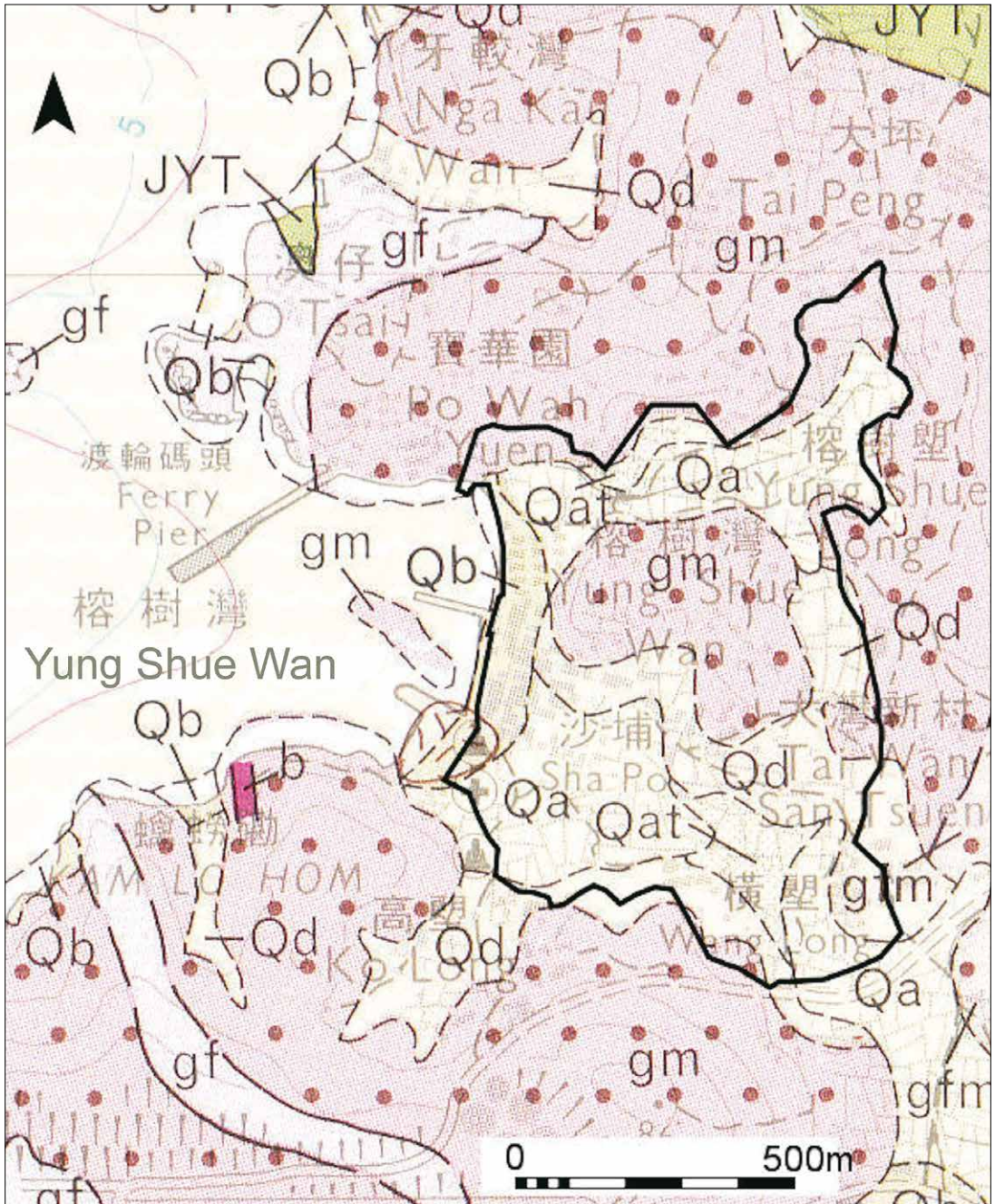
Those surface landforms are reflected in the underlying geology (see Map 4), such that in the main valley bottoms there are extensive deposits of stream-transported alluvium (Qa and Qat) fronted by an arc of sandy beach deposits (Qb) marking the modern shoreline, behind which to the south is the Sha Po backbeach. The valley sides are bordered by bands of sandy clay and boulders—so-called debris flow deposits (Qd)—eroded and washed down from the surrounding low granite hills (gm), in particular during the summer rainy season. Interestingly, the Sha Po backbeach is one of a group known to archaeologists that are not yet officially recorded on geological maps by the Geotechnical Engineering Office.²⁰

In the past, carefully managed *fung shui* woodlands²¹ were grown on slopes behind rice-farming villages as a more eco-friendly—and attractive—way of reducing landslide risk than the concrete used so widely today. While housing development has had a significant impact on the appearance of the Yung Shue Wan area since the 1970s, the same period has also seen an equally dramatic reforestation through plantations and post-agricultural scrub and woodland regeneration on hillsides that were stripped for firewood during the dark days of World War II and its immediate aftermath.²² Crucially, the study area is well watered by a number of small but perennial streams that were essential for human survival in all periods. The local drainage pattern also made the Yung Shue Long and Wang Long valleys ideal for wet rice cultivation.

A Regionally Important Site

Although a number of Hong Kong multi-period backbeach sites have seen small-scale publication as summary reports—mostly in the *Journal of the Hong Kong Archaeological Society (JHKAS)*—just two such sites have so far been more substantially published: Sham Wan (深灣) and Sha Ha (沙下).²³ However, as explained below, neither is really comparable with Sha Po, which has a quite different landscape context, qualitatively different material remains, and has seen an entirely different history of archaeological work.

With respect to Sha Po's archaeological highlights, there is the clearest evidence in the region for Bronze Age metallurgy—the melting and casting of bronze axes—occurring on the southern backbeach. Contemporary with that on the plateau we have traces of post-built structures—perhaps stilt-houses—seemingly used by craftspeople skilled in the manufacture of fine polished quartz rings. A programme of thermoluminescence testing commissioned by this project has shown that Sha Po's kiln-based salt-lime industry began in the Six Dynasties period but continued at least until the end of the Tang.²⁴ The dates



Map 4: Geological map of Yung Shue Wan. Source: Geotechnical Engineering Office. *HGM20 Series 1:20,000 Scale Map of Solid and Superficial Geology Sheet 14 Cheung Chau* (first edition). Hong Kong: Geotechnical Control Office, 1995. Reproduced with permission of the Director of Lands. © The Government of the Hong Kong SAR. Licence No. 59/2015.

seem to show a number of kilns in contemporary operation, while associated finds—including a locally unique moulded *guan* (官) brick—seemingly suggest imperial management of the industry. The rare discovery of two Six Dynasties burials with surviving skeletal remains—both apparently adult females—were found in different parts of the backbeach but both were buried with their feet pointing towards the same distant peaks on Lantau Island. Lastly, Sha Po's Qing dynasty remains served to highlight the interpretive richness of more recent periods and the need for an expansion of historical archaeological research in Hong Kong. Fundamentally, then, the nature of the evidence clearly encouraged a presentation framed in terms of a multi-period social landscape,²⁵ which is the first time this has been attempted in Hong Kong.

Moreover, in methodological terms Sha Po's history of intense but piecemeal development, and the patchwork of archaeological investigations of different scales, types, and methodologies that it produced, is fundamentally different from the aforementioned published backbeach sites at Sha Ha and Sham Wan, which had seen little or no prior development or archaeological work before they were investigated as relatively well resourced and, in Sha Ha's case, large-area excavations. In fact, if we include Father Finn's pre-war discoveries on the plateau,²⁶ archaeological work at Sha Po has occurred intermittently over nine decades, but with a particular intensity since the early 1970s. As a result, the timing, location, and even the size and shape of many of the areas investigated reflected the nature of each particular impact rather than any form of overarching research design.²⁷ Unfortunately, despite the discovery of exciting findings at Sha Po, the commercial context of many excavations meant that the time and money necessary for in-depth analysis and publication were usually lacking. Thus, although Sha Po was evidently a very important site, its prevailing context of archaeological investigation had prevented a wider recognition of the fact.

Abroad there has recently been a greater focus on using the results of development-funded excavations—unpublished 'grey literature' reports—in archaeological research.²⁸ Sha Po provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that, despite the imperfections of its rather piecemeal investigative approach, there was also a potentially rich research dividend to be derived from development-funded archaeological work in Hong Kong.

This is especially the case in areas such as Sha Po where rich archaeological sites coincide with areas undergoing expansive village development. Overall, then, there was a compelling argument in favour of researching and writing a book that drew all the strands of evidence together in one overarching reanalysis and interpretation of the Yung Shue Wan area in general and the Sha Po sites in particular.

If many passing through Sha Po are unaware of the history beneath their feet, they can easily be forgiven not only on grounds of limited publication, but also because the ancient landscape—whose most recent features remained in use and visible until at least the 1970s or 1980s—has in three or four decades been so dramatically transformed as to render it unintelligible to the eyes of all except older locals and inquisitive archaeologists. This book is our attempt to shed light on Sha Po's hidden past and in so doing reanimate the lifeways and landscapes of its past inhabitants. The next section describes how that process unfolds over the course of the following eight chapters.

Piecing Together Sha Po

We begin in Chapter 2 by presenting the twists and turns of Sha Po's 'site biography', or how over a period of eight decades our present understanding of its archaeological treasures gradually came to light. It is a story that reflects Hong Kong archaeology as a whole, in that there were the discoveries made by pre-war pioneers,²⁹ significant contributions by the Hong Kong Archaeological Society and the AMO and, most recently, a series of important finds made by archaeologists working in the commercial sector. During that

story of discovery, fieldwork progressed from poorly recorded ‘antiquarian collecting’, through more formalised research digging, into the present era of AMO-licensed excavations working to agreed research designs.

Having set out ‘how we know what we know’, we then move on in Chapter 3 to establish a fuller environmental context for the study region introduced above. We begin by exploring the making of Hong Kong’s present cultural landscape and then work back through its earlier forms, firstly into the age of rice farming where the long-term sustainable management of that particular socio-economic lifeway created highly distinctive cultural landscapes stretching back from the Qing dynasty to as early as the Northern Song in some areas. Then from the Tang dynasty moving backwards, we enter an era where, on the face of it, human impacts beyond the intensively industrialised backbeach areas seem to have been relatively slight. That said, the coastal focus seemingly exhibited by early historical populations was even more intensively expressed in prehistory when, once sea-levels had stabilised at more or less their present position, the resource-rich landscape of the New Territories and Pearl River estuary coastline and offshore archipelagos then took shape.

In Chapter 4 we begin our chronological journey through Sha Po’s human story in the earlier Middle Neolithic, providing the necessary archaeological background and context by referencing discoveries made across the wider Hong Kong–Pearl River Delta region (a format also employed in Chapters 5–7 inclusive). The backbeach evidences a major break in activity until the Later Neolithic and we suggest that the patterning of activities is suggestive of a relatively low intensity usage of the site by a small-scale community of fisher-hunter-foragers. Artefactual evidence is also used to suggest that by the end of the Neolithic the Sha Po community, like others across the region, was exhibiting features attributable to a rise in social complexity, which probably reflected both internal change and the intensification of contacts with agropastoralist groups to the north of the Pearl River Delta.

Chapter 5 examines one of Sha Po’s most fascinating and important periods of cultural development, the Bronze Age, a period during which the local community was making wider and more specialised use of the coastal landscape. On the plateau there was some form of stilt-house settlement associated with the specialised manufacture of fine quartz rings, while on the backbeach we have the region’s best evidence for non-ferrous metallurgy in the form of *in situ* bronze casting. The evidence for craft specialisation tells us that society was undergoing change and could perhaps support the work of artisans through some form of surplus production of food. Moreover, access to more advanced technology and exotic materials are both indications of a widening of external contacts, trade, and exchange, while a heightened interest in personal ornamentation and display points towards greater competition and the emergence of social hierarchies.

In Chapter 6 we explore the contrasting evidence for activity spanning the Han, Six Dynasties–Tang, and Song–Yuan periods at Sha Po. Our study of the structural remains and artefactual evidence associated with Sha Po’s Six Dynasties–Tang kiln-based coastal industry is supported by the results of a programme of thermoluminescence dating of kiln remains. Collectively, the evidence suggests that Sha Po was a planned and imperially controlled kiln complex directed towards the production of salt, with lime as a process-related by-product. In a pattern typical across Hong Kong, the industry’s post-abandonment phase is associated with Northern Song and some Southern Song–Yuan ceramics.

The final chronological discussion in Chapter 7 addresses the Ming and Qing dynasties, which at Sha Po could not be more different in that the former is virtually absent, whereas archaeological remains from the latter period are abundant and provide fascinating insights into the lives of local people. Moreover, those material remains can also be interpreted with reference to a particularly rich historical and anthropological resource resulting from documentary research and interviews with village elders between

the 1950s and 1980s. Recent historical research is a rapidly expanding field in archaeology, but sadly neglected in Hong Kong, and in this chapter we attempt to highlight its potential for the creation of more humanistic narratives and detailed interpretations than are possible in earlier periods.

Chapter 8 provides an opportunity to draw all the strands of evidence together within an overarching synthetic analysis of patterns of human activity through time, which are then interpreted in terms of the development, use, and past experience of Sha Po's multi-period cultural landscape. The shifting patterns of human activity during the 6,500-year span of our study also permit the changing backbeach landform to be modelled as it expanded westward through time.

The main text is rounded off in Chapter 9 with a series of conclusions, which reflect on the value and significance of Sha Po's archaeological resource in a local and regional context. We also offer some reflections on lessons learnt during the research that led to the production of this book and make some recommendations and predictions concerning future management of the Sha Po sites and their wider landscape.

The final substantive component of the book is our Catalogue of Selected Finds, which, as the name suggests, presents photographs, drawings, and descriptions of around forty of Sha Po's most interesting artefacts, most of which have not been seen in print before.

Conclusions

Without giving too much away, we hope in this chapter to have conveyed a sense of Sha Po's archaeological significance and revealed sufficient glimpses of its fascinating story to have whetted the appetite for the journey of exploration that lies ahead. That journey begins in earnest in Chapter 2, with our review of the process of investigation and discovery that provided the raw materials for this book. So we now move on to explore how we came to know so very much about the people and social landscapes of ancient Sha Po.

Notes

1. Place names within Hong Kong are given Cantonese transliterations in accordance with *A Gazetteer of Place Names in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories*, 2nd ed. (Hong Kong: Colonial Secretariat, 1969) with their Chinese characters when first used. Place names in China are presented in pinyin, again with their Chinese characters upon first appearance.
2. Strangely, the English spelling of the bathing beach ends in 'Yeh' while the AMO archaeological site is spelled 'Ye'. We therefore use 'Yeh' when referring to the beach and 'Ye' for the archaeological site.
3. The Yung Shue Wan Site of Archaeological Interest actually includes a number of discrete archaeological 'hotspots', such as the Sha Po Old Village backbeach site and Sha Po New Village plateau site, set within a broader 'buffer zone'. This approach is used by the AMO for most, if not all, of the 208 SAIs listed on their website in September 2014, at http://www.amo.gov.hk/form/list_archaeolog_site_eng.pdf.
4. *Backbeach* is now one of the two preferred terms (the other being backshore deposits) used by scholars for the raised sand bodies commonly found behind exposed sandy beaches in Hong Kong and other coastlines subject to the periodic effects of severe storms such as the summer wet season typhoons experienced locally, which can mobilise huge quantities of sand. Translation of village name is from William Meacham, 'Sha Po Tsuen', *JHKAS* XIII (1993a): 33.
5. Shellshear, Heanley, Schofield, Finn, and Chen Kung-che.
6. William Meacham, ed., *Sham Wan, Lamma Island: An Archaeological Site Study*, Hong Kong Archaeological Society Journal Monograph III (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Archaeological Society, 1978); William Meacham, 'Lo So Shing', *JHKAS* VII (1979): 16–26; 'Sha Po Tsuen', *JHKAS* XIII (1993): 33–54; Nigel Spry, 'Sha Po Tsuen', *JHKAS* XII (1990): 7–28.
7. Tang Chung, *A Journey into Hong Kong's Archaeological Past* (Hong Kong: Regional Council, 1991).
8. Lung Kwu Tan near Tuen Mun and Tung Wan on Cheung Chau—which, strictly speaking, is actually a tombolo—are good examples of this type.
9. AAL, 'Archaeological Rescue Excavations at Sha Po Tsuen' (unpublished excavation report, 2011a); AAL, 'Archaeological Watching Brief at Sha Po Tsuen' (unpublished watching brief report, 2011b). In Hong Kong, rescue excavation involves a set-piece archaeological

- excavation in the pre-construction phase of development projects, whereas watching briefs require an archaeologist to monitor the engineering contractors' groundworks during the construction phase.
10. This plateau workshop was first identified in the 1930s by Father Daniel Finn, SJ, who labelled the site 'YSW'—for Yung Shue Wan—in his series of papers on Lamma Island's archaeology published in the journal *Hong Kong Naturalist*.
 11. Patrick H. Hase, 'Some Notes on the History of Lamma, Especially Yung Shue Wan' (unpublished paper, 2002), 5. Hase cites the Dongguang County Gazetteer of 1464 for this early reference to Lamma.
 12. Map held on microform by Special Collection, Hong Kong University Library: Guo Fei, 'Coastal Map of Kwang Tung', in *Yue Da Ji* (place and publisher unknown, c. 1598).
 13. Hase, 'Yung Shue Wan', 6. The original Chinese documents referring to the Yiu Yi Yin Tong were translated into English but sadly only the translations now survive. The name in Chinese characters therefore remains unknown.
 14. Hase, 'Yung Shue Wan', 11–13.
 15. Hase, 'Yung Shue Wan', 40.
 16. Hase, 'Yung Shue Wan', 43.
 17. Tai Wan To is today known in English as 'Powerstation Beach' due to the massive Hong Kong Electric power plant that now overlooks it.
 18. Survey and Mapping Office, *Explanatory Notes on Geodetic Datums in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Lands Department, 1995). Hong Kong heights on land are expressed in metres above Principal Datum or 'mPD', where Principal Datum is 1.23 m below mean sea-level.
 19. Previous testing revealed fine sediments suggestive of the former existence of the lagoon. Au Ka-fat, 'Report on the Archaeological Survey on the Project of Small House Development at Yung Shue Wan Archaeological Site Lamma Island' (unpublished report, 2001a).
 20. J. C. F. Wong and R. Shaw, *High-Level Coastal Deposits in Hong Kong*, GEO Report No. 243 (Hong Kong: Geotechnical Engineering Office, 2009). As Wong and Shaw discuss, there was previously some speculation concerning the possibility that Hong Kong's back-beaches may have formed during a period when ancient sea-levels were higher than today's. But there is little archaeological evidence to support this idea and sea-levels seem to have stabilised at more or less modern levels by the middle Neolithic (around 6,000 years ago). The terms 'raised beach' or 'sandbar' are both inappropriate here, as the former relates to beaches formed by previously higher sea-levels, while the latter should be reserved for offshore sand bodies, typically formed at the mouth of estuaries.
 21. Chapter 3 contains further discussion of the importance of *fung shui* in village placement and landscape management.
 22. The deep practical and spiritual significance of *fung shui* woodlands for local farming communities was perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the fact that many survived World War II intact within an otherwise deforested landscape.
 23. Sham Wan in South Lamma was excavated over several seasons and unearthed some very significant archaeological remains, but also made the crucial discovery that the earliest cultural horizons may lie buried beneath sterile deposits of windblown sand (William Meacham, ed., *Sham Wan, Lamma Island*, 1978). Sha Ha in Sai Kung is an example of the post-1997 pattern of major excavations being done as collaborations between the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) and a range of institutions from the People's Republic of China (AMO, *The Ancient Culture of Hong Kong: Archaeological Discoveries in Sha Ha, Sai Kung* [Hong Kong: AMO], 2005).
 24. In this book we use the label 'kiln' for the ubiquitous fired clay industrial structures that characterise the Six Dynasties–Tang period in Hong Kong. We do, however, recognise that kilns usually have fully enclosed firing chambers, while the earlier historical examples in Hong Kong are open-topped.
 25. In recent decades in European and North American archaeology, landscape has become an important conceptual framework used for the investigation, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of the human past. The idea of social landscapes has become particularly popular because the physical characteristics of landscapes and the values and meanings people attach to them are all communally or socially defined; hence the term 'social landscape' (Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, eds., *A Companion to Social Archaeology* [Oxford: Blackwell], 2004).
 26. Daniel J. Finn, 'Archaeological Finds on Lamma Island near Hong Kong, Part XIII', *Hong Kong Naturalist* 7 (3–4) (1936c): 257–68. Finn was in fact one of several pre-war archaeological pioneers who visited the area including Shellshear, Schofield, and Chen Kung-che (see further discussion in Chapter 2).
 27. Mostly pipe trenches or Small Village House developments.
 28. For example, one of the authors' PhD research: Mick Atha, 'Late Iron Age Regionality and Early Roman Trajectories (100 BC–AD 200): A Landscape Perspective from Eastern Yorkshire' (PhD thesis, University of York, 2008); Mick Atha and Steve Roskams, 'Pre-medieval Transitions at Wharram Percy', in *Wharram: A Study of Settlement on the Yorkshire Wolds, XIII*, ed. Stuart Wrathmell (York: University of York Press, 2012), 63–82.
 29. Solomon M. Bard, 'Archaeology in Hong Kong: A Review of Achievement', in *Conference on Archaeology in Southeast Asia*, ed. Yeung Chun-tong and Li Wai-ling (Hong Kong: University Museum and Art Gallery, the University of Hong Kong, 1995), 383–96. The 'Pioneers' was one of three groups mentioned by Bard, first head of the AMO, when discussing the development of archaeological work in Hong Kong.

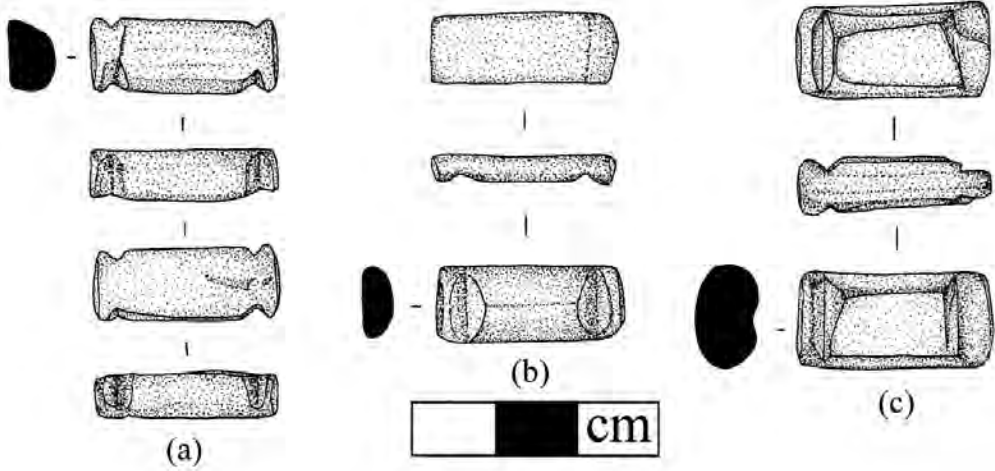


Figure 69: Soapstone 'net-weights' (pre-Tang, possibly even Bronze Age)

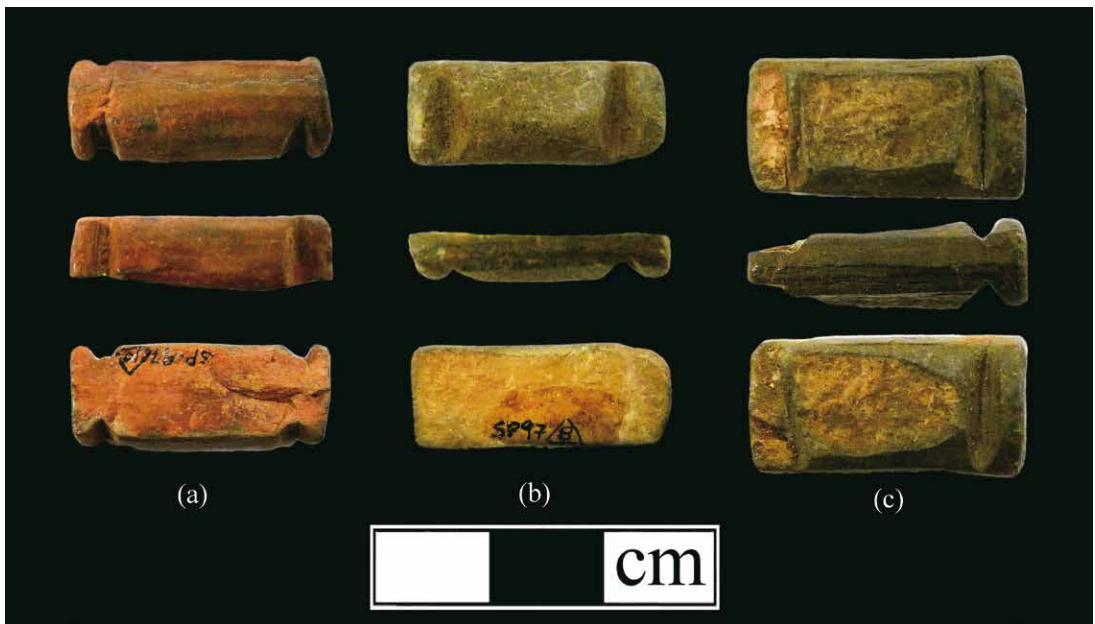


Plate 80: Soapstone 'net-weights' (pre-Tang, possibly even Bronze Age)

(38) Ink-stone

This heavily used ink-stone—used in fact to the point where it had worn through—was decorated with a well-executed melon and leaf motif. On the reverse, there is an inscription of the character ‘有’ (meaning ‘have’), which could possibly relate to the ownership of the object. The material is a fine-grained shale or slate. This is an unusual find for a rural site.

Dimensions: length 6.5 cm, width 6.5 cm, thickness 0.5 cm

2008, AA6A, Co. 605 [36:605]

Qing

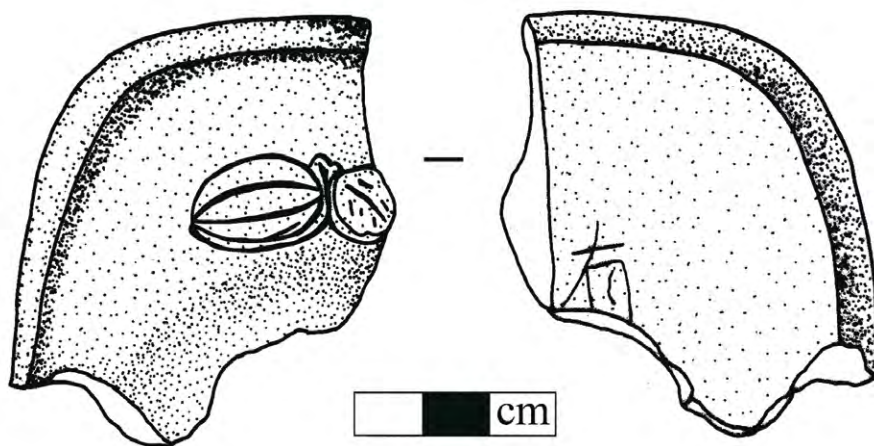


Figure 70: Qing ink-stone with melon motif and inscription on reverse



Plate 81: Qing ink-stone with melon motifs and inscription on reverse

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