

# Musical Relics of the Heluo Collection (Xia to Qing Dynasty)

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**Abstract:** The focus of the musical relics of the Heluo collection (Xia to Qing dynasty) is “root culture” in China. It looks at Heluo culture—an important part of the Yellow River civilization—and analyzes musical relics from the Heluo collection, which are stored at the National Museum of China in Beijing, Henan Museum, Luoyang Museum, and several archaeological institutes, in an attempt to research and classify the 102 relics dating from the Xia dynasty (2070–1600 BC) to the Qing dynasty (1636–1912 AD). The collection references the Heluo musical relics in the Chinese Musical Relics Series: Henan Volume (*Zhongguo yinyue wenwu daxi 2: Henan juan*) and includes relevant content from works such as *Zhongzhou Opera Relics (Zhongzhou xiqu lishi wenwu)* and *Photographic Compendium of Chinese Opera Relics (Zhongguo xiqu wenwu tupu)*. The dataset is archived in .doc format with the data size of 23.3 MB.

**Keywords:** Heluo region; musical relic; musical instrument; musical image; Xia dynasty; Qing dynasty

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodp.2021.04.08>

**CSTR:** <https://cstr.science.org.cn/CSTR:20146.14.2021.04.08>

**Dataset Availability Statement:**

The dataset supporting this paper was published and is accessible through the *Digital Journal of Global Change Data Repository* at: <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodb.2021.06.07.V1> or <https://cstr.science.org.cn/CSTR:20146.11.2021.06.07.V1>.

## 1 Introduction

The Heluo culture is an important part of Chinese civilization. The term “Heluo” appears 108 times in twenty-five official dynastic histories (*Ershiwu bu zheng shi*), including 105 instances in the main text<sup>[1]</sup>. There are different opinions on the specific geographic boundaries of the Heluo region. As for the regional scope of Heluo region, one definition refers to Luoyang alone, and the other definition refers to Luoyang region, namely Luoshui and Songshan area as the center, including the upper reaches of Rushui and Yingshui, from Zhongtiaoshan in the north to Foni Mountain in the south. There is also a regional definition refers to the area where the Yellow River and the Luo River meet. If the scope is slightly expanded, it will become a synonym for almost the entire area of China known as the central plains. Although scholars differ in their interpretations of the scope of the Heluo

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**Received:** 01-06-2021; **Accepted:** 05-08-2021; **Published:** 30-12-2021

**Foundation:** National Social Science Foundation of China (19ZD16)

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**Data Citation:** [1] Zhao, J. Musical relics of the Heluo collection (Xia to Qing dynasty) [J]. *Journal of Global Change Data & Discovery*, 2021, 5(4): 444–452. <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodp.2021.04.08>.  
<https://cstr.science.org.cn/CSTR:20146.14.2021.04.08>.

[2] Zhao, J. Heluo musical relics dataset (Xia dynasty 2070 BC–Qing dynasty 1912 AD) [J/DB/OL]. *Digital Journal of Global Change Data Repository*, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodb.2021.06.07.V1>.  
<https://cstr.science.org.cn/CSTR:20146.11.2021.06.07.V1>.

region, Luoyang—the location of the “root culture of the Chinese nation”—is always at the heart of it, and it is the narrowest definition of the Heluo region. For the purposes of this study, this narrow definition of the Heluo region—Luoyang—as the scope of this musical relics collection and research was used<sup>[2]</sup>. Luoyang is referred to as the “cradle” and “foundation” of Chinese and Eastern civilizations and was the heartland of the Huaxia tribes and the Han nationality. It was home to the primitive Neolithic cultures of the Peiligang, Yangshao, and Longshan cultures. It was also the site of civilizations created by the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties and has hosted a succession of cultural trends, including Lao-Zhuang Thought (philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi), Confucianism, Mohism, Han scholasticism, the metaphysical philosophies of the Wei and Jin dynasties, neo-Confucianism and music culture, Buddhism, and Daoism. The music culture rooted in the Heluo region was an important part of Heluo culture, and it gradually developed toward unified diversity over time.

## 2 Metadata of the Dataset

The metadata of Heluo musical relics dataset (Xia dynasty 2070 BC–Qing dynasty 1912) is summarized in Table 1. It includes the dataset full name, short name, authors, year of the dataset, data format, data size, data publisher, and data sharing policy, etc.

**Table 1** Metadata summary of Heluo musical relics dataset (Xia dynasty 2070 BC–Qing dynasty 1912)

| Items                               | Description   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Dataset full name                   | Heluo musical relics dataset (Xia dynasty 2070 BC–Qing dynasty 1912)  |
| Dataset short name                  | HeluoMusicalRelics_Xia-Qing   |
| Author                              | Zhao, J., College of Music & Dance, Henan Normal University,719588683@qq.com  |
| Geographical region                 | Heluo region (narrow sense), i.e. Luoyang   |
| Year                                | Xia dyansty (2070–1600 BC) to Qing dynasty (1636–1912 AD)   |
| Data format                         | .doc  |
| Data size                           | 23.3 MB   |
| Foundation                          | National Social Science Foundation of China (19ZD16)  |
| Data publisher                      | Global Change Research Data Publishing & Repository, <a href="http://www.geodoi.ac.cn">http://www.geodoi.ac.cn</a>  |
| Address                             | No. 11A, Datun Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100101, China   |
| Data sharing policy                 | <b>Data</b> from the Global Change Research Data Publishing & Repository includes metadata, datasets (in the <i>Digital Journal of Global Change Data Repository</i> ), and publications (in the <i>Journal of Global Change Data &amp; Discovery</i> ). <b>Data</b> sharing policy includes: (1) <b>Data</b> are openly available and can be free downloaded via the Internet; (2) End users are encouraged to use <b>Data</b> subject to citation; (3) Users, who are by definition also value-added service providers, are welcome to redistribute <b>Data</b> subject to written permission from the GCdataPR Editorial Office and the issuance of a <b>Data</b> redistribution license; and (4) If <b>Data</b> are used to compile new datasets, the ‘ten per cent principal’ should be followed such that <b>Data</b> records utilized should not surpass 10% of the new dataset contents, while sources should be clearly noted in suitable places in the new dataset <sup>[7]</sup> |
| Communication and searchable system | DOI, CSTR, Crossref, DCI, CSCD, CNKI, SciEngine, WDS/ISC, GEOSS   |

## 3 Content and Cultural Features of the Collection

### 3.1 The Relics in the Collection

A full list of the Heluo musical relics, which span a very long period, are presented below in Table 2.

It can be seen from Table 2 that the Heluo musical relics have the following three main characteristics.

First, the relics cover a long period of continuous history, from the Xia dynasty to the late Qing dynasty (though no relics have been discovered from the Ming dynasty), providing material evidence of the prolonged and unceasing development of music in the region.

**Table 2** Heluo musical relics (information up to April 24, 2021)

| Era                     |                   | Relic                               | No. of items | Type                  | Subtotal |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Xia and Shang dynasties |                   | Copper bell                         | 3            | Percussion instrument | 5        |
|                         |                   | Stone chime                         | 1            | Percussion instrument |          |
|                         |                   | Ceramic Xun                         | 1            | Wind instrument       |          |
| Zhou dynasty            | Western Zhou      | Ceramic Xun                         | 1            | Wind instrument       | 7        |
|                         | Western Zhou      | Set of bells                        | 1            | Percussion instrument |          |
|                         | Spring and Autumn | Set of chimes                       | 1            | Percussion instrument |          |
|                         | Eastern Zhou      | Set of chimes                       | 1            | Percussion instrument |          |
|                         | Warring States    | Set of large bells                  | 1            | Percussion instrument |          |
|                         | Warring States    | Set of bells                        | 2            | Percussion instrument |          |
| Han dynasty             |                   | Music and dance mural               | 1            | Image                 | 7        |
|                         |                   | Musical and dancing figurines       | 5            | Image                 |          |
| Northern Wei dynasty    |                   | Musical and dancing figurines       | 3            | Image                 | 18       |
|                         |                   | Sarcophagus musical image           | 2            | Image                 |          |
|                         |                   | Grotto musician image               | 11           | Image                 |          |
| Northern Qi dynasty     |                   | Vessel decoration                   | 2            | Image                 | 2        |
| Tang dynasty            |                   | Vessel decoration                   | 1            | Image                 | 33       |
|                         |                   | Musical figurines                   | 6            | Image                 |          |
|                         |                   | Musical and dancing figurines       | 2            | Image                 |          |
|                         |                   | Grotto musician image               | 22           | Image                 |          |
|                         |                   | Sanyue brick carving                | 1            | Image                 |          |
|                         |                   | Zaju opera brick carving            | 14           | Image                 |          |
| Song dynasty            |                   | Zaju opera brick carving            | 1            | Image                 | 15       |
|                         |                   | Mandarin duck pillow painting       | 1            | Image                 |          |
| Jin dynasty             |                   | Sanyue and Zaju opera brick carving | 6            | Image                 | 11       |
|                         |                   | Sanyue brick carving                | 4            | Image                 |          |
|                         |                   | Music and dance mural               | 1            | Image                 |          |
| Yuan dynasty            |                   | Guild hall opera stage              | 2            | Image                 | 3        |
| Qing dynasty            |                   | Script                              | 1            | Image                 |          |

Second, the collection contains the highest achievements of Chinese music culture from different historical periods, such as ceramic Xun (vessel flutes) (Figure 1), stone chimes, and a copper bell (Figure 2) from the Erlitou culture (approximately 1900–1500 BC) discovered at Yanshi, Henan; sets of bells (Figure 3), chimes (Figure 4), and large bells (Figure 5) highlighting the cultural achievements of the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC); music- and dance-related tomb figurines and murals from the Han dynasty (202 BC–220 AD) (Figure 6); a musical image on a sarcophagus and musical and dancing tomb figurines from the Northern and Southern dynasties (386–589 AD) (Figure 7); frescoes and carved bricks of Zaju opera from the Song (960–1279 AD) and Jin (1115–1234 AD) dynasties (Figure 8)<sup>[4]</sup>; and a stage and scripts from the Yuan (1271–1368 AD), Ming (1368–1644 AD), and Qing (1636–1912 AD) dynasties (Figure 9)<sup>[5]</sup>. These are all tangible expressions of representative and popular artistic styles from each period, and they fully exhibit the highest level of Chinese music culture during the different eras.

Third, it confirms that Luoyang experienced severe ups and downs in its long history. Beginning with the Xia dynasty, 105 emperors of 13 Chinese dynasties (Xia, Shang, Western Zhou, Eastern Zhou, Eastern Han, Cao Wei, Western Jin, Northern Wei, Sui, Tang, Later Liang, Later Tang, and Later Jin) established their capitals in Luoyang. Particularly from the Xia and Shang dynasties to the Tang and Song dynasties, Luoyang was the center of the nation, and its strategic location helped develop the region's culture. The many artefacts from the Xia and Shang to the Song and Jin dynasties excavated at Luoyang are a powerful testament to the city's extraordinary cultural and artistic value. The transfer of many functions away from Luoyang starting in the Southern Song dynasty and lasting until the end

of the Qing dynasty, however, affected the city's cultural development considerably. The musical relics in this collection powerfully confirm the changing role and status of Luoyang in Chinese history. As such, the history and features of music culture represented in this collection also encapsulate the historical development of the Heluo region.



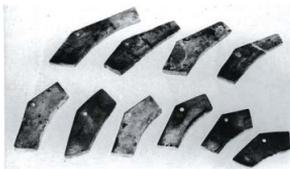
**Figure 1** Erlitou ceramic  
Xun Yanshi, Luoyan



**Figure 2** Erlitou copper bell,  
Yanshi, Luoyang



**Figure 3** Set of bells from Warring States  
period discovered at Jiefang Road, Luoyang



**Figure 4** Set of chimes from  
Spring and Autumn period  
discovered at Zhongzhou Road,  
Luoyang



**Figure 5** Set of large bells  
from Eastern Zhou discovered at  
Jiefang Road, Luoyang



**Figure 6** Music and dance tomb  
figurines from Eastern Han found in  
Miaonan new village, Luoyang



**Figure 7** Musical image on a  
sarcophagus from Northern Wei  
excavated at Luoyang



**Figure 8** Zaju opera carved  
bricks from the Song dynasty  
discovered at Luoyang



**Figure 9** Qing dynasty guild hall  
opera stage in Luoyang

### 3.2 Cultural Features Reflected in the Musical Relics

The collections reflect the achievements of Chinese culture in the field of music during different historical periods, which can be seen in the following six aspects.

#### (1) Pre-Qin rites and music culture

The system of rites and music can be traced back to the Xia (2070–1600 BC) and Shang (1600–1046 BC) dynasties and were established by the Western Zhou dynasty (1045–771 BC). Impressive aspects of pre-Qin culture, especially Zhou culture, were enhanced by the establishment of this important system, which are one of the earliest indicators in China and evidence of the establishment of a political system and social norms. Elements consistent with this culture have been identified in the collection of musical relics from the Heluo region.

In 1024 BC, early in the Western Zhou dynasty, the Duke of Zhou was ordered to build Luoyang, and it served as the eastern capital of the Western Zhou dynasty and the capital of the Eastern Zhou dynasty until the Zhou dynasty was overthrown twice by the Qin dynasty, once in 256 BC and again in 244 BC. The important instruments connected to the rites and music system from the Western Zhou dynasty which have been excavated at Luoyang,

including a set of bells discovered in Xigong district, chimes discovered at Jiefang road, and bells discovered at Tomb 131 in Luoyang, are all strong proof of the prosperity and development of a bronze rites and music culture at that time as well as the cultural achievements and heights it produced<sup>[6]</sup>. This kind of culture is an important representation of the heights reached by Chinese culture in the pre-Qin period, and the continuous development of this culture after the Zhou dynasty evolved into laws, folk customs, and morality and ideology, so it played a foundational role in the culture of the Chinese nation.

#### (2) Han dynasty music and dance culture

In the Han dynasty (202 BC–220 AD), culture and art developed and prospered. This was partly thanks to the establishment of a government office responsible for collecting folk songs, but most importantly to the traditional customs and ceremonies of ordinary people. Many new concepts and terms appear in records from the Han dynasty, for example, *baixi*, which is a general term for performances such as music, acrobatics, illusion, and martial arts, which reflects the development trend in people's interests and ideas that formed Han culture. Of the cultural relics discovered in the Heluo region, murals, carved portrait bricks, and musical and dancing tomb figurines are important items that allude to these new trends. These include the music and dance mural found in a tomb at Yuxin village, Luoyang (Figure 10), a portrait brick of women dancing discovered in Yichuan county, Luoyang (Figure 11), and plate and drum dance (*Panguwu*) tomb figurines discovered at Qilihe in Luoyang (Figure 12)<sup>[4]</sup>. They not only represent the height of music culture but also people's concepts regarding death and the development of tomb culture.

#### (3) Cultures of the six dynasties and tomb culture

The Six dynasties period (222–589 AD) was notable for the frequency of wars and degree of social turbulence. Despite constantly alternating between periods of prosperity and decline for more than three centuries, there was diverse political, economic, and cultural development. This can be seen in the development of Buddhism, evidenced by the discovery of music-related cave statues found in Buddhist grottoes in Heluo, including various flying musician statues discovered at the Longmen Grottoes dating from the Northern Wei. In addition, the sustained development of tomb culture is reflected in the magnificent portrait bricks, portrait stones, and musician figurines from that era (Figure 13)<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### (4) Music and dance culture and Buddhist culture during the Sui dynasty, Tang dynasty, and Five dynasties

During the Sui (581–618 AD) and Tang dynasty (618–907 AD), which was considered a golden age of Chinese feudal society, as well as during the turbulent Five dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907–979 AD), the Heluo region, and especially Luoyang, remained the center that drove China's development. The number and quality of musical relics and Buddhist statues discovered in this region directly reflect characteristics of the music. These include painted musical and dancing figurines unearthed from a tomb of the Cen family in Mengjin, Luoyang (Figure 14); musical and dancing figurines found at Xu village, Luoyang; horse-riding musical figurines unearthed from the tomb of Liu, Kai in Yanshi, Luoyang; and the musical statues preserved in caves at Longmen Grottoes, including the cave of ten thousand buddhas, Gushang cave, Bazuoci Buddhist altar, Longhua-Si cave, Fengnan cave, Huoshao caves, Gunan cave, Jinan cave, and Zhao Keshi cave (Figure 15)<sup>[4]</sup>.

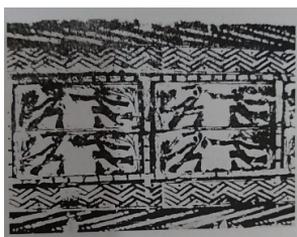
#### (5) Folk music culture during the Song and Jin dynasties

The Song (960–1279 AD) and Jin (1115–1234 AD) dynasties constituted an important stage in the transition of Chinese culture from the middle ages to the modern age. The prosperity of folk culture represented by urban culture provided a cultural field and opportunity for the development of music. It led to the emergence and popularity of Zaju opera, Zhugongdiao (a style of song prevalent in the 11<sup>th</sup> century), Changzhuān (a form of entertainment consisting of talking and singing), Guzici (a form of spoken art accompanied

by a drumbeat), and Jin Zaju opera. Musical relics excavated in the Heluo region strongly evidence these changes. Unearthed relics include carved bricks featuring Zaju motifs found at Jiuliugou in Luoyang (Figure 16)<sup>[4]</sup> and at Luoningjie village in Luoyang, Sanyue carved bricks found in a Jin dynasty tomb on Daobei road in Luoyang, a portrait on a sarcophagus found in Menjin county in Luoyang, and a colorful Jin dynasty pillow.



**Figure 10** Music and dance mural found in a tomb at Yuxin village, Luoyang



**Figure 11** Portrait brick of women dancing discovered in Yichuan county, Luoyang



**Figure 12** Plate and drum dance (Panguwu) tomb figurines discovered at Qilihe in Luoyang



**Figure 13** Musician figurines dating to the Northern Wei dynasty discovered in Yuan Shao's tomb in the Old Town district of Luoyang



**Figure 14** Musical figurine unearthed from a tomb of the Cen family in Mengjin, Luoyang



**Figure 15** Statue of a musician playing a konghou in the Cave of Ten Thousand Buddhas at Longmen Grottoes

(6) Ming and Qing dynasties opera art

Following on from the development of Zaju opera during the Song, Jin, and Yuan dynasties, opera as an artform enjoyed a golden age of development during the Ming and Qing dynasties. This was driven by the rapid expansion of a commodity economy, as well as by the accumulation of various musical styles and diversified exchanges in the previous period, and by cooperation between scholars and musical performers. Although opera performances from that time have not been preserved in their original formats, some physical cultural relics of opera performances powerfully testify to the popularity of the artform. The Heluo region is no exception to this, which is home to the Luze Huiguan Dancehall (Figure 9)<sup>[5]</sup>, Shanshan Huiguan Dancehall, and Guanlin Dancehall.

**3.3 Analysis of Musical Relics in the Collection**

The Heluo relics contain a wealth of musical information, including the following.

(1) Symbols of music culture

The musical relics in the collection reflect styles of music during different periods. The relics can be divided into two categories: precious musical instrument relics and vivid image relics. These are the two main and most important



**Figure 16** Carved bricks featuring Zaju motifs found at Jiuliugou

forms of musical relics currently available. Musical instruments have the characteristics of being authentic and directly perceptible. They allow people to directly observe and analyze their structure and sound to determine the pitch, interval, and tone of the actual instruments for a deeper understanding of their musicological characteristics. There are also drawbacks to these cultural vessels, including separation from the context in which they would have been used. To an extent, this limits our ability to interpret their cultural functions and other characteristics.

The advantages and disadvantages of image-based cultural relics are exactly the opposite of those of tangible musical instruments. Image-based relics are physical materials that indirectly reflect musical characteristics. Their advantage lies in their presentation of the occasions and cultural functions associated with musical instruments. However, their virtual and freehand nature limit our understanding of their specific characteristics. Images of musical instruments, music and dance scenes, and opera from the Qin and Han dynasties and later eras prominently depict the methods and functions of music, which have become a starting point for people today to interpret related issues in different historical periods.

### (2) The development path of music culture

There are inherited and characteristics of musical relics in this collection, including among types of musical instruments, music and dance, and opera. Taking physical musical relics as an example, the musical instruments of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties have inherited similarities, but they also reflect significant developments and changes, evidenced by the types, forms, and quantities of musical relics that have been excavated.

First, the musical instruments discovered from the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties are all wind and percussion instruments. Only one type of wind instrument has been found from any era: ceramic Xun (vessel flute) in our defined area of Heluo. However, its inherited features are very significant. Only two types of percussion instrument from the Xia and Shang periods have been discovered: copper bells and stone chimes, but many new types of percussion instruments appeared during the Zhou dynasty, such as sets of stone chimes, and sets of tuned bells. It is clear that the stone chimes used as melodic instruments in the Zhou dynasty were a development of the single chime used as a rhythmical instrument during Xia and Shang times. The advances not only reflect improvements in accuracy of pitch, but also a greater desire and ability to control pitch intervals. The chime instruments were developed from the bronze bell instruments used during the Xia and Shang periods, greatly surpassing them in terms of their production process and in the stability and richness of their musical sound. During the Warring States period, the people in Heluo developed sets of large bells based on those produced in the south. This not only illustrates the process and result of cultural exchanges, but also shows the popularity of such instruments in the north, which led to corresponding advancements.

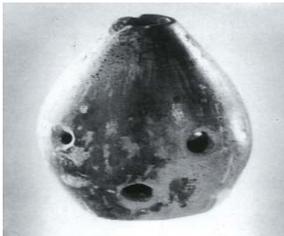
Second, there are obvious changes in the shapes and structures of similar musical instruments in different periods. Taking ceramic Xun as an example, during the Xia and Shang dynasties, they tended to only have one blow hole and two sound holes<sup>[8]</sup>. Sound tests have shown that they could only play two tones. The Xun from the Western Zhou dynasty, however, have one blow hole and five sound holes and can play at least six tones (Figure 17), which greatly improved its performance as well as the richness and artistic expressiveness of the melody that could be played on the instrument<sup>[4]</sup>.

Finally, considerably more musical instruments—both percussion and wind—have been excavated that date to the Zhou dynasty than date to the Xia and Shang dynasties. This indicates increasing demand for music and culture during the Zhou dynasty, and it suggests that musical life became richer and more diverse during the Zhou dynasty.

### (3) Distinctive characteristics of musical instruments from different periods

Of the musical relics in this collection, the most abundant are from the Tang dynasty.

These are of four types: decorated vessels, musical and dancing figurines, musician carvings from grottoes, and Sanyue carved bricks. There is only one type of relic from each of the Northern Qi and Yuan dynasties: decorated vessels and music and dance murals, respectively. To a certain extent, this reflects the different methods of representing, and differences in the cultural function of music in different periods.



**Figure 17** Ceramic Xun from the Western Zhou discovered at Jiwa Factory in Luoyang



**Figure 18** Carving of a Pipa player at Longmen Grottoes, Luoyang



**Figure 19** Carving of a person beating drums with sticks at Longmen Grottoes, Luoyang

The Tang dynasty was a period of development known for its extensive multi-ethnic cultural exchanges, unprecedented prosperity, and thriving politics. Its significant cultural prosperity provided the conditions for the thriving development of music culture. Outstanding artistic achievements from that time are embodied in tunes representing popular folk music, palace entertainment representing the cultural achievements of court music, and the grotto statues representing features of Buddhist music culture. It can be seen from the Tang dynasty musical relics that have been collected and sorted that, of the aforementioned four types of relics, the grotto carved musical figures are greatest in number (22), which highlights the importance Buddhism attached to music during its dissemination in China. It also reflects the great emphasis Tang dynasty rulers placed on Buddhism and Buddhist music (Figures 18, 19)<sup>[4]</sup>. It served as a special medium for the exchange of Chinese traditional music and music culture along the Silk Road and provided the conditions for the diverse absorption and development of traditional Chinese music.

#### (4) The artistic value of the musical relics

The Zaju-themed carved bricks discovered in the Yanshi district of Luoyang dating to the Song dynasty are a prime example of the artistic value of the items in the collection. Zaju opera was a development of the song and dance plays popular during the Northern and Southern dynasties period and of Tang dynasty plays. In April 1958, a cultural relics team from the Henan Provincial Department of Culture conducted an excavation of a collapsed tomb on the west bank of Jiuliugou Reservoir in Yanshi, where they discovered six carved portrait bricks. One group of three carved bricks depicts a maidservant, and the other group of three bricks depicts a Zaju opera performer<sup>[5]</sup>. The Zaju bricks include one figure on one brick and two figures on each of the other two bricks. The brick engraved with the single figure shows a man wearing a headscarf and a round-necked robe with a belt around his waist. He is holding a vertical painting and is leaning slightly, as if explaining something to someone (Figure 20)<sup>[9]</sup>. One of the carved bricks containing two figures shows one person wearing a headscarf and the other a Dongpo hat (Figure 21)<sup>[9]</sup>. On the final Zaju-themed brick, one of the figures is holding a birdcage while the other is using his fingers to whistle. Both figures are wearing soft cloth headscarves (Figure 22)<sup>[9]</sup>.

This set of delicately carved bricks depict elements of Zaju opera during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127 AD) as well as characteristics of Chinese opera in its early stages of maturity, which can be seen in the carved bricks excavated at Yanshi and in the Zaju carved bricks discovered at the Song tombs at Baisha located in Yuzhou, Henan province, only 120 km from Yanshi. These features were initially developed by Canjun opera during

the Tang dynasty. This set of musical relics provides strong evidence that northwestern Henan was an important region for musical development during the Song dynasty and the birthplace of Zaju opera, as described in historical documents. There are many examples of similar musical relics in this collection.



**Figure 20** Zaju-themed brick carving from Song dynasty found at Yanshi, Luoyang



**Figure 21** Zaju-themed brick carving from Song dynasty found at Yanshi, Luoyang



**Figure 22** Zaju-themed brick carving from Song dynasty found at Yanshi, Luoyang

## 4 Conclusion

This study looked at musical relics in the collection of Luoyang Museum excavated within the city of Luoyang. The historical content, cultural composition, and musical elements of the relics were analyzed to reveal the typical features, academic value, and cultural roots of the region's musical culture. These musical relics are vital and irreplaceable for understanding Heluo culture, the Yellow River civilization, and Chinese traditional culture.

### *Conflicts of Interest*

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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