

Exploring the Relationship Between King's Authority and Religious Beliefs in Liangzhu Culture Through Analysis of the Divine Emblem

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Abstract: Since the successful inscription of an ancient city, the capital of the Liangzhu culture, in 2019, this archaeological culture has become one of the most robust evidence of the 5,000-year history of Chinese civilisation. This paper presents a unique study of the king's power and religious beliefs of the Liangzhu culture, based on the most important symbol of the culture, the divine emblem of half-human and half-animal, in conjunction with the available archaeological data.

The study found that the divine emblem was a unity between nature and society and was carved on a jade ritual tool system, mainly jade cong (a pillar-shaped jade vessel), as a carrier of the beliefs of the Liangzhu ancestors. At the same time, relying on the divine emblem and the jade ritual system, the Liangzhu culture had a more mature class stratification, with the highest ruling group, the nobles, and the commoners, respectively. Moreover, the monarchs of Liangzhu controlled people's beliefs by possessing jade vessels and performing rituals, thus consolidating their class and efficiently invoking productive capacity. Finally, the paper argues that the political system of Liangzhu society was a theocracy, which allowed for efficient centralised rule in the unity of faith.

This paper examines the relationship between belief and king power in the Liangzhu culture, starting with its typical symbol of the divine emblem. It will be useful for the rest of the scholars to investigate further the religious beliefs and society of the Liangzhu culture.

Keywords: Liangzhu culture, divine emblem, jade ritual system, theocracy

1. Introduction

In archaeology, searching for the origins of early civilisations and states has always been a critical research topic. Due to a lack of empirical evidence from archaeological sources, international scholarship generally assumes that Chinese civilisation began in the Yin and Shang periods [1]. The discoveries and studies of the Liangzhu culture have been instrumental in breaking this dilemma. The capital of Liangzhu culture, located in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, from 5,000 years ago, starting with the discovery of black pottery by researcher Shi Xingeng more than 80 years ago, became a World Heritage Site in 2019 thanks to archaeological discoveries such as the ancient city walls, class differentiation and social division of labour, elaborate jade ritual system, and high and

low dam water conservancy systems. The Liangzhu culture, which extended the history of China by another 2,000 years, has become one of the strongest proofs of the 5,000-year history of Chinese civilisation.

There have been many exciting archaeological discoveries about the Liangzhu culture. The most striking of these are the beautiful and numerous jade ritual vessels made by the Liangzhu ancestors. On these jade vessels, it is impossible to ignore the half-human, half-animal divine emblem. This divine emblem, which existed in different forms on jade and pottery objects used for status, rituals, and heirlooms, represented the beliefs of the Liangzhu ancestors during the long period between the origin of the culture and its demise. With class differences in Liangzhu society, those in higher social classes owned more jade and wielded more power. According to the available archaeological data, their king, who held the highest power in this ancient civilisation, also possessed the richest burial goods after his death. The highest quality jade ritual vessels in his tomb were unearthed, and the divine emblem engraved on them is the most complete. This paper will examine the relationship between religious beliefs and centralised king power in the Liangzhu culture by analysing the divine emblems, a typical symbol of this culture.

2. The Half-human, Half-animal Divine Emblem of Liangzhu Culture

2.1. Crown of Feathers, the Eye of the Mythical Animal, and the Claws of the Bird

The Liangzhu, an archaeological culture located mainly in the lower Yangtze River valley, was a Neolithic civilisation favouring jade. The most representative element on its jade vessels is the half-human, half-animal divine emblem. The complete design of the divine emblem (see Figure 1) was first found on Fanshan site M12:98, on the jade cong known as the king of jade cong (A pillar-shaped jade vessel of the Liangzhu culture with divine emblems carved on all sides).

As shown in Figure 1, the complete motif of the Liangzhu culture's divine emblem is a god consisting of a man wearing a feathered crown on his head and a mythical animal face beneath him. The hands of the man appear to gently caress both sides of the eyes of the mythical animal face, while the mythical animal is in a crouching position with the buckteeth of its face protruding from its mouth. The divine emblem is symmetrical, with the godman's feathered crown and face both inverted and trapezoidal, with spaced patterns; the brim of the crown has the same pattern as on the godman's body. The mythical animal, with a similar demeanour to that of the godman, has a similar complex pattern of clouds and lighting, striped lines around its eyes, the bridge of its nose between its eyes, and its flat-convex nose. The mythical animal has a fierce expression and a long, slender mouth that, at its widest point, exceeds the width of a divine man's face and has huge buckteeth that stick out of its mouth. The sharp, curved feet of the mythical animal, like the claws of a bird, sit at the very base of the divine emblem and support the entire god.



Figure 1: Divine emblem motifs from the Liangzhu culture (M12: 98) [2].

The relationship between the godman and the mythical animal is briefly analysed through the different forms of engraving of the divine emblem on the jade cong. The arms of the godman and the lower limbs shared by the godman and the mythical animal are relatively slender, with microscopically carved lines [3], neat but faint. In terms of the overall visual effect, the face of the godman and the face of the mythical animal are equally emphasised. However, the connection between the two is indistinguishable from each other. Thus, in terms of the visual presentation of the divine emblem, the Liangzhu ancestors wanted to represent the image of the divine emblem as a fusion of the two, which is also reflected in the jade rituals of the various periods of the Liangzhu culture. For example, some of the crown-shaped ornaments are very similar in form to the feathered crown of the god and were made to represent the feathered crown of the god. However, the pattern inside the crown-shaped ornaments mainly comprises mythical animal motifs rather than human faces. In the light of the laws governing the creation of gods and goddesses in ancient Chinese society, the divine emblem is a combination of an ancestor god (human) and a totem god (animal) [4]. The Liangzhu culture's divine emblem no longer represents a single nature or ancestor cult but is a unified symbol of nature and society.

As a result, the divine emblem of the Liangzhu culture is considered a complete, one-piece image of a deity. This half-human, half-animal deity was carved on various types of jade as a belief of the Liangzhu ancestors, carrying the spiritual world of the Liangzhu people.

2.2. A Purely Divine Emblem Carrier - The Jade Cong

When it comes to the divine emblem, there is no escaping the jade cong. Regardless of the period, the jade cong found at the various sites of the Liangzhu culture is engraved with the divine emblem of varying integrity. Moreover, no relics of the Liangzhu culture to date do not bear the divine emblem in the form of a distinctly cong [3]. Consequently, the jade vessel, which differs from the typical square outer and round inner form, is also classified as a jade cong [3]. In the Liangzhu culture, the term jade cong refers exclusively to jade cylindrical vessels with divine emblems engraved on four sides [3].

If the divine emblem is representative of the beliefs of the Liangzhu culture, then the jade cong is representative of the jade ritual vessels of the culture. The typical shape of a jade cong is an almost square column on the outside, with a circular hole running through the entire body on the inside. Usually, the divine emblem is engraved on four nearly right-angled corners (ribs), mostly with mythical animal faces, centred on the nose carved into the corners and symmetrically on the left and right. The prongs of the jade cong are engraved with a relative number of divine emblems, depending on their height, with an equal number of emblems on each prong. This is, in fact, a third type of jade cong in its development to perfection.

As a purely divine emblem carrier, the evolution of jade cong from round to square is closely linked to the divine emblem. As mentioned above, the nose of the mythical animal of the third type of cong is situated on an almost right-angled prong, which is a clue to the evolution of the jade cong. In the earlier first type of cong, essentially a round bracelet, the body is thin, and the divine emblem is engraved on four raised curved surfaces with no angles. Later, the angles became more distinct - the central axis of the divine emblem was gradually raised to give a more three-dimensional effect to the nose of the mythical animal. By the time it evolved into the second type, the cross-section of the jade cong was already square with curved edges, although the angle was greater than 90°. The image of the divine emblem is engraved on the angled prongs. In the third type of cong, which has developed into the most familiar square outer and rounded inner pillar, the form is now a more formalised one.

The divine emblem on the body of the jade cong also evolved with the development of the Liangzhu culture. From the most elaborate of the early figures of the half-human and half-animal, they were gradually abbreviated to simple and abstract animal-faced designs in the middle and late

periods. It is evident that, as a carrier of the divine emblem, the Liangzhu jade cong, in addition to the change in form from round to square, gradually replaced the divine emblem itself and became part of the religious connotation.

3. The King Power of the Liangzhu Culture in the Light of the Divine Emblem

3.1. Symbols of Monarchical Status - The King of Jade Cong and the King of Jade Yue

As a symbol of the god, the jade cong was not a jade vessel that could be used in the daily life of the Liangzhu ancestors but was possessed by the highest classes as a ritual vessel for sacrifice or as a burial object. In most commoner burials, only a tiny amount of jade and stone and pottery wares were unearthed, and no large jade wares were present. Until now, only higher-ranking burials were accompanied by the excavation of jade objects such as jade cong, jade yue (A jade ritual vessel shaped like an axe), jade huang (An ornament to be worn as a symbol of the god), and jade crown-shaped ornaments. As one of the highest-ranking burial complexes at Liangzhu, the M12 burial of the Fanshan site is exceptional. It is by far the most outstanding of the Liangzhu culture burials in terms of the number and variety of jade objects buried with it, as well as the size and exquisiteness of the objects.

The owner of tomb M12 at the Fanshan site is recognised as the king of the Liangzhu culture. Apart from the extraordinary size of the jade, his tomb is most distinguished by the jade cong numbered M12:98 and the jade yue numbered M12:100 excavated from it. These vessels, also known as the king of jade cong and the king of jade yue, are now in the Zhejiang Museum.

3.1.1. The Jade Cong Numbered M12:98 from the Fanshan Site

The colour of the king of jade cong is now chicken-bone white, with slightly curved squared edges and a straight groove in the centre of each side, as shown in Figure 2, with two complete divine emblems incised in the centre and straight grooves on all four sides, making a total of eight. Between the complete divine emblem and the mythical animal, the bird in the form of the eye of the mythical animal is still carved symmetrically on the axis of the prongs. In addition, the upper and lower sides of the arc are carved with parallel straight lines, with shaded carving and relief carving, giving the entire body a very complex, detailed, and dignified appearance.



Figure 2: The jade cong numbered M12: 98 from Fanshan site [5].

3.1.2. The Jade Yue Numbered M12:100 from the Fanshan Site

As shown in Figure 3, the king of jade yue has a jade yue cap, a jade yue pier and an already decayed wooden handle, in addition to the jade, yue itself shown in the illustration. The king of jade yue is of green jade, with distinct green irregular markings on the body of the yue, the whole being axe-shaped

and asymmetrical. The blade of the yue is polished very smoothly and finely, with a divine emblem motif on both sides of the edge of the blade at the upper left corner and a divine bird motif at the lower left corner, consistent with that on the body of the jade cong [6]. The jade yue was widely regarded as a symbol of military power in the Liangzhu culture. The king of jade yue received the prestigious title of king from all the burial jade yues because it is the only jade yue among all the jade yues excavated so far that has the complete divine emblem and bird motif engraved on the body.



Figure 3: The jade yue numbered M12:100 from the Fanshan site [7].

3.1.3. The Unity of Power

The divine emblem was the representative of the supreme god in the Liangzhu culture, and the king of jade cong and the king of jade yue, with their complete divine emblems engraved, were thus endowed with divine power and a symbol of king power. A tomb owner who possessed both was of very high status.

As mentioned, only the jade yue with a complete divine emblem was unearthed in M12 at the Fanshan site. None of the other jade yues excavated from the rest of the tombs was found to have a complete divine emblem engraved on them, so it is clear that this one must have had a higher level of symbolic significance. At the same time, the motifs of the divine emblem on the jade cong can be roughly divided into three categories, from complicated to simple: the divine emblem with a relief feathered crown and beast's face, a detailed clouds and lighting pattern and bird's claws; the divine emblem with only a relief beast's face, but with a delicate pattern; the divine emblem which is simplified from complicated to simple, using circles to represent the eyes, and the mouth and nose being a simple protrusion [3]. Excluding the development of the motifs over time and looking only at the status symbols of the great tombs of the Liangzhu culture of the same period, only the one excavated at the Fanshan site has the most complete intact motif of the divine emblem.

The jade cong is the carrier of the divine emblem, representing faith; the jade yue is the symbol of the yue as an ordinary weapon to become the commander or owner of an army, representing military power. The most complete intact engraving of the divine emblem on both gave them the highest status and symbolism - it was the jade cong and jade yue given by the god of the Liangzhu culture to the ancestors, making the king who possessed them the closest representation of the god and the most centralised power. The ruler had his craftsmen make the finest jade cong and yue for himself and engraved the most sacred motifs to show his people his supreme power and consolidate his ruling position.

The king of the Liangzhu culture was not only the master of the ancient city of Liangzhu but also the ruler of the entire Liangzhu culture-influenced region at that time. In the lower reaches of the

Yangtze River five thousand years ago, the Liangzhu monarch used jade cong to communicate with heaven and earth and held a jade yue to command his subjects. He possessed the closest and closest relationship with the main god upwards and the labour and military power assembled by the whole country and all the tribes downwards. The combination of divine, military, and king power in the monarch allowed the god's will to unify and deify the primitive, violent forms of power that characterised the regime [3]. Moreover, this is one of the main features of Liangzhu society, a regime system and social organisation with divine power at its core and connected by divine authority, as expressed through jade [3].

3.2. Social Class Stratification in the Early Liangzhu Culture

According to Zhang Zhongpei, civilisation has reached the stage of statehood when its rituals and military have become so cumbersome that they require dedicated personnel and have gradually developed into a force above society and have been controlled by those engaged in the profession [8]. Based on this theory, this paper argues that the Liangzhu culture has reached this stage. The various jade ritual vessels representing the military, king and divine power, inscribed with complete divine emblems, were excavated from the same tomb M12 at the Fanshan site, confirming Zhang Zhongpei's view. The Liangzhu culture already had a unified leader in its early stages, in charge of military and divine power.

In addition to the supreme ruling class of the state as a whole, the Liangzhu culture had two other classes. The primary means and link to the organisation of power in Liangzhu society was the worship of the god and the design of a system of jade ritual objects [6]. This paper will briefly analyse the social stratification of the early Liangzhu culture in terms of divine emblems and jade ritual vessels.

Based on Chen Yong's view and taking the community, which was formed around the Mojiaoshan site, as an example, this paper divides the class of the Liangzhu culture into three broad layers. The people here can be divided according to their social status into the ruling group, with the king as the centre; the group of nobles and suburban chiefs; and the commoners, such as craftsmen and peasants [9]. The tombs of the highest-ranking ruling group contain many of the most beautifully crafted and diverse jade objects, most of which are accompanied by divine emblems. The burials at the Jiangjiashan site, which is close to the Fanshan site, are generally smaller in size and quantity than those at the Fanshan site. There are fewer jade objects with divine emblems, mostly with animal-face motifs representing simplified divine emblems. They do not follow the Fanshan site's burial pattern, with burials of minors, presumably family burials of nobles. The burials at the Huiguanshan site follow the Fanshan pattern, with the occupation and status of the deceased. A large number of jade and stone tools were found among the burial objects, and 48 pieces of stone yue and one jade yue were excavated in Tomb No. 4, which are rare so far, and are thought to figure in charge of military power among the suburban chiefs [6]. Many handicraft workshops were located in the eastern part of the ancient city, leaving the remains of handicraft activities such as jade, jade ware, stoneware, lacquered woodwork and bone and horn ware [9]. This class of craftsmen, most of whom lived in the interior of the ancient city and on the city walls, was the commoner class of the Liangzhu culture. Also belonging to the commoner class is the peasant class. The tombs of this class contain only a few stone tools and production tools used during their lifetime, as well as a few ornaments, and no burial objects accompanied by divine emblems have been found.

In summary, in addition to being a symbol of faith, the divine emblem symbolised people's class status. This paper argues that class in Liangzhu society was also consolidated through faith and that the higher the social rank, the more power one had over the interpretation of faith. The kings of the Liangzhu civilisation would have been the great witchcraft in the rituals, with the other nobles responsible for the rituals second. At the bottom of the social hierarchy, the craftsmen and peasants were subservient to the noble class and the kings who could represent the god and perform productive

work in society. Through his monopoly of rituals with the god, the supreme ruler used his divine prerogative to dominate all his subjects within his territorial boundaries. This was a characteristic of the theocracy.

The three main classes in Liangzhu culture, as delineated in this paper, were the supreme ruler class, which held divine, royal, and military power, the noble class, which did not need to engage in productive work; and the commoner class, which engaged in productive activities such as handicrafts and agriculture to support the first two classes. Each of them had a role to play in forming the society of the early Liangzhu culture.

4. The Divine Right of Kingship - The Consolidation of Faith in a King's Power

4.1. Crown-shaped Ornaments of the Liangzhu Nobility - Messengers of the God

Based on understanding the class divisions in Liangzhu society, this paper supports the theocratic nature of the Liangzhu culture as recognised by the academic community. The Liangzhu culture revered jade culture so much that most of its objects used for ritual and ceremonial purposes were jade, and most were carved with divine emblems. Interestingly, in addition to the jade cong mentioned above, the structural form of some of the jade ritual objects, such as the crown-shaped ornaments and the end of the jade yue handle, is directly linked to the form of the divine emblem [6]. This article will briefly analyse the crown-shaped ornament, a jade object unique to the Liangzhu culture, to explore how the ruling class and part of the noble class of Liangzhu came to hold divine power, consolidate their ruling position and maintain state order through jade ritual vessels.



Figure 4: Crown-shaped ornament numbered M17:8 from Fanshan site [10].

Figure 4 shows that the crown-shaped ornament is generally flat and thin, with a slightly inverted trapezoid overall shape. The top can be divided into three parts, the middle part is generally slightly bow-shaped, with a convex tip at the centre, and the bottom is generally narrow and flat [3]. The crown-shaped ornaments were only found in the great tombs of the Liangzhu culture, and, except at the Fanshan site, only the higher-ranking owners of the tombs in the noble cemeteries possessed such jade objects. In this paper, we have chosen M17:8 from the Fanshan site to explore the attribution of divine authority further.

The crown-shaped ornament numbered M17: 8 from the Fanshan site is carved in the centre with only the complete face of the mythical animal. The crown has a similar angle in the centre to the plumed crown of the full divine emblem and, like the feathered crown, is inverted and trapezoidal, which is very reminiscent of the human part of the divine emblem. It is therefore suggested that the crown-shaped ornament is not inscribed with the full divine emblem because the object's form represents the emblem's human part. This is supported by how the crown-shaped ornament was used. According to excavation reports from Liangzhu culture sites, most of the crown-shaped ornaments

are located on the head of the tomb owner and are often accompanied by vermilion traces and small jade particles set into the object below the crown-shaped ornament. In earlier studies, crown-shaped ornaments were considered ornaments of some organic material for the god [3]. However, at the Zhoujiabang site in Haiyan, Zhejiang Province, an ivory comb was found attached to the underside of the crown-shaped ornament – solving the mystery of using the crown-shaped ornament [3]. The crown-shaped ornaments symbolised the status of the Liangzhu ruling and noble classes, and they were fixed to the heads of the Liangzhu people using organic or ivory combs with wide teeth. As a representation of the divine emblem, the crown ornament also demonstrates the power of the high-class Liangzhu ancestors over their religious beliefs.

The Liangzhu ruling class, who wore crown-shaped ornaments, imitated the god through their decoration, leading and directing the commoners in Liangzhu society in the name of the god in basic agricultural and handicraft production, and even in the construction of the vastly engineered ancient Liangzhu city and the very large and complex hydraulic system of the time.

4.2. Witchcraft and King-theocracy in Liangzhu Societ

The divine emblem on the jade cong of the Liangzhu culture not only represents the religious beliefs of the Liangzhu ancestors but is also a symbol of the theocracy of Liangzhu society. The highest-ranking king in Liangzhu society was also the great witchcraft of Liangzhu, who held the most important divine power in primitive society, as seen from the highest-ranking Fanshan site. This was the political system in primitive Liangzhu society. Through the divine emblem, the Liangzhu king became the representative of the will of the god on earth [11], so his will became the god's will and was irrefutably correct and authoritative. This theocracy allowed Liangzhu society to achieve efficient centralised rule in the unity of faith.

Before discussing the theocracy of the Liangzhu culture, this paper will briefly analyse the religious beliefs of the Liangzhu culture. Apart from the totemic god represented by the dragon head pattern, which is identified as belonging to another family or political group [6], there is only one main deity in Liangzhu society, the half-human, the half-animal god represented by the divine emblem, during the continuity of the culture. This main deity was central to the religious beliefs of the Liangzhu. It was a combination of a totemic and a personal deity, becoming a symbol of the human king and ancestral deity [4]. As a culture just entering a national civilisation, the Liangzhu culture already could conquer nature, judging from the archaeological evidence of large-scale grain storage and cultivation and the construction and use of large-scale water conservancy facilities. As a result, their religion was no longer one of blind worship and reverence for nature. The fact that the Liangzhu ancestors attached the power of nature to the ancestors of their group, or believed that the god transformed by their ancestors had the power to change nature, was a reflection of the progress of real productivity in their religious beliefs.

When religious rituals and beliefs are not interfered with by force, religion is merely a form of self-help for the individual [11]. When the power intervened, however, religious rituals and beliefs were transformed into something else [11]. This intervention was the king's power over the god [11]. The relationship between man and nature in Liangzhu culture has changed due to productivity development. The will of the god is no longer just the will of nature but also the will of the rulers in Liangzhu culture. According to Han Yongzhi, after the “Jedi sky communication”, those who could communicate with the god used the self-transference and self-salvation of man to the god to become the word of the god on earth, using the authority of the god to meet their own needs for domination and becoming the highest ruling class in society [11]. From then on, the god and the regime were linked and became the divine authority that governed all things in heaven, earth, and earthly society [12]. This theory is consistent with the theocracy of Liangzhu society.

The image of the god represented by the divine emblem is almost identical to the ritual image of the ruling class in Liangzhu society. The evidence from archaeological excavations shows that, in addition to the crown-shaped ornaments that directly represent the feathered crown of the god, the owner of the highest-status tomb at the Fanshan site, M12, possessed a large number of jade conical ornaments that have been shown to have been worn on the head to imitate the feathered crown. The kings of Liangzhu, to show that they were 'communicating with the god', imitated the specific forms of the god and their noble status, from the appearance of the rituals to the ceremonial vessels used. The most important identity of the Liangzhu king was that of great witchcraft. It is easy to see that the king was the main protagonist of rituals and divination, the first to hear the god's will. The ruling class of Liangzhu gave orders to the ruled class by communicating the so-called will of the god, making their orders correct and unquestionable. The Liangzhu people, under divine authority, could maintain their relative sanity of thought, but no one could disobey the divine authority [11]. Such a theocracy allowed the Liangzhu society to be very centralised, carry out large-scale hydraulic engineering and agricultural production, and maintain a wide range of rules.

5. Conclusions

This paper briefly examines the relationship between king power, divine authority and two in the Liangzhu culture, relying on the shape of the divine emblem and the connotations of the belief it represents, in conjunction with the available archaeological data, starting from the most important symbol of the culture, the divine emblem of half-human and half-animal.

By analysing the symbolisation and engraving process of the most important divine emblems of the Liangzhu culture, this paper argues that the god believed in by the Liangzhu ancestors was an organic unification of the ancestor gods and totem gods in Liangzhu society. It broke away from the single nature or ancestor worship of primitive society to become the only main deity in the Liangzhu culture sphere of influence in the lower Yangtze River region. At the same time, this intricately patterned divine emblem also complements the jade ritual system of the Liangzhu culture. The depiction of the divine emblem on this jade ritual vessel, typified by the jade cong, basically follows the pattern of moving from the complex to the simple, from the figurative to the abstract over time, and the jade cong also becomes a representative of the divine emblem itself, from a mere carrier of the divine emblem.

Relying on the divine emblem and several important jade ritual objects, this paper analyses the issue of king power and social class stratification in the Liangzhu culture. Based on the analysis of the jade cong and the jade yue, the paper argues that the monarchs of the Liangzhu culture had the highest military, royal, and divine powers. The class stratification of the Liangzhu culture was mainly achieved through possessing jade ritual objects and controlling religious beliefs. Liangzhu society can be divided into three main classes: the supreme ruling group, the nobility, and the commoners. The higher to lower the hierarchy, the fewer jade objects people owned, the less power they had, and the less say they had over religion. The highest-ranking kings were the messengers of the god in reality, conveying the god's will and possessing the highest specification of jade ceremonial vessels to demonstrate their status and position. Moreover, the kings of Liangzhu consolidated their class and the efficient invocation of national productivity through their control of faith.

Finally, the paper explores the relationship between the divine and king power in the Liangzhu culture by analysing crown ornaments. The paper argues that the state's political system in the Neolithic Liangzhu culture was dependent on divine power and was a theocracy. The supreme ruler relied on god with absolute correctness and authority, enabling Liangzhu society to achieve efficient centralised rule in the unity of faith.

Based on archaeological data from the first discovery of the Liangzhu culture more than eighty years, this paper selects the most representative divine emblem and several important jade ritual

objects inscribed with them. It examines the relationship between king power and divine power in the Liangzhu culture with an eye to the analysis of religion and social class in Liangzhu. The main contribution of this paper is a further study and summary of the theocracy of the Liangzhu culture, an area less explored by academics at present, which will facilitate further research into the religious beliefs and society of the Liangzhu culture by other scholars. Moreover, this paper has certain significance for studying the political system and religious beliefs of archaeological cultures after the Liangzhu culture. It has a role in carrying on the research of prehistoric civilisations. However, the current study also has some shortcomings. It is hoped that in the future, more in-depth research can be carried out on the various types of jade vessels themselves and that the relationship between conformity and objects can be explored about the divine emblems of the Liangzhu culture, as well as further analysis of religious beliefs and more detailed analysis of social structures and ritual practices.

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