

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE MANCHENG TOMBS:
SHAPING THE AFTERLIFE OF THE “KINGDOM WITHIN MOUNTAINS”
(ZHONGSHAN) IN WESTERN HAN CHINA (206 BCE – 8 CE)

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BY
JIE SHI

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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INTRODUCTION

In May 1968, an unknown Chinese town named Mancheng 满城 in present-day Baoding 保定, Hebei province amazed the world. When a company of PLA soldiers was digging into a rocky mountain called Mt. Ling (Lingshan 陵山) to construct an air-raid shelter, they accidentally broke into what appeared to be an ancient burial chamber. Local archaeologists were immediately called in to assess the situation. The result was astonishing: they had discovered a secret tomb of monumental scale that had remained intact for more than 2,000 years. A rescue excavation team was quickly assembled and dispatched into the tomb three months later. After 13 months of intense work, it was clear that this was no ordinary tomb, but the tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝 (d. 113 BCE), the famous King Jing of the Zhongshan state, a half-brother of the famous Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 144-87 BCE).¹ The life and career of Prince Liu is briefly mentioned in history. According to historian Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 CE), in 154 BCE, Liu was sent by his father – the emperor – to revive a “barbaric” kingdom called Zhongshan in present-day Hebei province, near the north border of the young empire to rule the local people. During the follow-up excavation, the excavation team uncovered a second tomb, the burial of Liu Sheng’s wife, Queen Dou Wan 竇綰, located only 120 meters away in the same mountain (Map 1). It remains uncertain whether she died before or after her husband, although material

¹ Usually as close relatives of the emperor, these provincial vassals occupied the summit of the Han social hierarchy. They numbered in hundreds, each ruling a small state for a certain period of time; see Loewe and Twichett 1986, 136–49. For a survey of these kingdoms, see Zhou 1987, Wang 1984. For their arts, see t’Serstevens 1982, Nylan and Loewe 2010.

contents in both tombs share a similar periodic style, indicating two very close dates.² In fact, the author of the excavation report suggests that Dou Wan might have been buried between 118 and 104 BCE.³

The establishment of Liu Sheng's kingdom of Zhongshan was a direct outcome of the civil war. The war started in the first month of 154 BCE when seven most powerful regional kingdoms in the east half of the empire committed a joint military insurgency, with which the fate of the empire was hanging in the balance.⁴ Although the callow rebels were shortly crushed and the empire rescued, Emperor Jing's shock and resentment about the overt betrayal was not easy to heal.⁵ In the immediate aftermath of this event, the emperor dismembered the Zhao 趙 kingdom, one of the largest rebelling states in present-day Hebei in north China, into six much smaller kingdoms.⁶ The harshest revenge the emperor took to the rebels, however, was his plan of hammering out a new kingdom called Zhongshan, literally meaning "[the Kingdom] within Mountains," right in the heartland of the Zhao, which destroyed Zhongshan, its irreconcilable foe, in 196 BCE. The purpose of the strategy was unambiguous: the emperor wanted to forge a reliable and strong ally in the hostile territory by restoring his enemy's bitterest enemy. The reviving Zhongshan was part of the emperor's greater political scheme to secure the imperial control of the rebellious provinces and people, once and for all.

2 Zhongguo 1980a, 1: 274–5.

3 Some other scholars proposed an even more precise dating, arguing Dou Wan might have died before Liu Sheng during 118 to 113 BCE; see Li and Zhao 1991, Jiang 1989.

4 For a historical background of this well-known rebellion, see Hulsewé 1981, Akikawa 2001.

5 Sima 1959: 2082; Ban 1962: 2208.

6 Zhou 1986: 79-97; Wang 1984: 55–61.

The Mancheng tombs are among the best of all the archaeological discoveries made in China so far. By the end of 2014, tens of thousands of tombs dated to the Han dynasty had been excavated in China. Although most of them are modest, poorly furnished burials made of wood or brick, a few, belonging to members of the highest ranks, stand out in size, content, and form. Among them, the top tier of this prestigious group includes more than seventy royal tombs associated with Western Han kings (Map 2). Being the cream of the crop, only a handful of these royal tombs, including the Mancheng tombs, remained miraculously intact at the moment of being opened, while others had all been plundered or destroyed to different extents.⁷ In Mancheng Tombs 1 and 2 the unprecedented richness of grave goods, numbering over ten thousand, dazzled the excavators. In Tomb 1, which is about 2,700 cubic meters large, the excavators discovered over 5,509 burial objects including jades, bronze or iron artifacts, lacquerware, and ceramics, including the first known jade suit (Fig. 0.1). In Tomb 2, they found another group of 5,124 artifacts.⁸

The discovery's significance, which is beyond anyone's expectation, has been immediately recognized.⁹ Yu Weichao 俞偉超, an influential Chinese archaeologist hailed these novel tombs in one of his most popular papers as *the* pioneers that initiated an entirely new era, the so-called "Han-dynasty Type" (*Hanzhi* 漢制).¹⁰ To the eyes of art historians, this finding represents the crowning jewel of Chinese funerary art, a rare

7 The others include Hongtushan Tomb at Juye, a Southern Yue royal tomb at Guangzhou and a Jibei royal tomb at Changqing. Guangzhou 1991a; Shandong 1983; Shandong 1997.

8 Zheng 2003: 139.

9 Zheng and Zheng 2002; Lu 2005; Zhongguo and Beijing 1978.

10 Yu 1979.

continuous five-thousand-year-long tradition in world history. No wonder a large number of the works from the tomb have been declared national treasures by the Chinese government, and are not allowed to be exhibited anytime, anywhere abroad.

1. Modern Scholarship on Western Han Princely Tombs

Previous scholarship on the Mancheng tombs was conducted mostly by archaeologists as well as art historians within the broader category of princely tombs in the Western Han. Like Liu Sheng, these princes were male relatives of the imperial Liu clan sent to rule the unruly provinces of the young empire.

By 2017, archaeologists had probed or excavated about eighty tombs associated with Western Han regional kings (see Appendix I). All of the tombs are located in the eastern half of the empire. This geographic distribution of tombs matches the geopolitical map of the Western Han Dynasty, where the princes ruled principalities “East of the Mountain” (山東 *Shandong*), while the emperor who granted the lands ruled “Inside of the Pass” (關中 *Guanzhong*) (Map 3).¹¹

The scientific excavations of magnificent princely tombs in Western Han first took place in southern China in 1961,¹² although the true breakthrough came with the discovery of the cliff-cut Mancheng tombs seven years later. The 1970s witnessed the

¹¹ For geopolitical circumstances, see Loewe and Twitchett 1986: 136–49.

¹² Hunan 1963. Two years earlier in 1959, the first princely tomb of the Han dynasty, a badly damaged one attributed to an Eastern Han Prince Liu Yan, was unearthed at today’s Beizhuang, Dingxian. This excavation still yielded unprecedented finds which posed great challenge to the scholars such as fragments of jade suits, the use of barricade stones (*huangchangshi*) and the *huilang* ambulatory circling the main casket. See Hebei 1964.

important discovery of the barricade burials (*huangchang ticou* 黃腸題湊).¹³ A total of eight such tombs were excavated.¹⁴ These gigantic complex wooden-chambered structures have revived another distinct funerary practice reported by some Han dynasty authors as the most privileged type only the emperors could enjoy.¹⁵

The most significant discoveries in the 1980s and 1990s are the Chu princely cemetery at Xuzhou 徐州¹⁶ and the Liang princely cemetery at Yongcheng 永城.¹⁷ Each of the cemeteries consisted of dozens of individual cliff-cut burials, among which sixteen have been identified.¹⁸ With the Lu princely cemetery at Qufu 曲阜 found in the 1970s,¹⁹ these princely cemeteries, as close comparisons with the Mancheng tombs, brought to the scholarly attention larger archaeological contexts for the individual burials. New discoveries of individual princely tombs continued into the 2010s.²⁰

The fruitful archaeological fieldwork of the past half century has inspired an increasing number of theses, journal articles, short essays and conference proceedings,

13 For a general study of this type of burials in English, see Campbell 2010.

14 Beijing 1977; Hebei 1981; Shijiazhuang 1980; Hunan 1981; Changsha 1979; Song and Li 1993; Liang 2005.

15 Ban 1963: 2948.

16 Nanjing 1985; You 1985; Xuzhou 1997; Xuzhou 1984; Xuzhou 1988; Shizishan 1998; Qiu and Xu 1991.

17 Henan 1996; Yan 2001.

18 For a general account of this type of burials in English, see Miller 2011.

19 Shandong 1972.

20 For an introduction to most recent discoveries at Dayunshan, Jiangsu in English, see Tseng 2017.

especially since the 1990s.²¹ Having unique access to the original sites and the raw data, Chinese archaeologists have kept excavation and documentation as their top priority. As a result, a majority of their studies were devoted to three basic tasks: dating the tombs, identifying the tomb occupants, and cataloging the tomb furnishings. Individual excavation reports best represented such scholarship.

With more and more materials being accumulated, scholars have begun systematically to compare different data to generalize a typology of the tomb structures and a system of mortuary practice, sometimes in a combined form. The earliest such typological work appears in brief surveys, with a relatively limited scope and depth.²² In a recent survey, Huang Zhanyue classifies all the mortuary structures into two basic categories: the cliff-cut burial (*yadongmu* 崖洞墓) and the vertical shaft burial (*shuxue tushikengmu* 竖穴土石坑墓).²³ Along this direction, some scholars have extended Huang's synchronic approach to diachronic, mapping these types in multiple regions and charting out a panoramic, all-embracing typo-morphological transformation throughout the Han dynasty.²⁴

21 Chinese archaeologists Zhao Huacheng and Gao Chongwen have reviewed the history of discovery and scholarship of the Han princely tombs in China before 2001. See Zhao and Gao 2002: 69–89, 96–101. Between 2001 and 2004, see Sun 2006. For regional surveys, in Shandong, see Zhang 2006a; in Hebei, see Mu 2001; in Jiangsu, see Qiu and Liu 2005, and Li 2005; in Henan, see Zheng 2001; in Guangdong, see Cheng 1994.

22 Three field surveys appeared almost at the same time during the early 1990s under the same title. See Zha 1990; Li 1991; Song 1993.

23 Huang 1998.

24 Liu 2006.

Han mortuary practice has equally drawn scholarly interest.²⁵ The most popular topics of this kind include cemetery planning,²⁶ the aboveground ritual complex,²⁷ the barricade burial;²⁸ the jade shroud or suit,²⁹ the outer satellite burials³⁰ and the accessory chariot and horse burials.³¹ Relying on textual evidence to interpret the archaeological materials, Yu Weichao systematizes a “Han institution” (*Hanzhi* 漢制) which consists of the outer burial (*waicang* 外藏) and the main burial (*zhengcang* 正藏).³² But recently some scholars have challenged this text-centered method by doing more overt justice to the visual evidence.³³

Following these inquiries, Chinese archaeologists kept updating their surveys and studies of Han princely tombs. Most recently Liu Rui 劉瑞 and Liu Tao’s 劉濤 joint work *Studies of the Institution of Western Han Princely Tombs* (Xi Han zhuhouwang lingmu zhidu yanjiu 西漢諸侯王陵墓制度研究) is divided into two major parts.³⁴ Part One provides an inventory and summary of the excavated tombs up to 2010, and Part Two discusses thirteen aspects of “funerary institutions,” which include not only

25 General discussions include: Zheng and Zheng 2001. Regional studies include: Gao 1988.

26 Chen 2003.

27 Han and Zhang 2000.

28 Lu 1977; Shan 1981; Liu 1987; Qin 1999.

29 Lu 1981; Lu 1989.

30 Li 1997; Liu 1999.

31 Liu 1994; Gao 1992.

32 Yu 1979.

33 Gao 2006; Huang 2002.

34 Liu and Liu 2010.

structural problems such as the cemetery planning, inner and outer burials, satellite burials, and “mausoleum towns” (*lingyi* 陵邑) but also types and typological evolutions.

In Japan, Higuchi Takayasu’s little book on the Mawangdui and Mancheng tombs published soon after the excavations demonstrates an immediate interest in the Western Han princely tombs.³⁵ Over the decades, the issue of stylistic transformation has dominated Japanese scholars’ inquiry into the history of Chinese mortuary practice. A number of Japanese scholars including Machida Akira, Nishimura Toshinori, and Takahama Yūko have been trying to fit the newly discovered princely tombs into the conventional typological narrative about Han tombs.³⁶

In the 1910s Sekino Tadashi identified two major types of early Chinese tombs which he describes as “vertical” and “horizontal.”³⁷ And nearly two decades later, based on a group of Han burials systematically excavated at Lelang in today’s North Korea, Mizuno Seiichi observed a diachronic transition of early Chinese burials from timber casket graves (*mokkakubo* 木槨墓) to brick house-like tombs (*jōshitsubo* 磚室墓).³⁸ Sekino and Mizuno’s formalist framework and terminologies have won many followers. According to the latest theory proposed by Huang Xiaofen, a Chinese scholar working in Japan, the burial style undergoes a step-by-step transformation from the vertical casket

35 Higuchi 1975. The latest survey is found in Ogata 1998.

36 Machida 1999: 147–8. Machida 1977; Machida 1963; Nishimura 1979; Takahama 1994.

37 Sekino 1916.

38 Mizuno 1934.

(*kaku* 槨) to the horizontal house-like burial (*shitsu* 室) from the pre-Han period to the Han.³⁹

The essential task in such scholarship is to find out the lost piece(s) of the jigsaw puzzle that would explain the “great leap” from one end to the other. The gap between the two styles (i.e. *kaku* and *shitsu*) is so strong that, according to Hikuchi Takayasu, they clearly embody two very different meanings: whereas the vertical pit graves serve to preserve the corpse, new horizontal chamber tombs are meant to imitate a house for the dead to inhabit.⁴⁰

Before the princely tombs came to light, Western scholars of Chinese funerary art had been trained by connoisseurship and formalism based on museum or private collections.⁴¹ The earliest English book on the Han princely tombs is an illustrated volume titled *Princes of Jade*.⁴² As the title shows, this book turns its spotlight on the two cliff-cut Mancheng tombs and the famous jade suits, which have persistently attracted scholars’ attention since their discovery.

A variety of research projects have incorporated the princely tombs since the 1970s. In 1979, Robert Thorp, in his pioneering doctoral dissertation “The Mortuary Art and Architecture of Early Imperial China,” attempted to map the stylistic change of Chinese burials from the late Eastern Zhou to the Eastern Han. He built one important part of his argument on the newly discovered Western Han princely tombs. In his eyes,

39 Huang 1994; Huang 1997; Huang 1998.

40 Hikuchi 1975: 254.

41 Robert Thorp offers a historical overview of the formation of such a “canonical” framework in Chinese archaeology and art; see Thorp 1999.

42 Capon 1973.

the tomb architecture has two major styles: the gallery plan (*huilang* 回廊) and the axial plan.⁴³ His discussion of tomb furnishings is focused on the technique and symbolism of jade suits.⁴⁴ Although in this dissertation, he removes the jade suits from the architectural framework and studies them as independent objects, in his later essays, Thorp becomes increasingly conscious of the need to incorporate these different artistic categories in one funerary context.⁴⁵

Wu Hung also made contributions to understanding the princely tombs. In his book *The Art of the Yellow Springs*, he looks at the materiality, spatiality, and temporality of the princely tombs and tries to unveil the narratives embedded in these dimensions.⁴⁶ For instance, he observes that wood, stone, and jade constituted a three-stage transformation from mortality toward immortality in Prince Liu Sheng's tomb.

Jessica Rawson not only explores the cosmological symbolism of the princely mountain burials but also unveils the cross-cultural and trans-border scenario that underlines some exotic tomb furnishings bearing the "Animal style."⁴⁷

Another scholar who did admirable work on this group of materials is historian Michael Loewe, who introduced the Dabaotai barricade burial (*huangchang ticou*) to the West.⁴⁸ He examined the imperial funerary institutions based on both textual and

43 Thorp 1980: 141.

44 Thorp 1980: 206–12; Kao and Yang 1983.

45 Thorp 1987; Thorp 1991.

46 Wu 2009a.

47 Rawson 1999; Rawson 2005.

48 Loewe 1988.

archaeological evidence, in an attempt to pave a road to historicizing the excavated materials.⁴⁹

In a nutshell, previous scholarship on the Mancheng tombs falls into three major categories. The first one includes excavation reports and surveys, mostly written in Chinese. In addition to the two-volume excavation report published in 1980, recent years have witnessed at least three books, two of them commonly sharing the title *The Han Tombs at Mancheng* (Mancheng Han mu 滿城漢墓). Authored respectively by the excavators Lu Zhaoyin 卢兆荫 and Zheng Shaozong 鄭紹宗, they offer detailed introductions to and first-hand documentations of the tombs.⁵⁰ The second type of scholarship includes miscellaneous short analytical articles or essays, each targeting at one specific issue of the tombs in dating, attribution, geography, topography, architectural elements, and material contents, etc.⁵¹ The third and last group of works consists of studies that use the Mancheng tombs as data or evidence to solve various other archaeological or art historical problems, for example, the transformation of the burial style over the centuries.

2. Theoretical Framework for Western Han Princely Tombs

A Western Han princely tomb was constructed in a particular form (wooden-chambered, cliff-cut, or others) for a particular client (a prince or princess) to meet a particular goal (to illustrate the afterlife). In this sense, the tomb is a work, or more

49 Loewe 1999a; Loewe 1999b. Although focusing on the emperor's tombs, this article is also informative and relevant: Loewe 1994.

50 Lu 2005; Zheng 2003.

51 Please refer to my references in the footnotes and bibliography.

generally, a thing or object.⁵² As an object, the tomb is dividable into smaller substantial components (or “subsets” à la Alain Badiou in *Being and Events*): in the case of Western Han princely tombs, architecture (sometimes with wall paintings), burial objects, deceased subjects, and aboveground ritual structures. Since each part is indispensable to the totality of the tomb, a study of the tomb has to be a study of all these components.

But my study begins with the new reality that unlike ordinary objects the Western Han princely tomb is a topological being which consists of not only those typological entities, but also their concrete relations, links, and implications spreading and extending in space and time. Here the keyword “topological,” an alternative of “typological,” does not just describe a collection, a whole, a set, or simply multiplicities in Badiou’s words, nor does it simply mean combination, assemblage, or variation as Lothar Ledderose has masterly explicated in his contemplation of the Chinese concept of *variation* or *change* (*yi* 易) and the use of module.⁵³ Rather, this concept denotes something like a terrain with structures, networks, routes, and orientations. It is indeed hard to find a single word or phrase in the Han lexicon to define this nearly cartographic characteristic.⁵⁴ But the varying terms and contexts associated with the tomb, as well as the complex yet quite consistent design of the tomb itself during this period all verify the experience and

52 The word “thing” basically means entity, matter, or body, and the word “object” is derived from Medieval Latin *objectum*, which denotes “things put before.” These two concepts are generally used as synonyms, though not without philosophic reflections. For example, Martin Heidegger suggests that the two terms have very different meanings. While the term object which assumes its opposition—subject is epistemological, the term thing has an ontological meaning of being in the world. See Heidegger 1967. For a more general survey of theories on things, see Brown 2001.

53 Ledderose 2000.

54 A tentative choice for such a term can be *tu* 圖 (most popularly interpreted as “to illustrate”) in its most archaic and broadest sense, which means “to plan, graph, map, or chart what is complicated.” Xu 1999: 277.

existence of such a being. To understand such a distinct nature of these tombs it is necessary to appeal to a new ontology which transcends the conventional view of scientific objects, because empirical data are always synthesized, consciously or unconsciously, on the basis of certain ontological premise which defines the object of the observation, or what is to be seen. There are no natural innocent objects, therefore “abnormal” things are filtrated without being sensed during the normalizing cognitive process, as an old Chinese idiom laments, we “watch but fail to see” (*shi er bu jian* 視而不見). Only after being aware of the fact that what we watch is preconditioned are we able to see “alien” experiences, forms, and “species” otherwise hidden in the dark.

Martin Heidegger distinguishes three types of things while tracing the origin of the work of art: (i) “mere” things, the latter being lifeless beings of nature (stones, clods of earth, etc.); (ii) works, and (iii) equipment. The former two types constitute what can be called “positivist things” for natural or cultural sciences, with solid, visible, and observable substantial contents. In contrast, the third type constitutes “hermeneutical things” for hermeneutics, with volatile, invisible, and non-observable interpretative associations (i.e. purpose, ready-to-hand-ness, or *equipmentality*).⁵⁵ But taken as a whole the Western Han princely tomb is neither a positivist nor a hermeneutical object. It includes solid substances such as architecture, burial objects, and corpses which are physically self-contained and separated from one another, but these individual entities do not naturally add up to the tomb. Rather the tomb is something in between, with the solid contents on the one hand and an observable topological shape that encompasses all these substantial entities on the other. Figuratively put, the tomb exists like a cobweb or spider

⁵⁵ Heidegger 1993.

net, both visible and invisible, with a translucent material formation which holds together its concrete internal nodes and points. The methodology to see through this net is, to appropriate Gaston Bachelard, *topoanalysis*.⁵⁶

Being such a web-like object, Western Han princely tomb has another important quality: it is a dialectical historical being. The term “dialectical” is too heavily loaded.⁵⁷ But what helps us properly penetrate the dialectical core of the topological tomb is Walter Benjamin’s unorthodox interpretation of materialist dialectics which directs us to “a radically new method for the conduct of a new mode of critical materialist historiography.”⁵⁸ According to him:

When thinking reaches a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions, the dialectical image appears. The image is the caesura in the movement of thought... The dialectical image is, accordingly, the very object constructed in the materialist presentation of history.⁵⁹

In this implicit description, the concepts “object” and “image” must be understood in the broadest sense.⁶⁰ The cinematic art of montage, a single pictorial composition made

56 Bachelard 1994: 8.

57 Being dialectical means the tomb comprises not only contradictions, but also the sublation that surpasses them. As Hegelian idealist and Marxist materialist dialectics both agree, all things, either ideas or materials, contain within themselves internal dialectical contradictions, which are the primary cause of motion, change, and development in the world. For Hegel, see Hegel 2010; for Marx, “My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e. the process of thinking, which, under the name of ‘the Idea’, he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of ‘the Idea’. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.” Marx 1906: 25.

58 Ferris 2006: 179.

59 Benjamin 1999: 89, N10a, 3.

60 For the concept, see Jennings 1987; Susan Buck-Morss 1991; Pensky 2006: 113–31. For Buck-Morss the dialectical image is the historical object (commodity). But this is only one possible

by juxtaposing a variety of (sometimes heterogeneous) pictures or images, is a perfect model for such an image-object. The purpose of the “dialectical image” is to subvert the Hegelian dialectical notion which spirals upwards to generate an illusive narrative of teleological progression.⁶¹ On the contrary, the historical truth lies in the unity and rupture, momentum and resistance between the past and now: “the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.”⁶² Benjamin’s engagement with Riegl, Freud, and Marx opens a door towards a materialist formalism, dialectical but anti-Hegelian in essence, which differs from the Vienna School’s idealist “history of the spirit” (*Geistesgeschichte*). This new formalism focuses on a pathological analysis of the historical significance of seemingly insignificant things, and by looking closely at a historical “past-in-present monad” for dialectical constructs. It teaches us that contradictories of the object sometimes stem from the object being as a historical reaction, for every object has a past embedded in it. Benjamin’s materialist dialectics provides a valuable insight for understanding the complicated Western Han princely tombs, in which we repeatedly sight tensions between old habits and new fashions not only in tomb architecture but in burial objects and deceased subjects as well.

Problems still remain. Benjamin’s monadology reserves no room for the subject—the client. But thanks to psychoanalysis, the Western Han princely tomb as a dialectical historical object can be read as a mirror image of a historical subject, *within*

application of the concept, as Pensky noted: “There is much evidence that he sought to conjoin Marx’s understanding of the fetishized commodity with his own doctrine of the dialectical image.” (Pensky 2006: 116)

61 Benjamin 1999: 486, N19, 1.

62 Benjamin 1999: 462, N2a, 3.

specific historical contexts. It remained a norm that Western Han rulers usually launched their tomb projects shortly after ascending the throne. And as long as the prince ruled, the construction continued. This suggests that the princely tomb, under the tomb occupant's approval, must have had a symbolic life parallel to the political life of the prince himself. Prince Liu Sheng's tomb was such an example. Unlike Benjamin's image, which can include any historically conceived object, the Lacanian image is defined by the mechanism of simultaneous identity and alienation. This is precisely what Jacques Lacan discovered during the "mirror stage" that the ego is formed via the process of identifying with one's own specular image. According to Lacan, a six-month-old infant identifies with his or her image in the mirror, which serves as a gestalt of the infant's emerging perceptions of "as-yet-unspecified" selfhood.⁶³ But the image of a unified body is a fantasy which does not correspond with the vulnerable and uncoordinated body experience of the infant. This delusive *imago* is established as an Ideal-I toward which the subject will perpetually strive.⁶⁴ More relevantly, the mirror stage does not just represent a moment in the life of infants; as a mechanism of structuring subjectivity, it keeps functioning throughout a person's life in shaping the subject's ego with distorted mirror images.⁶⁵ So any desirable Other can become such an image. The Lacanian mirror

63 Lacan 1997: 1–6.

64 Fink 1995: 36–7.

65 By the early 1950s Lacan no longer regards it simply as a moment in the life of the infant, but sees it as also representing a permanent structure of subjectivity, the paradigm of the imaginary order; it is a stadium (*stade*) in which the subject is permanently caught and captivated by his own image: "[the mirror stage is] a phenomenon to which I assign a twofold value. In the first place, it has historical value as it marks a decisive turning-point in the mental development of the child. In the second place, it typifies an essential libidinal relationship with the body-image." Lacan 1953: 14.

is undoubtedly dialectical, for it involves dialectical relationships between the self and the other, the desirer and the desired, fragments and ideal.⁶⁶

The Western Han princely tomb which served as the final resting place and a public symbol of the prince can be considered a perfect image of his ego. The tomb represents the last chance for the desiring lord to fulfill his ideal-I—in the afterlife. Reading the tomb as a semiotic object does not have to assume a conscious mastermind or planner because the topoanalysis is mainly conducted within the “symbolic order” constituted by layers of layers of cultural sediments of norms, customs, habits, or dispositions over time with no specific authors. However, Lacanian pathological analysis operates not only within the linguistically structured “symbolic order,” but also within the pre-linguistic “imaginary order” that is targeted at a particular patient (subject) trapped in her desire of the other.⁶⁷ Taken as social symptoms, the tomb becomes a medium through which whoever designed and commissioned it for the tomb occupant could desire for something else. In the Western Han, since the construction of a princely tomb was begun while the prince was ruling, the project was impossible without the prince’s or his representative’s endorsement. This situation leads us to assume a desirer that represented the prince.

However, there is a risk, as Henry Lefebvre has cautioned, in reading the Western Han princely tomb merely as a coded object-subject like a semiotic text. To him, there is a danger involved in fetishizing the notion of the work at the cost of diminishing its social

⁶⁶ Chiesa 2007: 19; Flynn and Judovitz 1993: 219.

⁶⁷ Lacan 1997: 95.

dynamics.⁶⁸ Echoing Ragon's definition of the tomb as "the space of death," Lefebvre argues instead that for a sign to be released into the physical social realm as a sign, it has to cross the body and the material world—a space full of social practices and actions. Accordingly, Lefebvre categorizes the tomb to "Absolute space" which is simultaneously natural, religious, ritual, socio-political, and historical.⁶⁹ The Western Han princely tomb, with an extended sacrificial space down to the previously totally forbidden buried area, became a ritually continuous site, in which the prince exerted his political power and ambition, either fulfilled or unfulfilled during his life.

These theoretical efforts are not made to illustrate certain established theories with Western Han princely tombs because clearly none of these theories alone works for our subject matter. On the contrary, my purpose is to use them synthetically and creatively to build a ladder to reach the deep core beneath the complex phenomena we have discovered of Western Han princely tombs.

68 He states: "My criticism certainly applies in full force, however, to Julia Kristeva's *σημειωτική*, to Jacques Derrida's 'grammatology,' and to Roland Barthes's general semiology." In the footnote (no. 11) added to the end of this sentence, he further supplements: "And it extends to others, whether on their own account or via those mentioned here. Thus Barthes on Jacques Lacan: 'His topology does not concern *within* and *without*, even less *above* and *below*, it concerns, rather, a reverse and an obverse in constant motion—a front and back forever changing places as they revolve around something which is in the process of transformation, and which indeed, to begin with, *is not*.' — *Critique et verite* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), p. 27." Lefebvre 1991: 5, 75.

69 "Absolute space was made up of fragments of nature located at sites which were chosen for their intrinsic qualities (cave, mountaintop, spring, river), but whose very consecration ended up by stripping them of their natural characteristics and uniqueness...A sanctified inwardness set itself up in opposition to the outwardness in nature, yet at the same time it echoed and restored that outwardness. The absolute space where rites and ceremonies were performed retained a number of aspects of nature, albeit in a form modified by ceremonial requirements: age, sex, genitality (fertility) - all still had a part to play...Absolute space, religious and political in character, was a product of the bonds of consanguinity, soil and language, but out of it evolved a space which was relativized and historical." Lefebvre 1991: 48.

3. Methodological Proposal on Western Han Princely Tombs

Any methodological tool devised to approach a subject has to be built on the basis of latest theoretical advancement.⁷⁰ Yet surprisingly, despite numerous archaeological, art-historical, and anthropological studies involving individual tombs from every period worldwide, tombs as a topic have been generally undertheorized.

The Western literature on tombs is scattered across a variety of topics. In many studies, the tomb only occupies a relatively modest position in the larger issue of death. Philippe Ariès's renowned history of Western death is such a good example. In this book with over a hundred pages, the author devotes only six-and-half pages to "tombs" which form "the last phenomenon remaining to be studied."⁷¹ Such an unbalanced scholarly interest reflects a way of looking that situates ritual and religion above the totality of the tomb. In this framework, the tomb only represents a stage—the last one—of the ritual of death and burial. As for art historians, the situation is not much better. Books devoted specifically to tombs are disproportionately few compared with those to canonical arts. Instead, most discussions of funerary arts were subject to numerous larger research topics and agendas, e.g. iconography, religion, myth, ideology, politics, representation, visualization, memory, etc.⁷² And in the cases when funerary arts were the major topics, usually only fractions of the entire structure called "tomb" were examined, such as

⁷⁰ My take on the definition of theory stems from Max Horkheimer: "Theory is the sum-total of propositions about a subject, the propositions being so linked with each other that a few are basic and the rest derived from these... The real validity of theory depends on the derived propositions being consonant with the actual facts. If experience and theory contradict each other, one of the two must be reexamined." Horkheimer 1972: 188.

⁷¹ Ariès 1974: 46–52.

⁷² Among recent examples are Zanker 1998; Stewart 2003; Clarke 2003; Hallett 2005; Petersen 2007.

funerary architecture, sculpture, or wall painting.⁷³ This seems to indicate that for many authors the concept and conceptualization of tombs has been taken not as an independent theoretical subject, but as something conventional, simple, plain, and self-evident.

Michel Ragon, a versatile historian of art, architecture, urban design, and literature, is one of the few who attempted a sweeping view of tombs throughout history. His renowned book *The Space of Death* still provides one of the finest theorizations ever done on tombs. Under the title which concisely refers to the tomb, he divides his analyses into three sections: the cemetery and architecture, the funerary ritual, and the transformation of burial practice from antiquity to modernity.⁷⁴ A keen reader can easily grasp Ragon's conceptualization of the tomb as physical, temporal, and historical space of death. But in this theory, the tomb is not yet an organic totality. For example, there is little reflection on the dynamic relations between or within these aspects such as the interplay between the "Tomb-house" and the "Funerary furniture."

In the Chinese context, Wu Hung proposes tomb studies to be a "possible subfield of art history."⁷⁵ To qualify as a subfield, tomb studies must have a well-defined scope with relatively independent subject matters, theories, and methodologies. Unlike Ragon who prefers a diachronic perspective, Wu's theoretical endeavor is largely synchronic based on a series of case studies of individual tombs in China from various periods. He is critical of the decontextualizing methods that take away the tomb's organic integrity, e.g. breaking down a tomb to separate elements to match the conventional canonical art or

73 Examples of such include Colvin 1991; s'Jacob 1954; Panofsky 1992; Davies 2004; Brink 2008; Elsner and Huskinson 2010; Zanker and Ewald 2012.

74 Ragon 1983.

75 Wu 2007.

anthropological categories. He instead applauds a contextual methodology which places totality above components.⁷⁶ Wu also emphasized a difference between tombs and ordinary artworks while reflecting on the viewer's role. According to him, tombs in China were conceived as "concealment" (*cang*) so the viewer must not be a living subject.⁷⁷ Following these two basic assumptions, Wu develops a tripartite tomb theory of materiality, spatiality, and temporality in *The Art of Yellow Springs*.

If Ragon's Theory of Space of Death considers not only the physical structure but also relevant ritual practices and historical associations, Wu's Theory of Concealment places priority on the structural, material, and pictorial contents. Such a shift of focus turns the spotlight straight on the tomb's being as an independent complex work of art, but simultaneously restricts the concept of the tomb exclusively to the concealed buried structure and excludes rituals and social activities.⁷⁸ Meanwhile the "Rite of Passage" was taken up by Joy Beckman in her doctoral dissertation on Eastern Zhou burials.⁷⁹ Beckman developed an elaborate theory from the temporal perspective relying on canonical ritual prescriptions, particularly the *Etiquette and Ceremonials* (*Yili* 儀禮). According to her, the tomb is only one section of the endless ritual cycle in ancient people's lives. It is a ritual moment or ritual episode rather than a museum-like exhibition space. Being a *moment* means the tomb is essentially designed as one ring of a ritual

76 Wu 2009a: 14.

77 Wu 2009b.

78 It is worthwhile noting that Wu Hung once initiated a diachronic, ritual perspective in Chinese art history, but he later shifted his angle in favor of a more synchronic, spatial approach. See Wu 1992.

79 The relationship between tomb and ritual is largely examined from the anthropological perspective. In general, see van Gennep 1960. Huntington and Metcalf 1979. In the Chinese context, see Watson and Rawski 1988.

chain. With the ritual performance advancing from one episode to another, the previous moment is always left behind while the future moment keeps emerging on the participant's horizon. As Beckman has demonstrated, the ritual of *bin* 殯 (temporary burial) that takes place in the deceased's home puts an end to the previous ritual of *lian* 斂 (encasement) and the earlier visual and material setting and all the ritual props are replaced by new ones.⁸⁰ The practical dimension of the ritual approach is to acknowledge the constant movement as a dynamic temporal context (rather than a fixed spatial backdrop) in which individual artworks find their positions (or moments) and manifest their meanings. What is embedded in this ritual temporality is a psychological dimension Beckman failed to address.⁸¹ As a temporary stop in continuous practice, the tomb became an episode that could be experienced *only once*. For the audience of the funerary ritual, the retention and memory of what had happened exerted a lasting interpretative power on what was going on and even cast a shadow upon what was coming next. Not coincidentally, the temporal continuity of the ritual process carved out a new meaningful space: neither a physical one nor a practical one, but a psychological or experiential one.

The bifurcation between Ragon and Wu's theories is not simply derived from the cultural difference between Western and Eastern tombs. Rather it reflects different theoretical attitudes toward empirical data. Being more complementary than contradictory, their empirical and theoretical work provides a sound starting point for devising a critical methodology that combines the following do's and don'ts.

⁸⁰ Beckman 2006: 52–137.

⁸¹ This idea was thoroughly worked out by Husserl 1991: 29.

(1) I would make two critical revisions to Wu's principle of totality and Ragon's temporal, historical dimension to form the basic cornerstones of my study.

Firstly I subject Wu's organic tomb to a historical cultural context. The full meaning of the word "tomb" for a Han subject is threefold. From the formal point of view, a tomb occupied certain space in a particular geographic locale with particular topography and even geomancy. Large Han tombs usually consisted of not only an underground *burial* but also an aboveground "funerary park."⁸² In practical terms, the tomb was built to house funerary ritual performance, which was not accessible by a bird's-eye view but unfolded step by step along a moving horizon.⁸³ Therefore, the Western Han tomb was not just the final stage of the funerary ceremony, nor was it a material deposit of ritual paraphernalia used in the previous rituals as Beckman showed in the Eastern Zhou case, but was itself a vectorial (as opposed to static) construction with spatiotemporal directionality. In other words, the tomb was not only typological but also topological. It concerned not just the types of architecture or buried objects but also positions (both absolute and relative) which constitute orientation, connectivity, continuity, convergence, and radiation of things *in* the tomb rather than forms and materials of things *from* the tomb. This important point is thoroughly pursued throughout the following chapters. And finally, the tomb was a psychological and wishful construct. A resting place for spirits and ghosts, the tomb possessed a supernatural power granted by human audiences and projected back

82 According to the Western Han scholar Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) *Dialects* (*Fangyan* 方言), "Therefore tomb is read as scale." 所以墓謂之樞。The annotation reads: "scale (wu) means to plan and measure the cemetery. It is correct to say 'the scale of the Chu Mausoleum' in *Book of the Han*." 樞謂規度墓地也。漢書曰：初陵之樞，是也。See Yang 2005: 997, 1000. For studies on the funerary park (*qinyuan* 寢園 or *yingyu* 塋域 or *muyuan* 墓園), see Yang 1985: 14–33.

83 For a reflection on the constructive power of practice which mediates the subject and the object, see Bourdieu 1977.

to them. The power of the place lied in its direct prompting of intuitive human reactions such as sadness, yearning, fear and awe.⁸⁴

Secondly, while adopting Ragon's view of the tomb's being in time, I deconstruct his continuous general history and reduce it to a distinct moment, in which a *present* facing a *past*. Therefore anything present has a past standing before it, pressing upon it, and forcing it to react. So the tomb must be analyzed as an inseparable temporal unit of "present-past."

Consequently, this dissertation approaches Western Han princely tombs as firstly, an organic integration or a global network of architecture, buried objects, buried subjects (the tomb occupants) and the living world's projection, and secondly, as a distinct object in spatial extension and temporal transition, or a thing with direction and momentum. In both aspects, the tombs are treated as connective constructions both in space and time.

(2) We should avoid teleological linear evolutionism without losing sight of the historical problem. The meaning of tombs manifests itself in different ways in different tombs throughout this period, without necessarily following a linear sequence or progression. For this reason, this dissertation prefers a synchronic perspective to a diachronic one. The Western Han period functions as the common temporal framework within which various princely tombs take their shape. Rolf Stein in his synchronic investigation of traditional Chinese dwellings and tombs presents a persuasive model of combining visual, paleographic, textual, and ritual arguments to explicate household elements such as skylight, roof, and kiln.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, Western Han as a chronological

84 "Ruins and graves express no mournfulness to the people, and yet the people mourn (amidst them)." 墟墓之間，未施哀於民而民哀。 *Li ji* 禮記, the Tangong chapter; Legge 1967: 1: 191.

85 Stein 1991: 121–74.

unit is considered as a distinct historical stratum formed upon the previous Eastern Zhou. Consequently, the character of Western Han princely tombs is regarded not as a self-contained structure but as a dynamic departure from what tombs used to be. And it is precisely this transformation that defines the significance of this particular group of materials.

(3) A rigid, self-sustaining typological approach, which deals exclusively with the physical and formal aspects of a tomb, is rejected in favor of a topological method. In mathematics, topology is a type of knowledge about connectivity and continuity of a set of points or surfaces. It describes a type of geometry in which quality is more important than quantity and connection is more relevant than distance.⁸⁶ In natural sciences such as chemistry and physics, topology usually denotes a study of relationships among a family or group of elements rather than individual elements themselves. Briefly summarized, topology is all about boundary, linkage, passage, connectivity, mediation, and itinerary. Traditional ways of looking at a Chinese tomb have generally fallen into rigid typological fashions of categorization, which divide tombs either by material into stone, brick, and timber, or by form into vertical pit grave and horizontal chamber grave. Such ways of categorization are still dominating today's archaeology in China.⁸⁷ Huang Xiaofen in her recent work effectively unmasks the inappropriateness of current archaeological terminologies.⁸⁸ She introduces novel concepts such as *openness* and *connectivity*, which

86 Richeson 2008; James 1999.

87 A most recent example of such a typological treatment is Liu and Liu 2010.

88 Huang 2002: 16–25.

leap beyond the traditional typological nomenclature to describe burial space.⁸⁹ However, Huang's agenda is still typological, aiming at mapping out a linear evolutionary narrative based on reworked typological categories (i.e. *guomu* versus *shimu*). Not surprisingly, her theory faces similar challenges.⁹⁰ As Michel Foucault has cautioned, the formation of any knowledge is pre-determined by the order we impose on things.⁹¹ In the case of tombs, this *order* can be understood as the way in which the viewer's primordial experience is shaped and in which more advanced categories and concepts are formulated on the basis of that experience. Other than typology, the basic framework for this dissertation within which the entire pictorial, visual or material program finds its meaning is the tomb as an integration of all physical, ritual and experiential constructs.

4. Arguments and Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation first demonstrates three major symbolic structures in the topology of funerary architecture and pattern of furnishing, including the “enclosing

⁸⁹ Huang 1995.

⁹⁰ Here is a brief summary of my response to her categories. First we must reflect why “chamber” is experienced in some tombs, or what makes us recognize them as a “chamber.” Second, we must also ask why the opposite casket tombs (*guomu*) fail to do so. It is clear that a so-called *shimu* contains more elements reminiscent of a real chamber than a *guomu* does. However, conceptually a *guomu* is never less an otherworldly residency than any *shimu*. Therefore, sharing the same intentional matter, which is the tomb, the real difference between them is the content of experience, in Edmund Husserl's category, which concerns appearance. Whereas *shimu* lays bare the intuitive aspect of a “home,” *guomu* is intelligible through the signitive aspect. In fact, casket tombs could represent a chamber and chamber tombs could include a casket. Barricade burials or *huangchang ticou*, one of the most favored burial styles by the Western Han imperial house, is the best example that matches either category. While attributing the barricade burials to a *guomu* with opened-up space, Huang admits on another page that they actually fall in the category of *shimu*. Moreover, evidence from both transmitted texts and excavated inscriptions confirms unmistakably that in contemporary experience, *guo* was a term attachable to all types of tombs. Clearly, neither *guomu* nor *shimu* conveys an explicit meaning that can qualify them as a pair of contrasting and complementary analytic categories.

⁹¹ Foucault 2002.

structure (between body and soul),” “parallel structure” (between husband and wife), and “overlapping structure” (between Chinese and foreign). The apparently complicated tombs are in fact variations of these three structures.

In the three bipartite structures, the first is always double-leveled and is oriented with one level above or before the other, the second, non-oriented and parallel, and the third, one contained by the other. Although A or B can vary, their fundamental relationships as illustrated above do not change.

Linking visual analysis to contemporary history, this dissertation further contends that these three visual structures respond to three fundamental religious, social, and political identities: the unifier of body and soul, husband and wife, as well as Chinese (*Han*) and “barbarians” (*Hu*), who defied and resisted Chinese imperialism and assimilation. Eventually I conclude that in portraying their royal occupants simultaneously as immortal ancestors (religious), as reunited husband and wife (social), and as state pacifiers (political), the tombs fulfilled the king’s fourfold obligations: to fix the self (*xiushen* 修身), to put the family in order (*qijia* 齊家), to fix the state (*zhiguo* 治國), and further to help the emperor pacify the world (*ping tianxia* 平天下) in the 2nd century BCE China.

In making these arguments, this dissertation consists of three interrelated chapters.

Chapter 1 inquires into Mancheng Tomb 1’s pattern of furnishing focusing on the enclosing structure between body and soul, which constituted a strong traditional concern in the royal Zhongshan tombs during the late Eastern Zhou. First, it traces the varying ratios between two major groups of grave goods – wearable or portable “outfits” and usually non-portable “instruments,” shifting from the inner coffin, through the outer

coffin and the stone casket, to the front chamber. In the end, it concludes that the major purpose of this pattern of furnishing aimed to reunite the separated body and soul to secure the religious identity of the king of Zhongshan – as an immortal ancestor.

Chapter 2 studies the parallel relationship between Tombs 1 and 2. This chapter demonstrates that the lady's tomb (Tomb 2) was largely designed as a distorted mirror image of her husband's (Tomb 1) in both plan and furnishing. Based on this analysis, it further argues that the mirroring structure was subdued to a more abstract notion of *yin-yang* polarity, embedded deep in the early Chinese cosmology and philosophy.

Meanwhile, some architectural features and burial objects in Dou Wan's burial show her being compared to The Queen Mother of the West, or Xiwangmu, an immortal goddess who held the secret of elixir. This chapter concludes that the Mancheng tombs were planned to immortalize the social roles of the deceased couple: as ideal husband and wife.

The last Chapter 3 explores the ways in which non-Han elements overlapped with Han ones in the Mancheng tombs. It argues that the exotic elements, which resonate with Zhongshan's "barbaric" (Rong-Di 戎狄) tradition during the late Eastern Zhou period (475-221 BCE), and the distinctive emphasis on excessive drinking and sex represent Liu Sheng's efforts of identifying himself both as the restorer and heir of the "barbaric" tradition of Zhongshan, and as a Han prince who used the political strategy of ruling the locals by their own customs to effectively "tame" the new subjects of the empire.

CHAPTER 1: The Inseparable Body and Soul: Fixing the Self

In the thick forest of thousands of burial objects that furnished the Mancheng tombs, some patterns are easy to recognize (Fig. 1.1). For example, the front chamber was filled with various utensils but very few small portable paraphernalia.⁹² In fact, the excavators found no such personal objects as garment hooks, seals, hairpins, and mirrors in or around the two tents.⁹³ The same can be said of the rear chamber. But when it comes to the two nested coffins, we see exactly the opposite: no utensils were deployed at all. Was this contradiction a mere coincidence, or result of some thoughtful plan?

In this chapter, in response to this question, I will closely trace one of the basic structural principles at Mancheng, which can be dubbed “axial,” because it encompassed the coffins, the casket, and the front chamber following the east-west central axis of the tombs. The purpose of applying this axial principle, as I will argue, was to establish the religious identity of the tomb occupants by transforming them from the deceased to immortal ancestors, who not only lived on but also lived forever. This requires fixing the

92 The only portable items uncovered next to the tents were swords (nos. 247–249), but even they, mixed with long-range arms including dagger-spears (*ge* 戈) and crossbows, were originally fastened onto a wooden stand rather than being suspended to a waistband. Although some jades were spotted in front of the prince’s tent, they were most likely ornaments of some disintegrated lacquerwares rather than of ritual clothes. A group of bronze plaques, perhaps decorations of a decayed waistband, and the jade *bi* disc (no.124) and the *huang* half ring (no.133) uncovered before the prince’s tent were the only objects that could have been worn by the physical body. But these objects, impossible to be a pair, had an indeterminate relationship to the deceased body, and more likely ritual gifts dedicated to the deceased’s soul rather than referencing the physical body. See Zhongguo 1980a, fig. 16, Appendix 13. Thus the front chamber embraced a different posthumous subjectivity of the deceased prince: one without the physical shape. It seems as though the front ritual hall was an empty stage: all props were set in the right places, but only the main actors – the deceased couple – were either absent or completely shapeless.

93 This conspicuous absence, however, was not always the case among high-ranking tombs in the Western Han. For example, in Zhao Mei’s tomb at Guangzhou, a number of such small items were found in the side chambers around Zhao’s “soul seats;” see Guangzhou 1991.

disengaged body and soul, the two essential elements of a living person, in a perfect, eternal engagement.

The need arose and was met about the right time. The old time when a small stereotypical group of ritual objects was to be packed in a small stereotypical wooden casket had gone. As the royals were able to afford a horizontal, house-like tomb of extraordinary dimensions, they were presented with an unprecedented challenge and an opportunity for creativity: how to furnish the new space properly? For sure, in the ritualistic context, not everything was negotiable: the deceased body had to rest in the coffin and the wandering soul must be entertained outside of it. Other than this and some other lasting conventions, things were in the hands of the tomb designer, who must decide how to order the rest of the space with various objects. Apparently, if the task were to simply fill the space randomly, like filling one's storage in the basement, then there would have been ample, if not unlimited, possibilities. But furnishing a tomb was different because all those possibilities were to be screened for two reasons: first many things in the tomb were imbued with symbolic meanings and request a special treatment, and second, since this was His Majesty's last chance to prepare for his immortality, it had to be right.

Unlike religious authors who would never have faced such concrete tasks, the tomb designer(s) must (or was forced to) choose an alternative way other than propositions and argumentation to make things work. For example, the Daoist alchemist Ge Hong 葛洪 (284-363) once wrote: "No matter wise or stupid, everyone has the *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄. When they get separate, people fall ill; when they are completely separate,

men die.”⁹⁴ But let us imagine: what would Ge have done, had he been asked to articulate the same idea with materials instead of words? Could he express more or less than what he said? How could he show, with only beads, pots, or cups at his disposal, that the soul (*hun*) and the body (*po*) were united or separated?

Clearly, the tomb designer(s), who might have been well informed of contemporary religious discourses, could only resort to a visual and material language with a relatively fixed “vocabulary” -- objects permitted by the funerary protocols of the time -- to illustrate an effective answer to the critical question of the royal subject’s afterlife, the single most pressing issue to the recently departed king. In fact, on this matter there would be no opt-out: the tomb had to be furnished anyway. Even to those opportunists, who lacked a firm belief in the existence of the afterlife, the whole investment in the tomb was still worthwhile, because, as many of them wondered and feared, “what if by any chance the soul is indeed conscious?” (*hun ruo you ling* 魂若有靈).⁹⁵ Since a tomb could not be built twice, stakes could not be higher: if the design succeeded, life would go on more harmoniously than it did in the real world; if it failed, the entire universe might collapse on the deceased, and with it, the possibility of immortality. Therefore the physical plan must accord with contemporary ideas of life and death.

The Mancheng tombs were such a work of solid (in the literal sense of the word) religious thoughts. The secret material recipe for immortal life was concealed in the

94 Wang 1986: 21. 人无贤愚，皆知己身有魂魄，魂魄分去则人病，尽去则人死。

95 Goldin 2015.

changing ratio between two major groups of burial objects that I categorize as “outfits” and “instruments.”

“Outfits”

- Clothes
- Jewelry
- Hairpin
- Seal
- Garment hooks (belt hooks)
- Jade pendants (*bi*-discs, *huang*-half rings, etc.)
- Portable weapons (daggers, poniards, swords, etc.)
- Portable ritual or mundane paraphernalia (*bi*-discs, *gui*-tablets, toiletry-case, coins, etc.)

“Instruments”

- Kitchen vessels (*ding*-tripods, *hu*-pots, etc.)
- Tableware (cups, plates, bowls, etc.)
- Daily living objects (lamps, incense burners, etc.)
- Long-range weapons (*ge* and *ji* spears)

In short, “outfits” clothed, equipped, or decorated the body. These small, portable, and personal objects usually feature no “legs” (or bases) on which they could stand on their own, but rather holes to be suspended around the body. Either worn or carried, they traveled with the human subject and formed a material “skin” that merged into his or her *body image*.⁹⁶

According to Paul Schilder, different from the physical body, “body image” means “the picture of our own body which we form in our own mind.” This word denotes how the human body is experienced by human themselves. And in early Chinese mind, the human body was always experienced as being clothed with their ritual accessories, or *fu* 服, for a cultivated person could never put off his clothing, which signified his

⁹⁶ Clothing is often considered a default part of the human body. Schilder 1935: 11. For an updated introduction of this concept, see Pruzinsky and Cash 2004, 3–12.

physical and social body, and by extension, his mind, too.⁹⁷ Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BCE), an influential Confucian theoretician, claimed that while the human body was located at the center of the universe (between Heaven and Earth), the clothes, which extend to all outfits that can be physically worn, represented the gods that dominated the four cardinal directions of the universe: “The swords are [worn] on the left to represent the Blue Dragon; the knives are [worn] on the right to represent the White Tiger; the knee hide covers the front to represent the Red Bird; the hat is [worn] on the head to represent the Black Warrior. These four objects are magnificent decorations of a gentleman.”⁹⁸

Even in popular culture in the Han dynasty, people often imagined the dead as dressed up rather than naked. This fact puzzled Wang Chong 王充 (27-97), an eloquent intellect who questioned the masses’ apparently nonsensical belief in ghosts wearing clothes: “If we consider ghosts as spirits of the dead people, then we should (in theory) only see them as naked rather than dressed, for clothes don’t have spirits.”⁹⁹ The fact that the ghosts were always visualized as being clad in clothes precisely attests to the inherent relationship of clothes to the human body.

In contrast, “instruments,” including kitchenware, couches, tables, and food vessels, were usually large, heavy, cumbersome, often with “feet” to stay firm on a level. Rarely related to a specific body part such as head, neck, chest, waist, or hands, these

97 As a passage from *Guoyu* 國語 nicely puts it, “Clothing is the externalized pattern (*wen* 文) of the heart,” the very core of the body 夫服，心之文也。Xu 2000: 187.

98 劍之在左，青龍之象也。刀之在右，白虎之象也。韞之在前，赤鳥之象也。冠之在首，元武之象也。四者，人之盛飾也。Su 1992: 151. Translations are mine; see also Loewe 2011: 233.

99 Huang 1990: 874. 如審鬼者、死人之精神，則人見之，宜徒見裸袒之形，無為見衣帶被服也。

objects were not made to move with the body. Archaeological data have demonstrated that such objects seldom appeared in a coffin no matter how spacious the coffin was.¹⁰⁰

There is also a traditional Chinese concept corresponding to the group of burial objects: *qi* 器, or “crafted instruments,” which was often paired with *fu* in ancient texts. In *Zuozhuan*, Duke Jing of Qi 齊景公 (r. 547-490 BCE), the lord of the Qi state, once humbly confessed: “I have my ancestors’ outfits but dare not wear them; I have my ancestors’ instruments but dare not use them.”¹⁰¹ According to another Confucian canon *The Book of Rites*, “A superior man, though poor, will not sell his vessels of sacrifice; though suffering from cold, he will not wear his sacrificial robes.”¹⁰² Master Mo Di 墨翟 (ca. 468-371 BCE), the leader of Mohism, likewise agreed that “when the government offices provide the implements, they must first ensure that the proper sacrificial vessels and robes are fully stocked in the warehouses.”¹⁰³ Therefore, the contradiction between “outfits” and “instruments” in terms of grave goods was by no means a random coincidence.

In the front and rear chambers at Mancheng, the relationship between the two groups of objects varies from zone to zone.

100 The only exception I know is the tomb at Hongtushan, in which some bronze vessels were found in the east side of the coffin. But these vessels are not ordinary objects, but miniature surrogates all sealed in a bamboo box with garment hooks, toys, and other beads ornaments. The other objects in the coffin include weapons and a *se* zither. It can be said, therefore, that what was buried in the coffin was the bamboo box (like a suitcase) with all personal items; see Shandong 1983.

101 He Ning 何寧, *Chunqiu gongyangzhuan zhushu* 春秋公羊傳註疏, 24.135, in Ruan 1980: 2329. 景公曰：「寡人有不腆先君之服，未之敢服；有不腆先君之器，未之敢用，敢以請。」

102 Legge 1967: 1: 104. 君子雖貧，不粥祭器；雖寒，不衣祭服。

103 Defoort 2013: 135. 故曰官府选效，必先祭器祭服，毕藏于府。

The inner coffin contained the largest number of “outfits,” either worn by the corpse or placed next to where they were supposed to be put on (e.g. garment hooks around the waist, seals in the sleeves, or with the belt, etc).¹⁰⁴ The outer coffin held fewer such items. Despite the absence of a physical body, some of the objects were nonetheless arranged on an invisible body. For example, the swords and knives appeared at two sides and flanked the ritual jades, garment hooks, and seals in the middle. Meanwhile, because the invisible body was essentially an intangible mental image rather than a concrete physical being, it remained a shapeless idea. This explains the displacement of some other “outfits.” For example, the hairpin was not located in the place that corresponded to the head, but in the place corresponding to the chest. Beyond the outer coffin in the casket, the number of “outfits” dramatically dropped, and the anthropomorphic configuration was no longer maintained.¹⁰⁵ Instead, “instruments” became dominant. Eventually in the front chamber, while the varieties and quantities of “instruments” reached a peak, “outfits” almost completely disappeared. In this tripartite structure, if the inner coffin represents the corporeal side of the deceased subject, the front chamber stands for its spiritual side. Between the two ends were two intermediary zones: the outer coffin mediated between the inner coffin and the casket, and the casket did so between the coffins and the front chamber.

104 There were also exceptions in which such objects were deliberately placed in places that don't normally carry the items. In this case, they were perhaps not worn but contained in small boxes left on top of the corpse. For instance, the seal was sometimes contained in the deceased's mouth, as in Dou Wan and Cao Sun's cases. See Changsha 1979. In Zhao Mei's coffin, three jade garment hooks appeared together next to the head. See Guangzhou 1991: 1: 158–9.

105 It has to be noted that this three-zone theory is based primarily on the model of Mancheng Tomb 1. In most royal tombs, however, the outer coffin embraced the inner coffin so tightly that the limited interstice between them admitted few or no objects. And in tombs such as Princess Dou's, this intermediary space was simply omitted. Nevertheless, the *disembodying reduction* of grave goods from inside the coffin to outside it was common to almost all royal tombs.

To substantiate the above observation we are obliged to go through the four zones one by one. It makes the best sense to begin with the inner coffin and move outwards to the other parts of the tomb, for this centrifugal process represented the ancient perspective described in the *Book of Rites* (Liji 禮記): the tomb contains “the *guan*-coffin all around the clothes (*yi* 衣); the *guo*-casket all around the *guan*-coffin; the earth all around the *guo*-casket.”¹⁰⁶

1. The Imperishable Body

To Dong Zhongshu, human body stood at the beginning of time. Covering it with clothes represents the first page of human civilization and lays the foundation for rituals and etiquettes (*li* 禮).¹⁰⁷ It is not surprising that Chinese funerary ritual always began with the body and its outfit, which in Liu Sheng’s tomb was epitomized by the hybrid “jade suit” that is both clothing and “body.”

As this conventional name indicates, the “jade suit” was unmistakably an outfit (Fig. 1.2). Worn by the corpse, the remarkable shroud consists of 2,498 jade pieces bound by 1,100 grams of gold wires. With their edges pierced by a series of small holes to allow wires, most of the pieces were rectangular, but a few were circular, triangular, or quadrilateral. Their sizes varied from fifteen centimeters square to just one and a half

106 棺周於衣，槨周於棺，土周於槨。Ruan 1980: 1292; Legge 1967: 1: 155–6.

107 “Heaven and Earth give birth to ten thousand things to nurture the mankind. So everything comfortable is used to sustain the body; everything venerable is used to make magnificent outfits. This is why ritual and etiquette began to emerge.” 天地之生萬物也以養人，故其可食者以養身體，其可威者以為容服，禮之所為興也。Su 1992: 151.

centimeters square. These jade pieces formed twelve different large units, each covering a particular part of the human body: the front and the back of the head, the front and the back of the torso, the two arms, the two hands, the two legs, and the two feet (Fig. 1.3).¹⁰⁸

However, the true nature of this funerary outfit was more complex. In the transmitted texts of the Eastern Han dynasty, the jade suit was often referred as “*yuxia* 玉匣” (jade case).¹⁰⁹ Although the word *xia* literally means “case” or “box” characterized by *concealment* and *enclosure*,¹¹⁰ it could also be read as “armor” (*jia* 甲).¹¹¹ Not coincidentally, the thin pieces and the way in which they were bound together recall the technique of the bound armor and helmet.¹¹² Although the real armor was normally made of iron or leather, in the funerary context, it could be jade or stone, too.¹¹³ Evidence came from a sacrificial pit in Qin Shihuangdi’s Lishan 驪山 Mausoleum, which yielded dozens of sets of heavy and brittle helmets and armor made of bound stone pieces and bronze wires.¹¹⁴ Perhaps for this reason, a Han-dynasty author made the following observation: “(The maker of the

108 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 348.

109 Fan 1965: 446, 484, 615, 1174, 1470, 1637, 2143, 2811.

110 Duan 1999: 637.

111 Duan 1999, 637. See also Lu 1981: 56.

112 Lu 1981; Lin 2003. See also Dien, 2000.

113 In 1997, a group of 179 jade pieces, mostly square or rectangular, with identical small holes on the edges have been robbed out of the royal Tomb 2 of the Zhao kingdom, dating from the mid-3rd century BCE. Although the exact function of these jade pieces remains a question for debate, some scholars have suggested that they might have been parts of a jade armor; see Zhao 2009: 90; Chen 2005a.

114 The finds claimed during the excavation of 1998 include eighty-seven armor suits and forty-three helmets. Shaanxi and Qin Shi Huang 2000: 144. As the excavators have suggested, such stone armor and helmets were too heavy and brittle for soldiers to wear during a real battle; see Shaanxi and Qin Shi Huang 2000: 144; Lin 2007.

jade suit) transforms the jade into a jacket which looks like a piece of armor bound by gold wires.”¹¹⁵

The “jade suit,” however, was more than a simulated conventional outfit. Wu Hung contends that such shrouds should be interpreted as “jade bodies” rather than “jade suits,” as conventionally called by scholars.¹¹⁶ According to him, the jade suit not only “clothed” the body, but tightly followed its shape including the quite realistic head, face, torso, limbs, hands, and feet, which were connected with one another in good proportion to represent a body in the round: the saggy eyes and mouth; the protruding nose; the slightly bulgy belly; the two fleshy butt cheeks, and the precisely modeled thighs, calf muscles, and fingers.¹¹⁷

It must be noted that Wu’s illuminating concept of “jade body” does not account for all the features of the “jade suit.” Although Liu Sheng’s jade head was fashioned in a generally naturalistic manner, the incision of the eyes and mouth is so thin that it is barely recognizable, while the ears are completely omitted. What’s more, the “jade body” is not entirely naked, either, as the two “feet” are actually represented as wearing shoes.¹¹⁸ Such contradictions demonstrate that the “jade suit” is clothing and body merged together, which best embodies the concept of “outfit” (*fu*) as the “material skin” of the physical body.

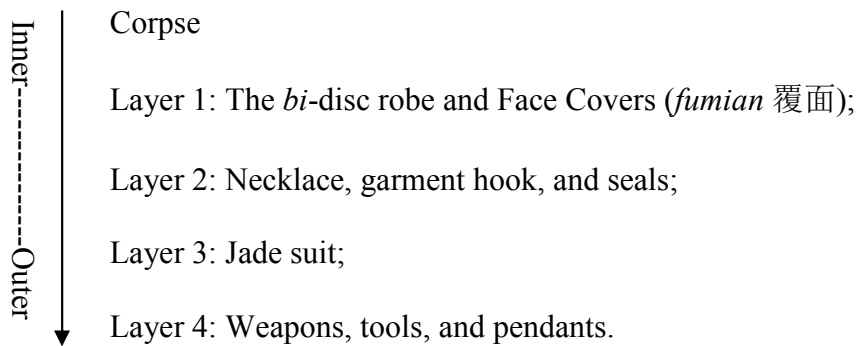
115 Sun 1990: 105.

116 Thorp 1980: 206–12; Kao and Yang 1983. On the concept of *yuti* 玉體, see Zhangjiashan 2006: 124. 五臟虛則玉體利矣. I would like to thank Professor Donald Harper for directing me to this source.

117 Wu 1997: 158–64. In another jade suit excavated from Shizishan 獅子山, a small pair of circular pieces represented the nipples on the front chest; see Zhongguo and Xuzhou 2005: 312.

118 The terra-cotta soldiers in the First Emperor’s mausoleum at Lishan wear similar shoes featured by a square front and a round rear. Shaanxi and Shi huang ling 1988: 1: 164–68.

However, the most eye-catching jade suit, which resembled both the body and the armor, was in fact not Liu Sheng’s innermost outfit. Rather, the jade suit was just the third of the four layers of worn objects that “encased” the corpse. The four layers that outfit the prince’s corpse can be conveniently demonstrated as the below diagram:



If the “jade suit” was a mixture of clothing and body, then those inside the “jade suit” must have had an even closer relationship to the body. Indeed. Among these layers, the innermost one that stayed closest to the body included a group of jade pieces used to cover the bodily orifices, or the so-called “nine orifices” (*jiuqiao* 九竅) including two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, the mouth, the anus, and genitalia. Not surprisingly, archaeologists found in this group of jades a pair of eye covers, a pair of nostril plugs, a pair of ear plugs, a mouth fill, an anus plug and a genital capsule (Fig. 1.4).¹¹⁹ Fashioned into the right sizes and shapes to fit in with the different bodily parts, all these items appeared in the corresponding locations: the eye, nostril, ear and mouth covers above the neck, and the anus and genital capsule below the belly. Some of these objects, such as the anus plug, were physically inserted into the human body.

¹¹⁹ For a study of the genitalia capsule, see So 2013: 1–18.

While the plugs either stuffed the bodily orifices or encased the male genitalia, the eye covers were most likely sewn onto a piece of cloth to cover the deceased's face because each of the two eye covers contained three tiny holes around the edge.¹²⁰

This group of objects' closest relationship to the body was also evident in the ritual process. According to the classic ritual manual *Etiquette and Ceremonials* (*Yili* 儀禮), immediately after someone's death, the ritual specialist would first cover the deceased's eyes, ears, and mouth with eye-covers (*mingmu* 瞑目), ear plugs (*tian* 填), and mouth fills (*fanhan* 飯含).¹²¹ Jade was deliberately chosen as *the* proper material, for people in the Han dynasty commonly believed that “when gold and jade are inserted into the nine orifices, corpses do not decay.”¹²²

Above this layer but still inside the “jade suit,” a robe (which had disintegrated upon discovery) decorated with a group of eighteen jade discs (*bi* 璧) further covered the plugged torso (Fig. 1.5). Thirteen of them appeared on the chest in three vertical columns: a middle column formed of three discs flanked by two side columns each consisted of

120 This technique was derived from an Eastern Zhou funerary device used to cover the deceased's face during the death ritual. A typical Zhou face cover was a piece of cloth ornamented with a group of jade appliqués of different shapes to sketch out a fantastic human face, sometimes with stylistic mustaches, eyebrows, hair, and even facial decors; see Ma 1999; Yuan and Shi 2009; Lin 1998. This tradition continued in some Western Han high-ranking tombs including a few royal tombs. A good example of these is a face cover yielded by a tomb at Zifangshan in the Chu princely cemetery around Xuzhou. This complex object portrays a surreal human face adorned with earrings and headdresses; see Wu 1981; Li 1993. Shuangrushan Tomb 1 yielded another jade mask which is half round. Unlike traditional flat face covers, this mask which consists of eighteen groups of jade pieces represents a three-dimensional face. The prominent nose bears two open nostrils; the mouth is also rendered as being open. However, individuality is still denied. For instance, the wings of the nose are decorated with abstract patterns that show more spirit than human nature; see Shandong 1997.

121 Chen 1956: 69–72.

122 Needham 1974: 5.2: 284. But gold was far less popular than jade as the material for orifices plugs during the Western Han period.

five discs. Five more discs lay beneath the back, with three in the middle and two near the shoulders. Bound by interwoven ribbons, these discs were inseparable from one another. A layer of cloth or silk has attached the discs, perhaps to bind them together to the robe.¹²³

Within this robe, a unique necklace made of forty-eight carnelian beads adorned the upper torso, presumably strung together and worn around the corpse's neck. In the same layer, the archaeologists also found two small jade seals, one square, and the other circular, lying side by side next to the left arm. The inscriptions on them read "credential" (*xin* 信) and "private credential" (*sixin* 私信) respectively.¹²⁴ Some scholars have identified such seals as the prince's private seals whose inscriptions normally follow the format of "somebody's credential seal."¹²⁵ Yet mysteriously, the owner's name – the very element that makes a seal a seal – was left out. Similar nameless seals, though cast in bronze, also appeared in the neighboring Mancheng Tomb 2 occupied by Liu Sheng's wife Dou Wan.¹²⁶ According to another theory, they should fall into the category of "seals with auspicious words" (*jiyu xi* 吉語璽).¹²⁷ However, it has been noted that perhaps the "credential" seals are of a different kind which he calls "seals with maxims" (*zhenyan xi*

123 This robe might have had a waistband or belt, as indicated by a jade garment hook found next to it. In a recently excavated princely tomb at Dingtao 定陶 (dated late 1st c. BCE or early 1st c. CE), archaeologists have discovered an intact silk robe decorated with an identical *bi*-disc fastened onto the back side, secured by two crisscrossing ribbons.

124 The adjacent Mancheng Tomb 2 yielded three similar circular seals which too bear the inscription of "private credential." They were found together with three other seals with an inscription of "joint happiness" (*tonghuan* 同驩/謹). *Zhongguo* 1980a: 1: 275.

125 Li 1996: 130. However, Lu Zhaoyin is not convinced; see Lu 1998.1: 43–9.

126 *Zhongguo* 1980a: 1: 274–5.

127 Luo 1981.

箴言璽). Their function, as Wang Rencong argues, was to cultivate the owner's mind.¹²⁸

In whichever case, these seals represent the deceased couple's subjectivity or identity, which can be regarded as an immaterial part of the deceased body.¹²⁹

Above the "jade suit" was a fourth layer largely made of weapons and other pendants. This outermost layer's association with the human body was beyond doubt, for each object was physically affiliated with a particular body part. The gilt bronze pillow in the shape of two back-to-back Siamese dragons inlaid with exquisite jade pieces lay under the deceased's head; a pair of arc-shaped half rings (*huang* 璜 or *heng* 珩) called "hand fills" (*woshou* 握手) in *Etiquette and Ceremonials (Yili)* were held in his hands;¹³⁰ the weapons were suspended to the waist.

Some objects were connected with the human body beyond the physical level. As the excavators have observed, the two half rings held in Liu Sheng's hands were directly cut and modified from exactly the same type of discs that wrapped the prince's torso.¹³¹ It seems very likely that these two half rings might have been the two halves of a single disc. Indeed, by definition, the half ring was the disc split in half.

128 Wang 1997.

129 Most recently, archaeologists found another double-sided bronze seal at a newly uncovered royal tomb at Dayunshan with an inscription of "honest and credential" (*chengxin* 誠信); see Nanjing and Xuyi 2013.10: 35, fig. 49.

130 Ruan 1980: 1131. Jade half rings often played that role in some early Han royal tombs. Three other important royal tombs including Dou Wan's tomb, Zhao Mei's tomb and Dingxian Tomb 40 yielded such half rings as *woshou*. However, the most common hand filling in the late half of the Western Han dynasty was the jade pig, perhaps an auspicious symbol; see Shi 2003.

131 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 138.

Meanwhile, the two half rings also echoed the single disc which was mounted onto the top of the head section of the “jade suit” that shielded the skull.¹³² As the jade *bi*-disc bore a hole in the center, so was the outfit. In fact, the jade disc was deliberately put in an upright position to target its central hole precisely at the vertex of the head,¹³³ which for a Han subject symbolized heaven.¹³⁴ The hole of the disc perhaps represented an opening through which the physical remains could have communicated with the external world.¹³⁵ On the one hand, the hole in the center implied an entrance; on the other hand, the circular disc corresponded to the circular heaven. For this reason, some scholars have concluded that discs in the Han Dynasty perhaps represented the entrance to heaven.¹³⁶

Hayashi Minao has made an observation that the disc and the half ring were complementary in symbolism.¹³⁷ The former echoed the head, heaven, and *yang*, and the latter corresponded to the bottom, earth, and *yin*.¹³⁸ In Liu Sheng’s coffin, the disc on the

132 Jessica Rawson directly identifies it as a disc; see Rawson 1996: 170–1. In Zhao Mei’s jade suit, the top disc is more obviously a genuine *bi* disc which carries typical cloud patterns; see Guangzhou 1991: pl. 9.

133 The mysterious relation between a disc and the human head has been manifested in several well-preserved Eastern Zhou tombs from the Changsha region, in which one or two jade discs were erected uprightly to surmount the vertex of the lying body’s head; see Zhongguo 1957: 65. A good example of these came from a late Eastern Zhou tomb (M406) at Changsha. In this multi-casketed tomb, two jade discs remained upright right “above” the deceased’s head, one in the inner coffin and the other in the outer coffin; see Zhongguo 1957: 26.

134 “Heaven phonetically means the top of a man.” 天，顛也。Duan 1999: 1.

135 Wu 2011.

136 Chen 1994a; Zhao and Yuan 1990.6. Further evidence comes from some mid or late Western Han brick tombs near Luoyang which belonged to lesser-ranking social members. In these tombs, *bi* discs are represented either above or beneath heavenly doors, an indicator of their close relationship to the doors. For examples, see Henan 1964. Huang 1982: 26–7. Lilian Lan-ying Tseng makes the same observation in Tseng 2011: 205–11.

137 Hayashi 1991: 141–72.

138 For the symbolic meaning of *yin* and *yang* in early Chinese art, see Cheng 1957.

head (above) and the half rings next to the waist (below) matched this symbolic relationship perfectly.

Moreover, the disc and the half rings were also connected with the human body during the ritual process. In a standard funeral, the deceased's hands were usually filled during the same session when the eyes were covered, the ears were plugged, and the body was clothed.¹³⁹ In this point of view, the half rings were treated as parallels of the orifice plugs, the “jade robe,” and the jade suit.

Despite the many layers, these various funerary jades in and out of the “jade suit” formed a complex “outfit” assembled during a continuous process of wrapping (*lian 斂*) the corpse. As a totality, they were connected not only to individual layers but also across different layers. The top disc of the “jade suit” was related to the lower genital cover, the jade discs in the jade suit, and the half rings held in the prince's hands. Moreover, the “jade suit” itself was a combination of the body and outfit.

The prince in the “jade suit” as “armor,” not surprisingly, also carried a group of short-range weapons around his waist. A long iron knife was on the left side, and two iron swords were on the right side. The blade and swords were all contained in scabbards, one of which was attached to a gold belt hook (*daikua 帶鈎*), presumably tied to a waistband or belt.¹⁴⁰ Neither belts nor belt ornaments were found next to the “jade suit,” indicating that these weapons might have been laid by rather than suspended to the deceased's waist.

139 Ruan 1980: 1: 1131.

140 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 113.

Although centuries of natural erosion had reduced the deceased's physical remains to a layer of ash no more than four millimeters thin, the non-perishable "skin" for the dead, made of the multilayer "outfit" attached directly to the physical remains, allowed scholars to reconstruct the shape of the deceased in his full royalty.

The practice of adhering intimate "outfit" objects to their relative parts of the body could be traced back to the Eastern Zhou tombs. Take the famous tomb of Marquis Yi of the Zeng for example. When the excavators opened the perfectly intact inner coffin, they found such items as jade objects, beads, bone and horn decorations, and silk and linen fabrics were placed in a good order above and around the physical remains: "The jade comb was laid in the position of the head, small jades were inserted inside the ears, nostril, and mouth, a golden garment hook and a bronze short dagger with the jade hilt were put at the waist."¹⁴¹ Archaeological data have shown that by the late 2nd century BCE the idea had become so deep that even if an object was not actually worn by the corpse, it would nevertheless stay as an individual item next to the right part of the body. For example, in Emperor Wen of the Southern Yue's tomb, the archaeologists found a set of four gilt bronze or glass plaques, each gift-wrapped separately in silk. As decorations of the waistband, these clad objects could not possibly be worn by the corpse, but they were still carefully placed in the coffin independently at the deceased's waist, two on the left and two on the right.¹⁴² The mentality is unambiguous: they should always be faithful to their corresponding parts of the body. And this mentality never went away even without the existence of the body, as I will show in the following section.

141 Hubei 1989: 1: 60.

142 Guangzhou 1991: 1: 156.

2. The Fluid “Body” and Distorted “Outfit” in the Outer Coffin

When the excavators opened the outer coffin, they surprisingly found a whole group of metal and jade objects furnishing the right side of the inner coffin across a long narrow area (see Fig. 1.9). No lacquer remains were reported, and these objects would have been laid out directly in the outer coffin without being contained in boxes.

The practice of furnishing the outer coffin did not begin with Mancheng. Earlier such outer coffins in the Eastern Zhou period usually held a small number of ritual jades, such as *bi* discs or *gui* tablets, pendants, textiles, or cosmetics.¹⁴³

Even with these early precedents, it was uncommon to have so many objects deposited in such an intermediary zone, given that space was usually very small if there was any at all. So why did the tomb designer furnish this special space?

The answer lies in the special way in which the objects were chosen and arranged. As I will demonstrate below, although the outer coffin was also filled exclusively by “outfit” objects, the way in which these objects were arranged was subtly different. As the distance to the corpse increased, the “outfit” objects generally followed the physical form of the body, which was distorted as if being melted away. The hidden pattern would become clearer if we imagine an invisible person lying in this furnished area, many of the

143 In the royal cemetery of the Guo state, dating from the late Western Zhou or early Eastern Zhou, archaeologists discovered ritual jades and pendants placed on top of the inner coffin inside the outer coffin in Tomb 2001, and in Tomb 2012 they found two bronze containers and a bronze toiletry box; see Henan and Xiamenxia 1999: 1: 26, 238, 251. In Marquis Yi’s outer coffin (early 5th c. BCE), there were jades, objects made of animal horns and bones, silks, and linen objects; see Hubei 1989: 1: 60. In Tianxingguan Tomb 2 (4th c. BCE), the badly damaged outer coffin still contained jade *bi*-discs and stone *gui* tablets upon discovery; see Hubei 2003: 29. In the three nested coffins at Baoshan Tomb 2, seven layers of ornaments were placed on top of the middle coffin; see Hubei 1991: 1: 65.

objects would still correspond to the proper body parts. These include a number of worn paraphernalia, particularly weapons and jade pendants, normally suspended from the waist.

At the invisible person's "waist" were two short-range arms, including an iron sword and a bronze sword (nos.42, 46), one on the left side and one on the right. These swords were similar to those worn by the corpse in the inner coffin, only of a finer quality.¹⁴⁴ Their relationship to the invisible "waist" was evidenced by two engraved jade garment hooks (nos.49–50) placed between the two swords. As an equivalent of modern buckles, the rear of a garment hook was normally attached to one end of the waistband so the tip hook could clasp the other end of the belt pierced with holes. One of the hooks carries vermilion on the surface—evidence of its ritual purpose.

Some other weapons were slightly "displaced." These include a group of four daggers (nos.197, 108, 235, 97) and two poniards (nos.196, 109), located in the southeast of the furnished area, approximately on top of the invisible person's right thigh. These short weapons, cast in either bronze or iron, were different from the aforementioned long swords. They all bear exquisite ornaments on the blades. Among them, the poniard, which I will discuss in Chapter 3, is a particularly exquisite piece. One of the excavators has identified these fancy portable arms as "private paraphernalia of the deceased subject."¹⁴⁵

Among the jade pendants, the most eye-catching object was probably an elaborate jade *bi*-disc located right below the "waist" (Fig.1.6). Unlike those relatively plain ones

144 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 101, 82.

145 Zheng 2003: 110–1.

in the inner coffin, this fancy object was ornamented with a pair of open-worked winged dragons that, though situated back to back, intertwine their bodies and arrest their forelegs on top of the disc.¹⁴⁶ The unique *bi*-disc was placed in the special position as if it were suspended from the invisible person's waist like ritual pendants. Such *bi*-discs decorated with the motif of "copulating dragons" appeared in a silk false robe (*feiyi* 非衣) excavated from Mawangdui Tomb 1, located at a similar position at the robe's "waist."¹⁴⁷

Slightly beneath the *bi*-disc the excavators encountered other pendants including a circular jade ring (*huan* 環) and another roundish *she* 鞞, which is round on one end and angular on the other. Its polished exterior is decorated with abstract cloud and dragon patterns. Such jade rings were popular decorations tied to a gentleman's waistband.¹⁴⁸

But some other objects appeared obviously out of place. A jade hairpin, which was supposed to be worn on the "head," was found next to the ring near the "waist." One small carnelian bead, uncovered beside the daggers at the waist, is identical with the other beads worn around the prince's neck inside the jade suit.¹⁴⁹ It seems unlikely that this bead might have "jumped" over so many objects to reach this new location while all other beads remained inside the jade suit. This situation leads us to speculate that the single bead was placed deliberately in the outer coffin to stand for a necklace.

146 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 133.

147 Loewe 1979: 17–59, 136–143.

148 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 139. For two well-preserved examples, see Changsha 1979: 1–16; Guangzhou 1991: 1: 192–4. Derived from a military ring worn around the thumb to pull the bowstring, such a ring had developed into a garment ornament by the Western Han. See Sun 2008: 93. In Dabaotai Tomb 1, archaeologists found a disc ornamented with a *she* pattern, which demonstrates the *she* ring's relation to the disc. See Dabaotai 1989: 47.

149 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 143.

Other apparently “dislocated” objects put between the “legs” were supposed to be held by hands. Next to the short weapons, archaeologists uncovered a group of three *bi*-discs and three pointed tablets (*gui* 圭) in different scales, another type of the symbolic ritual props in the ancient Chinese ritual system.¹⁵⁰ Plain and undecorated, these items were essentially different from the previous *bi*-disc right below the waist, because as a group, they were only affiliated with the human body via hands. In *The Book of Rites* (Liji 禮記), the author specified the proper manner of carrying silk, *gui* and *bi*: “In the case of a piece of silk, or a rank-symbol of jade, square or round, he should keep his left hand over it.”¹⁵¹ The classic ritual codes clearly dictated that local vassals (*zhuhou* 諸侯) must hold (*zhi* 執) *gui*-tablets in their hands to pay an official visit to the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子).¹⁵² And some other Han authors suggested that princes could also use *bi*-discs.¹⁵³ This opinion might have been based on the story of Duke Zhou 周公, the regent of the Western Zhou (1046-771 BCE), who visited the ancestral temple with both *bi* and *gui* in his hands to ask for the gods’ help to cure his young nephew, the seriously ill King Cheng 周成王.¹⁵⁴ A popular Han-dynasty story of the King Mu of the Zhou 周穆王 related that the king visited the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母) holding a

150 Hayashi 1991: 1–80.

151 Legge 1967: 1: 100. 執圭器，操幣圭璧，則尚左手。

152 Chen 1990: 353. 諸侯執圭以覲天子。

153 Chen 1990: 354. 諸侯執所受圭與璧朝于天子。

154 Sima 1959: 33. 1516. 周公北面立，戴璧秉圭，告於太王、王季、文王。

white *gui*-tablet and a black *bi*-disc.¹⁵⁵ Leaving holdable objects between the legs was not unique to Mancheng Tomb 1. In the neighboring Tomb 2, the only such item, a toiletry case, was placed exactly in the same position between the corpse's two legs in the inner coffin.¹⁵⁶ It remains unclear, however, why this particular spot was reserved for the “hand objects.” It is likely that these objects were symbolically put on the deceased's “knees” for him to pick up.

Mancheng Tomb 1 was not the only royal tomb that kept such “outfit” objects in their relative body positions in the outer coffin but out the inner coffin. In Dabaotai 大葆台 Tomb 1, belonging to king Liu Jian 劉建 (r. 73-44 BCE) of the Guangyang 廣陽 kingdom excavated in present-day Beijing, a wooden cane and a bronze stick were placed on top of the middle and the inner coffins respectively, corresponding to the deceased's arms.¹⁵⁷ A better-preserved comparison was found in Fenghuangshan Tomb 168 (early 2nd c. BCE), located in present-day Jiangling in Hubei province, occupied by a Grandee of the Ninth Order (*Wudafu* 五大夫) aristocrat. In this tomb, while the corpse in the inner coffin remained bareheaded, the outer coffin contained two silk hats in the east interstice between the two coffins, just “above” the head of the lying corpse. The corpse wore a pair of linen shoes, and another pair of silk shoes appeared in the west interstice between the two coffins, right “below” the feet of the corpse. In addition, a wooden cane was placed on top of the outer coffin, reminiscent of their counterparts in the Dabaotai tomb,

155 Wang 1994: 161. 吉日甲子，天子宾于西王母。乃执白圭玄璧以见西王母。

156 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 233.

157 Dabaotai 1989: 27–8.

around the position of the deceased's hands.¹⁵⁸ In terms of position, all these items corresponded exactly to the affiliated parts of the deceased's body, as if these objects, though detached from the corpse, formed an extra outfit of the human remains beyond the inner coffin.

But who was the assumed “invisible person” in this additional elaborate outfit? A square jade seal that appeared right above the “waist” offers a clue (Fig. 1.7, right). Twice as big as the seal found in the “jade suit,” it was surmounted with a freestanding hornless dragon or tiger, captured in a vivid moment of prowling with its body curving into a beautiful S shape.¹⁵⁹ The prominent size and fine artistry of the seal speak of its importance. According to a Han author, the emperor owned six official jade seals, each with its superstructure shaped into “a hornless dragon or tiger.”¹⁶⁰ Although in the form it looks similar to many contemporary seals,¹⁶¹ this beautiful object lacks the most important element for a seal—the inscription. Being totally blank, it could not function in this world.¹⁶² This could mean whoever owned the seal had to further inscribe it for use, or the seal was made not for mortals.

158 Jinan 1975; Hubei 1993.

159 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 140.

160 Fan 1965: 3672.

161 In Zhao Mei's tomb at Guangzhou, a group of jade or gold seals bearing the inscriptions of “The Crown Prince” (*taizi* 太子), “Zhao Mei”, “The Emperor's Seal” (*diyin* 帝印), and “Emperor Wen's Emissary Seal” (*Wendi xing xi* 文帝行璽) were found next to his jade suit; see Guangzhou 1991: 1: 199–202.

162 Such blank seals were also found in contemporary tombs other than those at Mancheng; they appeared in Zhao Mei's coffin, too, with those inscribed one; see Guangzhou 1991: 1: 199–202. In 2009, another similar blank jade seal with a feline-shaped finial was excavated from a high-ranking Western Han tomb (M 112) near Guangzhou; see Ma and Yi 2014: 340–41.

Can we retrieve the anonymous owner of the blank seal? An anthropomorphic jade statuette placed right next to the blank seal seems to hold the clue. Representing a gentleman whose age is indicated by a short mustache wearing a small hat and a plain robe (Fig. 1.8), this figure keeps a detached and peaceful expression on his face and leans elegantly on an armrest. The inscription made on the bottom of this statuette identified him as an “ancient jade figure” (*gu yuren* 古玉人).¹⁶³ Although many such jade statuettes found in other Western Han and even earlier tombs were pierced by small holes, suggesting they were pendants,¹⁶⁴ Liu Sheng’s jade statuette did not bear holes and thus belonged in a different category.¹⁶⁵ An inscription made on the base of the statuette betrays its real function. It reads:

163 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 140.

164 Little jade figurines are seen in many public and private collections. Examples can be found in Rawson 1995: 281–5. For scientifically excavated examples dating to the Han, see Luoyang Shaogou M28B: 1 (Height: 3.2 centimeters), Luoyang Xijiao M3010: 32 (Height: 2.7 centimeters), and Xanmenxia Xiangyang M15: 29 (Height: 2.6 centimeters). These little figurines are perhaps ornaments. But interestingly, in each case, only one sample was found. For excavation reports, see Zhongguo 1959: 209; Zhongguo 1963: 36; Sanmenxia 107–14. A prominent example was found in a joint burial at Taolou in the east suburb of Xuzhou. The corpse in the south was attended by a jade figurine. This round figure which stands about four centimeters tall is executed in an archaic style and perhaps is truly an Eastern Zhou antique. So it is literally an “ancient jade figure.” See Xuzhou 1993. Normally, they, but perhaps not just as decorations, because archaeologists also found them in sacrificial sites with sets of ritual jades including *bi*-discs, *gui*-tablets, and other sorts; see Two jade figurines came out from Luantingshan F3, one male and one female, and appeared together with a *bi*-disc and a *gui*-tablet. See Zaoqi 2005. Two other important Western Han examples were from the Lianzhicun 聯志村 sacrificial pit and the Lujiakoucun 蘆家口村 sacrificial pit, both near the capital Chang’an; see Liu 2004: 296, and Xi’an 2004: 14–16, 26; see also Wang 2011: 59–71.

165 Predecessors of such round figurines flourished in late Eastern Zhou tombs. Their early history can be traced all the way back to the Shang; see Chêng 1966; Hayashi 1985. Two examples, one jade and the other bronze, were uncovered side by side in a well-preserved tomb at Luoyang (numbered as C1M5269). Like Liu Sheng’s jade figure, neither of them bears holes. The bronze statuette (no.36) which measures 3.5 centimeters tall portrays a sitting man resting his two hands on the knees. The jade statuette (no.35) in a long garment stands 4.4 centimeters tall and holds his two hands before his belly. The modest postures of the two men indicate they are perhaps servants waiting for orders. Interestingly, they both appeared on the right side of the corpse in the outer coffin with a group of jade, stone, or glass ornaments, most of which were perhaps wrapped by silk; see Luoyang 2001.

維古/玉人/王公/延十/九年.

Jeffrey Riegel has provided the following translation: “Verily this Old Jade Man, the Royal Sire, will extend life by nineteen years.”¹⁶⁶ In my reading, however, the “old jade man” refers to the statuette, which was a talisman made in hope to prolong Liu Sheng’s life, perhaps when the prince was old and sick. Thus, the inscription reads: “This is an old jade man [that possesses the power to] extend the prince’s life by nineteen years.”

Such prophetic texts for prolonging life were not uncommon in early China. A very close parallel text comes from a 2nd-century CE volume titled *Discourse Balance* (*Lunheng* 論衡), in which a magician named Ziwei 子韋 made an auspicious prophecy for Duke Jing of the Song state 宋景公 (d. 469 BCE) based on a good omen from heaven:

This evening the Mars will surely travel over three stations, and [as the heavenly omen] Your Majesty will extend your life for twenty-one years.

今夕，星必徙三舍，君命延二十一年。¹⁶⁷

On another occasion of the same text, the author wrote:

Heaven considered the Lord of the Song state a wise man and ordered the Mars to travel over three stations to extend his life for twenty-one years.

天犹贤宋君，使荧惑徙三舍，延二十一年。¹⁶⁸

The two parallel texts, though slightly later, follow the same structure and format as Liu Sheng’s jade inscription does: it begins with the explicit heavenly omen and ends

166 Riegel 1989: 81. Recently Li Song read Yan as the name of a Western Han prince called Liu Yan 劉延 (d. 118 BCE), and the jade figurine as a gift from Liu Yan to Liu Sheng; see Li 2013: 167–69.

167 Huang 1990: 1:203.

168 Huang 1990: 1: 205.

with the implicit prophecy. According to Sima Qian, in 163 BCE a jade cup with a similar “heavenly” prophetic inscription “the Lord of the people will prolong his life” (*renzhu yanshou* 人主延壽) was presented to Emperor Wen as a good omen. Delighted, the emperor adopted a new reign title, only to find out soon that this was a fraud.¹⁶⁹ Also inscribed on a jade object, the inscription on the jade statuette might have been perceived similarly as an auspicious omen for longevity.¹⁷⁰ The receiver should have likewise been a lord or prince.

As for the extension of nineteen years of life, a passage from *Mozi* 墨子 makes a perfect comparison. It relates that Duke Mu of the Zheng 鄭穆公 (647-606 BCE) was once confronted with a deity with bird’s head in a temple. When he was trying to flee, the deity calmed him down and said:

“Do not be afraid. God cherishes your intelligent virtue, authorizing me to prolong your age by nineteen years, and ordaining your state to be prosperous and your descendants to be many and not to lose Qin.”¹⁷¹

神曰：「無懼！帝享女明德，使予錫女壽十年有九，使若國家蕃昌，子孫茂，毋失。」

In light of these analogous texts, it is almost certain that the “prince” (*wanggong*) refers to Liu Sheng, whose body lay a few inches away. What’s more, the little jade statuette mirrors the encoffined prince who, after being wrapped by so many layers of

169 Sima 1959: 10.430.

170 Some Han-dynasty authors told stories of stone men being able to cure diseases; see Wang 1981: 2:406–7. 石人能治病，愈者來謝之。

171 Knoblock and Riegel 2013: 338.

jades, has virtually transformed into a jade figure. The analogy between jade (stone) figures and *wanggong* must not have sounded strange to the Western Han elite. According to Sima Qian, on one occasion Empress Dowager Wang 王太后 (d. 125 BCE) compared her son – Emperor Wu – with a deathless “stone figure” (*shiren* 石人).¹⁷² Perhaps for this and other reasons, Lu Zhaoyin has suggested that this jade statuette might have had served as a magic substitute for the king.¹⁷³

Another interesting fact reinforces the outer coffin’s association with Liu Sheng. Although most of these objects are life-sized and functional, and some of them even possibly served the deceased in his life, the two exceptions including the miniaturized jade statuette and the blank seal best testify the “melting body.” Both carved of jade, the former shows the subject’s body (*shen* 身) with a diminishing body and the latter shows the subject’s name (because it is a seal) (*ming* 名) yet to be inscribed. David Keightley, in a detailed study of Shang oracle bone inscriptions, has cogently traced the loss of individual personality as one becomes an ancestor.¹⁷⁴

Working together, all these metal or jade objects in the outer coffin were portable ritual paraphernalia. They were all physically affiliated with particular bodily parts: the hairpin worn in the hair; the swords and knives, seal, ornament, and garment hooks decorating the waist; the discs and the tablets held in the hands. Even with some

172 Sima 1959: 107.2852. 且帝寧為石人耶?

173 Lu 2005: 78. Lu considered this statue as a grave-quelling object (*yanzhen* 厭鎮) for the prince to escape bad luck. He seems to have implicitly referred to a particular group of stone talismans called “gangmao” (剛卯) whose function was to ward off evils. However, this exorcising scenario is not at all clear in the space.

174 Keightley 1978: 218–20.

displacement or dislocation, many of the objects were arranged precisely as their counterparts in the inner coffin: the jade ornaments appeared in the center and the weapons flanked the ornaments on both sides. This arrangement looks as if an invisible body existed in the outfit.

Unlike the Fenghuangshan case, in which the “outfit” in the outer coffin still enrobe the corpse, the Mancheng “outfit” objects were placed as if there were another invisible “body” lying next to the corpse. Regarding the religious meaning of this parallel outfit, there is an interesting textual parallel. According to Ban Gu, the author, in the second month of 1 CE, the spirit robe mysteriously flew away by itself:

On the day of Yiwei, the “soul robe” at the Yi Mausoleum was in the wooden case; in the morning of the day of Bingshen, however, the robe made its appearance on the outside bed.

乙未，義陵寢神衣在柩中，丙申旦，衣在外床上。¹⁷⁵

Although this incredible event took place in an aboveground “funerary resting chamber” (*lingqin* 陵寢), which mirrored His Majesty’s sleeping room in his palace, this written account of this missing “soul robe” was surprisingly similar to the mysterious outfit actually presented at Mancheng’s outer coffin: first, the clothing was concealed in a wooden case (the outer coffin), and second, there was an external couch or dais beyond the case. And, indeed, as I will demonstrate later, the same assemblage was exactly what was found in the external furnished space in the stone casket at Mancheng.

175 Ban 1962: 12.351.

But how do we explain the distortion of the “outfit” at Mancheng? Was this intentional? Since the tomb was never disturbed, even if the distortion could be unintentionally made, it must have been justified.

3. The Fragmented and Marginalized “Body” in the Casket

The transition towards disembodiment dramatically intensified outside the outer coffin in the casket. If all the objects in the coffin belong in the “outfit” that either clothed or decorated the deceased body, then beyond the coffin, the major category decisively shifted to “instruments,” especially food and wine containers. Meanwhile, the minority of “outfit” objects were scattered on the periphery of the furnished space rather than in the center of it (Fig. 1.9).

The original distribution of the objects in this area followed a regular order, with a sacrificial table in the center, which was encircled by three layers of “instruments” only dotted sparsely with “outfit” objects (Fig. 1.10).

This external area differed from the coffins first in centering on a sacrificial altar rather than a body or body image.

At the center of the casket space stood two tables (*an* 案).¹⁷⁶ The larger piece, identified by the excavator as a table, measured about two meters long and one meter wide, supported from below by four bronze winged dragons at the four corners as its four legs.¹⁷⁷ The table was very low, standing about five to six centimeters above the ground

176 And they missed the other one, which should also be a table. *Zhongguo* 1980a, 1: 145.

177 Such dragon-shaped bronze objects were also found in Xuzhou as supporters of a jade pillow; see *Zhongguo and Xuzhou* 2005: 332–9. Another similar example is published in Umehara 1937: 40–1, and PL.LXVII.

like a sitting dais or couch (*ta* 榻).¹⁷⁸ The second table, smaller but higher, might have initially rested on top of the larger one.¹⁷⁹ With the tables, archaeologists found a few lacquer dishes, presumably laid out on top of the tables. Disintegrated as it was, one plate bearing refined silver lacing contained a whole roast suckling pig.¹⁸⁰ An inscription made on the bottom of the plate identifies this plate as an “imperial rice plate.”¹⁸¹ Clearly, this sacred altar was the climax of the entire ritual scene.

Symbols of the body, or “outfit” objects, were spotted only sporadically on the peripheries, swamped by an overwhelming number and variety of kitchen- and tableware made for ritual purposes.

Around the central tables spread a group of large bronzes including four pots, four cauldrons, a scoop, and a tripod. They belonged to a kitchen set which included another lacquer *zun* 樽 pot. Light, fragrance, and heat were also served in this zone, as five bronze lamps, a bronze incense-burner, an iron heater, and a bronze dustpan probably for loading charcoal into the heater accompanied the tables from the east and the northeast.¹⁸²

Beyond the circle of large vessels, eleven plates circled the tables and kitchenware from northeast, northwest, southwest, south, and southeast. Ten of these

178 For the formal difference between a table (*an*) and a dais (*ta*), see Sun 2008: 251.

179 In the southeast corner of the chamber, archaeologists uncovered a group of bronze fittings of a second plain wooden table (no.27), which might have worked with the dais as a set.

180 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 30.

181 御褚飯盤一，卅七年十月，趙獻。Zhongguo 1980: 1: 150.

182 Such dustpan-shaped objects appeared as early as in the Shang tombs. A good example was from Lady Fu Hao’s tomb at Anyang. See Zhongguo 1980: 92–4. These instruments were normally positioned with bronze ritual vessels around the coffin, but as the author of the report remarks, their exact function “is not clear.” This puzzle seems to have been resolved with the excavation of Marquis Yi’s tomb at Leigudun, in which a bronze dustpan was placed on a charcoal heater. Hubei 1989: 1: 246–7.

plates were wooden and shared the similar silver lace and the same inscription as plate no.71. These life-sized lacquer plates measured about twenty-five centimeters in diameter.¹⁸³ The only exceptional case was a glass tray located in the southwest.¹⁸⁴ Slightly smaller as it is, its placement makes the glass tray an equal of the lacquer plates and a member of the “dish circle” around the dais. These plates and the winged-cups, including one in glass, formed a single set because the inscriptions on them indicate the fact that they entered the princely household in the same month of the same year from the same provenance.¹⁸⁵ A few of the plates were coupled with wing-cups so food and wine—the two most important offerings—were available at the same time (Fig. 1.11).

Just between the layers of kitchen- and tableware the excavators uncovered a few “outfit” objects which were all scattered in different directions: in the north, a number of bronze coins and gold currencies; in the northwest, two lacquer toiletry cases; in the southwest, a bronze garment hook, a jade seal, a jade *bi*-disc, two little lacquer toiletry boxes; in the southeast, a few coins.

Some of these intimate items look familiar. The *bi*-disc was almost identical in terms of shape, size, and ornamentation with those contained by the “jade suit.” The blank jade seal covered by a roaming dragon was so similar to the piece uncovered in the outer coffin that they might have been used as a pair (see Fig 1.7, left). The garment hook cast in bronze and burnished black bears some marks of wear and tear. In the coffins,

183 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 150.

184 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 212.

185 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 150–1.

these two typical “outfit” objects were often, if not always, tied to the deceased’s waist. However, in the dominant world of “instruments,” they appear isolated and lost.

Some other objects, though absent from Liu Sheng’s coffins, also qualify as “outfit” objects because they often travel with the body. Pocket money was one of them. Usually, the corpse would carry a modest amount of money with it.¹⁸⁶ For Liu Sheng, the king, forty gold currencies, and 277 stringed bronze coins should have been a small piece of cake.¹⁸⁷

Besides, small and light toiletry cases (*lian* 奩) for personal items or cosmetics fall into the category of “handheld paraphernalia” in the previous chart of common “outfit” objects. One of them preserved in relatively good condition measured no more than seven and a half centimeters in diameter.¹⁸⁸ This petite size made the container ideal to be carried in person. Though badly damaged, the case’s surviving silver inlays and lacquer ornaments show how refined the artistry had been. This box held a set of eight little lacquer containers including one square box, one oval box, two circular boxes, two rectangular boxes, and two U-shaped boxes with one end circular and the other square. Inlaid in silver and ornamented with gold, silver, carnelian, pearl or bone foils, each of these little boxes contained yellow and white powders, which have been identified as

186 In the royal tomb at Shuangrushi 雙乳山, twenty coins were found next to the left side of the deceased’s body, perhaps initially contained in a wallet; see Shandong 1997. In Dabaotai Tomb 1, scores of coins spread on the floors of the outer and inner coffins; see Dabaotai 1989: 28, 63. This tomb was plundered and disrupted, so the exact quantity and location of the coins remain uncertain. But it is almost sure that many of the coins were initially located in the coffins. In Dingxian 定縣 Tomb 40, the number of coins increased to about a thousand; see Hebei 1981: 3.

187 Lu 2005: 78.

188 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 148.

remains of cosmetics.¹⁸⁹ A better preserved toiletry box uncovered in another slightly later royal tomb at Hongtushan (1st c. BCE) specified the different functions of these multiple little cases: in the circular box it was rouge; in the U-shaped box, a U-shaped comb; in the oval box, an oval comb; in the rectangular box, a slim hairpin.¹⁹⁰ The large circular box which encased all above held a bronze mirror on the bottom, which was exactly of the same size as the box itself. Hence the shapes of these small and large boxes fit with the particular objects they contained so the containers and the contained could perfectly match. Because the bronze mirror and all other items in the same box constituted a cosmetic kit intimate to the human body, such toiletry boxes sometimes appeared with the corpse in the coffin.¹⁹¹

In the absence of the deceased's body or body image stood a number of human figurines, which appeared here and there among the "instruments" as servants. Figurines were skipped entirely in the inner coffin and only one (probably as a substitute of the deceased) showed up in the outer coffin. But in this external space, their number was multiplied. Near the southwest corner of the dais, a stone statuette representing a middle-aged palace lady sat with two sets of cups and plates. Resting both her hands on the knees, she was quietly watching the glass plates and cups laid in front of her.¹⁹² In the doorway, a similar female stone figurine sat against the south wall with a winged-cup and a group of stacked plates. While females were looking after the dishes, the male figurines were

189 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 148.

190 Shandong 1983.

191 In Princess Dou Wan's tomb, a five-in-one toiletry box was placed on the left leg of the jade suit. Like the one found in her husband's rear chamber, it also held a bronze mirror on the bottom. Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 234, 300–6.

192 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 206.

carrying out other duties. One male stone figurine sat in the doorway as doorkeeper or guardian.¹⁹³ Another male entertainer or actor was also among the servants. These attendants “humanized” the static ritual setting into a lively scene. The major human agency in this place was not communicated so much through the deceased body (or body image) as through the miniaturized representations of people.

While the weapons in the coffins were all worn at the waist, be it real or imaginary, in the casket chamber, they – including a number of long-range ones – took positions at the four corners. In the southeast side of the offering space, besides a ceremonial stick of regalia, a group of spears, halberds, and a long-range sword were erected along the south wall.¹⁹⁴ A crossbow and a group of bronze and iron arrowheads were left in the northeast corner. Hard, sharp, and keen-edged, these arrowheads were all genuine weapons to kill.¹⁹⁵ The other two corners were also defended: three swords lay next to one another in the northwest; a cluster of bows, a shield, and a suit of iron armor dominated the southwest.

Occupying the four corners, these genuine arms safeguarded the interior—the drinking and eating event. However, the four sides of the same offering space were free of weapons. Perhaps the tomb designer did not want to block the passages to the three neighboring spaces, including the front chamber in the east, the side chamber in the south, and the double coffins in the north.

193 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 206.

194 By the time they were excavated, these weapons had fallen down on the floor. The spearheads rested in the center of the chamber while the bottoms remained under the wall, all pointing northward.

195 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 87.

The religious role of this casket space was obviously ritual, but to whom was this ritual space dedicated? It is easy to assume Liu Sheng was the recipient, but is there any evidence?

Yes, indeed. Although consisting of three zones (the seat, vessels, and weapons) the furnished area is multi-layered and appears highly symmetrical in all directions, it was not completely deprived of directionality. For instance, the most elaborate bronze *hu* pots are all displayed on the northern side, which is close to the coffins, while the eastern side is only occupied by plates and cups. This imbalance indicates that the whole banquet scene is oriented toward the coffin, so the offerings could directly face the deceased's physical remains.

The second clue hides in the ownership of the scattered “outfit” objects beyond the coffins. Human figurines wearing miniature costumes and surrogate objects in reduced scale were quite common in the Western Han. For instance, during a recent excavation of the satellite burials of Emperor Jing's (r. 157–141 BCE) Yang mausoleum, archaeologists discovered a group of figurines that not only carried miniature bronze garment hooks but also wore miniature clothes and sometimes even seals bearing inscriptions.¹⁹⁶ Because no human sacrifices existed in Liu Sheng's rear chamber, and all objects were life-sized instead of miniaturized, these objects could only have belonged to the deceased prince himself. Not surprisingly, the pair of beautiful jade seals with dragon decorations were found both inside and outside the coffin, suggesting a common owner. Therefore it is reasonable to believe that those “outfit” objects all belonged to the deceased king.

196 Shaanxi 2008.

It is reasonable to identify the casket space as what was called “The Chamber of Ease” (*bianfang* 便房). Although it remains controversial among modern scholars which specific part of a tomb this was,¹⁹⁷ the Eastern Han scholar Fu Qian 服虔 (fl. 2nd c.), I think, made a clear enough description: “*Bianfang* refers to the convenient seat (*bianzuo* 便坐) in the burial.”¹⁹⁸ This short sentence packs two crucial points: first, *bianfang* was a place beyond the coffin (*zigong* 梓宮) but in the burial; second, it was a simple seat. And it must also be noted that *bianfang*, by essence, was a *fang* (chamber), which refers to the inner zone of a standard Chinese house, which also includes an outer zone called *tang* 堂 (hall). In Liu Sheng’s tomb, no other places match this twofold definition better than the furnished casket space, located at once outside the coffins and behind the front chamber, which as I will demonstrate, imitated a sacrificial hall.

As a *bianfang*, the stone chamber stood not only physically but also symbolically between the coffin and the front chamber. Although at first glance the “instruments” in the casket chamber were arranged in the same way as their counterparts in the front chamber, with a table or dais surrounded by vessels, this similarity was only superficial. With the presence of the corpse nearby, the furnishing pattern has changed. Whereas in the front chamber, which imitated a temple, the offerings were organized around the empty tents, or “soul seats,” in the rear chamber, they were oriented, as I have explained earlier, to the coffined body as the ruling subject. Enclosed together in the *guo* casket, the nested coffin and casket belonged to an organic intimate sphere fundamentally different from the front chamber, which was public and void of corporeal remains. The only

197 For a convenient survey of the previous arguments about *bianfang*, see Liu and Liu 2010: 351-69.

198 Ban 1962: 68.2948. 便房，藏中便坐也。

difference lies in that the coffins, instead of taking the center of the rear chamber, were pushed to the right or north, and the dais took over the other side in the south.

The same intermediary logic applies also between the two nested coffins. The extra space in the outer coffin made a transitional space between the two coffins. Although formed entirely by “outfit” objects that covered the body, this group of objects conveys an idea of a ritually dressed-up body (body image) beyond the physical remains. Put together, the following diagram illustrates the two transitional stages (I and II) between the body (corpse) and the soul across the three nested coffins and casket, the traditional “multiple casket-coffin set.”

The two-stage transition represents an intermediary state few ancient texts have ever described. The planner of the tomb furnishing adjusted the ratio between “outfit” objects and “instruments” and the way these objects were arranged to express the idea of a diminishing physical body, which kept losing its shape and corporeality till nothing but an empty “soul seat” (*shenzuo*) was left. This was what happened in the front chamber, in which the deceased subject was conceived and constructed as totally disembodied.

4. “People Flowing into Form”

Although the tomb designer(s) at Mancheng left no direct explanation of the slightly distorted and fragmented “outfit” in the outer coffin and beyond, the idea that the human body can take shape or melt down like a flowing liquid was not an alien one in early Chinese philosophy.

This process of the changing human appearance vividly echoes a theory of death stated in Wang Chong’s philosophical treatise titled *Balanced Discourses* (*Lunheng* 論

衡), in which the author compared people with ice: “The vital force produces man just as water becomes ice. As water freezes into ice, so the vital force coagulates to form man. When ice melts it becomes water and when a man dies he becomes spirit again. He is called spirit just as ice which has melted changes its name to water.”¹⁹⁹

In Liu’s tomb, from inside to outside, with the deceased’s outfit gradually losing its solidarity and anthropomorphic form, the deceased’s appearance is becoming less and less concrete, just like solid ice slowly melting into liquid water, that is, “becomes spirit again.”

Although Wang Chong lived two centuries later, his metaphor of ice and water was derived from the Western Han concepts of *xingjie* 形解 (literally, “body dissolving”) in early Chinese religion and philosophy about death.²⁰⁰ In *Shiji*, it is stated that a few magicians “practiced the way of transcendence, broke and melted down their forms, and followed the affairs of ghosts and spirits.”²⁰¹ After the subject *xing*, the author juxtaposed three synonymous verbs: *jie*, *xiao*, and *hua* to describe the magic change of the body: The first verb *jie* literally means break down (from whole to parts), the second verb *xiao*, melt down (from solid to liquid), and the third verb *hua*, ontologically transform (from human to divine). Although Sima Qian reduced the complex process to just three abstract words,

199 氣之生人，猶水之為冰也。水凝為冰，氣凝為人；冰釋為水，人死復神。其名為神也，猶冰釋更名水也。English translation by Burton Watson in Birch 1965: 1: 88. Wang Chong repeated the same idea twice in one chapter to emphasize his firm reception of this theory. 隆冬之月，寒氣用事，水凝為冰。踰春氣溫，冰釋為水。人生於天地之間，其猶冰也。陰陽之氣，凝而為人，年終壽盡，死還為氣。Huang 1990: 877.

200 In later Daoism, however, this term is often translated as “release from the form;” see Fabrizio 2008), 896-97.

201 Sima 1959: 28.1368. 為方僊道，形解銷化，依於鬼神之事。

the material evidence in Liu Sheng's tomb graphically simulated the same process with the gradual variation of the outfit.

The opposite process of *xingjie* is somewhat similar to *liuxing* 流形. In the Chu manuscripts in the Shanghai Museum as well as the Mawangdui medical texts, the formation of people is imagined as “flowing into form.”

In a manuscript titled “Ten Questions” (Shiwen 十問) excavated from Mawangdui Tomb 3, the legendary ruler Huangdi 黃帝 asks the sage Rongchengshi 容成氏 a set of questions including these two vital ones:

“When people first dispense the purity that flows into the form, what is obtained so that life occurs? When flowing into the form produces a body, what is lost so that death occurs?”²⁰²

The same questions had been already raised in a Warring States Chu bamboo manuscript (dated about 4th c. BCE) now in the collection of Shanghai Museum:

“It has been heard: Regarding people flowing into form, what do they attain to live? In flowing into form and completing their bodies, what do they lose to die?” 聞之曰：民人流形，奚得而生？流形成體，奚失而死？²⁰³

In both the Mawangdui and Chu texts, the truth is established: in the beginning, “people” are formless breath or water; later they are flowing into an anthropomorphic form and become solid and complete “figures.” In another manuscript from Mawangdui, the term *liuxing* 溜形 was used for the first month of gestation. As Donald Harper has

202 Harper 2009: 393.

203 Ma 2008: 78.

cogently explained, the question was about “how intercourse and conception lead to the production of a life.”²⁰⁴ In received texts, a passage from *Guanzi* 管子 (compiled in 1st c. BCE) perhaps best describes the notion of a fluid human body: “Man is water. When the vital essence and vital force of male and female unite, water passes between them and assumes form.”²⁰⁵ The belief that the human body is essentially a form filled with some fluid vital matter (semen, breath, or water) might find its root in the belief in water as the origin of the world and true nature of the ultimate Way (*Dao* 道).²⁰⁶

Some scholars interpret *liuxing* as describing the metallurgic process of casting a bronze vessel when liquid bronze flows into form in a mold, which reverses the process of body transformation described by Sima Qian.²⁰⁷

The related concepts of *xingjie* (the form breaking down) and *liuxing* (flowing into form) reflect the early Chinese thought of the transformation between death and life: “When death occurs, the vital breath (*yuanqi* 元氣) departs from the body and the true soul (*zhenhun* 真魂) roams and scatters. They return to simplicity, come back to the origin, and ends in beginninglessness.”²⁰⁸ But this subsequently initiates a new cycle of life: “All people begin to attain the pure breath and flow into form.”²⁰⁹ Finally, with the *shen* 神 spirit settling down in the heart and the *hunpo* reaches its completion, people rise

204 Harper 2009: 393.

205 人，水也。男女精氣合，而水流形。Rickett 1998: 103.

206 Allan 1997.

207 Cook 2009.

208 Fan 1965: 39.1314. 夫亡者，元氣去體，貞魂游散，反素復始，归于无端。

209 Cook 2009. 民始賦淳流形。

up to life.²¹⁰ In other words, the process of *liuxing* is the gradual accumulation and growth of *hunpo*, and *xingjie* denotes the opposite process.

5. The Downgraded “Instruments” in Front Chamber

Although the front chamber contained many similar objects to those in the rear chamber, the general artistry of the “instruments,” which constituted the overwhelming majority of all grave goods, was notably inferior to those in the rear chamber (Fig. 1.12). This change in material content, as I will demonstrate further, was a result of the front chamber’s religious role as a simulation of the ancestral temple.

In terms of types, most of the objects in this chamber were familiar, including 1) cooking and food instruments, such as tables, tripods, pots, cauldrons, cups, and plates; 2) daily utensils, such as lamps and incense burners; 3) weapons, particular long-range ones; and 4) coins.²¹¹

What’s more, these objects were organized in a similar symmetrical manner across the chamber. Each chamber centered in a “seat” framed by a tent or a dais and all other objects found their positions around the “empty” seat. In the rear chamber, the weapons placed at the fringe surrounded the kitchen wares and other daily utensils, which further surrounded the dais, the table, and the plates and cups in the center. Likewise, in the front chamber, weapons scattered in the east, southeast, and southwest corners shielded the kitchen wares and other utensils in the middle, which in turn circled the tent,

210 Zhang 2006: 380-81. 黃帝問于歧伯曰：願聞人之始生，何氣築為基，何立而為楯，何失而死，何得而生？歧伯曰：以母為基，以父為楯；失神者死，得神者生也。黃帝曰：何者為神？歧伯曰：血氣已和，營衛已通，五臟已成，神氣舍心，魂魄畢具，乃成為人。

211 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 419–26.

tables and cups in the center. The deceased soul occupied the center, took his seat, ate, drank, had fun, and sent orders to the servants.

However, under this superficial similarity hides a significant difference in materiality and artistry, evidenced by three facts. First, whereas both chambers were house-shaped, the rear compound was all stone while the front one was wooden and earth. Second, while figurines in the rear chamber were made of precious and “immortal” materials including stone, bronze, or jade, those found in the front chamber were mostly cheaper and fragile clay (i.e. fired earth). Third, while the rear chamber contained no vessel made of inferior materials such as clay, the front chamber housed many of them. Taken as a whole, the material variation across the tomb was anything but coincidence, especially as the variation involved not only material but also form.

Although bronze vessels appeared in both front and rear chambers, their artistic qualities were unequal.²¹² In the rear chamber, archaeologists found a group of four bronze pots with marvelous ornaments. Standing between forty and sixty centimeters tall and weighing more than ten kilograms, these pots were giants of their kind. Each of them consists of a lid, a circular base, two handles, and a beautifully curved body with a flaring mouth and a bulging belly. One of them boasts complex gold, silver, and glass inlays. Four horizontal bands divide the surface into three registers (Fig. 1.13, left). Areas between these bands are ornamented with interlocking strips. These crisscrossing strips are lavishly gilded with gold and dotted with silver bosses. Green glass covers the rest of the surface in grid patterns. An inscription made on the bottom identifies the vessel’s

212 Martin Powers has cogently argued how Eastern Zhou and Western Han aristocrats converted the artistic value of the burial objects to the social value of their owners. But we still have to explain why the quality of the objects buried in a single prince’s single tomb varied across different chambers rather than remaining constant and even; see Powers 2006.

former master as an empress dowager.²¹³ Another pot bears shining gold and silver inlays throughout its exterior which includes wave and floral patterns on the vessel's neck, and swirling cloud and dragon patterns on its belly and lid (Fig. 1.13, right). An inscription identifies this pot as a precious vessel from the Chu princely collection. The excavators have suggested that the imperial court might have confiscated this vessel from the Chu state after the latter had been involved in an unsuccessful insurgency in 154 BCE. Eventually, it went to Liu Sheng perhaps as an imperial gift.²¹⁴

The exterior of the other two pots bears elaborate inlays from top to bottom (Fig. 1.14). Four horizontal bands—one between the lid and the neck, one around the base, and the other two around the belly—divide the surface into four parallel registers. Mythological animals and birds motifs adorn the bands with a bird script inscription decorate the registers.²¹⁵ The lines read:

[This] cover is inlaid with gold script in three character lines and gold fish designs.

[This] decorated *hu* has a circular cover and body with four rows of ornaments.

With happy hearts [let us] gather in banquet.

The occasion is grand and the fare sumptuous.

Let delicacies fill the gates and increase our girth,

And give us long life without illness for ten thousand years and more.²¹⁶

213 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 41. A very similar bronze pot is published in Umehara 1937: App.pls.V and VI, which is clearly of a similar date.

214 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 43.

215 Bird-script first appeared in Eastern Zhou; see Yetts 1934; Cao 1999.

216 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 43; see also Zhang 1979. English translation is from Fong 1980: 331; see also Louis 2003.

These lines express auspicious wishes blessing the health of the honorable user. Once inscribed on the vessels, these words might have become magic spells that could transform the food and wine in the vessels into a kind of “elixir” to achieve a “long life without illness for ten thousand years and more.” This couple of inscribed pots with such an ingenious design has no parallels so far among Western Han archaeological finds.

The artistic quality of these four bronze pots was outstanding. The first two pots once held in other princely or imperial collections before eventually reached Liu Sheng’s hand as honorable gifts. This reinforces the special significance they might have meant to their owner. And these pots were no isolated examples. Among other widely acknowledged masterpieces of the Western Han art, two came from the rear side chamber (“bathroom”). The incense burner in the shape of an immortal mountain rises up in the center of a rough wavy ocean. Another bronze lamp is modeled after an elegantly recumbent sheep.²¹⁷ All these examples epitomized the prince’s favorite collections, embodied his caress, gaze, affection, and identity. The norm seems quite simple: better objects stayed closer to the physical body.²¹⁸

On the other hand, the front chamber housed common and modest ritual objects that each measure half as large and weigh a third as heavy as their counterparts in the rear chamber (Fig. 1.15). Rather than adopting the flamboyant style that characterizes the pots

217 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 63–6; 66–9.

218 This norm also existed in the other two well-preserved princely tombs. In Zhao Mei’s tomb, almost all the exquisite jade containers, including a horn-shaped cup (fig. 30a), a jade inlaid bronze cup, an elevated jade plate and a jade box were placed in the casket that encased the coffin. The jade inlaid cup which had been damaged before the entombment was even carefully wrapped by silk. According to the excavator, the special care given to this broken vessel suggests “it was highly valued even by the tomb occupant himself.” Mai 2005: 124. In Hongtushan Tomb, the same distinction was also maintained; see Shandong 1983.

in the rear chamber, the bronze vessels in the front chamber are plain and simple with few or no ornamentations. In terms of provenance, they were either tributes from local subordinates²¹⁹ or commodities purchased in marketplaces.²²⁰ In all aspects, these ordinary-looking, humbly born vessels are no match for the privileged imperial gifts cherished in the rear chamber.

Another observation further reinforces this subtle contradiction between the two chambers. While the front chamber contained miniature surrogates or “spirit objects” (*mingqi* 明器) including eleven chariots and five water-drawing buckets (as parts of the miniature water wells), the excavators found in the rear chamber only life-sized objects. This distinction became even more conspicuous in Princess Dou Wan’s tomb, in which the front chamber was full of miniature bronze vessels (see Fig. 2.4), while the rear chamber contained no such models.²²¹ The changing body and scale of the objects from the front chamber to the rear chamber demonstrates a transformation from things simple, plain, and normal to things ornate, complex, and extraordinary.

In fact, everything across the tomb was “upgraded” both in material, form, and meaning as the distance to the corpse decreased. The ultimate material was stone and jade, and the ultimate form was exemplified by the invaluable treasures that best proclaimed the deceased subject’s social identity. More importantly, the four inscribed pots might have had a special relation to the prince before his death.

219 One inscription identifies a bronze basin as “received from Lunu 廬奴,” the capital of the Zhongshan state. Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 58.

220 One bronze basin is identified as a bought from Luoyang—an important manufacture center under the direct control of the empire. Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 57.

221 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 29, 228.

6. The Enshrined Soul in the “Bright Hall”

Whereas the exquisite instruments in the rear chamber represent the private sector of the deceased king, those stock ones in the front chamber register his public role.

The royal sacrificial hall is evidenced first and foremost by the two parallel tents set in Liu Sheng’s front chamber, both facing to the east (or outward). The one in the south was smaller than the one in the center. Although both tents were furnished with the same kinds of burial objects including ritual vessels, iron tools, weapons, and a figurine, as those surrounding the primary tent, the south tent concentrated all its objects in a small area, but the central tent attracted more grave goods, separated into several large and small groups across a broader space in several groups. Clearly, the two tents were of the same ritual function but not equals.

These facts led Lu Zhaoyin to correctly identify the larger tent as occupied by Liu Sheng.²²² Noting the fact that no tents existed in Tomb 2 and that the wife “could not enjoy an independent sacrificial space,” Wu Hung further speculates that the primary tent should have belonged to Liu Sheng, and the secondary one, to Liu’s wife, though he supplies no proof.²²³

In fact, this assumption finds support in ritual texts. It is important to note that the two tents were not only unequal but also unparallel: the secondary tent was installed slightly behind the primary one in the center. This distinct order between the two tents in the front chamber clearly recalls an Eastern Han textual record that describes the two parallel tents in the Han ancestral temple. During the collective sacrifice held every three

222 Lu 2005: 71.

223 Wu 1997: 152; Wu 2009: 67.

years, all imperial ancestors were jointly worshiped in the temple of Emperor Gaozu, the dynasty founder, and his empress:

“In the Great Collective Sacrifice... Seats were set on the left and right sides. [The seat of] Emperor Gao faced towards the south in a sloping-roofed tent ornamented with embroidery...[The seat of] Empress Gao was on the right side, six inches backward, also in an embroidered sloping-roof tent.”

三年大祫祭設左右坐。高祖南面，幄繡帳.....高后右坐，亦幄帳，却六寸。²²⁴

According to this passage, the supreme couple occupied two parallel empty tents, presiding over the whole ritual space. The husband “sat” on the left; the wife “sat” on the right and slightly behind him. This seems to be a good description of the two tents found in Liu Sheng’s tomb.

Not surprisingly, the objects surrounding the tents, or the “soul seats,” included unmistakable sacrificial objects (*jiqi* 祭器) usually dedicated in temples.

In the east side of the tent, with all the traditional bronze ritual vessels such as *ding* 鼎, *yan* 甗, and *hu* 壺 lined up in rows, the ritual scenario is unambiguous (see Fig. 1. 12). What’s more, all these vessels are uniformly of a simple plain style, without ostentatious openwork, inlays, painting, or ornamentation, conveying a sense of solemnity, restraint, respect, and order, applauded by Confucianism as the quintessential quality of the ancestral worship.²²⁵ A 2nd century BCE author claimed: “When gentlemen are engaged in sacrifices, they must keep respect and never slack.”²²⁶

224 Sun 1990: 100.

225 For Confucian sacrifices, see Sommer 2003: 1: 197–219; Puett 2005: 75–95.

On the west side of the primary tent, despite the absence of traditional ritual vessels, the way in which the small cups were displayed fits into a temple context. Instead of being stacked or packed, these cups were dispersed one by one into two parallel rows, all with their handles facing towards the tent. Clearly, saving space was not the goal; rather, the major idea focused on an orderly (aligned) and spectacular (dispersed) presentation to the tent occupant. In this sense, the two sets of bronze cups closely imitated the traditional “tripod sequence” (*lieding* 列鼎), in which identically shaped tripods of different scales were displayed successively from the largest to the smallest before the ancestor recipient.²²⁷ To date, Chinese archaeologists have unearthed such “tripods sequences” in a few other Western Han royal tombs that were contemporaneous with the Mancheng tombs.²²⁸

The same sacrificial scenario applies equally well to the second tent. In the west and southwest peripheries of the tent, different weapons including crossbow triggers, arrowheads, and curved blades created a protective shield against any evils (see Fig. 1.12). Behind this shield stand, most prominently, a group of cooking and banqueting instruments were lined up in front of the tent from the east to the west. They included two

226 君子之祭也，敬而不黷。He Xiu 何休, *Chunqiu gongyangzhuan* 春秋公羊傳註疏, juan 5, in Ruan 1980: 2: 2218.

227 von Falkenhausen 2008.

228 As a good example, Shuangrushi Tomb 1 once yielded a set of nine tripods of different scales. All these tripods bear an identical inscription of “Temple of Qu” (*qumiao* 曲廟) which betrays their ritual origin (fig.2.25c). Shandong 1997. Another bronze vessel which bears an inscription of “The Gong Temple” (*gongmiao* 恭廟) is from Baonüdu; see Yangzhou and Hanjiang 1991. Another set of seven bronze tripods that might have come from a funerary temple was found from a sacrificial pit at Yangguishan 羊鬼山 at the Chu princely cemetery at Xuzhou. Each tripod bears an inscription which contains the words “X Park” (□*yuan* 園). See Zhongguo and Xuzhou 2005: 180–3.

ceramic pots, a lacquer pot, a bronze cauldron, a (or two) lacquer ware(s), possibly a (or two) plate(s), a bronze basin, two bronze rectangular pots, and a bronze pot-shaped water clock. A privileged winged-cup (*huanger* 黄耳, “Yellow ears”) and a bronze spoon, which was somehow displaced might have been initially laid on the lacquer plate(s). All the vessels dedicated to the tent are life-sized and functional, again, indicating they were “sacrificial instruments” (*jiqi*). Some of them even bear inscriptions recording their sizes, weights, and provenances.²²⁹ The bronze basin, for example, features an inscription which identifies itself as a property of the “Inner Treasury of the Zhongshan state” (*Zhongshan neifu* 中山内府). This label identifies the person who received this vessel as a member of the princely house.²³⁰

Among the many different kinds of temples existing in China at this time, it is hard to pin down which temple was precisely imitated in Liu Sheng’s front chamber.²³¹ However, some of the interred lamps hold the clue. In the central bay, the east side was illuminated by nine bronze and three clay lamps, all located to the west of the kitchenware. Each lamp had a circular base, a tall and slim stand, and a circular plate with oil and wick in it. In the northern bay, twenty-three ceramic lamps appeared in three parallel rows. Such a lavish display of lamps in the tomb was unprecedented in Chinese tombs. The lamps, which were beyond traditional ritual objects, must have added an extra meaning to the ritual space. More importantly, four of the nine bronze lamps each bear an identical inscription made on the plate, which identifies the device as a “bronze lamp of

229 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 85, 57.

230 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 57.

231 Loewe 1994.

the Bright Hall of Jiaolin” (*Jiaolin mingtang tongdeng* 椒林明堂銅燈) (Fig. 1.16).²³²

Whereas the meaning of the title *Jiaolin* remains a mystery, the central term *mingtang* had an unmistakable sacrificial meaning at that time. As these lamps were relocated to this new place, the possibility that the front chamber might have been considered as a “Bright hall” (*mingtang* 明堂) or at least a sacrificial parallel of it cannot be ruled out. In fact, as indicated by inscriptional evidence from the second century CE, the concept had been widely accepted to denote the front chamber of a tomb.²³³ But what did the “Bright Hall” originally mean?

In Eastern Zhou texts, *mingtang*, where the sovereign held ceremonial meetings with local vassals, was an auditory hall with a circular ceiling and square base.²³⁴ Not coincidentally, Liu Sheng’s front chamber is precisely vaulted (as I will demonstrate later, an unfinished dome) at the top and square at the base. The hall was considered “bright” because its walls bore altogether 36 doors and 72 windows so that sunlight could generously illuminate its interior from all directions.²³⁵ This might explain the

232 *Zhongguo* 1980a: 1: 74.

233 An Eastern Han scholar named Fan Ran 范冉 (112–185) made a will which prescribes that after his death the offerings in his “Mingtang” should include nothing but dry rice and cold water and any food or beverage should not be brought into his tomb (其明堂之奠，干飯寒水，飲食之物，勿有所下). Fan 1965: 2690. An Eastern Han grave-quelling text also refers to the central hall of the tomb as Mingtang (中央明堂，皆有尺六桃券、錢、布、鉛人). From Zhang and Bai 2006: 1: 230. Miao Yu’s 繆紆 (84–155) tomb inscription found near Xuzhou also mentions “Mingtang.” The text is barely legible due to the damage, but there is no question that this “Mingtang” must be associated with the tomb; see Zhou 1995.

234 “If it should do all this, then even if it should construct a Bright Hall and summon the feudal lords to pay court there, it would almost be proper.” 若是，則雖為之築明堂而朝諸侯，可矣。Knoblock 1994: 2: 246.

235 According to *Da Dai lijì*: 明堂者，古有之也。凡九室：一室而有四戶、八牖，三十六戶、七十二牖。以茅蓋屋，上圓下方。Wang 1983b: 149.

extraordinary number of lamps displayed in the front chamber, which might have emulated the brilliance of sunshine in the Bright Hall, a special quality that made the building so distinct.

The Bright Hall should not have been an alien concept to well-educated Western Han princes, because it was essentially associated with their royal identity. According to *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), the ancient *mingtang* was a modest hall approached by no more than three earth steps.²³⁶ Perhaps for this reason, this legendary structure later became a symbol of simple and practical kingship and benevolent politics in the Confucian discourse. Mengzi 孟子 (372–289 BCE) once advised King Hui 惠 of the Liang that “The Bright Hall is a Hall appropriate to the sovereigns. If your Majesty wishes to practice the true royal government, then do not pull it down.”²³⁷

Liu Sheng, however, was not the first Western Han prince to associate his tomb with the legendary Bright Hall. Princes Liu Wu 劉武 (d. 144 BCE) and Liu Shun 劉舜 (r. 145–114 BCE), for example, both shared the same interest in shaping the outer zone of their tombs more overtly into a Bright Hall.²³⁸ This new practice of inserting a sacrificial “hall” directly into the tomb was most likely an invention of the royal ancestral cult in the Western Han dynasty.

²³⁶ Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 525.

²³⁷ 夫明堂者，王者之堂也。王欲行王政，則勿毀之矣。 Legge 1990: 161.

²³⁸ For a detailed discussion of how these two tombs imitating the Bright Hall, see Shi 2013.

The new practice of inserting a “temple” directly into the tomb was most likely an invention of the royal ancestral cult in the Western Han dynasty to keep the soul as close to the body as possible.

During the late Eastern Zhou, tombs gradually grew bigger and busier into a new center of sociopolitical and religious power.²³⁹ As a result, ritual facilities developed in the cemetery to facilitate rituals made to the deceased.²⁴⁰ This trend continued into the early Western Han dynasty with a different focus: arresting the soul next to the burial.

In the Western Han, a special imperial ritual called “parading the robes and head-dress” (*youyiguan* 遊衣冠) of the former emperors occurred every month.²⁴¹ The procession started at the aboveground ritual buildings in the mausoleum where those cultic apparels and outfits were worshiped, then stopped by the ancestral temple to receive a sacrifice, and finally returned to the tomb. “Presumably the purpose for the conveyance of the imperial clothes,” wrote Michael Loewe, “was to symbolize a journey that was being undertaken by the emperor to a place where he would receive honors, i.e., from the *ch'in* (*qin*), where he received four meals daily, to the *miao*, where he was entertained with the more special offering that was presented only once monthly.”²⁴²

This monthly ceremony bound the ancestral temple tightly with the tomb and made them ritualistically a whole. While the tomb served as the deceased’s private sphere,

239 Wu 1988.

240 Yang 1985: 14–33.

241 Ban 1962: 3116. According to Wang Su 王肅 (195–256), these robes and head-dress were called “magificent robes” (*rongyi*). 按漢氏西京故事，月游衣冠，則容衣也。 See Du 1988: 2142.

242 Loewe 1994: 283–84.

the temple signified his or her public space, as was explained by the learned scholar Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192):

When his life came to an end, the *miao* (temple) was instituted at the front to symbolize the audience hall, and the *qin* was instituted at the rear to symbolize his sleeping chamber.²⁴³

To connect the temple in the city and the tomb in the outskirts, however, would have required a lengthy journey. In 191 BCE Emperor Hui, erected a temple duplicate (*yuanmiao* 原廟) for his deceased father, Emperor Gao, right next to the latter's mausoleum, located as far as 20 kilometers to the north of the capital city Chang'an.²⁴⁴ Thanks to this invention, the annual ritual of *youyiguan* between the tomb and the temple, originally located in the capital, became much more convenient, as the distance between the two stops became substantially shortened. Consequently, the replica temple allowed the soul to dwell right next to the body. In 72 BCE, Emperor Xuan had an extra temple erected for each of his predecessors and himself next to their mausoleums.²⁴⁵ Such temple duplicates, called "tomb temple" (*lingmiao* 陵廟) or "cemetery temple" (*yuanmiao* 原廟), stood in the center of a luxurious ritual complex called "temple-park" (*miaoyuan* 廟園) which would have housed daily, monthly, seasonal, and annual sacrifices.²⁴⁶ Although the temple stayed closely with the graveyard, the aboveground resting-park (*qin*) represented the tomb as opposed to the temple (*tang*).

243 Cai 1592: B.5a. English translation based on Loewe 1994: 282, slightly modified.

244 Sima 1959: 99.2725–26.

245 Ban 1962: 3115; Kimura 1981: 43–57.

246 Liu and Li 1987: 174–83. Loewe 1994.

But could the soul be drawn even closer to the body? The closest situation we may imagine was when a temple duplicate ended in the tomb. And this was exactly what happened in the front chambers at Mancheng.

Reflecting the ritual need to tour the robes and head-dress between *qin* and *miao*, like the rear chamber the front chamber also contained a handful of representative “outfit” objects. Although such typical “outfit” objects as seals, garment hooks, and jewelry were totally absent, other portable items including a *bi*-disc, a *huang*-half-ring, a group of bronze belt plaques as well as some swords were located before the king’s tent.

The unique *bi*-disc in the entire front chamber was found on the floor lying precisely on the east-west central axis of the chamber. Its singularity, central position, and refined artistry jointly speak of its prominent role in this space. The shape and ornamentation of the disc is exactly identical with that of the discs found in the king’s “jade robe” and on top of his “jade suit.” According to *Rites of the Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮), jade *bi*-discs were perfect tools to “arrest the divine” (*yishen* 依神), which could mean either natural gods or deceased souls.²⁴⁷ Bearing a tiny hole in its body, the *huang*-half-ring, also unparallel in the antechamber, might have originally been a pendant.²⁴⁸ The gilt bronze plaques bear “Animal-attacking” motifs, a traditional steppe artistic subject matter to be examined in Chapter 3, on one side while leaving the other side unpolished. Such rectangular plaques were usually fastened to garments or leather belts.²⁴⁹ Placed

247 Hayashi 1991: 119–26.

248 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 138. For a comprehensive study of the jade pendants, see Hayashi 1991: 141–72; Sun 1998.

249 Sun 2001: 254–55; Huang 1990; Lu and Shan 2007. In Cao Sun’s tomb, a pair of jade plaques was uncovered at the waist of the corpse, see Changsha 1979.

right in front of the kingly tent, the “outfit” objects were not configured to reflect a body image, as they were in the coffins, but as selected symbols, or, metonyms of the deceased’s physical presence, similar to those found in the stone casket.

7. The Double-facing Soul

Yet the disembodied soul in Liu Sheng’s interred “temple” was not simple; it was by visual means guided into two opposite directions, one to the east (outwards) and one to the west (inwards)

Although the tent had long collapsed before the excavation and all its perishable materials had disappeared, the distribution of the bronze joints and fittings has allowed us to reconstruct it and resituate it back to its original location (Fig. 1.17). What remains ambiguous, however, was the tent’s orientation, although it most likely faced towards the east.

As a typical kind of “soul seats” (*shenzuo* 神坐), the primary tent remained unoccupied or “empty.”²⁵⁰ Prototypes of such “soul seats” can be traced back to Eastern Zhou temple rituals, although the name “shenzuo” was probably an Eastern Han creation.²⁵¹ Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), when annotating *Etiquette and Ceremonials* (*Yili* 儀禮), identified a series of bamboo mats (*yan* 筵) used during the temple sacrifice as “soul seats.” According to those annotated passages, a “soul seat” usually consists of a mat and an armrest (*ji* 几), often (but not necessarily) accompanied by food, wine, or

250 Wu 2009: 64–8.

251 I would like to thank Professor Donald Harper for reminding me of this fact.

other offerings.²⁵² Such seats also appeared in Eastern Zhou tombs. The *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) states clearly that kings and vassals held seats in their caskets, each too with a mat and an armrest.²⁵³ Although simple “soul seats” had appeared in tombs at least by the early fifth century BCE, it was not until the Western Han that they became standard and central in large tombs, usually dominating the front chamber or the front section of the tomb.²⁵⁴

The tent (the “soul seat”) carved the central bay into the west and east halves (Fig. 1.18). Both sides contained a group of bronze vessels as major offerings; both pointed to the tent and its occupant; both were backed by a group of lavishly decorated horses and

252 司宮筵於奧，祝設几於筵上，右之。“The keeper of the sacrificial vessels spreads a mat in the lounge, and the liturgist places the body rest on the mat, at its right end.” Steele 1917: 2: 163. Zheng’s annotation reads: “This is to display the spirit seat.” 布陳神坐也。

253 凡喪事，設葦席，右素幾。其柏席用萑黼純，諸侯則紛純，每敦一几。“For all the death ceremonies, (for the Son of Heaven) reed mats have to be spread with the undecorated armrest on the right. The casket mat is made of reed with silk embroidery. The vassals use silk ribbons for their mats. Each *dun* vessel is coupled with an armrest.” Zheng’s annotation reads: “I would say the graph ‘bai’ is the left-over of the partially effaced graph ‘guo’ (casket). The casket mat is the mat prepared for the spirit seat in the burial.” 玄謂柏，檟字磨滅之餘。檟席，藏中神坐之席也。Ruan 1980: 775.

254 A good example of these can be found in Marquis Yi’s tomb. In this irregular structure consisting of four rectangular compartments, the central one stood out as the “ritual hall” furnished by most ritual vessels and musical instruments. All the food containers appeared in the west side while the bells and chimes were suspended in the east. In the narrow space between them, archaeologists found an armrest with a mat placed on top of it (nos. 75–6). This unique single armrest-mat installation in this compartment most likely symbolized a sacrificial seat for the tomb occupant, who was the receiver of this ritual space. As an early version of the “empty seat,” there was no figurative representation of this honored sitter. Since the mat was folded and the space around it was scanty, nobody could physically sit on it. This means the mat-armrest installation in Marquis Yi’s tomb was not a real functional seat, but a symbol or index of the deceased subject at the most; see Hubei 1989: 1: 68–9. Such symbolic “spirit seats” continued to exist during the Warring States period. A good example of these later developments was found in the left-rear compartment of Changtaiguan Tomb 1 at Xinyang dating from the mid-Warring States period, in which a couch, an armrest, six bamboo mats and some other instruments including a tool-box, some blank bamboo strips, and two figurines tightly filled the space. See Henan 1986: 19, 21. On the date of the Changtaiguan tombs, the conclusion offered by the 1986 excavation report is inaccurate. The corrected dating is the mid-Warring States period. See Guo 1995: 23.

chariots facing the opposite direction. Meanwhile, the two sides were also contrasted in three aspects.

The first aspect is about content. Most of the objects in the east are food-preparing vessels more or less associated with the kitchen, including several cauldrons, two identical tripods, a number of pots, a steamer, and two basins. In contrast, offerings on the west side of the tent were almost all small cups with no large cooking instruments. The east group consisted of a bronze lamp, a silver container, a bronze container, a lacquer ware, and two sets of bronze cups.²⁵⁵

The second issue concerns position. The two groups of offerings in the west and the east mirror each other by flanking the prince's tent from before and behind. The east group was located next to the chamber's east entrance, while the west group approached the west entrance of the same chamber on the other side. Despite slight variations, all the objects followed a south-north axis, facing towards the tent.²⁵⁶ In *The Book of Rites*, it was reported that during a ceremony, "The jugs and jars were placed with their spouts towards the arranger," because this would allow the drinker to grab the handle of the vessel more easily.²⁵⁷ Not coincidentally, in the west group, all the cups were oriented with their spouts facing the west, and the handles facing the east.

The third problem is lighting. The east side was overwhelmingly brighter than the west side. Jessica Rawson correctly observes the prominent role assigned to the lamps on

255 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 78.

256 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 27. The facing is not described in the text but shown in the line-drawing of fig.15. The placement of the two tripods best indicates this orientation by turning its front and back toward a south-north axis.

257 Legge 1967: 1: 79.

the east side of the tent.²⁵⁸ A series of lamps including nine bronze and three clay ones were placed in front of the kitchen wares. Among them, one little lamp joined the kitchen group with an incense-burner, while others belonged to another independent group. The lamp and the incense-burner, which did not fall into any traditional ritual sets, were intentionally added here to give the kitchen scene a little light and fragrance. However, the other lamps were different. Although placed in front of the kitchen wares as illuminating devices, such a large group of lamps might have been an independent offering in their own right. The “offering of light” was also made in the east part of the northern bay. In a similar manner, twenty-three ceramic lamps appeared in three parallel lines. The existence of these two groups of lamps, whether lit or not, constructed a bright environment. To the contrary, the west side contained but one lamp which clearly made it a much darker place.

The contrasts between the east and the west sides of the tent were reinforced by two groups of chariots, which flanked the ritual vessels on the east and on the west, contrasting each other in materiality, scale, and orientation. In the east, the horses and vehicles were real, life-sized, and oriented to the east (outwards), and in the west, those were surrogates, miniaturized, and oriented to the west (inwards).

The two life-sized chariots in the east were stationed one in front of the other in the front tomb tunnel to face to the tomb entrance. Both chariots were accompanied with horses, all fully equipped with frontlets, bits, and harnesses. These animals were slain

258 And she even boldly doubts if these “ritual vessels” were really meant to be “ritual” in function: “Here, there seem to have been no *ding* in bronze; (the *ding*-shaped bronzes seem to be various forms of lamp or brazier). *Hu* are numerous, but without other ritual bronzes it is difficult to be sure that they were indeed for ritual offerings.” Rawson 2002: 22.

before being moved into the tomb tunnel in a way as if they were pulling the chariots behind them. The front vehicle was drawn by a single horse, and the rear one, by four.

Lavishly decorated, the two magnificent chariots were different from each other in many aspects. The excavators have noted a few. First and most obviously, the first chariot was a single-horse pulled vehicle and the second one is pulled by four horses. Second, the first chariot is a little larger than the second one. Because similar chariots also appeared in other royal tombs, the structures of such chariots can be fully retrieved.²⁵⁹ The nature of these chariots is still controversial. The excavators have associated them with the “princely blue canopied chariot” (*wangqinggaiche* 王青蓋車) documented in the “Treatise of Chariots and Costumes” in the *Book of the Latter Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書).²⁶⁰ Gao Chongwen has related them to the three soul-chariots used in funerary ceremonies—the “Ritual chariot” (*hunche* 乘車), the “Ceremonial chariot” (*daoche* 導車) and the “Leisure chariot” (*gaoche* 藁車).²⁶¹ Wu Hung has identified them as the soul-cart and the hearse,²⁶² but Zheng Luanming insisted the genuine chariots should fall into the category of the “Imperial carriage” (*chengyu* 乘輿) rather than funerary chariots.²⁶³

However, all these scholars have neglected the specific mission the two chariots carried. Both vehicles were armed with a crossbow which allowed the rider to attack or

259 Dabaotai 1989: 77–83; Cui 1997; Hebei and Luquan 2005: 121–7.

260 Zhongguo 1980: 1: 204.

261 Gao 1992.

262 Wu 2009: 203.

263 Zheng 2002; Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 204.

defend. What is more, the second chariot was followed by eleven hunting dogs, some chained. A deer lying next to the chariots perhaps represents the prey. These chariots were most likely associated with a hunting event.²⁶⁴ A pair of contemporary “narrative plaques” gives a lively scene in which a man is chasing a beast with his horse, cart, and two dogs.²⁶⁵

Hunting and traveling, as two royal activities, were factually and symbolically related during the Qin and Han period. An emperor’s ceremonial traveling to the remote provinces to visit his local governors, a tradition traceable to the pre-dynastic age, was called “inspection and hunting” (*xunshou* 巡狩).²⁶⁶ During the Qin and Han period, a recently dead emperor was given the title *Daxing* 大行, which literally means “a great journey” and implies “going to heaven.” According to Tosaki Tetsuhiko, the doctrine of interpreting *Daxing* as “a great journey” was established at the time of the First Emperor with his inspectional journeys.²⁶⁷ No wonder Western Han princes including Liu Sheng would have followed this imperial practice to demonstrate their political privilege.

In both materiality and scale, the other group of chariots to the west of the tent was obviously different. These were a series of miniature horses and chariots, which, due to the bad disintegration, became hard to identify. The horse bits and frontlets were less

264 Zheng 2003: 98. Burying dogs with horses and chariots was a practice that can be traced back to the late Shang or the early Western Zhou period. And this practice became increasingly popular during the Eastern Zhou period. A good example was found in Minister Zhao’s tomb at Taiyuan, dating to the early 5th century BCE. The excavators identify the dogs as “hunting dogs.” See Shanxi and Taiyuan 1996: 198. However, some doubts still remain regarding the meaning of those dogs buried with chariots which were not apparently made for the purpose of hunting. See Wu 2009: 85–6.

265 Rawson 1990: 350. More plaques with similar motives were found in Inner Mongolia. See Tian and Guo 1986: 97.

266 He 2003: 7–13.

267 Tosaki 1991.

than a third as large as the real ones.²⁶⁸ Like the cups and the coins, the chariots were plural and displayed openly on the floor. Twenty-two wheel hubcaps (*wei* 韀) in eleven pairs demonstrate that the total number of the chariots must have been eleven.²⁶⁹ Another notable fact is that these small but not tiny horses and chariots were “lavishly decorated.”²⁷⁰ Three surviving fake horse teeth made of animal bones indicate the initial design must have been quite meticulous.

Such chariots, as the excavators have identified, were “wooden model horses and chariots” (*myu chema* 木寓车马 or *ouchema* 偶车马) made particularly for ritual purposes.²⁷¹ Although the imperial workshop monopolized the production of these privileged mortuary goods, commoners could acquire copies for themselves in the marketplace.²⁷² In the Hebei area, as new archaeological discoveries have suggested, the practice of making small wooden chariot surrogates was a local tradition going back to the late Warring State Period and was popular in some later Zhongshan royal tombs as well.²⁷³

The orientations of the two groups of chariots are precisely opposite. As the excavators have observed, the life-sized carriage shafts in the east pointed to the east,

268 Zhongguo 1980a: 1:199–201.

269 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 181.

270 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 29.

271 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 29.

272 Ban 1962: 3210.

273 Early examples of surrogate chariots were found in the royal mausoleum 2 of the Zhao state during the 3rd c. BCE near Handan, Hebei; see Zhao and Li 2007: 193.

demonstrating that these vehicles were oriented eastward, or, outwards.²⁷⁴ Although due to severe disintegration the miniature chariots in the west are no longer restorable, the undisturbed remains suggest that they were oriented to the west, or inwards. For example, in the south section, the frontlets and the fake horse teeth were located to the west of the strap hooks (*yi* 轆) which would have been fastened to the top of the cart crossbars (*heng* 衡). This distribution indicates that the horses were heading westward. Better preserved chariots in the north section further buttress this observation. There the frontlets and bits were located to the west of the wheel hubcaps and cross-bow hangers which would have been attached to the front of the carts. This demonstrates again that these chariots must have been facing westward (or inward). This orientation echoes with the parade of robes and head-dresses between *qin* and *miao*.

If the life-sized genuine chariots index the living world, the “spirit objects” with coarse forms, shrunken sizes, or inferior materials point to the dead world. Contemporary authors in the Zhou and the Han explicitly distinguished between two types of burial objects: “sacrificial objects” (*jiqi* 祭器) and “spirit objects” (*mingqi* 明器).²⁷⁵ To Lothar von Falkenhausen, these two types of objects represented two fundamentally different ideas in the Chinese religious mind.²⁷⁶

The contradictions between the east and the west sides of the tent in the front chamber establish a fundamental antithesis between the living and the dead. Since the tomb opened to the east, the east side (or the front) of the tomb played a transitional role

274 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 179.

275 Watson 1963, 104.

276 von Falkenhausen 1994; von Falkenhausen 2006: 305–6. He links all the ceramic surrogate vessels imitating the bronze pieces to *mingqi*, and therefore agrees that as early as in the Spring and Autumn Period (771–475 BC), *mingqi* had been first invented in the Qin region.

in mediating between the bright living world and the dark world of the deceased, which was located on the other side of the tent in the west (or the rear).

In Liu Sheng's tomb, the objects to the east and west of the tent also implied two different subjects—the assumed users. The objects displayed on the east side of the front chamber suggest that the subject should be genuine and life-sized, but the “fake” material and the reduced scale of the miniature models on the other side suggest differently. The orientation of the miniature chariots demonstrates that the occupant of this tiny procession must be the one sitting in the tent. It is equally true that the two life-sized chariots on the other side facing outward also took the tent as their departure point, and therefore, must be occupied by the same subject, too. Indeed, the tent sat right on the border of the two sides and belonged to both processions simultaneously. This interesting overlap begs the following question: if the two contradictory processions were associated with a single subject, i.e. the deceased's fully disembodied soul, then which procession must the soul take and for where?

On the one hand, the real chariots taken by the “living” side of the deceased's soul were leaving for the bright world; on the other hand, the miniature chariots taken by the “dead” side of the same soul were heading toward the darker rear chamber, which housed the corpse.

The material duality around the tent along the east-west central axis of the tomb sheds light on the double nature of the deceased soul. The coexistence of real objects and shrunken surrogates has its root in this double nature: the soul was imagined as “living” and “deceased” at the same time. In the contemporary religious discourse, as Ying-shih Yu noted, the soul was indeed divided into two halves: the heavenly *hun* 魂 soul and the

earthly *po* 魄 soul.²⁷⁷ It has been declared in *The Zuo Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals* that when a person was first born with the *yin* side, the *po* soul, which then gave rise to its *yang* side, the *hun* soul.²⁷⁸ According to *The Book of Rites*, once a person died, the two souls departed: the former would fly up and the latter would descend down.²⁷⁹ Although Kenneth E. Brashier has shown that in the popular religion of the Han dynasty the two concepts were used almost indiscriminately,²⁸⁰ the material duality around Liu Sheng's "soul seat" reveals a deeply embedded notion of *yin-yang* polarity in the mind of the Han elite.

8. Conclusion

The multistaged transition between the inner coffin and the front chamber gives us a vivid demonstration of how the Mancheng designer(s) used visual and material means to secure the deceased's religious identity: being ancestors means possessing a posthumous life that both unites the body with and separates it from the soul. And this seemingly paradoxical body-soul relationship holds the secret of personal immortality. In previous vertical pit graves, with the traditional practice of "multiple nested caskets and coffins" (*duochong guanguo* 多重棺槨), the coffin and the body it contained were always settled at the center of the tomb. In contrast, in Liu Sheng's tomb, this unique

277 Yu 1987: 365.

278 Ruan 1980: 2050. 人生始化曰魄，既生魄，陽曰魂。

279 "The ethereal soul (*hunqi* 魂氣) returns to heaven; the physical body (*xingpo* 形魄) returns to the earth; and hence arose the idea of seeking (for the deceased) in sacrifice in the unseen darkness (*yin* 陰) and in the bright region (*yang* 陽) above;" see Legge 1967: 1:444. Translation modified; according to Poo Mou-chou, this passage might reflect late Eastern Zhou belief; see Poo 1995: 64.

280 Brashier 1996.

center vanished with the tomb space divided evenly into two halves: the rear and the front. With the soul taking the front part of the horizontal tomb, unlike the previous Eastern Zhou cases, the corpse no longer occupied the center of the burial but was pushed laterally to the rear part of it. This change gave rise to a new burial plan, which would dominate Chinese tombs for many centuries to come, the so-called “front hall and rear chamber” (*qiantang houshi* 前堂後室).²⁸¹

Between the corpse and the soul, the outer coffins and caskets that held the inner coffin became the buffer zones between the disembodied soul (empty seat) in the front chamber and the soulless body (corpse) in the inner coffin. The Mancheng designer then furnished these intermediary zones as if a gradual mediation between a solid corpse and an ethereal soul was taking place within.

With these transitional buffer zones, a three-level “polarization” happened throughout the tomb, along the central axis of the tomb, from the whole tomb all the way back to the coffins.

First, with the inclusion of the front chamber and the soul seat into the tomb, a polarity of body and soul came into being.

Second, in the rear chamber, the body space broke down into two halves between the coffins in the north and the dais in the south, resulting in another polarity of soul and body.

Third, in the two nested coffins, the body space further consisted of two ends: the inner coffin with the corpse and the outer coffin with the soul.

281 Huang 2002.

The multilevel polarization of body and soul might well continue beyond the tomb itself, as the tomb as a whole corresponded to the body and the ancestral temple in the city of the living world enshrined the soul.

Through this sophisticated “axial logic,” only one goal was fully achieved: the forever union of soul and body, and with it, the immortal life of the deceased Zhongshan king.

CHAPTER 2: Correlating Husband and Wife: Putting the Family in Order

Although the personal care paid to the deceased king applies equally to his wife, the tomb occupant of the sister Tomb 2, the Mancheng cemetery does not equal the sum of the two individual tombs. Instead, the relationship between the two individual tombs indicates that they must have been designed as a structural whole (Fig. 2.1).

At first glance, Dou Wan's tomb appears almost like a generic copy after her husband's example. Cut into the same mountain slope, only 120 meters to the north of Liu Sheng's tomb, the queen's tomb similarly consists of four major chambers in a similar compact plan along the east-west axis, including a front chamber fitted with a wooden house, two elongated side chambers for "kitchen and stable" (*chujiu* 廚廄), and a rear chamber holding a house-shaped stone building. In addition to this formal resemblance, most of the major internal logics we have discovered of Liu Sheng's tomb were also true in his wife's case. For example, the changing ratio between Dou's "outfit" and "instruments" along the axis of the tomb was as obvious as that in Liu's tomb.

However, these similarities constitute only one part of the story. A number of apparently odd facts about the queen's burial might puzzle a viewer. For example, Dou Wan's rear chamber was not located to the west of (thus "behind") the front chamber but deflected to the south side of it. She did not have any tents installed in her front chamber, nor did she have horses and chariots ready to go in her tomb tunnel. Were such differences outcomes of some random decisions, or results of certain thoughtful planning?

This chapter faces this question head on. Dou's tomb was in fact not crafted to be a mere duplicate of her husband's model; instead, it is more accurate to call the wife's

tomb a “mirror image” of the husband’s: they appear almost identical, but are basically “reversed” in terms of gender. The regularity of the pattern can only suggest one thing: Mancheng tombs were designed not only to maintain the afterlife for two individual royal persons but also to keep in order a royal house or family with the king and the queen and other minor members.

I will name the new principle that bonds together the two tombs the “parallel logic.” Unlike the “axial logic,” which extends longitudinally, this second logic is latitudinal, running between the north and the south. The hidden force behind the parallel relationship was not so much religious as it is sociological, as the goal of the planning, as I will argue below, was to set in stone an ideal social relationship between husband and wife, by means of architecture and grave goods.

To explore the hidden patterns, we must shift our perspective 90 degrees clockwise and see the Mancheng tombs in a totally different way. We are not following each tomb’s physical structure, but instead examining what happens between the two rear chambers, between the two front chambers, and so forth. I will also compare the twin tombs with other related earlier and contemporary royal tombs in other royal cemeteries to show the ordinariness and extraordinariness of the Zhongshan couple.

1. Gendered Objects

The consciousness of gender began with the body. Although her flesh and bones had long vanished before the excavation, Dou’s imperishable “outfit” preserved the major features of a female body.

Like her husband, the wife also wore a “jade suit” consisting of head, upper torso, legs, hands, and shoes. Again following the king, the queen’s “jade suit” was accompanied in and out by several other layers of “outfit,” including bodily covers and plugs, a garment hook, a seal, a necklace, as well as a “jade robe” featuring multiple *bi*-discs wound by crisscrossing ribbons.²⁸² Despite all these similarities, there were a few distinct items that pronounce the lady’s femininity.

The most striking ones of these were found near the sex organs. Whereas the husband’s “jade suit” was characterized by a unique genital capsule adapted from an ancient jade *cong* tube, the queen’s suit was modified to imitate a slim, pointed jade *gui* tablet positioned near the vagina (Fig. 2.2).²⁸³ The juxtaposition was full of sexual implication. The excavators have suggested that the *cong*-adapted capsule contained the male genitalia, and the *gui* was to cover the vagina. However, to say “cover” might not be accurate; in fact, the pointed tablet represents the penis and was meant to be inserted into the vagina.

As some scholars have noted, in early Chinese rites the *cong* tube represented the vagina and the *gui* tablet, the penis.²⁸⁴ Archaeologists have discovered as early as in the late Western Zhou an unmodified *cong* tube was put in the coffin of a certain marquis of the Jin 晉 state at the position of his genitalia.²⁸⁵ Therefore, the jade “vagina” held the

282 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 244-45.

283 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 295, 350.

284 For the *cong*, see Erkes 1931; Ling 1959. Other scholars who agreed with *cong*’s femininity include Nan Zhiliang 那志良, Feng Hanji 馮漢驥, Tong Enzheng 童恩正, Shi Zhilian 石志廉; Zhou Nanquan 周南泉; see Zang 1993.

285 It was found in Tomb I11M8; see Beijing 1994: 12; see also So 2013.

king's real penis, and the jade "penis" penetrated, at least symbolically, into the queen's physical vagina. It is no coincidence that the dimensions of the two jade objects are very close. The king's modified *cong* tube is 6.8 centimeters long and 6.6 centimeters in diameter, and the queen's *gui* tablet measures 7.5 centimeters long and 1.3 centimeters thick, just long enough to hold the entire *cong* tube in it. These two jades were put in the two corpses to enact the sexual intercourse.

Love-making (*xingfang* 行房) was the final testimonial to the conjugation of a man and a woman, as much in ancient China as in the modern age. Sexual activity for the early Chinese was justified on a sociological basis: by constantly producing the right offspring, the clan and lineage could continue and thrive, and therefore, remain deathless. In the indigenous ritual called ancestral worship, which was one of the cornerstones of Chinese society, intercourse was a sacred duty everybody had to fulfill for their ancestors.²⁸⁶

During the Han dynasty, with the popularity of Daoist practice, sexual intercourse was not only a social obligation but also a "scientific" means to health and longevity. By stimulating the female energy (*yin*), love-making could not only strengthen the female body but also benefit the male subject by renewing the male energy (*yang*).²⁸⁷ In the early 2nd century BCE Daoist texts excavated from Mawangdui Tomb 3 in present-day Changsha, Hunan province, this process was called "conjoining of the vapor" (*heqi* 合氣).²⁸⁸ To generate more energy, men and women should have sex frequently to transform

286 Goldin 2002.

287 van Gulik, 2004: 1-13.

288 Harper 2009: 389.

the sexual force (*jing* 精) into the *qi* energy and replenish the power of life.²⁸⁹ It was reported that techniques of using sexual intercourse to improve health and prolong life were read and circulated among royalty.²⁹⁰ The Mancheng discovery suggests that this philosophy probably applied to the afterlife, too. By situating the deceased couple symbolically in a perpetual moment of love-making, both the husband and the wife were assured with a non-stop renewal of the energy of life.

Other “outfit” objects in the coffin further reinforced this gender scenario. Although Dou wore a similar necklace of her husband, hers was slightly—yet decisively—different including a small jade plaque shaped into a female dancer elegantly swirling her sleeves (*yuwuren* 玉舞人) (Fig. 2.3).²⁹¹ Excluded from the king’s outfit, this motif has been identified as typically feminine.²⁹² Archaeologists discovered the same type of jade plaques with the same motif in Zhao Mei’s – Emperor Wen of the Southern Yue – tomb as well, but only with one of the imperial concubines buried together with the emperor, proclaiming her femininity.²⁹³ Although the exact model for such dancers remains unknown, it is possible that these beautiful jade ladies might more or less represent their graceful wearers, albeit in a generic and ideal sense.

289 Wile 1992.

290 The best example is perhaps the Mawangdui medical manuscripts found in a noble tomb dating from the early 2nd century BCE; see also van Gulik 2004: 1-13.

291 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 245.

292 Erickson 1994; Lu 1996; Liu and Liu 2012.

293 Guangzhou 1991: 1: 523.

In Han literature, probably no other art was associated more closely with femininity than dancing, even though in reality men also performed. During the Western Han, many noble ladies favored by the emperors and kings were known as excellent dancers; some of them were trained as professional dancers before they won the heart of their lord. Lady Li, for example, was a native of Zhongshan. When presented to Emperor Wu, she captured the imperial heart immediately by her beauty and dance.²⁹⁴ The most famous story was perhaps of Empress Zhao, also known with her nickname Feiyan 飛燕, meaning “flying swift.” Beginning as a low-ranking palace lady, she learned and mastered the art of singing and dancing. When Emperor Cheng saw her performance, he could not resist her charm and decided to marry her.²⁹⁵

Some cosmetic objects, though used both by men and women, were granted a much closer relationship to the female subject. Mirrors, for instance, were found in both tombs, but their numbers and positions differed significantly. In Tomb 1 the only mirror found in the rear chamber was located outside the king’s nested coffins.²⁹⁶ Tomb 2, in contrast, contained three mirrors, one of which was a little mirror held directly in the queen’s left hand. It looks as if she were anxious to check, even in the afterlife, whether her makeup looked perfect.²⁹⁷

294 Ban 1962: 97.3951. 平陽主因言延年有女弟，上乃召見之，實妙麗善舞。由是得幸。

295 Ban 1962: 97.3988.

296 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 81.

297 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 265.

In both the pictorial art and literature of the Han dynasty, mirrors were a gendered imagery associated almost exclusively with women.²⁹⁸ In extant murals dating from the Han dynasty, noble or wealthy ladies were portrayed as either sitting in front of or holding in hand a mirror. One such example appeared in a stone carving at Jiexiang, dated to 2nd c. CE. On the second floor of a two-story pavilion, among a group of ladies adorning themselves in the boudoir, one is looking at a mirror held in her hand.²⁹⁹ It is not difficult to imagine Dou as one of such noble ladies living in her royal boudoir in Zhongshan. Although mirrors were absolutely used by men as well, artists almost never depicted such scenes. It seems mirrors were treated as a metaphor of female vanity, and perhaps even a symbol of feminine passivity. A Han poet thus described a beautiful lady who was being wooed by a nobleman: “He gives me a bronze mirror and ties it to my red silk skirt.”³⁰⁰

The toiletry case set (*duozilian* 多子奩), a multi-level lacquer box encasing a group of smaller lacquer containers usually with beautification tools in them, presented another similar example.³⁰¹ Although in the actual daily life they served both men and women, in the perspective of cultural psychology, they assumed a much closer association with femininity. At Mancheng, toiletry cases appeared in both tombs but attested to different relationships to the body. While Liu’s only toiletry case appeared on

298 To my knowledge, very few male figures were represented with mirrors in hands in Han pictorial art.

299 Zhongguo 2000: 2: pl. 105.

300 貽我青銅鏡，結我紅羅裾。Yu 1987: 21.

301 A comprehensive survey of early Chinese toiletry cases was done by Sheri Lullo who examines their forms, functions, and placement in tombs; see Lullo 2009.

the floor of the *guo* casket outside his coffins,³⁰² one of Dou's two cases was laid right on top of her legs inside the coffin. The shining gold, silver, carnelian, turquoise, and jade inlays on the exterior face of the lacquer cases, which had largely disintegrated, proclaim the power and wealth of their owner. Originally measuring 25 centimeters in diameter, the outer case held a set of five smaller square, rectangular, and circular containers of various sizes. In these little boxes lay one mirror and a cluster of small knives for beautification.³⁰³ Brought into the queen's coffin, the toiletry case boasts a more intimate relationship to the female subject and qualified as a feminine "outfit" only. The case lay on her legs as if she were in the middle of using the items in the case lying on her laps. Unlike the husband's toiletry case, which contained powder (probably facial creams), the wife's case puzzled the excavators without any traces of makeup, probably because the powder had already been applied to her face.

In addition to what was present, what was absent from the wife's tomb conveys equally eloquent gender messages. It is not surprising that the least feminine object in all the grave goods was the weapon, which was treated unambiguously as masculine.³⁰⁴ The authors of the excavation report have noted a distinctive difference in Dou's burial: unlike Liu Sheng, who carried a large number of weapons into his coffins, the queen's coffin remained totally unarmed.³⁰⁵ The statistics are unmistakable – five for the husband and none for the wife. Although a few weapons did appear outside the coffin in the

302 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 148.

303 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 300-2.

304 For a case study of weapons' gender implication in early China, see Rode 2004: 315-38.

305 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 228-34. The knives found in her coffin were most likely cosmetic tools.

queen's rear chamber with royal regalia near the entry, which I will discuss in the next section, they played mostly likely a symbolic role of warding off the evil.

Not only the content and function but also the number and size of the objects reflect their users' gender. The burial objects that furnished the two front chambers at Mancheng were radically different.

As the excavators have already pointed out, with regards to the ritual objects displayed in the front chamber, those from the wife's tomb were modest in both quantity and scale compared with those from the husband's.³⁰⁶ The queen's front chamber boasted no regular-sized ritual vessels but featured a number of miniaturized vessels absent from the king's tomb. While both chambers contained a set of *ding*, *hu*, and *yan*, three of the most common ritual vessels, the scales of the objects radically differ. For example, while the husband's two *ding* tripods, measuring between 17 and 18 centimeters tall, are of a standard scale, the wife's *ding* is barely half the size, with no more than 8.2 centimeters in height.³⁰⁷

The excavators considered these miniaturized objects as funerary surrogates, or *mingqi*.³⁰⁸ According to Xunzi's classic definition, "spirit objects resemble lived objects but bear no function."³⁰⁹ Yet those nearly half-life-size vessels from Dou's chamber were by no means crude, deformed, or unusable, but technically all functional. The lid of the vessels can be freely removed from and put back onto the top opening; each leg or handle

306 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 337.

307 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 51-52, 1: 249.

308 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 249.

309 Watson 1963: 104.

was meticulously cast so the vessel could firmly stand or be lifted; both the interior and exterior faces of the vessel were carefully polished.

These usable miniatures were not alone in the queen's tomb. A unique carriage stationed in the wife's north side chamber bears the similar antithesis: a reduced scale and a regular function at the same time. The carriage, dubbed "Carriage No.4," settled at the northernmost end of the elongated chamber.³¹⁰ The disintegrated car, which measured 90 by 55 centimeters in area, is about half the life-size, fitted with smaller gilt bronze parts and ornaments.³¹¹ Most amazingly, it was also drawn by smaller horses. Two "horses beneath the fruit" (*guoxiama* 果下馬), specially bred ponies that could grow only up to one meter tall, were killed and interred with the small carriage in the same stable.³¹² Neither such smaller horses nor carriages were found in the husband's tomb.

The petite vessels, vehicle, and horses correspond with the smaller physical stature of their female user. Indeed, the royal lady was physically shorter than her husband. While Liu Sheng's "jade suit" was 1.88 meters long, Dou Wan's was no longer than 1.72 meters.³¹³ But being small was not only a physical but also a sociological attribute of female subjects, which in the Confucian ideology are ranked lower (*bei* 卑) than men. A 3rd-century lexicographer interpreted *bei* directly as "small."³¹⁴ It is in accordance with this definition that Confucius (551-479 BCE) once compared women to

310 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 319.

311 See Dabaotai 1989: 77.

312 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 320.

313 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 37, 244.

314 Wang 1983: 53. 穉, 小也.

“small people” (*xiaoren* 小人), dismissing female souls as weaker, lower, and lesser than their male counterparts.³¹⁵

In north China, the association of small objects with female tomb occupants was not new to the second century BCE, but centuries older. In the famous tomb of Lady Fu Hao 婦好 (fl. 12th c. BCE) the excavators found not only regular bronze ritual vessels but also a group of miniature *ding*, *gui*, and *fou*, no taller than ten centimeters.³¹⁶

Archaeologists have encountered more evidence in several late Western Zhou noble cemeteries including those of the Guo 虢, Jin 晉, and Rui 芮 states.³¹⁷ For example, in aforementioned Lady Liang’s tomb, the excavators found two miniature bronze vessels three times as small as their regular counterparts. One of the two miniature bronze vessels measure 11.8 centimeters and 8.1 centimeters in diameter, and the other one is even smaller – 8.4 centimeters tall and 6 centimeters in diameter (Fig. 2.15).³¹⁸ Scholars have speculated that these small objects were toys for female users.³¹⁹ In some cases, such miniature bronze vessels might have registered the female owner’s memory of her past cultural tradition.³²⁰ Whereas in some places (e.g. Tomb 63 at Tianma-Qucun) these small feminine objects were mixed up with regular ritual vessels, on other occasions (e.g. Tomb

315 Wang 2003: 66.

316 Zhongguo 1980: 38, 43-44, 49, 67.

317 For a summary, see Fang 2007: 483-98; Chen 2009: 41-50; Li 2009.

318 Shaanxi and Weinan 2008.

319 On the concept of *nongqi* 弄器, see Huang 2001.

320 Chen 2002: 164.

26 at Liangdaicun) they were separated in two different groups and spots.³²¹ Dou Wan's miniature bronzes followed the latter practice.

The queen's unique small vehicle was part of the same local tradition in north China. While unearthing the cemetery of the Marquises of the Jin state, the excavators noted a notable difference between the male and female tombs in the size of interred carriages. Whereas the Marquises were buried with life-sized vehicles, their wives were distinguished by one small and exquisite carriage parked either on top of the casket or at the end of the tomb ramp.³²² These small vehicles were identified as entertaining instruments in games or plays.³²³

2. The Structural Reversal and *Yin-Yang* Polarity

However, the relationship between the two tombs at Mancheng was far more complex than a contrast between masculinity and femininity. The issue of gender specificity only represents the most superficial level of the parallel logic, like the tip of the iceberg. Below this surface lurks a more abstract contradiction in the layout of grave goods, which defines the wife as the husband's mirror image.

In some aspects, the two tombs are planned like a pair of mirror images. The structure was simply flipped around, with the left turned to the right and the right to the left. Such a simple geometric relationship can be grasped intuitively by anyone even without knowing about the Western Han culture.

321 Wang 2013.

322 Wu 2009: 77.

323 Liu and Xu 2002: 47-48.

This direct reflection is particularly clear in the relative positions of the deceased bodies and grave goods between the rear chambers of the two tombs (Fig. 2.5). The husband's nested coffins were placed in the north half of his rear chamber, and the wife's single coffin settled on the south side of hers. Accordingly, the burial objects in the wife's bedroom, too, became her husband's mirror image: in Tomb 1, the objects filled the south of the chamber, and in Tomb 2, they spread out in the north.³²⁴

Lying side by side, though physically separated in two different burials, the husband and wife stayed close to each other in the center, flanked by ritual offerings on both sides. The lady's coffin was laid under the south wall, with the head slightly oriented to the west. In this position, her body was securely concealed in the deepest place of the tomb. All the grave goods spread out on her north side near the entrance. In the west, the bronze hinges and red lacquer remains indicate the previous existence of some large wooden boxes or folding screens.³²⁵ In the middle, there was a wooden table with bronze ornaments and nails. Mixed up with the table remains were fragments of a lacquer *zun* 樽 vessel, often used as wine container, a bronze *juan* 鍤 basin, and a bronze scoop (no. 88). Clearly, they were originally put on the table or right next to it to serve the deceased queen. This fully loaded offering table was closely accompanied by the extraordinary bronze lamp of the Palace of Eternal Honesty (no. 35), which I will analyze more carefully later in this chapter. In the east, there were another group of beverage offering, served with two beautiful chained bronze *hu* vessels (nos. 28-29) and some ornaments of lacquer cases (nos. 39-40), a *zun* vessel (no. 87), and two scoops (no. 88).

324 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 164, 32.

325 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 228.

Right beneath the east wall were swords (nos. 30-31, 89) and regalia remains (nos. 54, 61, 81, 83, 85, 128). Although swords could be worn by the human subject, since the deceased was a female, these improper weapons were kept away from her body and put near the entrance presumably to ward off the evil.

Whereas all of the above objects, except the swords, belong in the category of “instruments,” to the south of the table and the drinking “instruments” at Dou’s side, archaeologists found a group of “outfit” objects including a bronze seal (no. 58), an iron knife for cosmetic purposes (no. 52), and a circular lacquer toiletry case (no. 59). Bearing the inscription “Dou Wan” on it, this was the only seal found in the tomb with the deceased’s name. A jade *bi*-disc (no. 64), identical with those scattered in Liu Sheng’s tomb, was put on the north side of the lamp. As the only ones of the kind that appeared outside the queen’s coffin, these intimate objects symbolized the royal lady’s existence in the casket chamber.

The structural “inversion” between husband and wife in the rear chambers were by no means a coincidence. In fact, the same pattern extends well into the rest of the tombs, particularly the side chambers, which, though lying beyond the major east-west axis of the tombs, exactly repeat the “flipping” structure as witnessed in the rear chambers.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Liu Sheng’s tomb featured two elongated side chambers on the two sides of the tunnel that leads into the front chamber. Although the architectural forms are almost identical, the material contents were different: in the north chamber hundreds of food vessels and containers were tightly packed and stacked together, in the south one, horses and chariots were stationed in alignment. In Dou Wan’s

tomb, while the material contents remained almost identical, the whole order was reversed, with the kitchen removed to the south side and the stable switched back to the north (Fig. 2.6).

Let me begin with the south side before moving to the north. All the grave goods in Dou's south side chamber were put on a platform, which was divided, as was in Liu's north side chamber, into east and west sections. The west section was separated by seven brick walls into six units. Although the interior design is slightly different from that of Liu's, the lady's south side chamber highly resembles her husband's north side chamber in type, arrangement, and lighting.

First, besides a few lacquers and an iron heater, most of the objects in Dou's south side chamber were similar wine and food containers made of fired clay, including jars, *hu* vessels, basins, pots, cauldrons, boxes, beakers, cups, etc. Among them, the signature vessels were a number of giant jars (nos. 26-42) for the massive storage of Grade A wine (*shangzunjiu* 上尊酒). These jars bear such inscriptions as "Eleven *dan* (about 220 liters) millet brewed alcohol" (*shujiu shiyi dan* 黍酒十一石) to mark their content.³²⁶ The interior walls of the jars still carried stains of wine. Being the wife of a notorious drinker, the queen's side chamber mirrors her husband's in the adjacent Tomb 1.

Second, the way in which these objects were arranged was similar. Rather than set up on the floor across the tomb chamber as if in the moment of being used, these objects were stacked, piled, or packed together, even though the chamber was no shortage of space. For example, in the deepest sixth unit, twelve basins lying on the bottom level

326 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 126.

were topped by a large number of pots, *hu* vessels, boxes, cauldrons, and cups on the upper level, while the first, third, and fourth units were almost left entirely empty.

Third and last, the side chamber was similarly void of light, subjectivity, and time. There were no lamps, figurines, or any time-counting devices interred next to the vessels.

But these similarities are only part of the structure of reversal. For Dou's south side chamber to become the mirror image of Liu's north side chamber, it must "reverse" the latter's structure. At least one thing is definitely turned around: the density of the vessels. While in Liu's north side chamber, most vessels concentrated in the north (inner) end, in Dou's south side chamber, they accumulated in the south (inner) end. It looks as though the order of the two side chambers was physically "flipped."

Arranging the coffins and burial objects into a mirror relationship between husband and wife was not without earlier predecessors. The earliest known example was the joint burial of Lord of Fan (*fanjun* 樊君) and his wife at Pingqiao in present-day Xinyang, Henan province, dated to the early Eastern Zhou period (ca. 7th c. BCE).³²⁷ In this case, the deceased husband and wife were buried in two parallel, equally deep vertical pit graves, one in the north and one in the south, respectively (Fig. 2.20). The husband's coffin is located on the south side of the tomb pit and the wife's is on the north side of it. At the same time, the husband's burial objects were placed on an earthen ledge at the north side of his tomb pit, and the wife's, on a similar ledge at the south side of her tomb pit. This symmetrical arrangement precisely anticipated that between the rear chambers of the Mancheng tombs. A similar but later example (late 1st c. BCE) was found in Shi Qiyou and his wife's joint burial at Haizhou in present-day Lianyungang,

327 Henan 1981.

Jiangsu province.³²⁸ On some occasions, people tried other ways to express the same idea, such as breaking a mirror in two equal halves and burying one half with the husband and the other half with the wife,³²⁹ or tilting the parallel bodies of the deceased couple to let them face each other – of course across the coffins.³³⁰

Such structural reversal between the two tombs was not a coincidence because it happened between husband and wife with a mythological origin. In the folklore of the Han dynasty, the first human couple was the god Fuxi 伏羲 and the goddess Nüwa 女媧, both half-human and half-serpent in form.³³¹ In contemporary iconography, Fuxi holds a *ju* 矩 ruler or the sun, and Nüwa, a *gui* 規 compass or the moon. With their lower serpentine bodies being intertwined together, the divine couple always forms a symmetrical pair in bodily posture. For example, in a famous stone carving from the Wu family shrines in Jiayang, although Fuxi and Nüwa wear almost identical swallow-tailed costumes except for the gender-specific head-dresses, the two display precisely opposite bodily postures. The goddess on the left turns her body to face to the left, and the god on the right, to the right; the former stretches out her right arm to hold the compass, and the latter, his left arm to carry the ruler. Both figures lean their upper torso forward, forming a symmetrical V shape between them (Fig. 2.7).³³² The idea that the male and the female

328 Nan 1975.

329 For two late Western Han examples, see Zhongguo 1959: 33, 165, pl. 43; Guangzhou 1981: 1: 301.

330 For example, Yinwan Tomb 6, see Lianyungang 1996: fig.2.

331 Hayashi 1989: 287-98.

332 Zhongguo 2000: 1: pl. 49.

must mirror each other except the gender indicators was universal in the material structure of Mancheng and in the pictorial representations of Eastern Han murals.

The apparent “mirror” structure has its root in the Han cosmology, which was constructed upon the polarity of *yin* and *yang*, two basic contradictory cosmic forces whose interactions give birth to everything concrete in the world.³³³ Consequently, everything is attributed to the two forces. *Yin*, the negative force is associated with coldness and darkness, which is in turn correlated with the north (because in the northern hemisphere where China is, the more northern, the higher altitude) and the winter. *Yang*, on the other hand, is a positive force related to warmth and brightness, characteristic of the south and the summer.

Whereas in the previous chapter the *yin-yang* polarity dictates the religious duality of body (*po*) and soul (*hun*), the same cosmology stands behind the sociological duality of husband and wife, or in terms of gender, male and female. In a marriage, the dominant husband is correlated with *yang*, and the submissive wife, *yin*.³³⁴ Through this link, the husband is further correlated with the south, and the wife, with the north. No wonder the king’s tomb was situated in the south and the queen’s, in the north.

It is important to note that the structural reversal was only the superficial symptom of the abstract and profound *yin-yang* polarity, which does not always stay in a perfect balance. To those who glimpse over the plan of the Mancheng tombs, one of the strangest features of the rear chamber is its position, which mysteriously deviates from the east-west central axis of the tomb (see Fig. 2.5). Instead of carving into the west (rear)

333 For the *yin* and *yang* cosmology and its role in early Chinese art and philosophy, see Cheng 1957; Pas 1983.

334 Raphals 1998: 139-68; Hinsch 2011: 162ff; Black 1986: 166-95.

wall of the front chamber, as is in Liu Sheng's case, the queen's rear chamber cuts into her front chamber's south wall. As a result, the plan of Tomb 2 ends in an odd "L" shape that is very rare in all excavated Han-dynasty tombs.

Confronting this structural anomaly, one of the excavators Lu Zhaoyin made a keen observation in his memory:

At first, we suspected that the quality of the stone in the west of the front chamber was perhaps too poor-quality to be cut into, but our later observation suggests no such quality issue. We then tried other thoughts. It should be intentional for the tomb builders to carve the rear chamber in the south, for the goal was to get closer to Tomb 1 to its south. This situation indicates that the two tombs were designed as a couple.³³⁵

Lu cannot be more correct. In the rear chamber, the parallel logic of husband and wife grows so powerful and dominant that it even disturbs the axial logic in the wife's tomb, pushing the wife's bedroom closer to Tomb 1 and turning the former into the latter's "satellite." In this rare conflict between the two principles, i.e. axial and parallel, the latter prevails.

Deflecting one bedroom towards the other betrays the designer's intention and effort to keep the deceased couple actively connected, even symbolically. In another royal cemetery dug into a low hill called Mt. Gui at Xuzhou, which consisted of two parallel burials both oriented to the west.³³⁶ Archeologists have attributed the south burial to Liu Zhu 劉注 (r. 128-117 BCE), King Xiang of the Chu kingdom, and the north one, to

335 Lu 2005: 116.

336 Liang 2001: 76.

his anonymous wife.³³⁷ While the two burials remained separate in the front, they were physically connected to each other through a short tunnel cut between chambers III and VII in the rear sections of both burials. The scenario cannot be clearer: the deceased husband and his wife would stay forever connected in their bedrooms.

However, at Mancheng, it was the wife tilting to the husband, rather than the other way around. The sacrifice of the wife's axial logic manifests the power of the male gravity. This was no isolated case. A similar hierarchy occurred in the rear section of the tomb of Zhao Mei, or, Emperor Wen of the Nanyue (Fig. 2.8). Whereas at Mancheng, the king and the queen were separate in two parallel tombs, in Zhao's tomb, the husband was buried with his concubines (lower-ranking wives) in one tomb. Despite the actual difference, in terms of the relationship between husband and wife, the Zhongshan and Nanyue designs are in fact not so different from each other.

Oriented to the south rather than the east, the horizontal structure of Zhao Mei's tomb, though made of assembled stone slabs rather than cut into the rock, resembles that of the Mancheng tombs in many ways. In the front, it consisted of three chambers, including a rectangular front chamber in the center and two flanking side chambers. The front "hall" at Mancheng was omitted with the ritual contents transferred into the two side chambers that flank a much smaller antechamber. In the antechamber lay a chariot attended by the physical remains of a deceased official, reminiscent of Liu Sheng's front tunnel filled with chariots. The two side chambers, like their counterparts at Mancheng, were strictly symmetrical, gracefully elongated, and spacious enough to hold a lot of

337 Nanjing and Tongshan 1985; Nanjing 1985.

objects. In terms of general structure, the two tombs, built almost at the same time, were comparable with each other.

The rear section of Zhao's tomb was not that different, either, if we compare it with the two rear chambers at Mancheng combined. In this square complex divided into four interconnected chambers, the emperor's coffin compartment (*zhuguanshi* 主棺室) dominated the center, which was in turn surrounded by three side rooms in the east, the west, and the north respectively. The west and the east rooms were occupied by Zhao's female subordinates. Whilst the west one contained physical remains of relatively low-status imperial attendants, the east one was occupied by Zhao's four concubines (*furen* 夫人).³³⁸ Each of the noble ladies was buried with their daily paraphernalia including various beautification tools as if she would continue to serve her husband by his side in the afterlife.

Making the wife flank the husband is also part of the design at Mancheng. Although Dou was entitled to an independent burial chamber in a separate tomb and Liu Sheng was alone in his rear chamber accompanied only with stone figurines that represented low-status attendants, the queen was nevertheless positioned as the equivalent of Zhao Mei's four concubines: affiliated on the left side of the husband.

In light of the Nanyue and Chu comparisons, it is clear that Dou Wan's subordinate status caused her rear chamber to tilt. As a wife (recessive *yin*), Dou must submit to her husband's (dominant *yang*) superior power (*shi* 勢), which broke the balance between the two tombs and "derailed" the wife to reach out to her husband.

338 Guangzhou 1991: 1:249.

And this hierarchy practice was in perfect accordance with contemporary ideology, which was promoted in the imperial Academy (*xueguan* 學官), thanks to the imperial patronage of Confucianism under Emperor Wu's reign.³³⁹ For example, the *Guliang Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu Guliang zhuan* 春秋穀梁傳) bluntly states: "To Women...in marriage the husband is the one to follow."³⁴⁰ The idea became so well established that the word "woman" (*fu* 婦) during the Han dynasty was officially interpreted as "obedience" (*fu* 服 or *cong* 從).³⁴¹ Although the concept of "obedience" could have been visualized in many different ways (consider, for example, the subtle relationship between the two tents in Tomb 1), deflecting the wife's tomb partly towards the husband's was a clever, simple, and creative option.

3. Internality (*nei*) and Externality (*wai*): Between *fang* (*shi*) and *tang*.

In a more implicit way than structural reversal, the same *yin-yang* logic also applies between the two front chambers, the most prominent spaces in both tombs. In this case the contradiction between husband and wife was manifested through another culturally encoded duality: externality (*wai*) and internality (*nei*). Whilst in Tomb 1, the front chamber was made to imitate an external hall (*tang*) in the royal ancestral temple,

339 Tomiya 1979..

340 "jijia, zhiyufu" 既嫁, 制於夫. Fan Ning 范寧, *Chunqiu guliangzhuan zhushu* 春秋穀梁傳註疏, juan 1, and "jiacongfu" 嫁從夫, Kong Yingda, *Liji zhengyi*, juan 26. Ruan 1980: 2:2367, 2:1456.

341 Thus states *Comprehensive Meanings Held in the White Tiger [Hall]* (*Baihutong* 白虎通), the official exegetic canon of the Eastern Han dynasty: "The word *fu* (women) means *fu* 服, or, to be obedient according to the ritual and etiquette." 婦者, 服也, 以禮屈服. Chen 1994b: 376.

which was public and dominated by the male; the front chamber in Tomb 2 simulated the inner apartments (*shi*), an intimate ritual space situated in the rear of a standard Chinese house:

The queen's front chamber, 14 by 12.2 meters in area with a dome up to 7.9 meters tall, was almost identical with that of the king's (Fig. 2.9). According to the reconstruction, the front chamber was shaped into a roofed house of three bays deep and three bays wide.³⁴² On the floor made of rammed earth, charcoal, gravels, and plant ash stood an identical wooden structure with a sloped tiled roof.

The sacrificial role of this building is testified by four square sealing clays (no.19) archaeologists uncovered in it. Each measures 2.7 by 2.6 centimeters and one centimeter thick, with an identical inscription impressed on it: "The Temple Sacrifice of the Zhongshan" (*Zhongshan cisi* 中山祠祀).³⁴³ The clay is perforated to allow threads to pass through. This indicated that the sealed clay might have been used as a tag.³⁴⁴

According to the excavators, "The Temple Sacrifice" in charge of the imperial sacrifices was a branch of the imperial bureau of "The Office of Sacrificial Worship" (*Taichang* 太常). First titled "The Office of Great Supplicant" (*Taizhu* 太祝), this institution changed its name to "The Office of Shrine Sacrifice" (*Cisi* 祠祀) in 144 BCE, and forty years later, switched it again to *Miaosi* 廟祀 ("The Office of Temple Sacrifice").³⁴⁵ The provincial principalities presumably followed the imperial model

342 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 15–7.

343 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 335.

344 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 228.

345 Ban 1965: 726.

closely.³⁴⁶ The clay indicates that the offerings marked with this official title should have been handled by officials who were responsible for state sacrifices.

However, despite the common sacrificial functions, the two front chambers were radically different in many aspects. The most obvious difference occurs in the chamber's interior design and the distribution of objects. Whilst Liu's chamber was undivided, Dou's contained a group of units (like rooms) walled by bricks in the most north of the house. In terms of grave goods, the spacious chamber contained neither tents nor chariots, but two concentrated groups of objects flanking the doorway to the rear chamber. The rest of the chamber, about two-thirds of the entire area, on the contrary, was dotted sparsely by individual objects here and there, mostly around the peripheries. For example, for the scattered exceptions, there were three iron labor tools (nos. 116–118) found in the northeast corner of the chamber, a bronze bowl (no.113) and a bronze cauldron (no.112) in the northwest corner, two bowls (nos. 114–115) in the north, and a circular lacquer box (no.110) accompanied by an iron saw (no.111) under the west wall.

This uneven distribution of the objects across the chamber would make one wonder about the rationale behind it. More importantly, these two groups of objects in the two corners were all positioned around empty “soul seats.”

The southwest group of objects was located on a square platform. This platform, presumably an offering altar, was made of rammed earth and framed by bricks. A little lacquer table (no.107) holding a lacquer plate and a lacquer winged-cup occupied the center of this platform. One lacquer wine container (*zun* 樽, no.103) and one bronze basin

346 宮室百官同制京師. Ban 1965: 394.

(no.104)—probably for washing hands—appeared to the southeast of the table. Two bronze lamps (nos.101–102) for emitting light stood close-by, and a little incense-burner (no.109) to give off fragrance and warmth served the “invisible sitter” in the northwest corner. All these props added up to a typical empty “soul seat.”

The southeast group held another group of objects, some of which carried remnants of bamboo mats on the bottom.³⁴⁷ A series of four leopard-shaped bronze mat weights (nos.56–59) further confirmed these objects to be part of another “soul seat”. Among this paraphernalia were various bronze vessels including a furnace (no.31), a basin (no.35), a steamer (no.38), an eared-cup (no.28), a scoop (no.41), a washbasin (*yi*, no.60), cauldrons (nos.39, 43), tripods (nos.52–54), pots (nos.19, 29), coins (no.24) and figurines (nos.25, 30, 67). Perhaps the most interesting discovery among these objects was a set of coins bearing special inscriptions as the “palatial entertaining coins” (*gongzhong xingle qian* 宮中行樂錢), which were played for amusement during a drinker’s wager game.³⁴⁸ Initially contained by a wooden box, most of these objects were conspicuously small.³⁴⁹ To the southeast of the lacquer box, there were a few more objects including some genuine and false cash (nos.15–17), a bronze cauldron (no.1), a bowl (no.2), an incense-burner (no.4), and two jade *bi* discs (nos.12–13).³⁵⁰ These items supplemented the box group and enriched the content of the ritual offerings. Unlike the

347 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 228.

348 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 271–72. Lu 2005: 161–4. Zhao 2003: 164–5. For the so-called “colorful coins” (*huaqian* 花錢), see Liu and Xu 2006.

349 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 248–49.

350 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 228.

previous dark group which contained no lamps at all, the “bright group” included two lamps.

The question is: in what circumstances did ancient Chinese people make use of a ritual chamber’s northwest and southwest corners, and only these two corners? In fact, according to the orthodox ritual protocol, there was only one possible answer.

To the eyes of the Han subjects, the southeast and southwest corners of a house carried special ritual implications during the ceremony of an ancestral cult. The former was called “the obscure (corner)” (*yu* 奧) and the latter “the bright (corner) of the chamber” (*shizhibai* 室之白) (Fig. 2. 10).³⁵¹ For a traditional Chinese house, the major source of light came through the windows opened in the southern wall. As a result, the southeast corner of the room remained relatively dark while the southwest corner of the chamber was rich in light.

These two corners played important roles in the sacrificial ceremonies. In the Eastern Zhou ritual manual *Etiquette and Ceremonials* (*Yili* 儀禮), vassals were entitled to three types of sacrifices called “The Single Beast Offered in Food to the Ancestors” (*Shaolao* 少牢), “The Smaller Set of Beasts offered as Food to the Ancestor” (*Tesheng kuishi* 特牲饋食), and “The Assistant Clears Away” (*Yousiche* 有司徹). Each of these three rituals consisted of a series of offerings held in different places either indoor or outdoor, as *The Book of Rites* explained: “They knew not whether the soul were here, or whether it were there, or far off, away from all men.”³⁵² In all these rituals, three phases stood out as the most important: the phase before the arrival of the impersonator who

351 Zheng 1971: 46–9.

352 不知神之所在，於彼乎？於此乎？或諸遠人乎？ Legge 1967: 1: 444.

enacted the ancestor, the phase while the impersonator was present, and the phase after the impersonator had left. They were all held specifically in the private internal chamber, or *shi* 室, rather than in the public external hall, or *tang*. According to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), an Eastern Han annotator of *Rites and Etiquettes*, every vassal who died in his adulthood should receive all the three offerings during a standard sacrifice.³⁵³

The first phase called the “Dark Satisfying Offering” (*yinyan* 陰厭) is held in the southeast corner of the inner apartment (Fig. 2.11, left).³⁵⁴ This ritual is viewed “dark” because its location, the southeast or “the obscure” corner in the house, has poor illumination. The word *yan* 厭 (literally, “to feed”) refers to a particular type of offering in the absence of an impersonator, who dresses like and plays the role of the ancestor during the ritual.³⁵⁵ An empty “soul seat” comprising a mat and an armrest (or a table) indexes the spirit of the ancestor, to whom the food and wine is offered.³⁵⁶ A shaman presides over the ceremony during which the filial son enters the chamber, bows, kneels before the “soul seat,” and prays:

353 Zheng Xuan annotates: “To hold sacrifice to an adult, offerings are first dedicated at the southeast corner before the impersonator is received. This is called the ‘Dark Satisfying Offering.’ After the impersonator has rosed (to leave), the offerings are switched to the northwest corner. This is called the ‘Bright Satisfying Offering.’” 祭成人始設奠於奧，迎尸之前，謂之陰厭。尸謖之後，改饌於西北隅，謂之陽厭。 Ruan 1980: 1399.

354 Ruan 1980: 1: 1191. *The Book of Rites* offers an interpretation of this offering: “Confucius said, ‘When the oldest son, who would take the father’s place, dies prematurely, no brother by an inferior wife can be his successor. At the auspicious sacrifice to him, there is a single bullock; but the service being to one who died prematurely, there is no presentation (of the lungs), no stand with the heart and tongue, no dark-coloured spirits, no announcement of the nourishment being completed. This is what is called the dark satisfying offering.’” Legge 1967: 1: 338.

355 Ruan 1980: 1399.

356 Ruan 1980: 1183. See also Yang 1986: 104-265.

The filial grandson So-and-so dares to use the fat-tailed (sheep), and the hard bristled (pig), the fortunate offering (the pickles), and the great harmony (the millet), to perform the anniversary sacrifice to his noble grandfather, eldest of his family So-and-so, coupling with him his wife So-and-so, and invites them to partake of some refreshment.³⁵⁷

孝孫某，敢用柔毛、剛鬣、嘉薦、普淖，用薦歲事於皇祖伯某，以某妃配某氏。尚饗！

After the complicated procedure has ended, the impersonator leaves the inner apartment and the offering is removed to the southwest corner of the apartment. The follow-up ritual is called the “Bright Satisfying Offering” (*yangyan* 陽厭) (Fig. 2.11, right).³⁵⁸ Like the earlier “Dark Satisfying Offering,” this ritual is also dedicated to an empty “soul seat” without an impersonator.³⁵⁹ Food and wine are offered in front of a set of unoccupied mat and armrest.³⁶⁰

What happens between the two special sacrifices is the “Formal Sacrifice” (*zhengji* 正祭), which takes place also in the inner apartment (Fig. 2.12). This sacrifice is different from the above two special sacrifices in two aspects: first, it is situated not in any corner of the apartment, and second, the recipient of the offering is not an empty

357 Steele 1917: 2: 167.

358 Ruan 1980: 1: 1191.

359 “In regard to all others who have died prematurely and have left no offspring, the sacrifice is offered to them in the house of the oldest son, where the apartment is most light, with the vases in the chamber on the east. This is what is called the bright satisfying offering.” Legge 1967: 1: 338.

360 Ruan 1980: 1191. “The waiter removes the relishes and stand and the grain jars used by the impersonator, and paces them in the north-west corner, with the body-rest to the south of them. He covers all with a mat, and sets a jar of wine along with them. The waiter closes the window and door, along with descends the steps.” Steele 1917: 2: 153. See also Yang 1986: 104-279.

“soul seat,” but the impersonator. Enacting the ancestor, the impersonator enters the door of the temple, crosses the courtyard, and walks into the inner apartment for a meeting with the hosts and guests of the ritual event. During the sacrificial ceremony, the dedicator (hosts) exchanges toasts with the dedicatee (impersonator) for multiple rounds.³⁶¹

In Queen Dou’s tomb, with the presence of the deceased body, there was no need for an impersonator to pretend the ancestor was physically there.³⁶² Indeed, the largest group of offerings located right in front of the coffined corpse (*shi* 屍) accorded well with the “Formal Sacrifice,” in which the receiver presented her bodily existence. Interestingly, the Chinese term for the impersonator was *shi* 尸, a word which shares the same phonetic value with the word *corpse* (*shi* 屍).³⁶³ Although in the literature of the Han dynasty the two words were not always interchangeable, both of them could be used to denote an embodied ancestor as the recipient of sacrifices.

The radically different layout of the objects used in the different rituals in Dou’s front chamber indicates that the lady’s ritual space was essentially different from her husband’s, even though both were essentially “sacrificial.” While Liu Sheng’s front chamber represented the formal hall, or *tang* 堂, in the ancestral temple, in which the soul

361 Ruan 1980: 1183–91; Steele 1917: 2: 135–52. See also Yang 1986: 104-267–78.

362 During the Qin and the Han period, the previous Zhou practice of including an impersonator was abandoned in rituals above the ground. Few impersonators appear in the Qin and Han transmitted texts related to rituals. As the 7th century ritual specialist Du You 杜佑 has commented: “Before the Zhou, all sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, to ancestral temples and to the soil and grains gods require an impersonator. From the Qin and Han onwards, this practice has vanished in China.” 自周以前，天地、宗廟、社稷一切祭享，凡皆立尸。秦漢以降，中華則無矣。Du 1988: 1355.

363 In the Han dynasty, *shi* 尸 was sometimes used to denote the corpse, whereas *shi* 屍 could not be used the other way round to refer to the impersonator; see Duan 1999: 400.

seats of both male and female ancestors were set up, Dou's front chamber represented the inner apartment, called *shi* 室 or *fang* 房, located behind (i.e. to the north of) the formal hall.

According to *Rites and Etiquettes*, *fang* and *shi* constituted the private realm in the back of a standard house as two connected inner apartments, both standing behind the front hall. In the Qing scholars' reconstruction, the two chambers are distinguished from each other. Located side by side, the apartment in the west is called *shi*, and that in the east, *fang*. But in reality, people made no difference between *fang* and *shi*.³⁶⁴

To the royal houses of the Western Han dynasty, however, this modest house (entitled to the *shi* class) was only a minimal version for expansion. In the ancient city of Chang'an, the imperial capital of Western Han, for the past three decades, Chinese archaeologists have unearthed or probed a number of huge palace remains, including the emperor's Palace of Infinity (*Weiyang gong*), the empress's Palace of Spiciness (*Jiafang dian*), the empress mother's Palace of Perpetual Joy (*Changle gong*), imperial concubines' Palace of Bright Light (*Mingguang gong*), Northern Palace (*Bei gong*), and The Osmanthus Palace (*Gui gong*), and a number of provincial royal residences in other places of the empire.³⁶⁵ Large or small, these palaces all follow the same basic rules of

364 According to *Shiji*, Tian Fen 田蚡 (d. 130 BCE), one of the Prime Ministers during Emperor Wu's reign and a contemporary of Liu Sheng, satiated himself with an excessively sumptuous home, with the "front hall" (*qiantang*) containing bells and chimes, and banners with curved handles, and "rear chambers" (*houfang*) accommodating hundreds of women. 前堂羅鍾鼓，立曲旃；後房婦女以百數。In this text, the author used *fang* rather than *shi* to denote the rear chambers. Sima 1959: 107.2845. Interestingly, the exactly same text was cited by another Han-dynasty author named Xun Yue 荀悅 (148-209) in his *Chronicles of the Western Han* (*Hanji* 漢紀) except that the original phrase "houfang" was revised to "houshi." 前堂羅鍾鼓，立曲旃；後室婦女以百數。This variation suggests that the two concepts, *fang* and *shi*, were in fact interchangeable. Xun 2002: 1:183.

365 For the city planning, see Wang Zhongshu 王仲殊, Yang Kuan 楊寬, Liu Qingzhu 劉慶柱, and others' research papers in Zhongguo 2006.

design: first, whilst wives lived behind, i.e. to the north of, the palace of their husband, each palace is made of a hall in the front and a number of apartments in the rear.³⁶⁶

It must be noted that in the royal context the concepts of *tang* and *fang* (or *shi*) were broadened. For example, The Bright Hall, or *mingtang*, was not just a single-chambered auditorium (*tang*), but a full-fledged palace compound comprising a number of small halls and apartments, although its major ritual role remained as a “hall.”³⁶⁷ At the same time, the Chamber of Spiciness (*Jiaofang dian*), the dwelling of the empress, was essentially an apartment (*fang*), as indicated by its Chinese title, in extreme elaboration, which also included a formal hall, a leisure hall, and a complex of affiliated apartments, of which more than 12 thousand square meters have been unearthed.³⁶⁸ Three hundred and thirty meters to its direct south stood the emperor’s Palace of Infinity, in which the Front Palace (*qiandian*) – the emperor’s auditorial hall, contained another smaller front hall and a number of rear apartments.³⁶⁹

In accordance with the classical and actual building plans, the front chamber of Tomb 2 was constructed and furnished into an idealized *fang* apartment, suggested by the brick cells, to accompany the idealized *tang* in Tomb 1.

The simulation of the “outer hall” and “inner apartment” as seen at Mancheng was also present at another royal cemetery at Mt. Baoan, albeit in a different manner. At Mancheng the simulation was realized “internally” mainly through the different material

366 Yang 2000: 228-318.

367 Zhongguo 2003.

368 Zhongguo 1996: 1: 186.

369 Zhongguo 1996: 1: 265.

contents and organizations in the chambers; at Baoanshan, it was expressed “externally” in the architectural form: the king’s Tomb 1 simulated the Bright Hall (*mingtang*), and the queen’s Tomb 2 imitated the “inner apartment” (*neifang* 内房).

The same contradiction between internality and externality also applies to other royal tombs. I will focus on the two tombs at Mt. Baoan 保安 in the Liang royal cemetery in present-day Yongcheng, Henan province, which have been regarded by some Chinese archaeologists as the closest typological parallels to the Mancheng tombs (Map 5, Fig. 2.13).³⁷⁰

Lying about twenty meters beneath the northern peak, the two Baoanshan tombs, situated only 200 meters apart from each other, cut side by side into the east slope of Mt. Baoan about twenty meters below the mountain top. Like the Mancheng tombs, the Baoanshan tombs are both oriented to the east. The south one, dubbed Baoanshan Tomb 1, has been attributed to Liu Wu 劉武 (d. 144 BCE), famously known in history as King Xiao of the Liang, a brother of Emperor Jing’s 景帝 (r. 156–140 BCE). The one in the north was identified as the tomb of Dowager Queen Li 李 (d. 123 BCE), Liu Wu’s wife.³⁷¹ The relative positions are right: the husband is situated in the south and the wife, in the north.

And the two tombs were not only parallel but also symbolically connected. Tomb 2 features an unusual third tomb passage in the south. Hiding entirely in the mountain without opening to the world, this useless passage deviates from the east-west axis of the tomb and points directly to the south, where Tomb 1 is situated, but never physically

³⁷⁰ Liu and Liu 2010: 497-98.

³⁷¹ Henan 1996: 91–226.

reaches the other tomb. This seemingly dead-ended passage can only be symbolic, which reflects the wife's desire and obligation to join up with her husband. Queen Li's symbolic connection to her husband echoes the deflection of Queen Dou's bedroom.

In the plan, the two Baoan tombs are radically different. In Tomb 1 the architectural compound features a distinct form. Six smaller rooms evenly flank the central rectangular chamber on the north and south sides. A rectangular corridor further surrounds these chambers. Four almost identical side-chambers attached to the four corners of the square corridor embrace the corridor in the center. These side-chambers approximately of the same scale are square cubes each approached by a short doorway.³⁷²

The compact and symmetrical plan of this central compound seems to have been a result of thoughtful calculations. Its shape, a central large square surrounded by four smaller squares, resembles the cosmological diagram of the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行), which are the five basic ingredients of the universe (Fig. 2.14).³⁷³ A more important clue came from the varying height of the central compound. The four side-chambers are the lowest; the corridor is a few inches taller than the average height of the side-chambers; the main chamber stands as the highest of all. This gradual centripetal elevation reaches its apex at the center of the whole compound.

Liu Wu's symmetrical tomb structure corresponds to the unearthed temples of the Western Han imperial house. The central compound of the Bright Hall resting on top of a circular foundation, 60–62 meters in diameter and 0.3 meters thick (Fig. 2.15). The plan of this compound was a square central building surrounded by four smaller square

372 Yan 2001: 32–3.

373 Cheng 1957. For a general study on the Five Phases theory, see Major 1984: 133–66. Kimura 1948.

buildings erected at the corners. Each of the five buildings was based on a square earth foundation. The largest one in the center measured 16.8 by 17.4 meters. Due to centuries of natural erosion, the extant height of this foundation had been reduced to 1.5–2.0 meters by the 1950s.³⁷⁴ According to Yang Hongxun's reconstruction, the undamaged original might have reached a height of 7–8 meters, much loftier than the foundations of the four surrounding buildings.³⁷⁵ This means the central foundation was, in fact, an earth terrace.³⁷⁶ A series of pilasters attached to the exterior of the central terrace indicate the existence of a surrounding gallery. Each of the four marginal buildings was only about 1/16 of the size of the central building. These subordinate buildings were connected with the central structure through four narrow, short passageways.

The symmetrical plan of the temple as a great central square embraced by four small squares resembles the plan of Liu Wu's tomb. And the scales are close, too. Like the Bright Hall, the four side-chambers in Liu Wu's tomb are approximately 1/16 of the size of the area the corridor frames. The size of the four side-chambers which varies between twenty-two and twenty-five square meters is close to the size of the marginal buildings of the Bright Hall, too. For instance, the average length of the tomb corridor is 18.79 meters, and each side of the central terrace of the Bright Hall measures about 18.1 meters. The margin between the two numbers is trivial. Moreover, the temple also features a step-by-step elevation as the center of the tomb space does. Although the superstructure of the Bright Hall failed to survive, the foundation per se suggests that

374 Huang 1998: 198–9.

375 Yang 2000: 270, fig.252. For details of Yang's reconstruction theory, see Yang 1987.

376 Thorp 1986: 364.

visitors to the temple would have experienced a continuous ascension. A little well was located right between the side room no.1 and the south corridor, connecting the ditches and the sink. This functional device also appeared in the southeast corner of the courtyard in the Bright Hall—another meaningful match.

It is wrong to assume that Wang Mang's Bright Hall represents the ultimate version of this legendary building. As an idealized construction, the Bright Hall can never be fully realized. Eastern Han scholar Cai Yong's 蔡邕 (133–192) left one controversial account of the Bright Hall, which puzzled many scholars. He wrote:

The numerical measures of this institution all have a [cosmological] basis. The [base of the] hall is square [measuring] 144 feet [on each side], the number of the trigram *kun* [=earth]. The roof is round with a diameter of 216 feet, the number of the trigram *qian* [=heaven].³⁷⁷

The size of the central building's circular roof in Cai's account turns out to be much larger than the square base. This design in Maspero's view contradicts architectural principles and cannot be true.³⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Liu Wu's tomb offers an alternative insight into this issue.

Although Baoanshan Tomb 1 is cut into a hill, it is covered under a mound surmounted by remains of a shrine. Pounded with earth, the mound went up layers upon layers, each 0.1–0.2 meters thick, and grew into a truncated cone. The extant mound measures as tall as ten meters, with a circular base eighty meters in perimeter which

377 Cai 1920: 10.1a–8b. The full English translation is from Henderson 1984 : 78, slightly modified.

378 Maspero 1951 : 48. To resolve this paradox, Wang Shiren suggests that Cai's figures could be right if we parallel the circular foundation to the roof. See Wang 1963: 503–4. But it is yet to be explained how such an arbitrary parallel between roof and foundation could have made sense in the Han dynasty.

covers the corridor of the tomb located below the mound.³⁷⁹ By turning the conic mound into a “roof,” a Bright Hall takes its full shape. The tomb offers a perfect example of how Cai Yong’s fantastic Bright Hall might have looked like.

The form of Baoanshan Tomb 2 is very different. It boasts a number of small chambers surrounding the two major chambers, identified by inscription respectively as “The East Palace” (*Donggong* 東宮) and “The West Palace” (*Xigong* 西宮).³⁸⁰ In Western Han texts, “xigong” almost always referred to the emperor’s palace (*Weiyang gong* 未央宮) and “donggong,” always the imperial mother’s residence (*Changle gong* 長樂宮).³⁸¹

Baoanshan Tomb 2’s association with royal wives is confirmed by an inscription made on a wall of a side chamber attached to West Palace, which reads “East inner apartments” (*dongpang* 東旁) and “Northeast inner apartments” (*dongbeipang* 東北旁).³⁸² Unlike its counterpart at Mancheng, which is a simplified and idealized inner apartment, Baoanshan Tomb 2 is a painstaking physical imitation of a rear palace (*hougong* 後宮), an extreme elaboration of the conceptual inner apartment in the real life.³⁸³

379 Yan 2001: 12–3.

380 Henan 1996: 104–10.

381 Wang 1982b : 4-5; Guo 2006.

382 Henan 1996: 116, 148, 222.

383 Other royal tombs that bear similar inscriptions include Tianshan Tomb 1 and Wangchengpo Tomb 1. See Xia 2006: 67; Changsha and Changsha 2010.

4. The Contradicted Titles: *Wanggong* versus *Wangmu*

The assumption that the two tombs were conceived as a pair of mirror image was reinforced by inscriptional evidence.

Among the many sacrificial items dedicated in the southwest quarter of the queen's front chamber, the excavators found 40 wager coins (*gongzhong xingle qian*) (Fig. 2.16). The most valuable part of these modest items is the inscriptions. On each of these coins, 3.3 centimeters in diameter, two to four characters were cast on one side. Twenty of them bear inscriptions of numbers, beginning with "No.1" and ending with "No. 20." And the other twenty carry wishful prayers, each composed of three to four characters. Interestingly, all the prayers were perfectly rhymed and together formed a coherent passage. According to the excavation report, the text reads³⁸⁴:

第一，聖主佐	No.1, The sage ruler is assisted,
第二，得佳士	No.2, (for) wise gentlemen are found.
第三，常毋苛	No. 3, Never be harsh;
第四，驕次已	No.4, nor should myself be arrogant.
第五，府庫實	No.5, Warehouses and barns are full,
第六，五穀成	No.6, (as) five grains turn mature.
第七，金錢施	No.7, Gold and money are spent;
第八，珠玉行	No.8, pearls and jades circulate.
第九，貴富壽	No.9, To be noble, rich, and long-lived,

384 According to the leading excavator Lu Zhaoyin, his interpretation followed Guo Moruo 郭沫若; see Lu Zhaoyin 2005: 161-62.

第十，壽毋病	No.10, (and) long-lived without sickness.
第十一，萬匹番	No.11, Ten thousand horses prosper ³⁸⁵ ;
第十二，天下安	No.12, the world remains in peace.
第十三，起行酒	No.13, Get up and have a drink,
第十四，樂無憂	No.14, with joy but no worry.
第十五，飲酒歌	No.15, Sing as drink;
第十六，飲其右	No.16, let the one on your right drink. ³⁸⁶
第十七，自飲止	No.17, (When) drinking is over,
第十八，樂乃始	No.18, music begins.
第十九，畏妻鄙	No.19, Fear the spousal branches!
第廿，壽夫王母	No. 20, Long live the royal mother (or, Live as long as the Queen Mother)!

Among these prayers, although all the lines describe either auspicious wishes or moments of entertaining, the last two couplets, both rhymed at “əg” according to the modern reconstruction,³⁸⁷ speak of some feminine subjects as “wife” or “mother.”

It is no coincidence that in the queen’s tomb one of the prayers in coin no.19 addresses a “wife.” According to the paleographer Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, it begins with the

385 See Qiu 1981.

386 The excavation report transcribes it as “yin qi jia” 飲其加, but Qiu Xigui suggests that the last character should be “you” 右; see his “Du kaogu fajue suode wenzi ziliao biji (yi).”

387 Baxter-Sagart Old Chinese reconstruction, version 1.1.
https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Baxter-Sagart_Old_Chinese_reconstruction.

verb “wei” 畏,³⁸⁸ while the following phrase *qibi* 妻鄙 denote, as another scholar Guo Moruo 郭沫若 suggests, the spousal branches (*qidang* 妻黨).³⁸⁹ In the Han dynasty, each person lived at the intersection of nine family branches called *jiuzu* 九族, including four paternal branches (*fuzu* 父族), three maternal branches, and two spousal branches or the in-laws (*qizu* 妻族).³⁹⁰ In imperial politics, rivalries between these branches for more power often ended in a bitter fight or even bloodshed, yet the spousal branches stood influential. One Han-dynasty author wrote: “After the foundation of the Han dynasty, the emperors always assigned the posts of high-ranking generals to members of the maternal or spousal branches. And this was called ‘assisting the court’.”³⁹¹ In this perspective, the whole prayer can be read as: “Fear the spousal branches!” However, the emphasis on the wife and her clan in the coin inscriptions matches Dou Wan’s actual identity as the queen and head of the spousal branches.

The last prayer numbered 20, talks about a “mother.” The importance of this couplet is beyond doubt because while each of the other 19 prayers consists of three characters, the final one boasts four graphs.³⁹² I have to offer two equally valid

388 Guo Moruo and the excavators read the first character as a two-syllabus word “tiantian” 田田, of which the second graph is interpreted as a repetition mark (*chongwen fuhao* 重文符號). To them, *tiantian* literally means “fields after fields,” or, “many fields,” and thereby obtains a derivative more abstract meaning of “many” or “much.” However, I follow Qiu Xigui’s reading; see Qiu 1981.

389 Lu 2005: 162. *Dang* and *bi* were sometimes associated. The poet Qu Yuan’s 屈原 (340-278 BCE) once lamented: “As the members of the branch are vulgar and stubborn, they don’t know my concealed merits.” 夫惟党人鄙固兮，羌不知余之所臧。

390 For Han family structure, see Qu 1972: 168-74. Lang 1946.

391 Zhongchang 1935. 漢興，皆引母妻之黨爲上將，謂之輔政。

392 Qiu Xigui thinks the prayer should be “shou wu du” 壽無毒, which is based on the assumption that the vertical stroke in the graph 王 actually emerges above the top horizontal stroke and therefore

translations, thanks to the tricky term *wangmu*. This two-syllable compound either means a “royal (queen) mother” or is an abridged title of the goddess “Queen Mother (of the West)” (*Xiwangmu*). In transmitted texts from the Han dynasty, when used alone, *wangmu* most frequently refers to queens or queen mothers, who presided as the matriarchs over the royal houses.³⁹³ Furthermore, with the previous prayer placing Dou at the top of the spousal branch, it makes good sense to read this *wangmu* as an honorable title that compliments the noble lady herself. In this scenario, the last prayer should read “Long live the royal (queen) mother!”

This interpretation finds its support in an interesting parallel between the two Mancheng tombs, as yet another manifestation of the *yin-yang* polarity. In the previous chapter, I’ve devoted a detailed discussion to a small jade statuette interred in Liu Sheng’s outer coffin in the adjacent Tomb 1 (see Fig. 1.8). The inscription carved on the bottom of the statuette prophesizes that the “royal (king) father” (*wanggong*) will be granted nineteen more years to live. And this “royal (king) father” must refer to King Liu Sheng, whose body lay just inches away. Therefore it is hardly a coincidence that on both semantic and grammatical levels the two titles form a perfect pair. Since the “royal (king) father” meant the husband, it is plausible that the “royal (queen) mother” should have denoted the wife, to whom the inscribed coins were dedicated.

An inscription cast on a first-century BCE mirror further bolsters this assumption. In this long prayer likewise composed of short rhymed couplets, the maker of the mirror

invalidates the reading of the graph as 王; see Qiu 1981. However, this time Qiu’s observation, which was based on a low-quality rubbing of the coin, is wrong. The high-quality photograph of the coin published afterwards clearly shows that the graph is unmistakably 王, as the vertical stroke never reaches beyond the top horizontal stroke.

393 It sometimes also meant “grandmothers” among the commoners. 受茲介福，于其王母。

included a similar auspicious wish for the longevity of a “majestic mother” (*wangmu*): “The royal mother must forever extend her life” (*fu wangmu, yong yi shou* 夫王母，永益壽).³⁹⁴ Although this “royal mother” remains unknown, she might be someone like Dou Wan, presumably an aged woman, who yearned for a prolonged life.

But another reading of *wangmu* equally works well. Although the title of the goddess often begins with her place of origin: the West (*Xi*), occasionally in bronze inscriptions, *wangmu* could be used as an abbreviated form of *Xiwangmu*, the Queen Mother of the West. Thus, the prayer, perhaps so far the earliest excavated reference to the goddess, can be interpreted as “Live as long as the Queen Mother!” A close comparison appears in an early 1st-century mirror inscription that hopes the owner to “live as long as the Queen Mother with the household possession multiplied by a million times” (*Shouru wangmu jia wanbei* 壽如王母家萬倍).³⁹⁵ Embodying the very notion of longevity, this goddess was probably the role model for any woman who wished to live forever.

Despite the two different readings of the word *wangmu*, one “immortal” and one “mortal,” they are not necessarily contradictory because the mortal matriarch of the royal family was often considered the earthly embodiment of the supreme goddess, in front of whom the Son of Heaven had to remain modest.³⁹⁶

394 Chūgoku 2009: 172, inscription no. 403.

395 This mirror inscription is published in Wang 2010: 77.

396 A good example was the legendary westward journey of King Mu, or *Mutianzi* 穆天子, of the Western Zhou dynasty, who became a guest in the court of Queen Mother of the West; see Porter 1996: 86-104.

A later but very famous example of this double identity was Empress Dowager Wang Zhengjun 王政君 (71 BCE – 13 CE). Her nephew, Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BCE – 23 CE), compared the lady to the Queen Mother of the West, and used her authority to help him usurp the emperorship and establish the Xin 新 dynasty in 9 CE.³⁹⁷

If the palace-like tomb chambers of the deceased queen furnished with the functional ritual objects mirrored a civilized world that imitated a Chinese royal “inner apartment,” the raw cave of the Queen Mother of the West populated with the fantastic images, on the other hand, simulated an outlandish wonderland of gods and immortals. These two worlds coincided peacefully without intervening into each other. This precisely echoes the semantic ambiguity in Dou Wan’s last prayer on the wager coins: being the mortal great mother (or queen mother) and the immortal goddess ancestor at the same time.

Making Dou Wan embody the Queen Mother of the West would automatically put her husband, Liu Sheng, into the position of the King Father of the East, the cosmic deity that was imagined as the male counterpart of *Xiwangmu*. This scenario is not impossible. According to *Shenyijing* 神異經, a slightly later text, the King Father dwelled in a stone chamber in the east remoteness (*donghuang* 東荒) with some beautiful jade ladies (*yunü* 玉女).³⁹⁸ An Eastern Han stone carving portrayed Dongwanggong as residing

397 It was during this period that the iconic image of this goddess suddenly appeared and became popular across the empire; see Xing 1988; Miao 2007.

398 東荒山中，有大石室，東王公居之，長一丈，頭髮皓白，鳥面人形而虎尾，恆與一玉女更投壺。Ouyang 1965, juna 17, 1: 318.

in a mountain.³⁹⁹ And this image of Dongwanggong applies perfectly to Liu Sheng who was buried and “living” in the mountain cave.

5. The Distinctive Lamp and Lady

Behind the parallel between the “royal mother” (*wangmu*) in Dou’ tomb and the “royal father” (*wanggong*) in her husband’s burial looms an important difference. Whilst the latter was expected to extend his life by just a few more years, the former was promised with infinite longevity (*shou* 壽). Does this mean the wife was, counterintuitively, considered superior to her husband?

The wife’s distinction was testified in some other aspects, too. For example, occupying a volume 3,000 cubic meters large, Dou’ tomb was over 10% larger than her husband’s.⁴⁰⁰ If this alone might be considered a coincidence, then Dou’s jade coffin—a wooden coffin covered by 192 pieces of jade on the interior and 26 jade *bi* discs on the exterior, unquestionably humbled the king’s plain counterpart, which bore no such lavish jade layers.⁴⁰¹ Concealed in this unique jade coffin, Dou’s body acquired one additional layer of magic protection from the immortal matter of jade, a probable compensation for her lacking the outer coffin.

Although in general Dou’s burial objects were of a lower status to Liu’s in terms quantity and quality, and those exceptions certainly do not mean the subordinate *yin* side topples the superior *yang*, to fully understand the queen’s distinction one extraordinary

399 Zhongguo 2000: 2, pl. 176.

400 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 10, 216.

401 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 234-42.

object interred right next to the queen's coffin holds a clue. Nothing like it was found in the king's tomb.

This single bronze lamp was the only light source for Queen Dou's otherwise pitch-black sleeping chamber (Fig. 2.17). Although in Liu Sheng's tomb the excavators found a large number of lamps in various forms, none of them displays the same kind of mechanical and artistic ingenuity that marveled art historians all over the world. The lamp was held in the hands of a sitting palace lady, who use her left hand to support the lamp from below and her right hand to grab it at the top. Gilt all over the exterior face, both the lamp and the lady are hollow, assembled by a number of thinly cast bronze pieces. The light from the lamp was released through the lamp cover that contained an opening on the side, whose size could be adjusted to control the amount of light that sheds out. The opening could also be turned to different directions to steer light on a specific spot. More remarkably, the lady's right arm merges seamlessly with the lamp's cover, forming an integral conduit for the unhealthy gaseous particles released from the burning fuel to be vented into the lady's hollow body, where they would cool down and deposit into ash. For this reason, this object has been acclaimed as one of the earliest "environment-friendly" artifacts made in China.⁴⁰²

In addition to the sophisticated mechanism, the lamp was splendidly decorated as one of China's national treasures never to be allowed for exhibitions abroad. This bipartite object combines a functional lamp with a bronze statue of an elegant palace lady sitting in the deceased queen's posthumous bedroom and preparing light for the descending night that would last forever. Her head is slightly enlarged to emphasize the

402 Zheng 2003: 154-56.

round, calm and almost emotionless face, which might illustrate the ideal feminine beauty of the time. This pronounced carrier steals the thunder of the small and plain lamp, which is literally pushed aside into a secondary role.

The similarity between the lady and other figurines is obvious. Let us compare her with a marble statuette found near Dou Wan's tent, or her "soul seat" in the front chamber of Tomb 1. The statuette represents a seated male attendant, wearing a flat hat and resting his hands on the knees.⁴⁰³ There are several notable analogs. In dimensions, the marble statue is only one centimeter shorter than its bronze counterpart (no.324).⁴⁰⁴ In style, both figures feature a smooth, flat, and almost mask-like face ridged with sharply defined eyebrows and cheekbones, while the clothes are treated with minimal folding and draperies. As for material, both objects are made of relatively rare substances, namely marble and bronze, which in Han China were considered as the imperishable pair of "metal and stone" (*jinsi* 金石).⁴⁰⁵

But this complex lamp was visually far more distinguished than the stone statues. Standing as tall as 48 centimeters, this was the largest and highest surviving object in the entire tomb. Weighing nearly 16 kilograms, in a lady's room, it was almost immobile. What's more, this permanently positioned object was most likely also the shiniest, with a smooth, polished, and gilt surface ideal for reflecting light. All these features of the object demand primary visual attention, another sign of its unparalleled significance.

403 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 27, fig.15. This orientation is not indicated in the text, but is shown in the drawing.

404 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 206.

405 Marble in China was considered an equal of jade, as it is conventionally nicknamed "white jade of the Han" (*hanbaiyu* 汉白玉); see Luo 1987: 6: 49.

Being not only an ingenious instrument but also an extraordinary work of art, this obviously precious object boasted an illustrious biography, passing from hand to hand in the imperial house. A number of inscriptions made on this object show how special it might have been. The label “Yangxin family” (*Yangxin jia* 陽信家) indicates that the lamp was once in the possession of the Eldest Queen of Yangxin (*Yangxin zhang gongzhu* 陽信長公主), the elder sister of Emperor Wu.⁴⁰⁶ However, a second label “Changxin 長信” (Eternal Honesty) suggests that this object also at some point belonged to the imperial “Palace of Eternal Honesty,” the major residence of Western Han empress dowagers. A third inscription confirms that this remarkable object was once used to light the imperial “bedchambers [supervised by] the Palace Servant Bureau” (*neizhewo* 內者 卧). So how this imperial item, via the Yangxin family, finally ended up in Dou Wan’s hands has puzzled many scholars. Although a few theories have been proposed to link up all the inscriptions and collectors, many scholars seem to agree that Dou Wan received it as a gift from Liu Sheng’s grandmother, the mighty Empress Dowager Dou (d. 135 BCE), who maintained a powerful influence on Emperor Jing till her death.⁴⁰⁷ And some even speculate that Dou Wan herself was related in blood to this mighty woman.⁴⁰⁸

In this theory, everything about the outstanding lamp makes good sense. Holding permanent possession of this imperial gift proclaims the prestige and honor granted to the local Zhongshan queen by the imperial house, which added weight, beauty, and luster

406 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 258. Barbieri-low 2007: 10–15. My following translation comes from his.

407 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 255–61, 337; Feng 1983.

408 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 337.

(like the object) to the queen's social and political status even in her afterlife, and therefore balanced the relationship between husband and wife.

6. Conclusion

The Mancheng tombs were more than two analogous parallels; they formed a mirroring couple. Whereas the “axial logic” links up the body and the soul through a succession of transitional phases, the “parallel logic” holds the husband and the wife together by turning their tombs into each other's “reflections,” either physically or culturally. It looks as if the deceased couple was conceived as one unity, “united in one body” (*fufu yiti* 夫婦一體).⁴⁰⁹ The parallel logic also extended to other inferior family members, buried in dozens of satellite burials whose stone pyramids dot the lower mountain slopes, and put the family in order.⁴¹⁰

Some of the parallel patterns are physical. These include the gender distinction, suggested by the sexual hallmarks of the “jade suits” or the highly gendered ornaments of the body. There are also direct structural reversals of grave goods distributions in the side chambers and the bedrooms. Other patterns, however, are culturally encrypted. The duality of “outer hall versus inner apartment” as well as “south versus north,” for example, captures the essential difference between the two parallel front chambers, one in the south and one in the north.

The Mancheng tombs were just one of the many of its kind. On the one hand, it was not a total invention but reflecting a “symbolic order” (to borrow Jacques Lacan) in

409 Jia Gongyan, *Yili zhushu* 儀禮註疏, juan 30, in Ruan 1980: 1: 1105. John Steele's translation is “husband and wife...are of one flesh;” Steele 1917: 2: 17.

410 Zheng 2003: 65-69.

accordance with the Western Han ideology; on the other hand, the design also included special features customized for the Mancheng site alone. In fact, similar practices of connecting husband and wife existed in a number of other royal cemeteries, some of them dating from exactly the same period, including the imperial or royal tombs of Nanyue, Chu, and Liang.

In this perspective, the Mancheng tombs reveal a comprehensive picture of how the Zhongshan, and more broadly, the Western Han elite visualized and spatialized the relationship between masculine and feminine. In fact, what connects the two tombs speaks eloquently of early Chinese views of gender and politics, which eventually hinges upon the eternal polarity of *yang* and *yin*, in which the deceased husband and wife remained inseparable forever.

CHAPTER 3: Taming *Hu* with *Han*: Governing the State, Pacifying the World

To ordinary local inhabitants of Zhongshan who lived under Liu Sheng's reign, the Mancheng tombs would have struck them as anomalies. Among all royal tombs found in the entire North China Plain, a vast area nearly as large as the isle of Britain, the two Mancheng tombs stand as the only discovered cliff-cut burials with multiple horizontal chambers.⁴¹¹ By 2014 a total number of 13 Western Han princely tombs have been scientifically spotted and probed in this area, with the earliest of them dating from the beginning of the second century BCE, and the latest one, towards the end of the Western Han.⁴¹² During the long span of 200 years, almost all of the tombs featured a wooden structure casket settling on the floor of a vertical earthen shaft dug deep into the ground and a high earthen tumulus that surmounted the burial at the top, a traditional style radically different from that at Mancheng.⁴¹³ More oddly, even Liu Sheng's descendants, the later kings of Zhongshan, did not follow his example. Instead, all the four later Zhongshan princely tombs excavated in present-day Dingxian, just about seventy kilometers south of Mancheng, returned to the conventional large-scale vertical pit graves

411 Li 1985: 59.

412 Liu and Liu 2010: 66–253.

413 Liu and Liu 2010: 210–14. The only exception was located at Gaozhuang; see Hebei and Luquan 2005.

dug into the earthen ground.⁴¹⁴ In other words, the Mancheng tombs were not a model or standard but an eccentricity among the Zhongshan royal cemeteries.

If we expand our scope from a dozen or so royal tombs to hundreds of lesser tombs excavated in the Hebei region, the Mancheng tombs look even stranger. The local funerary custom during the early and mid-Western Han was characterized predominantly by wooden-structure caskets in vertical earthen shafts.⁴¹⁵ Horizontal multi-chambered tombs or large-scale stone burials did not appear until the 1st century BCE, that is, after the completion of the Mancheng tombs.

So what made the Liu Sheng couple become so special in this vast neighborhood?

This chapter will answer this question by delving into the third principle of design at Mancheng – the intercultural logic, which regulates the relationship between the Han Chinese, which was imperialist, and the Zhongshan, the object to imperialize. I will argue that the formal oddity of Mancheng tombs accords with the special political mission assigned to Liu Sheng to revive and rule the Zhongshan, which had a “barbaric” past and memory, to pacify the unruly northern frontier of the empire. And to do so, Liu’s successful government had to conduct a deft negotiation between the dominant Han imperialist culture and the fragmentary Zhongshan cultural heritage scattered in the region of Zhongshan and areas around it.

414 One is located at Bajiaolang 八角廊 (numbered as M40), the other three at Sanpanshan 三盤山 (numbered as M120, 121, and 122). All these tombs have been attributed to three other Zhongshan princes or their wives, postdating Liu Sheng 劉勝 (d. 113 BCE), the occupant of Mancheng Tomb 1. For excavation reports, see Hebei 1981; Wenwu 1979: 46.

415 Mu 2001; Even in the even broader region including present-day Beijing, Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi, stone burials were quite rare before the 1st century BCE; see Jiang 2007: 6-7; Jiang 2008: 22-23.

If one used a tomb to express some political ideas, one of the most powerful “weapons” at the designer’s disposal was artistic style.⁴¹⁶ When facing a number of different styles from which to borrow, the artist could show his or her opinions by choosing certain styles and rejecting others. And when these different styles come from politically conflicting parties, the opinions may also become political.⁴¹⁷ During the 2nd century BCE, there was no stronger political opposition in China than the one between the “civilized Han” and the “barbarians,” when the Western Han and the Xiongnu came at each other as two utterly incompatible ideologies: sedentary and nomadic. Any artistic decision between the two sides might potentially be political.

So what were the possible styles for the Mancheng designer to choose from and how they were contradictory of one another?

In architecture, there were two major options called “chamber” (*shi* 室) and “casket” (*guo* 槨) (Fig. 3.1). These two concepts were first coined by Japanese art historian Mizuno Seiichi in his study of a group of Han burials excavated at Lelang in present-day North Korea during the 1930s.⁴¹⁸

According to Alain Thote, there were two major methods in the Eastern Zhou period to make a *guo*.⁴¹⁹ One represented the “metropolitan” style by simply stacking logs to form a rectangular vertical framework, while the other was “much more advanced” and adopted “joint-making techniques” to assemble carefully prepared thick panels. In both

416 Powers 2006.

417 A wonderful example has been shown by Powers 1991.

418 Mizuno 1934.

419 Thote 1999: 190–1.

cases, the goal was to create a physically enduring hollow shell that could both admit a deceased human and his or her posthumous possessions.

Unlike *guo*, an ancient concept that refers to a specific type of physical burial device, *shi* (literally “chamber”) is a modern analytic concept appropriated to describe those tombs that simulate real houses. Generalizing Mizuno’s definition, archaeologist Huang Xiaofen further describes *shi* as an interconnected complex of chambers open not only to one another but also to the outside world through doors. In Huang’s view, the two formal criteria that distinguish *shi* from *guo* are connectivity and openness.⁴²⁰

The concepts of *guo* and *shi*, however, don’t address the issue of orientation. Like the categories of *guo* and *shi*, the concepts of *zong* (vertical) and *heng* (horizontal) also came from the early archaeological excavations of Han tombs in present-day North Korea.⁴²¹ The ideas of vertical and horizontal differ fundamentally in how the inside of the tomb leads to the outside world and how the boundary between them is crossed.

In a typical Zhou pit grave, the coffin was centrally located in the pit. Before the lid of the casket was closed, the tomb was open from above. Tomb passages, sometimes ramps and sometimes steps, existed only in large tombs, but they always led toward the casket and terminated above it. Few human subjects were supposed to enter the tomb pit in person. Sekino Tadashi generalized such space as “vertical,”⁴²² which implies that the

420 Huang 2002 : 20.

421 Sekino 1916.

422 This separation not only indicated the literal physical distance that kept the visitor away from the casket, but also defined a more profound psychology: The dead ascend and descend in a way that the living can never follow.

deceased's soul always followed an upward or downward direction, ascending or descending between heaven and the underground "Yellow Springs" (*huangquan* 黃泉).⁴²³

In horizontal tombs, however, the tomb passage, which was an extension of the aboveground "Spirit Road" (*shendao* 神道), joined directly with the burial chambers through a lateral door.⁴²⁴ The passage invited the human subject, as well as the dead spirits, to walk through the gate or door into the tomb chambers. The lateral movement oriented the deceased's soul towards the living world on the ground, where cities, temples, and palaces stood.

In the Hebei area, most kings preferred constructing tombs in a vertical earth pit dug into a plateau, following a centuries-long local tradition. Caskets were usually wooden, buried under an earth tumulus. In fact, even among the commoners, horizontal cave tombs did not gain much popularity in this area until the late first century BCE.⁴²⁵

So why would the Mancheng designer blatantly ignore the local mainstream and fashion to embrace an alien architectural style, which could only distance the royal couple from their surrounding neighbors – a potential political risk?

I will argue that these tombs reflect the historical and cultural memory of Zhongshan, which was vital to the success of the local administration.

The architectural style is actually only one aspect of the Mancheng tombs' innovative introduction of a strong accent of the Hu, or "barbaric" flavor to the otherwise Sinicized mortuary practice. I will argue that these "odd" elements, which occurred in

423 For discussions of the Yellow Springs as a metaphor of the underworld, see Poo 1993: 206–7; Jiang 1980: 109–26.

424 Paludan 1991: 28–51.

425 Hu 1998; Mu 2001.

every major aspect of life including clothing (*yi* 衣), eating (*shi* 食), living (*zhu* 住), and traveling (*xing* 行), represents the first king of Zhongshan's effort to preserve and enhance the cultural distinction of Zhongshan, an ancient "barbaric" nation (White Di) that had lain in ruins for nearly one and half centuries before its revival.

1. The Western Structure of Catacombs

For idiosyncratic monuments rare in the local context, scholars tend to assume they must follow outside models. But from where?

For those familiar with Western Han royal tombs, there are many reasons to relate the Mancheng tombs to cliff-cut multi-chamber tombs around Xuzhou and Yongcheng in the heartland of China (see Map 2). Back in the second century BCE, the Chu and the Liang royal houses respectively chose these two hilly areas as their burial grounds. Each of the places was home to dozens of cliff-cut burials, all horizontally cut into mountains.⁴²⁶

Among these approximately contemporaneous cliff-cut tombs, none is formally and structurally closer to the Mancheng tombs than the two elaborate architectural compounds dug into Mt. Baoan in Yongcheng. To some archaeologists, they look like enlarged, enriched, and polished versions of the Mancheng tombs.

Baoanshan Tomb 2 has often been selected for comparison (see Fig. 2.13).

Although like their Mancheng counterparts both of the two Baoanshan tombs open to the

426 For a survey of these tombs, see Liu and Liu 2010: 463-94; for excavation reports, see Nanjing and Tongshan 1985; You 1985; Xuzhou 1997; Xuzhou 1984; Xuzhou 1988; Shizishan 1998; Qiu and Xu 1991; Henan 1996; Yan 2001.

east, Tomb 2, however, contains two additional ramps in the west and the south, while the two main chambers, i.e. the front and the rear chambers, are connected by a long interior tunnel. A string of twenty symmetrically arranged side chambers flank these ramps and interior tunnels, massively outnumbering their counterparts in either tomb at Mancheng, which has only two. What's more, whilst at Mancheng the front and rear chambers are clear of side chambers, each of two main chambers in the Baoanshan tomb is surrounded by seven affiliated smaller chambers clustering around its outer rim.

The roles of the side chambers were presumably also similar in both the Liang and the Zhongshan tombs. At Mancheng, one of the two side chambers attached to the tunnel in front of the front chamber was dedicated entirely to chariots or carriages. Correspondingly, in Baoanshan Tomb 2, though the side chambers have all been emptied by tomb robbers, an inscription carved on the wall of a side chamber reads “East Garage” (*Dongche* 東車), and another one in the chamber next to it, “West Garage” (*Xiche* 西車).⁴²⁷

The most compelling analogy, however, occurs between the two galleries that respectively surround the rear chamber of Baoanshan Tomb 2 and Mancheng Tomb 1. Outside the rear chamber and its side chambers, the Baoanshan tomb boasts a near-square gallery about 80 meters in perimeter (see Fig. 2.13), dwarfing the latter, which measures no more than 39.1 meters long (see Fig. 0.1).⁴²⁸

But in contrast to the straight passages with highly polished walls in the Baoanshan tomb, the uneven crude interior face of the corridor at Mancheng Tomb 1

⁴²⁷ Henan 1996: 98–104.

⁴²⁸ Henan 1996: 121–23; see also figs. 64, 86; Zheng 2003: 87.

compels us to wonder whether this structure was no more than a clumsy imitation devoid of function. Indeed, the purpose of this corridor puzzled the excavators, who assumed it was used as a drain.⁴²⁹ But this assumption has been thrown into question by the space's only material content: three ceramic vessels, including a jar, a pot, and a bowl.⁴³⁰ In fact, these vessels suggest that the corridor as a place for containing grave goods was more likely a ritual space rather than a drain.⁴³¹ The ambiguous role of such an awkward structure, to the eyes of Liu Tao and Liu Rui, betrays the tomb designer's intention to imitate for the sake of imitation such galleries as those in the Baoanshan tombs.

These and other analogies led Liu Rui and Liu Tao to conclude that “the design of Mancheng tombs might have referred to the Baoanshan tombs as the blueprint.”⁴³² This claim echoes with Huang Xiaofen's 黄晓芬 earlier view, which places the Mancheng tombs as a typological development of the Baoanshan tombs.⁴³³ And Liu Rui and Liu Tao further imply that the Mancheng tombs were abridged versions of the Baoanshan ones, as they list out six differences, among which five address the relative simplicity of the Mancheng tombs in structure and function.⁴³⁴ In fact, this list can be further expanded in this direction.

429 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 22.

430 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 22; 30.

431 Examples of such furnished gallery were found in the many of the so-called “barricade” (*huangchang ticou*) tombs; see Lu 1977; Shan 1981; Liu 1987; Qin 1999.

432 Liu and Liu 2010: 497-98.

433 Huang 2002: 89, fig. 28. In fact, a year before Huang's view was published, Yan Genqi, one of the excavators of the Mangdangshan tombs already claimed that “the structure and plan of Mangdangshan Tomb 1 is very similar with that of the Mancheng tombs;” see Yan 2001: 311.

434 Liu and Liu 2010: 497. No. 2 of the six points argues that the Mancheng tombs departed from the Baoanshan archetype in having sloping rather than level tomb passages. This difference, however,

It is necessary, however, to pause before this implication and ruminate upon the differences between the Mancheng tombs and their Liang and Chu “prototypes.” True, the designer(s) of the Mancheng tombs lacked interest in hollowing out more side chambers, digging longer tunnels, and sculpting finer architectural details, such as sloping ceilings, polished walls, pillars, and railings that are characteristics of the earlier Chu and Liang cliff-cut tombs.⁴³⁵ But this is not because the Mancheng tombs were simplifications, but because they followed very different structural and conceptual models: while the Chu and Liang tombs consisted of one layer of architecture that directly simulated the real house,⁴³⁶ the Mancheng burials featured two layers, one enclosing the other. Between these layers, an abstract outer rock “shell” contained an inner wooden or stone “core,” which simulated real architecture.

To substantiate this point, it suffices to focus on the distinct outer “shell” of the Mancheng tombs: the abstract round shape and unpolished face of the rock-cut interior.⁴³⁷ I will use the front chamber of Mancheng Tomb 1 as my example.

may not be essential. In fact, although the east tomb passage does appear level, the west ramp of Baoanshan Tomb 2 is slightly sloping; see Henan 1996: fig. 64.

⁴³⁵ Liu 2004: 29. Erickson 2010: 17-22.

⁴³⁶ At Xuzhou, beginning in the late 2nd century BCE, some tombs also began to develop a two-layer structure, containing house-shaped wooden structures in the rock shell, which also simulated real architecture. It was not until the 1st century BCE that the outer shell lost its architectural semblance; see Zhou and Liu 2005: 72.

⁴³⁷ Though perhaps among the earliest examples, the Mancheng tombs were not the only Western Han princely burials with vaults or domes. Other analogous cases include Nandongshan Tomb 2 at Xuzhou and Huangtushan Tomb 2 at Yongcheng, dating from the late 2nd to 1st centuries BCE, which feature a similar dome in the main chamber; one side chamber in Jiulongshan Tomb 3, possibly contemporary with the Mancheng tombs, is also vaulted; see Zhou 2001: 131–32; Yan 2001: 306-8. And it was not until the latter half of the 1st century BCE that vaulted or domed burials had become popular among low-ranking brick tombs in metropolitan areas including Chang’an and Luoyang; see Huang 2002: 130ff.

For any visitor who walks into the tunnel, stands at the entrance of the front chamber, and casts a glance into the chamber, he or she will perceive a nearly hemispherical “cave,” nearly 15 meters long and 13 meters wide, with a height of 6.8 meters in the center, hollowed out in the body of the mountain (Fig. 3.2). Whereas the chambers at Baoanshan are all dug in square plans with straight and upright walls, those at Mancheng are starkly different. Although the chamber appears generally square, it is in fact rounded on all sides and at all corners. The front (east) and the rear (west) sides of the rock chamber are conspicuously concave and the other two sides are slightly curved, making the chamber look almost like a hemisphere.

The most impressive structure of the chamber, the gigantic ceiling, lends more weight to this assumption. Although this ceiling appears rough and almost irregular, it generally resembles a vault in form, with the center elevated up to form the apex of the space. It is possible that Liu Sheng’s front chamber might have been originally designed with a vault or dome, while the work somehow failed to be completed.⁴³⁸ In comparison, the ceiling of the front chamber in the adjacent Tomb 2 was fashioned into a much more elegant dome (Fig. 3.3).

The significance of its distinct hemispherical shape is beyond the practical level. It is important to note that the space was made to hold a rectangular wooden house-shaped structure, which I will analyze in detail below. For that purpose, the designer(s) should have understood that the circular interior was not the most efficient and economic option because that would require a large amount of superfluous labor in chiseling out

⁴³⁸ In Hebei, such a vaulted or domed shape was later followed in the Sanfengou cemetery at Yangyuan in present-day Zhangjiakou, Hebei province, about the 1st century BCE; see Hebei and Zhangjiakou 1990. It seems the Mancheng tombs were probably the direct origin of this new distinct burial shape.

practically useless gaps between the upright walls of the building and the round sides of the “cave.” Without a doubt, the special shape must have had some special meaning.

A further examination of the tombs’ interior surface reveals another major difference between the Mancheng rock chamber and its Liang and Chu counterparts. Whereas the interior walls in earlier Liang and Chu cliff-cut tombs were all polished, plastered, or even painted, those in the Mancheng tombs only bear crude treatment.⁴³⁹ What’s more, on the three interior walls the workers carved 45 holes in different shapes and sizes (see Fig. 3.2). Although at first glance these holes form three horizontal rows, in fact, the distance between every two neighboring holes varies. The irregular distribution means that these holes were no part of a functioning wooden structure, but, as the excavators suggest, used to fix scaffoldings during the construction.⁴⁴⁰ Although the roundish shape, the vault or dome, and the rough, unpolished surface dotted with the disconcerting holes of the rock chamber do not resemble any architectural features of a Chinese building, they, in fact, did little harm to the harmonious view of the tomb, because all the rough environment would eventually become invisible: a roofed wooden structure in shape of a house almost as long and wide as the rock chamber itself thoroughly filled the vacuum, blanketed the rock surface, and blocked it from the viewer’s eye (see Fig. 1.1).

It is clear that the Mancheng plan embraced a different idea from those in Yongcheng and Xuzhou. For those familiar with the dazzling maize-like structure of the

439 In Yongcheng, Bao’anshan Tomb 1, for example, was even painted with a polychrome mural on the ceiling in the main chamber, see Yan 2001: 115-20. In Xuzhou, the same occurred in those tombs cut in the early and middle Western Han; see Liu 2004: 29-30; Liu 2011: 62.

440 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 16.

earlier cliff-cut tombs, they might marvel at Mancheng's simplicity and orderliness. But this contrast is only superficial. Despite apparent analogies, the round rock-cut chambers at Mancheng cannot be reduced to some simplified versions of their Liang and Chu forerunners at Xuzhou and Yongcheng, which directly simulated real buildings—indeed palaces—in stone. The compact plan at Mancheng consists of just two major chambers, whose tightly fitted wooden or stone structures denied any possibility for extra side chambers to be inserted. Whereas the other cliff-cut tombs were entirely architectural simulations, the Mancheng tombs had the simulation encased in a non-simulative rock “shell,” whose meaning has remained unnoticed.

The relatively simpler tomb plan at Mancheng was derived from a fundamentally different model. But to see this, it is necessary to abandon the previous Sinocentric view and shift our spotlight from princely tombs in the heartland of the Chinese civilization to the “barbaric” burials on the margin of it.

The designer(s) of the Mancheng tombs embraced a compact organic plan that comprised four basic elements, no more and no less. It at once (A) cut laterally into the ground or rock, (B) has vaulted or domed ceilings, (C) consists of two or more horizontally connected chambers, and (D) includes a chamber or tunnel situated in the front part of the tomb for containing carriages or horses.

Although tombs with one of the four elements were excavated in large numbers all over China, combinations of (A) and (B) existed extensively only in west China from the pre-historical period onwards (Type I-1) (Fig. 3.4). These laterally cut or dug tombs, usually called “earthen cave burials” (*tudongmu* 土洞墓) or “cave-chamber burials” (*dongshimu* 洞室墓) in China, or catacombs in the West, normally consisted of a single

vaulted or domed burial chamber, sometimes with a niche dug into a side wall of the chamber.⁴⁴¹ This burial style was first introduced by the indigenous Rong people, and about the 4th century BCE was adopted by some of their Chinese neighbors in the Qin,⁴⁴² who enlarged the burial chamber and put in a Chinese compartmentalized wooden structured casket.⁴⁴³ However, the most concentrated area of vaulted catacombs in China was located at Yanglang 楊郎 in present-day Guyuan 固原, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, identified by archaeologists as a typical settlement of the Rong people prosperous between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE.⁴⁴⁴

Towards the late Warring States Period, some new combinations appeared. Perhaps inspired by the Chinese traditional vertical pit graves (Type II-1), elements (C) and (D) merged in the Miaozhuang 廟庄 and Shangyuanjia 上袁家 cemeteries in Gansu, as well as in the royal Qin mausoleums at Fengxiang 鳳翔 in Shaanxi.⁴⁴⁵ These burials consisted of two horizontally connected chambers with the front one reserved for horses and chariots alone. But these were constructed on the floor of a conventional vertical shaft rather than cutting laterally into the ground (Type II-2) (see Fig. 3.4).⁴⁴⁶

441 Han 2007; Xie 1987.

442 Yu 1985: 188; Li 1988.

443 For example, Shangjiaocun Tombs 11 and 18, in Qinyong 1980.

444 Han 2007: 21.

445 Gansu 1997.

446 Major examples of such tombs include the tomb of the Duke Jing of the Qin (6th c. BCE), Guweicun Tomb 1 (4th-3rd c. BCE), and Shangyuanjia Tomb 7 (late 3rd c. BCE). For archaeological reports, see Han and Jiao 1988; Zhongguo 1956: 70.

But examples combining all the above four elements had remained unknown until an astonishing archaeological discovery was made at Majiayuan 馬家塬 in Zhangjiachuan 張家川 Hui Autonomous County, Tianshui 天水, Gansu province, in July 2006 (Map 4b).⁴⁴⁷ In a cemetery dating from the late third century BCE, archaeologists have so far spotted 59 burials dug into the ground accompanied with a number of sacrificial pits. Whereas bones of cows, sheep, or horses were uncovered in the sacrificial pits, horses, chariots, and other grave goods were laid in the tomb passage and the burial chamber.⁴⁴⁸ These objects surprised the discoverers with their shining gold and silver ornaments in the “Animal style” popular across the Eurasian steppes during the seventh to third centuries BCE.⁴⁴⁹ Studies of the material culture in the cemetery have generally pinned the tomb occupants down as a group of pastoral nomads called in traditional Chinese historiography “Xirong” 西戎, or the “Western Barbarians,” who lived a half nomadic and half sedentary life on the western frontiers of the Qin kingdom.⁴⁵⁰ Although these lost people also interred many Chinese objects or objects fashioned in Chinese styles in their tombs, attesting to an active cultural interaction, they maintained a rather distinct cultural profile against their Chinese neighbors to the east. The Majiayuan discovery reshaped the understanding of the previously obscure “barbaric” culture in late

447 Gansu and Zhangjiazhuang 2008.9.

448 Wang 2009; for “Animal style” in northern China, see Rostovcev 1929.

449 Hou 2012.

450 On Rong and Xirong, for an anthropological perspective, see Wang 1997: 214-17. For a historical perspective, see Shi 1990.2: 71-76; see also Di Cosmo, 2004: 93-126. Archaeologist Lin Yun suggests that, like the Di, the Rong people were also ethnically East Asian Mongloids and spoke the same language as the Chinese (Hua or Xia). But Edwin Pulleyblank thought Xirong might speak a Tibeto-Burman language; see Pulleyblank 1983: 419.

Eastern Zhou, which might have served as the “buffer zone” and linking bridge between the steppes and the Chinese civilization.⁴⁵¹

This rich cemetery brought to light the earliest known Eastern Zhou catacombs (A) with a horizontal double-chambered plan (C) and vaulted ceilings (B), which precisely characterizes the Mancheng tombs (Type I-2). Almost all the burials at Majiayuan featured a vertical stepped tomb passage, at the bottom of which one or two connected burial chambers were carved into the west wall to hold the deceased’s coffin. Although the majority of burials in this cemetery consisted of only one burial chamber, three large ones numbered as Tomb 1, 3, and 16 each comprised two horizontally connected chambers, with the larger one preceding the smaller one, just like the Mancheng counterparts. In the largest Tomb 1, which is located at the center of the site, the front and rear chambers, totaling 6.64 meters long, featured an unusual shape, with walls slightly rounded out. Despite the fallen ceiling, the three walls of the chambers, which begin to curve at the level of 3.7 meters above the tomb floor, might have originally convened at the top to form a vault or dome.⁴⁵² In this way, the three elements characterizing the plans of Mancheng tombs were organically unified in these “barbaric” tombs (Fig. 3.5).⁴⁵³

451 Di Cosmo 1999: 885-966; Di Cosmo 2004: 44-92; Lin 2009: 39-76.

452 Gansu 2008: 5.

453 Although the question of the origin of the Majiayuan catacombs lies beyond the scope of this study, it should be noted that these “barbarian” tombs were very similar to those catacombs found in the Eurasian steppes, often identified as Scythian in Greek historiography. A typical Scythian catacomb, according to Renate Rolle, consisted of “a descent, usually leading steeply down from the original surface, with a corridor or short passage below opening into a cave-like burial chamber,” which was often vaulted or domed; Rolle 1989: 21.

The inclusion of the Xirong architectural model at Mancheng begs the question: how did they reach there, a giant leap of over a thousand kilometers from Shaanxi to Hebei?

By the early 2nd century BCE the northern cultural zones had all been assimilated into the Xiongnu confederacy and become available to the people in the north Hebei area as a general “Hu” culture.

For the western “barbaric” culture based in western Shaanxi, Ningxia, and Gansu to enter northern Hebei, geographically it must pass through northern Shaanxi and Shanxi. Since the late Eastern Zhou period, a highly mixed and dynamic cultural zone appeared in a vast region around the Ordos in Inner Mongolia (Map 6).⁴⁵⁴ The northern end of this zone falls into the “Maoqinggou 毛慶溝 Type,” historiographically attributed to the north Di “barbarians,” and the southern tip of it, is under the sway of the “Yanglang 楊郎 Type,” traditionally associated with the Western Rong “barbarians.”⁴⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, some cemeteries in this culturally hybrid zone featured, as Nicola di Cosmo has described, “an unusual combination” of vertical earthen pit graves (Type II) and catacombs (Type I), characterizing the Di and the Rong cultures respectively.⁴⁵⁶ This “culturally most complex” zone assimilated local and western immigrant cultures and became a melting pot for the

454 It is called Zone Two by Linduff 1997: 33, 47-55; Di Cosmo calls it the “North-Central Region,” in Di Cosmo 2004: 74.

455 Xu and Li 1993; Yang 2009.

456 Within this large cultural zone, only about 300 kilometers to the north of Fushi, a few cemeteries at present-day Baotou in Inner Mongolia brought to light about 50 “cave-chamber” burials (dated about 5th c. BCE) characteristic of the Yanglang Type, or the *rong* people from the west; see Neimenggu and Baotou 1991; Neimenggu 2009a; Neimenggu 2009b. Some similarities between these and the Xirong burials at Majiayuan have been noted; Di Cosmo 2004: 75.

Rong and Di “barbarians.”⁴⁵⁷ Over the time, “their cultural gaps were gradually diminishing and their burial customs merged into an unseverable unity.”⁴⁵⁸

In this culturally hybrid region, about the early 2nd century BCE simple catacombs started to appear in northern Shanxi. This fact has encouraged some archaeologists to re-date the catacombs in the neighboring northern Hebei to the same period. And by the time when Liu Sheng ascended to the throne, their shapes had developed with vaulted ceilings and side chambers.⁴⁵⁹ In 1982, archaeologists unearthed an important cemetery that contained hundreds of Qin and Han tombs at present-day Shuoxian 朔縣, of which a number were catacombs.⁴⁶⁰ Among them were Tomb 6M158 and Tomb 6M200, both dated to the mid-2nd century BCE. The former featured a single burial chamber, preceded by two side chambers, and the latter consisted of a small front chamber and a major rear chamber.⁴⁶¹ The existence of these developed catacombs suggests that the basic concept of digging horizontal tombs, originated from Xirong, had reached Shuoxian some 280 kilometers to the west of Mancheng.

Catacombs also broke sporadically into the north Hebei in the early 2nd century BCE. Archaeologists spotted a small number of single-chamber catacombs cut into the ground in the Guanzhuang 官莊 cemetery in Huailai 懷來, in north Hebei, about 280

457 Yang 2004: 104.

458 Xu and Li, “Dong Zhou shiqi de rongdi qingtong wenhua,” 9.

459 Huang 2002: 107.

460 Pingshuo 1987.

461 Pingshuo 1987: 10-11.

kilometers to the northeast of Mancheng.⁴⁶² For the light cavalry of the nomads, it would take only three to four days to cover the distance. Even though these humble earthen structures, built for low-ranking people or commoners, were no match for the royal spectacles of the Zhongshan, their existence suggests that the Mancheng tombs were not a complete eccentricity beyond the local context, but part of an ongoing east-west cultural interaction. Through these humble links, the Zhongshan people would have been able to have access to a better appreciation of the Rong culture.

2. Liu Sheng's Chamber of Wheelless "Carriages"

The last element (D) shared by the Majiayuan tombs and the Mancheng tombs is a little complicated. At first glance, the difference is apparent. In the Xirong tombs, chariots, the most important burial objects, dominated the entire tomb space before the rear chamber; at Mancheng, chariots or carriages only appeared in the side chambers or the front tunnel (in the case of Tomb 1). However, the treatment and arrangement of carriages in Mancheng Tomb 1 echoes in a very subtle way with the Xirong prototypes.

The relative positions of the vehicles were similar in both sites. At Majiayuan the most important vehicle, the so-called "gold inlaid carriage" (*jingenche* 金根車) always occupied the front chamber, facing the north, while four other chariots lined up from the

⁴⁶² Whereas the excavators dated these tombs to no earlier than the first century BCE, recently archaeologist Jiang Lu 蔣璐 proposed an earlier date from the early Western Han, i.e. the early 2nd century BCE; see Jiang 2010; see also Jiang 2008: 55.

east to the west in the “chariot pit” (*chekeng* 車坑) dug in front of the front chamber.⁴⁶³

Altogether, the distribution of the five chariots formed a reversed “L” shape.

Amazingly, in correspondence with this layout, the six chariots interred with horses in Mancheng Tomb 1 were also sequenced horizontally in the shape of the right angle, even though their orientation changed (Fig. 3.6).⁴⁶⁴ The two vehicles (Chariots 1 and 2) buried in the tunnel in front of the front chamber was the ritually most distinguished, which have been identified as the privileged “Royal Chariot with Blue Canopy” (*Wangqinggaiche* 王青蓋車) only entitled to princes.⁴⁶⁵

What is less obvious is that in Mancheng Tomb 1 the front chamber was also dominated by means of transportation – not wheeled horse-drawn carriages, but vehicles without wheels.

When studying Liu Sheng’s life-sized carriages, Wu Hung was puzzled by the absence of the third carriage, which was supposed to follow the two present carriages in the front chamber.⁴⁶⁶ This missing “Great Carriage” (*dache* 大車), sheltered under an extensive oval umbrella, was found in some other royal tombs including those of the Guangyang kingdom at Dabaotai in present-day Beijing.⁴⁶⁷ But in Mancheng Tomb 1 the

463 Zhao 2010.

464 The only major positional difference between the two patterns was the direction of the chariots. Whereas the Majiayao chariots were all oriented inwards, the Mancheng ones were mostly facing towards the outside.

465 Zheng 2002.

466 Wu 2009: 203; Wu 1998.

467 Dabaotai 1989: 77-85.

position of this absent carriage was taken instead by the middle tent and its offerings. Could this tent have any association with carriages or transportation?

The answer is “yes,” for the two parallel tents were wheelless vehicles or the superstructures of carriages.

The structure and shape of the Mancheng tents are very similar to those sedans or carriages. Before its collapse, the tent occupied the center of the entire bay, as is suggested by the distribution of the tent’s bronze joints and fittings on the floor, which frame a field about 2 by 4 meters.

In this size, the tent was almost as wide as the central bay, therefore cutting the bay into two separate halves. While the other joints were in utter disarray, eighteen of the twenty-eight rafter caps, which once framed the umbrella (roof of the tent), remained in relatively good shape. The majority of rafter caps in the west follow a regular shape and all the heads of the caps uniformly point outward. The regularity of the distribution indicates that when the tent collapsed the umbrella generally remained a full piece with most of its rafter caps remaining in their original positions. The regularly distributed rafter caps traced the shape of the roof which covered a rectangular area about 2 by 1.3 meters. Since the roof was supposed to cover the tent from above, the tent should not have exceeded the frame of the roof. Following this clue, we have good reason to assume that the original tent should have measured about 2 by 1.3 meters in area.

The tent was originally high enough to block the already very limited amount of sunlight and prevented it from reaching behind the tent. Assuming that the tent still maintained its basic form after the collapse, we might estimate based on the distance

between the roof and the legs that the original height of the tent ranges between 1.5 and 2.5 meters.

The excavation of Hougudui Tomb 1 at Gushi in Henan province (dated to the 5th c. BCE) brought to light two well-preserved roofed sedans (nos. 115 and 116) in similar shapes. Thanks to the sticky clay that surrounded and sealed up the burial pit and turned the latter into a waterproofed environment, the perishable wooden components of this much older object remained almost intact upon discovery. This sedan, a rectangular house-shaped structure under a sloping roof, measures 1.34 by 0.9 meters in area and 1.23 meters in height. Once proportionally enlarged by 50%, the sedan appears almost like an exact copy of the Mancheng tent. Its height reaches around 1.84 meters, well within the range between 1.5 and 2.5 meters as my calculation has suggested.

The third sedan found at Hougudui Tomb 1, this time a square rather than rectangular one, is a proportionally downscaled version of the second tent at Mancheng, which had once stood on the west side of the southern bay in the front chamber. Whilst the Hougudui square sedan measures 0.9 meters on each side and about 1.4 meters in height,⁴⁶⁸ the roof remains scattering on the floor at Mancheng formed a near circle about 1.50 meters in diameter, approximately 50% larger than its counterpart from Gushidui.⁴⁶⁹ This second parallel further verifies that the two findings must fall into the same category.

The formal similarities suggest that the Mancheng tents made as wheelless vehicles were probably also made as sedans, or *yu* 輿, as was called in Chinese.

468 Henan 2004: 73–9. See also Guo 1981.

469 According to the excavators, however, the second tent measures 1.8 by 1.8 meters in area and about 1.8 meters tall; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Mancheng Han mu fajue baogao*, 1: 178. While the shape is more reliable, the size is again hypothetical.

Converted into tents, these settled “soul seats” were two sedans or carriages with wheels being removed.⁴⁷⁰ The middle wheelless vehicle was Liu Sheng’s missing third carriage. Such a wheelless hipped-roofed tent-like structure was found in a couple of other late Eastern Zhou tombs as the superstructure of a special “limousine” (*wenliangche* 溫涼車), in which the rider could comfortably sleep.⁴⁷¹ In a third-century BCE tomb at present-day Liulihe in Huixian, Henan province, one large horse-powered carriage consisted of a sloping-roofed vehicle in an almost identical form and size as the tent at Mancheng. Similarly, no horse remains were found next to the vehicle, suggesting that this structure might have been removed from a carriage and carried into the tomb. The excavators have associated this cart with the hearse (*sang er che* 喪輜車) that once transported the coffin from the deceased’s home to the cemetery.⁴⁷²

Found right in front of the middle tent, a small iron axle (no.209) provides another clue. The cylindrical axle is 15.8 centimeters long and 2 centimeters in diameter. Each end of the axle is extended by a 3.2-centimeter-long rectangular cube. The middle section of the axle is pierced by two slim holes filled with remains of leather straps. The outer sections of the axial beyond the slots bear the marks of polishing caused by rotating something on the axle.⁴⁷³ Although its exact function remains speculative,⁴⁷⁴ these

470 Zhao Weiping has noted the relationship between the primary tent and one of the chariots stationed in the south side chamber of Mancheng Tomb 1; he proposed that the Mancheng tent might have been originally put on a housingless carriage and was later removed from it for installation in the front chamber. His major argument is based on Chariot No. 3 in the south side chamber, which was large enough to carry the tent, was the only vehicle without a roof or umbrella over its wheels in the tomb; see Zhao 2007.

471 Sun 2008: 113, 116.

472 Zhongguo 1956: 47, 51, cart nos.18, 19; Zhongguo 1957: 151–53.

473 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 113–5.

characteristics remind us of a carriage axle of a shrunken scale and in a simplified structure. A similar cart axle was found in Tomb 203 near Changsha. Measuring 32 centimeters long, this wooden axle of a miniature wheelless vehicle (possibly a sedan) is nearly 50% larger than its iron counterpart at Mancheng.⁴⁷⁵ It is possible that the iron object belonged in a disintegrated vehicle model, and the wears and tears were caused by the rotation of a missing wheel hub, or *gu* 轂, that spin round the two ends of the axle.

The possibility that the two tents – the central elements of Liu Sheng’s front chamber – were wheelless vehicles is significant. This means that the front chamber might have also functioned as a semi-garage, reminiscent of the front chamber at Majiayuan, which was furnished entirely with carriages without horses.⁴⁷⁶

The role of Liu Sheng’s middle tent as a wheelless vehicle was further reinforced by a group of objects placed in front of it, which refer to a journey.

The “journey group” consisted of a group of animal-shaped bronze objects lying in front of the tent-vehicle. These included a distinctive group of five almost identical bronze figures in shape of crouching felines (nos.163-167) (Fig. 3.7). With the mouth slightly open, each beast stretches the forelegs and hindlegs forward in a relaxing posture. Interestingly, ferocious as it is, each animal wears a tight circular collar around the neck, indicating its tameness. In each of the felines a rectangular slot, about three centimeters

474 Bai 2005: 245.

475 Zhongguo 1957: 151–3.

476 Analogously, in Bajiaolang Tomb 40 at Dingxian, occupied by Liu Sheng’s grand-grand-son named Liu Xiu 劉修 (d. 55 BCE), the front section of the front chamber contained three chariots and 13 horses, functioning as garage; see Hebei 1981.

wide, two centimeters long, and three centimeters deep, cuts into the back.⁴⁷⁷ A nail penetrates the feline body in the front below the neck, passes through the slot, and drives its tip into the beast's rear. Whereas the body of the feline is gilt, the interior sides of the slot remain plain. This contrast suggests that the slots might have been filled with some perishable materials such as wood, which were possibly attached to some larger wooden object(s) disintegrated long before. Indeed, these ferocious predators crouched on the floor as if they were enduring extraordinarily heavy loads on their backs.

Similar three-dimensional felines were not rare in high-ranking Western Han tombs.⁴⁷⁸ Earlier examples of chained wild predators have decorated King Cuo's tomb at present-day Pingshan, in which a pair of freestanding bronze felines with gold and silver inlays all over their bodies analogously feature gently opened mouths, forward stretching legs, and tightly worn collars.⁴⁷⁹ In most cases, such animal figures have been used as weights or object (such as armrest) supporters.

However, the felines in Liu Sheng's tomb carried a special mission. Unlike all other known counterparts, however, inscriptions on the animals' abdomens associate the five felines with particular carriage-drawing horses (Fig. 3.8):

no.167: "the left side horse" (*zuocan* 左驂)

no.163: "the left side horse, right" (*zuocan you* 左驂右)

no.164: "the right central horse, left" (*youfu zuo* 右服左)

477 Zhongguo 1980a: 1:96–7.

478 A good example predating the Mancheng example was found at a royal tomb of the Chu kingdom at Shizishan; see Zhongguo and Xuzhou 2005: 257.

479 Hebei 1980a: 1: 138-39.

no.165: “the left central horse” (*zuofu* 左服)

no.166: “the left central horse, right” (*zuofu you* 左服右)

The inscriptions clearly refer to a carriage drawn by four horses, or *sima* 駟馬, which were supposed to align themselves side by side ahead of the cart they drew collectively.⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, four of the five (nos.164–167) were lined up approximately along a north-south axis, although the fifth one (no. 163) somehow made it over the table (no.178) into the east. The positions of the four beasts match the descriptions in the inscriptions: the left side horse (no. 167) in the far left (north), the left central horse (no. 166) on the near left, the right central horse (no. 164) on the near right, and the right side horse (no. 165, here mistaken by “the left central horse”), the far right. The directional terms “left” and “right” in the inscription orient the whole group of felines to the east, that is, in front of the tent.

The largely parallel positions of these felines in front of the tent recall yokes, balancing crossbars (*heng* 衡), or horse harnesses that were situated before a cart.⁴⁸¹ Although no identical or comparable objects have been discovered with Western Han chariots, fortunately, in an Eastern Zhou tomb at Bianjiazhuang 邊家莊, only about 150 kilometers to the east of Majiayuan, near present-day Baoji 寶雞 in Shaanxi province, archaeologists found a well-preserved chariot whose crossbar was fitted over with four

480 Sun 2013: 16.

481 Various parts, including frontlets, reins, belts, and even horse hoofs, of the half-life-size bronze horses and chariots excavated in the First Emperor’s mausoleum at Lishan bear similar positional inscriptions, which reinforce the Mancheng figures’ connection with horses or carriages; see Qin Shi Huang and Shaanxi 1998.

identical crouching bronze rabbits.⁴⁸² Depicted in Eastern Han stone carvings, these rabbits might represent the imaginary pullers of the fantasized carriage, as fast horses were sometimes compared to “flying rabbits” (*feitu* 飛兔) in early Chinese literature.⁴⁸³ It is very likely that the Mancheng felines were similar decorations that symbolized the source of power for the tent, the wheelless vehicle. What’s more, the number of the felines matches the code well that kings (*zhuhou* 諸侯) were entitled to a carriage drawn by either four or five horses.⁴⁸⁴ Gathering in front of the king’s tent, these well positioned zoomorphic figures were symbolically drawing or leading a fantastic “carriage,” the tent as a wheelless cart.⁴⁸⁵ This high-ranking, fantastic “carriage,” which corresponds to the “missing” privileged carriage Wu wondered about, was not unusual in the Han people’s imagination. In Eastern Han murals, wheelless carriages drawn by flying animals such as dragons, tigers, rabbits, or wales rolled across the sky on clouds, carrying gods and ancestors on board.⁴⁸⁶

The symbolic “carriage” in Liu Sheng’s front chamber, therefore, defined the whole space as a garage, which reinforces Mancheng’s relationship to the Xirong predecessors at Majiayuan. And this practice was not unique to Mancheng but followed at least in another royal Zhongshan tomb in present-day Dingxian, Hebei, where the front

482 Shaanxi 1988: 17.

483 Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 474-75.

484 There are two different versions regarding how many horses kings should have for his chariots. While the majority thinks the number is four, and a lost text in *Wangduji* 王度記 claims it is five; see Sun 2008; Shen 1974: 18.495. Interestingly, the inconsistency is well reflected in the paradoxical inscriptions on the felines: while the terminologies suggest this was a four-horse-drawn chariot, the number turns out to be five.

485 Henan 2004: fig. 29.

486 Zhongguo 2000: 6.141, pl. 170, 6.126, pl. 155, 6.180, pl.219.

chamber was indeed furnished entirely with real or miniaturized carriages followed by food offerings.⁴⁸⁷ This practice was originated in the west. During the late Eastern Zhou some tombs in the frontier regions in west China were equipped with an individual compartment in front of the main burial just to hold horses and chariots.⁴⁸⁸

The fantastic carriage was accompanied by other three-dimensional animal figures, including two almost identical bronze elks with long antlers (nos.170–171). Gilt throughout, each of the zoomorphic torsos contained a cavity opened on the left side. Core materials in the cavities indicate that these two figures were originally attached to some perished wooden objects from aside.⁴⁸⁹ A small hole is pierced into each hoof of these beasts, perhaps to fasten the figures to other unknown articles.

Although in both style and casting the two Mancheng elks were Chinese creations, these hollowed bronze figures are reminiscent of those found in 4th-3rd century BCE burials in the Ordos, which separated the sedentary Chinese culture from the nomadic one led by the Xiongnu.⁴⁹⁰ Such three-dimensional bronze animals as elks, horses, or ibexes usually stand, recline, or crouch on top of a square stand, with one or multiple holes pierced in the neck, belly, or sides. A majority of these bronze figurines in the round have been identified as decorations fitted over a horizontal wooden yoke, or pole caps or

487 Dingxian 1973.

488 Wu 2009: 63. It must be noted that this practice had spread into the Hebei area by the late Warring States period. A good example is Guweicun Tomb 1; see Zhongguo 1956: 70.

489 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 97.

490 Neimenggu and Neimenggu 1977; Neimenggu 1965. Tian and Guo 1986: 156-58. However, prototypes of such yoke ornaments may date back to the late Shang period in the twelfth century BCE. At Chariot Pit 40 at Meiyuanzhuang, archaeologists found a pair of bronze ornaments, each with two rabbits crouching on the top of a tube. Like the late Ordos bronze figures, the bodies of these rabbits are all hollowed out; see Zhongguo 1998: 53, fig.3.2. See also Yang 2002: 130.

finials of a wheeled funerary vehicle.⁴⁹¹ For example, there was a pair of bronze carriage poles each surmounted with a standing ram on its four legs. Like the elks with cavities, each ram is opened by a round hole below the neck and is fastened to the upper end of the pole through the four hoofs.⁴⁹²

Strangely, however, the Mancheng zoomorphic figures fail to form perfect sets. For example, the felines came from different sets, for “the left central horse” (*zuocan*) and “the left side horse” (*zuofu*) both appeared twice but “the right side horse” (*youcan*) was missing. The two elks do not form a complete set, either, for both beasts are pierced on the left side of the body without strictly mirroring each other. The same problem also occurs to two other gilt bronze bear figures (nos. 146, 223) found around the tent. Although usually forming a group of three to support a circular food or wine vessel, one of the triplets was never found in the tomb. Instead of staying close to each other as vessel legs usually did, the remaining two bears, one found in the east of Liu Sheng’s tent and the other in the south of it, were separated by many unrelated objects. We may conclude that the figurines were originally attached to and later removed from some larger wooden objects.

Such incompleteness was certainly not a result of carelessness or frugality. The royal burial tolerated little carelessness, and a rich and powerful king who afforded priceless royal carriages for his afterlife would have no reason to spare some small wooden objects decorated with tiny figurines. Then there must be a stronger motivation:

491 Bunker 1997: 53-55.

492 Bunker 1997: 230-1. See also Rawson and Bunker 1990: 322.

the animal figures were deliberately taken off their original decorated objects and put into the tomb for a ritual purpose.

In the Rong-Di funerary tradition, this practice was nothing new. In the Mazhuang cemetery in Guyuan, when archaeologists opened a number of catacombs (dated to the 5th-4th c. BCE) belonging to the Rong people (or the “Yanglang Type” culture), they were surprised by a few zoomorphic carriage parts scattering among sacrificed animal bones as independent images.⁴⁹³ In a most remarkable case (Tomb IIIM1), two bronze deer detached from a carriage, reminiscent of the Mancheng elks, were erected as a pair of freestanding sculptures flanking the tomb entrance.⁴⁹⁴ This special burial custom in west China, as new archaeological evidence has suggested, was related to the Scythians in the Eurasian steppe. For example, a group of deer figures, originally as object attachments, were found in a burial at Filippovka in present-day Southern Russia, dating from the 5th to 4th centuries BCE.⁴⁹⁵ It has been proposed that these deer were placed in a meaningful pattern to convey some religious ideas of the Scythians.⁴⁹⁶

3. The “Barbaric” Set of Objects

Mancheng’s creative imitation of the Xirong and other non-Han examples along the broader Northern frontier, which runs in parallel with China’s first Great Walls, was not limited to architecture and means of transportation. In both Mancheng tombs,

493 Ningxia 1993.

494 Ningxia 1993: 17.

495 Aruz 2000: 69-71.

496 Windfuhr, 2006: 46-81.

whereas the majority of the grave goods followed Han Chinese styles, an impressive number of miscellaneous metal, bone, gemstone, and clay objects buried with him lay beyond the mainstream of Han material culture and recalled non-Chinese “barbaric” styles. Some of these elements have so far been exceptional, if not unique, among all Western Han royal tombs.

Each of the two royal bodies wore some special “outfit” objects that proclaim a “barbaric” identification. These included more than 40 identical drum-shaped carnelian (*manao* 瑪瑙) beads strung together into a necklace found on the chest of the king’s corpse (Fig. 3.9).⁴⁹⁷ Liu’s wife wore a similar necklace, too, which contained 30 carnelian beads, five crystal beads, and nine stone beads, some circular and some drum-shaped (see Fig. 2.3).⁴⁹⁸ The dimensions of the beads vary. In Liu Sheng’s necklace, each bead measures 1.2-1.6 centimeters in diameter and is pierced in the middle by a hole 0.2-0.4 centimeters wide.

Almost identically small beads of carnelian, crystal, turquoise, or other gemstones made almost a hallmark of the Rong-Di burials along China’s north and northwest frontiers during the 6th to the 4th centuries BCE. In the famous archaeological sites of the Rong-Di cultures at Jundushan 軍都山 (Beijing), Ordos, and Yanglang 楊郎 (Ningxia), these necklaces were found in great numbers in both male and female burials.⁴⁹⁹ For example, among 400 tombs in the Yuhuangmiao 玉皇廟 cemetery at Jundushan, at least

497 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 143.

498 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 298.

499 Tian and Guo 1986: 205; Ningxia 1993: 18-19; Beijing 2007: 3:1328, 1131, 1344.

42.5% of them were furnished with such necklaces.⁵⁰⁰ In 53 burials excavated at Maoqinggou 毛慶溝 in the Ordos, 31 contained such necklaces. And archaeologists found nearly 2,000 carnelian and other semi-precious stone beads in 49 tombs excavated at Yanglang in Guyuan.⁵⁰¹ Meanwhile, this mortuary custom has also spread westwards into the Eurasian steppes.⁵⁰²

This practice continued into the second century BCE, but more often appeared in “barbaric” tombs than in Han Chinese tombs. For example, In Xigoupan 西溝畔 Tomb 4 in present-day Junggar in the Ordos, occupied by a Xiongnu noble lady who died about mid-Western Han, two necklaces of crystal and carnelian beads were identified, one of which is especially similar to Dou Wan’s necklace with the long-sleeved female dancer pendant.⁵⁰³ A group of contemporaneous tombs at Xichagou in Liaoning, attributed by most scholars to the nomadic tribe called Eastern Hu (*Donghu* 東胡), contained similar such necklaces with carnelian and other beads.⁵⁰⁴ In contrast, archaeologists have seldom encountered such jewelry in other Chinese royal or aristocratic tombs of the time.

Liu Sheng was armed with exotic weapons, including an extraordinary short sword (no.196) in his outer coffin (Fig. 3.10). The blade and the hilt are fashioned in iron,

500 Beijing 2007: 1:237-240.

501 Ningxia 1993: 49.

502 Esther Jacobson was surprised by the alien custom of adorning men with necklaces, for in the Greco-Roman culture only women wore such jewelry; see Jacobson 1995: 108.

503 Tian and Guo 1986: 381-82. The dating of Xigoupan Tomb 4 is controversial. Tian and Guo holds early Western Han, although his evidence suggests a later date about mid-Western Han. There has been a new proposal that the tomb is dated to late Western Han or even early Eastern Han; see Pan 2004. I tend to believe in a mid-Western Han date, or late 2nd century BCE.

504 Sun 1960: 27.

and the guard and the pommel are made of a silver-based alloy inlaid with gold. This type of straight-bladed short swords, more often cast in bronze, did not belong in the traditional Chinese arsenal; they were instead favorite small arms of men of the Rong-Di people. Liu's short sword, with its characteristic closed loop at the pommel, falls into Tian and Guo's Type E of such short swords in the Ordos or Xiong Zenglong's Type C in north Hebei, all dating from the mid-Warring States Period, or about the 4th centuries BCE.⁵⁰⁵ Swords with iron blades and hilts but gold inlays – itself a traditional steppe technique⁵⁰⁶ – decorated with elk-related motifs on the blade have been excavated in kurgans at Filippovka on the south bank of Ural River in east Russia.⁵⁰⁷

Derived from these earlier models, Liu Sheng's short sword displays a strong flavor of steppe art. Each side of the blade is inlaid with two parallel rows of gold "flame" patterns, which resembles the antlers of the elk, a totem-like motif in the ancient art of the steppe.⁵⁰⁸ The pommel and the guard are fused with fantastic zoomorphic masks with comma-shaped ears, characteristic of the steppe "animal-style."⁵⁰⁹ The ring-shaped pommel is made of two head-to-head and tail-to-tail joined beasts, each curving its body into a half-ring to face the opponent. It seems the two beasts are jointly supporting the lower end of the hilt with their heads. Meanwhile, each side of the guard is shaped into a

505 Tian and Guo 1986: 7; Shao and Xiong 2005.

506 Armbruster 2010; Shemakhanskaya 2009.

507 Aruz 2000, 80–1, pls.5–6; Yablonsky, 2010.

508 Compare, for example, Gryaznov 1969: figs. 56-58. For the symbolic meaning of the stag motif, see Baumer 2012: 157-63.

509 Zhongguo 1980a: 1:105. Chinese archaeologists call this comma-shaped form "the recessed leaf-like decor" (*aoru yezhuangwen* 凹入葉狀紋) or "water drops decor" (*shuidiwen* 水滴紋); see Tian and Guo 1986: 72.

frontally posed zoomorphic mask, which appears to be holding the upper end of the hilt in its mouth. Although the motifs of supporting and holding objects have been popular in Chinese bronze art since the Shang dynasty, the “confronting animals” style was unmistakably nomadic.

By the late 2nd century BCE such short swords had already become obsolete in China.⁵¹⁰ Like the necklaces, Liu Sheng’s short sword echoes with some remote culture, in either time (Rong-Di) or space (Xiongnu). This short sword was so treasured that it ended up in Liu’s coffin as one of his most intimate weapons.

Another group of “barbaric outfit” objects included five identical rings to which iron pins are attached (no.143), four similar plaques (nos.144, 145), and a connecting tube (no.142) of unknown function.⁵¹¹ They were found in front of the middle tent in Liu Sheng’s front chamber. The gilt plaques bear the “animal combat” motif on one side while leaving the other side unpolished (Fig. 3.11). On the decorated side, a feline leaps upon its prey opens its mouth and attacks its back. The prey with a long neck turns its head around in a desperate attempt to fight back. This motif is very similar to what is represented in two plaques found in present-day Ivolga and Sidorovka in Russia’s Southern Siberia, dating from the same period, i.e. mid-Western Han.⁵¹² In Liu Sheng’s plaque, however, the prey’s head is strangely missing, because it is overlapped by the predator’s head. This careless mistake indicates that Liu’s plaque was probably not a real

510 Tian and Guo 1986: 15.

511 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 98–100.

512 Tian and Guo 1980a: 80, fig. 47.4. Brosseder 2011: 372-78. Although dating of the plaque varies from 3rd century BCE to 4th century CE, the object’s similarity to the Mancheng piece suggests the late 2nd century BCE.

object but a surrogate made specifically for the dead. Although these plaques were unquestionably Chinese products, the motif was derived clearly from the art of the steppes.⁵¹³ Used as decorations for a variety of objects, at Mancheng these rectangular plaques were most likely fastened to the garment belt as a decoration of the waist.⁵¹⁴ And the distinct combination of rings, plaques, and sometimes tubes, has been found in nomadic burials in the Ordos as part of an outfit, which used small rings or tubes to hold belt hooks or pendants.⁵¹⁵ This may suggest that the rings and plaques probably worked as a set as belt ornaments. Another silver belt hook (1: no. 4356) discovered in the front chamber also attests to the nomadic dressing code.

The Zhongshan king not only wore exotic “outfit” objects, but also used non-Chinese “instruments.” The local Rong-Di customs at Zhongshan were quite visible in the interred ceramics and small functional items, which, as a reliable mirror of the local culture, were usually mass-produced in workshops with generations of traditional craftsmanship. Among the large corpus of ceramics excavated at Mancheng, although most of them followed the Han Chinese styles, a few appear quite alien. For example, ten ceramic barrels (*tong* 桶), each with three pointed feet at the bottom and two tiny half-ring-shaped handles on the sides were beyond the mainstream Chinese ceramic traditions (Fig. 3.12).⁵¹⁶ These barrels were related to a special type of non-Han ceramic pots called *guan* 罐, featuring a round body, a flaring mouth, and a pair of half-ring-shaped “ears” on

513 So 1995a: 53-75; Bunker 1997: 47-54.

514 Sun 2013: 202-27; Lu and Shan 2007.

515 Tian and Guo 1986: 108-9, 268; for the combination of rings and belt hooks, see Wang 1982: 75-82, 94. In both cases rings are used with belts.

516 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 129.

the shoulders or sides. Chinese archaeologists have demonstrated that this unique type of vessels was made by the Rong-Di people active in China's northern frontiers during the late Eastern Zhou.⁵¹⁷ Not surprisingly, at least one ceramic pot in Mancheng Tomb 1 falls precisely into this category.⁵¹⁸

In addition to the large utensils, small dining tools were also faithful bearers of foreign cultural traits. These included three silver chopsticks found in Liu Sheng's tomb. Measuring about 11 centimeters long and 0.45 centimeters in diameter, each of these chopsticks was twisted into a spiral shape in the upper half, which is further surmounted by a short square prism, while the lower half is a smooth cylinder, pierced with holes.⁵¹⁹ The spiral design made it easy for the hand to grab; the smooth design guaranteed not to discomfort the mouth or tongue. Whereas early Chinese tombs rarely contained such dining instruments,⁵²⁰ many Eastern Zhou tombs at Ordos were furnished with bronze spoons with the same combination of a spiral handle and a smooth scoop.⁵²¹ Chopsticks made of animal bones were very common in Xiongnu burials.⁵²²

Other "barbaric" metal works decorated the horses. Among a number of silver and bronze horse frontlets decorating Liu Sheng's horses, two feature a distinctive shape

517 Xu 1992; Yang 2008; Ren 2013; Teng and Wang 2011.

518 The object is no. 3211; Zhongguo 1980a: 1:126, 2: pl. 81.1.

519 Zhongguo 1980a: 1:118, 2: pl. 76.1.

520 The earliest chopsticks in China were made of ivory, found in the Ruins of Yin at Anyang, the last capital of the Shang dynasty. The earliest metal ones were cast in bronze, excavated in a hoard at Huijiachong 徽家冲 in present-day Guichi 贵池, Anhui province, dated to the late Spring and Autumn period (6th-5th century BCE); see Anhui 1980.

521 Tian and Guo 1986: 144.

522 Pan 2007: 81-83.

Chinese archaeologists conventionally call “horse face masks” (*mamian* 馬面) (Fig. 3.13).⁵²³ Cast into thin plaques whose shape resembles a frontally posed horse head, with two erected ears and sometimes even eyes, these graphic frontlets are starkly different from traditional Chinese frontlets, which were simple, plain geometric shapes.⁵²⁴ Decades ago Japanese art historian Komai Kazuchika 駒井和愛 noted similar frontlets existed in the ancient Mediterranean world.⁵²⁵ And recent excavations have bolstered his insight. The Yanglang culture in western China was characterized with almost identical mask-like frontlets.⁵²⁶ Similar frontlets also appeared in the art of the Scythians, nomads to whom horses were of a primary importance.⁵²⁷

Other outlandish objects furnished both tombs at Mancheng included an unusual bone needle bearing four holes, three of which are not pierced through.⁵²⁸ Whereas such small tools made of animal bones were unusual in early Chinese tombs in the Bronze Age, they were regular grave goods in many “barbaric cultures,” and especially prominent in the Yanglang culture.⁵²⁹

Even the toys interred for the deceased’s entertainment were exotic. Queen Dou Wan’s front chamber contained a set of tiny bronze figurines representing an ox (2:3046), a horse (2:3047), three mounted riders (2:3025), and a short stout (2:3067), all measuring

523 Zhongguo 1980a: 2: pl.138.

524 Wu 2002.

525 Komai 1936.

526 Wuen 2007: 370, 373.

527 Jacobson 1995: Figs. 141-43; Davis-Kimball 1995: 39, fig. 14.

528 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 214, 335.

529 Wuen 2007: 375.

about 4-7 centimeters tall. Among them the most notable ones are the stout and the riders. The former displays an exotic and intimidating appearance with the bald head, handlebar moustache, bulging muscles, and clasped fists. In short jackets, the three mounted riders with disheveled hair are all dressed in the non-Chinese “left lapel” (*zuoren* 左衽) style, in which the robe opens at the left side of the body, while the Chinese is the “right lapel” style.⁵³⁰ The riders each bear a nail between the legs at the bottom of the body, while the horse is pierced with a hole in the back. The correspondence between the nail and the hole allows the player to mount and dismount the rider at will. Such tiny horseriders and “wrestlers” were Chinese products whose “barbarian” parallels were found in large numbers in Ordos and all over the entire Eurasian steppes.⁵³¹

As a set, these figurines might have been used as game pieces to be played with an 18-faceted dice. In kurgan V buried in the permanently frozen Siberian tundra at Pazyrik in Mongolia, archaeologists unearthed a perfectly preserved square rug with colorful brodered patterns. The composition consists of three concentric square zones, the inner, the middle, and the outer ones. The inner zone contains 24 small squares each with an eight-petal flower pattern, very much reminiscent of that on the facets of Dou Wan’s die. Around the squares is a rim of smaller squares of winged Griffins. The middle zone comprises a sequence of clockwise roaming stags, edged on all sides by a continuous floral pattern similar to the previous one. The outer zone holds a sequence of counter-clockwise promenading horses and riders, with dismounted riders alternated with

530 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 228, 275. Similar figurines, including a four-centimeter-tall tin mounted rider and a 3.3 centimeter-tall sturdy clay figurine, were found in another bamboo case at another slightly later royal tomb at Hongtushan, Juye, Shandong province; see Shandong 1983.

531 Tian and Guo 1986: 134-36.

mounted ones. Noting the initial markings (the two die-like circles) at the bottom right-hand corner, some scholars inferred that this carpet was used for gaming.⁵³² But as Renate Rolle has confessed, “We have no idea how the game started or whether they played with dice or with small bones taken from sheep’s ankle-joints, polished ivory which are found in many graves.”⁵³³

However, the tiny toy set found in Dou Wan’s tomb sheds a valuable light on the question. If we replace the stag with the ox, then the images in the Pazyrik carpet all have their freestanding equivalents in Dou Wan’s tomb. More importantly, the missing dice Rolle wondered about was present with the small figurines and is remarkably similar to the two round die-like markings on the carpet. Based on the comparison, we may assume that what was played here was something analogous to Ludo, except for a “hunting” theme. At least two people can compete, probably one playing the hunter, and one playing the hunted (beast). They might throw the dice in the inner zone alternatively, and move the game pieces (the figurines) along the middle and outer bands according to the roll of dice.

The above inventory of the “barbaric” objects buried at Mancheng may not be exhaustive but suffices to make us rethink the third defining characteristic of the two tombs: the intercultural logic. These miscellaneous objects were associated broadly with the non-Han (Rong-Di) cultures active on the northern and north-western frontiers of China. Although these non-Han artworks and artifacts only represent a small percentage of a total of over ten thousand burial objects, the sheer number and variety of them have

532 Jettmar 1967: 139.

533 Rolle 1989: 98.

been unparalleled among all discovered tombs during the Western Han dynasty. Some of the objects, including the necklaces, the short sword, the elks, the carriage-related felines, and the silver chopsticks, have hitherto found no close parallels in other royal or high-ranking tombs of the Western Han. The deceased not only wore the jewelry, belt plaques, and short sword of the “barbarians,” but also rode their horses and ate with their food and wine vessels and tableware. In this sense, this group of non-Han objects probably should not be considered “exotica,” which assume a Han Chinese perspective.

4. The Distinctive Zhongshan of the Eastern Zhou

So what set Liu Sheng apart from his fellow kings and even from his own descendants?

Zhongshan’s cultural eccentricity did not begin in the Western Han; in fact, as early as the Eastern Zhou, Zhongshan, an ancient state ruled by the White Di, was like Xirong distinguished from its Chinese Huaxia neighbors because of its “barbarity.”

The early history of the Zhongshan kingdom in the Eastern Zhou is shrouded in mist, only to be peered at through a few scattered, fragmentary textual records. According to *Commentary of Zuo* (*Zuo zhuan* 左傳, comp. 4th c. BCE), Zhongshan as an independent kingdom had already made its appearance on the stage of Chinese history by the end of the Western Zhou dynasty (1046-771 BCE).⁵³⁴ Those who established the kingdom were a group of non-Zhou people named in traditional Chinese historiography as White Di 白狄. According to modern historians’ reconstruction, these people, who had different customs from those of the Zhou Chinese, or *huaxia* 華夏, originally lived a half

534 He 2011: 16.

nomadic and half sedentary life like the *rong* 戎 peoples around present-day northern Shaanxi province, depending their lives on herding, hunting, gathering, or even practicing some agriculture.⁵³⁵ About the early Eastern Zhou dynasty (771-221 BCE), as the power of the Western Zhou dynasty waned, they migrated eastwards, bursting into the northern provinces of the Zhou. A group of them invaded and conquered a land called Xianyu 鲜虞, initially ruled by a Zhou Chinese vassal, and settled down (Map 4a). From this time on, they mixed up with the local inhabitants and forged a new hybrid Xianyu people.⁵³⁶ By the 6th to the 5th centuries BCE, the new Xianyu had grown to a local power that the neighboring Zhou Chinese dukedoms including Jin and Qin had to reckon with. No later than 506 BCE they established their own independent kingdom called Zhongshan, literally meaning “The land within mountains.”⁵³⁷ This name reflects, as some scholars suggest, a culture of stone and possibly a cult of mountains.⁵³⁸ Boasted as a “kingdom of a thousand chariots” (*qiansheng zhiguo* 千乘之國), Zhongshan claimed its equal political status and rights along with her Chinese peers, which grew increasingly uneasy about this “barbaric” competitor.⁵³⁹

The real face of this lost nation, however, remained veiled till the 1970s, when two major Zhongshan royal cemeteries were discovered on a vast plateau located south of

535 Lattimore 1988: 347-49; Egami 1951: 294-95; Lin 2009b. Nicola Di Cosmo associate these people with “pastoral nomadism,” or “pre-nomadic pastoral or agro-pastoral society,” see Di Cosmo 2002: 74-75.

536 He 2011: 19-22.

537 He 2011: 58.

538 Hu 1998: 433.

539 Miao 1987: 1149.

the twin mountains Xiling 西陵 and Dongling 東陵.⁵⁴⁰ These cemeteries we shall designate A and B for convenience; A was inside the Eastern Zhou city called Lingshou 靈壽, the capital of Zhongshan, and B was outside it. They included four large tombs numbered by the excavators 1, 2, 6, and 7; a few middle-sized tombs, numbered 3, 4, 5, and 8; and several smaller tombs.⁵⁴¹ The large burials held kings or queens; the more modest ones presumably interred aristocrats or royal concubines. Of all these tombs, the best known is the suburb Tomb 1, the burial complex of King Cuo 聃, the next-to-last king of Zhongshan (d. ca. 310 BCE).⁵⁴²

In the Pingshan cemeteries, even though the Huaxia Chinese influence was indisputable, Chinese archaeologists still unearthed many artifacts that exhibit an unmistakable Rong-Di style, which separates these tombs from their Chinese counterparts. Evidence comes from the “barbaric” bronzes. According to Yang Jianhua, the unmistakable similarity between the Zhongshan and Yuhuangmiao bronze cultures reflects the kinship between the two Di cultures.⁵⁴³ One of these bronze artifacts includes the straight-bladed short sword, whose hilt is decorated with the distinct gridded pattern (*huage* 花格). This type of short swords was characteristic of the Yuhuangmiao culture, probably related to another group of Di people living just to the north of Zhongshan during the early Eastern Zhou, represented by the Jundushan cemetery. The later short

540 Hebei 1979.

541 Among them Tombs 1 and 6 have been published, Tomb 7 briefly reported. Tomb 2 has no literature whatever; Hebei 2005: 119.

542 King Cuo's exact death date remains a matter of debate. The archaeological report gives 313. See Hebei 1996: 1: 533. Li Xueqin 李學勤 and Li Ling 李零 hold to 309; see Li and Li 1979.

543 Yang 2004: 80-82.

sword found in Liu Sheng's tomb, though cast in iron and ornamented in a different style, nevertheless falls into the larger "northern" cultural category. Yang also observed that the Zhongshan and Yuhuangmiao people shared a similar interest in decorating their bronze plaques with the tiger motif.⁵⁴⁴ And perhaps not coincidentally, the same tiger motif also appears in the bronze belt plaques interred in Mancheng Tomb 1.

In addition to the bronzes Yang has discussed, another distinctive type of "barbaric" objects that characterize the Eastern Zhou Zhongshan burials was the necklace, a string of round, tube-shaped, or drum-shaped beads made of carnelian or other sorts of precious stones. In three royal tombs (numbered as M3, M4, and M5), a staggering number of 1,457 beads almost identical with those found at Mancheng were unearthed.⁵⁴⁵ The same type of jewelry, too, was ubiquitous in the Yuhuangmiao cemetery in north Hebei, in which a rich variety and a large number of suspended ornaments decorated the upper torso of the dead body.⁵⁴⁶

The remarkable discovery of the Pingshan cemetery also surprised scholars with a fresh "Animal style,"⁵⁴⁷ which reflects a strong impact of the nomadic art in the Eurasian steppes and even the art in West Asia.⁵⁴⁸ The marriage between Western motifs and Chinese elements gave birth to a new figurative art in China, which emphasizes motion and realistic depiction of the body. King Cuo's tomb the east and west side pits yielded a group of bronze animal statuettes in the form of fantastic winged felines, perhaps

544 Yang 2004: 82.

545 Hebei 2005: 228.

546 Beijing 2007: 1: 237-40.

547 Rostovcev 1929.

548 Bagley 2006.

originally used as mat weights.⁵⁴⁹ Originating in western Asia, the motif of winged animals, identified as either chimeras or griffins, must have been introduced into China via Central Asia and the Eurasian steppes. These exotic animals inlaid with gold or silver are covered with ornamental patterns of Chinese flavor: the motifs of feather-curls or cloud-scrolls.⁵⁵⁰ A sculptural decoration on a bronze stand of a disintegrated wooden object from Cuo's tomb portrays a prowling tiger crushing a paralyzed deer with teeth and claws (Fig. 3.14). The tiger's powerful grip on the deer's leg in a gesture of tearing it off shows a thrilling moment of body dismemberment. No earlier or contemporary tombs in China contained such a strong nomadic artistic flavor, which also separate the Mancheng tombs one and half centuries later from their Han Chinese counterparts.

Stone, Mountain, and the Zhongshan

The mysterious echo between the Eastern Zhou Zhongshan and the Western Han Zhongshan, both featuring a non-Chinese flavor, is reinforced by their unparalleled interest in the imperishable material of stone.

Within the outer cave-like rock "shell" of the Mancheng tombs stood a complex architectural simulation, the house-shaped "core." It was divided into two sections with different media. While the front section, consisting of the front chamber, the tunnel, and the side chambers, was made into wooden structures with sloping tiled roofs, the rear section, comprising the rear chamber and its small side room, resembled a stone house also under a sloping roof. While wood, as mentioned earlier, was popular in the Xirong

549 Hebei 1996: 1: 139-43.

550 So 1980: 310-11.

burials to frame the front chamber, stone remained an unfamiliar architectural medium in China's western region, including Qin and her barbarian neighbors. Used only in the rear chamber, which was concealed behind the wooden houses or pavilions, this material was reserved exclusively for the body.

Consisting of two connected apartments, the main chamber in the north and the affiliated side room in the south, Liu Sheng's stone house fit tightly into and almost occupied the entire rock shell, leaving only a narrow gap for gravels to fill in.⁵⁵¹ In the adjacent Mancheng Tomb 2, earth was used.⁵⁵² With this extra effort, the designer showed little interest in displaying the house's exterior but intended to transform the cave into an architectural interior. In fact, the house's exterior remained invisible as no free space was left for a viewer to circumambulate the house.

Walled, ceiled and paved with a series of stone slabs of different sizes and shapes, the main chamber was the largest and tallest structure in the rear compound. The house's interior walls were painted red, while the invisible exterior was left unpainted, again demonstrating the privilege of the interior. However, the main door connecting the front chamber and the rear compound was somewhat special: this functioning door could be pushed or pulled open and was painted red on both sides of the door leaves. The preferred red color, as Otto Fischer suggested decades ago, might have suggested the mobility of the deceased's vital energy.⁵⁵³ After the funerary ceremony, the door was shut

551 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 22.

552 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 225.

553 Fischer 1931: 95.

permanently, allowing no access, not even visually, to the deceased's body that rested behind it.⁵⁵⁴

Therefore the Mancheng tombs combined two ways of using stone as the mortuary architectural medium: as mountain-cut, and as constructed (i.e. the stone house-shaped casket). Such a seemingly repetitive exploitation of stone only highlights the excessively important role stone played in the entire design of the Mancheng tombs. But this also made them total anomalies in the contemporary local context.

Even though by the late second century BCE, stone had widely been known to the Chinese as a mortuary material,⁵⁵⁵ based on current archaeological data, it was systematically rejected in the Hebei region (i.e. to the north of the Yellow River) during the 2nd century BCE.⁵⁵⁶ The local funerary custom during the early and mid-Western Han was dominated by wooden-structure caskets in vertical earthen shafts, making the Mancheng tombs almost total exceptions. Among more than 200 Han-dynasty tombs excavated in Hebei, only three of them were stone burials, all dating from the late first century BCE to early first century CE, that is, approximately 100 to 150 years after the

554 This intention was suggested by a small bronze latch that was set in a slot carved into the stone floor right at the threshold between the two door leaves. As the door closed, the latch would be automatically switched on to permanently prevent the door from being pushed open from outside (called *dingmenqi* 頂門器 in the excavation report); see Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 17-19.

555 Wu 1995: 121-42. Current archaeological data suggest that there might have been a general enthusiasm about stone at that time throughout the empire, as freestanding stone sculptures were commissioned for Emperor Wu and his favorite general Huo Qubing's tombs. In south China, architects in the kingdom of Nanyue even erected stone columns for a real royal garden in its royal capital Panyu or present-day Guangzhou. Looked at in this broader contemporary – shall we call “pan-Chinese” – context, it seems that the Mancheng tombs were only two normal examples of this contemporary fashion of “lithophilia.”

556 Liu and Liu 2010: 210-14. The only exception was located at Gaozhuang; see Hebei and Luquan 2005.

completion of the Mancheng tombs.⁵⁵⁷ Once again, the Mancheng tombs were mysteriously out of context.

But not so in the diachronic perspective. Stone as a mortuary material was once popular in Hebei during the Eastern Zhou period and was particularly favored in the ancient Zhongshan. In fact, the Zhongshan people's love for stone was unmatched by any other places in China. They expressed the greatest sensation by uniting the rock-cut and constructed stone burials, hence anticipating the practice at Mancheng centuries later.

Although in Pre-Qin China, stone was used from the Neolithic Age onwards as an unconventional burial material in North China,⁵⁵⁸ the Zhongshan royal tombs distinctly combined the two practices of (1) using cut stones to construct a wall (or “casket”) that fully embraced the wooden casket, and (2) cutting the burial shaft into the bedrock to create a stone layer deep enough to hold the coffin.⁵⁵⁹ Current excavated data suggest that the former was earlier, which can be traced back as early as the middle Spring and Autumn period (771-475 BCE), and the latter practice was probably a new development beginning in the Warring States period (475-221 BCE).⁵⁶⁰ Combining the two practices into one fortified stone burial, the Zhongshans were probably the earliest, if not unique,

557 Mu 2001; Even in the even broader region including present-day Beijing, Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi, stone burials were quite rare before the 1st century BCE; see Jiang 2007: 6-7; Jiang 2008: 22-23.

558 Zheng 1993.

559 Another even earlier royal tomb of the Yue (also considered “barbarian” by the Chinese) kingdom also cut vertically into the bedrock at present-day Yinshan, Zhejiang province, in south China, dating from the late Spring and Autumn period, or early 5th century BCE; see Zhejiang and Shaoxing 2002: 11-12. However, this tomb was very unusual and even mysterious, because making such deep rock-cut burials was beyond the Yue mortuary tradition. This led archaeologists to wonder about the possible outlandish origin; see Zhejiang and Shaoxing 2002: 61.

560 For example, Tomb 8004 (M8004), dated to middle Spring and Autumn period, contained a coffin that was surrounded by gravels. The gravels were accumulated up to the level of the top of the coffin; see Hebei 2005: 253.

in China to conceal the deceased body not only in a natural rock shell but also in a manmade stone casket, a synthesis precisely anticipating the practice at Mancheng.

Approached by two ramps, King Cuo's square central grave, 30 meters on a side, contained the deceased king's physical remains. The vertical section of the central grave generally consists of three parts: 1) an underground burial chamber and three smaller and shallower side pits around it; the burial chamber holds the king's casket (*guo*), which encapsulates the coffins (*guan*) and grave goods, and side pits, more grave goods; 2) a larger shaft built directly above the burial chamber and covered by an earth mound; 3) a freestanding offering hall atop the earth mound and the shaft (Fig. 3.15).⁵⁶¹

Like the rear chamber in the Mancheng tombs, which held a stone casket in the deepest end of the burial, the lowest part of Cuo's tomb, or *guo*, was entirely enclosed in stone. Cut stone slabs, blocks, and small pebbles filled the interstices between the casket and the four walls of the shaft, forming an extra stone wall to hold and protect the wooden casket and coffins. Large square or rectangular stone chunks, as thick as 0.9 meters, covered the top of the casket chamber, whose bottom cut three meters into the bedrock at the high grounds facing the southern slopes of Mts. Dongling and Xiling.⁵⁶² In the additional "stone casket" lay the king's wooden casket, which further encased his two nested wooden coffins.⁵⁶³ Although upon discovery the coffins had been totally destroyed by a fire set by the plunders centuries before, the coffins, which contained hundreds of

561 Shi 2015.

562 Hebei 1996:1: 30.

563 Zhao Huacheng made an important observation that the stone layer might have been considered an additional "casket," which marked the privilege of the deceased's multilayer casket and coffins; Zhao 1998.

jade items like their later counterparts at Mancheng were originally settled within the lowest layer of the casket chamber cut entirely into the bedrock, as wooden coffins from this period rarely exceeded three meters in height.⁵⁶⁴ Perhaps to emphasize the significance of the reinforced stone casket, a wooden strip was put into the eastern side pit with a vertically written ink inscription on it: “The treasure [is] heavy; the casket [is] stone” (*bao zhong guo shi* 寶重槨石).⁵⁶⁵

The burial chamber of Tomb 6 was constructed in almost exactly the same manner.⁵⁶⁶ Even the wooden caskets of many lesser tombs in the two cemeteries were either surrounded by stone or partially cut into the bedrock of the high ground under the mountain slopes.⁵⁶⁷ Interestingly, among all the half stone and half earthen burials, the depth of the rock-cut part always varies between 1.95 and 3 meters, no more or less, just tall enough to contain the coffins. This depth ensures the deceased’s body was concealed beneath the surface of the rock.

The emphasized connection between the body and stone shared between the Mancheng and Pingshan tombs suggest a further Zhongshan cultural memory. But their

564 One of the largest known outer coffins from late Eastern Zhou, excavated from the tomb of Marquis Yi of the Zeng state, measures 2.19 meters tall; see Hubei 1989: 1: 19.

565 Hebei 1996: 1: 259, 1: 443, fig. 195.11. I suspect that the inscription was meant to be read in a reversed order as “shiguo zhongbao” 石槨重寶, or “the stone casket [is] a heavy treasure.”

566 Hebei 2005: 125.

567 Tomb 3 was cut 1.95 meters into the bedrock and was surrounded with stones on the four sides; see Hebei 2005: 206; Cuo’s all six satellite tombs (numbered PM1-6) were cut into bedrock. Some of these tombs, such as those code-named PM1 and PM2, were cut 2.7 meters deep into bedrock; see Hebei 2005: 1: 445, 460, 472, 478, 486, 494. Another tomb code-named WPM2, located outside Cuo’s mausoleum, also features a rocky floor; see Hebei 2005: 125. All these tombs date from the 4th-3rd centuries BCE.

physical, external differences raise interesting questions: how do we explain the development, the leap from a modest stone casket to a full-fledged mountain-cut tomb?

After the establishment of the kingdom in late 5th century BCE, the later history of the Zhongshan kingdom, “the sole kingdom in the Central Plains ruled by a non-Chinese people,”⁵⁶⁸ was marked by an intensive struggle, first for supremacy and later for survival, amid a number of invasive Chinese kingdoms, including Wei 魏, Zhao, Yan 燕, and Qi 齊, which were closing in from all directions with their superior military strength (Map 4b).

About 457 BCE, the Zhao kingdom to the north assaulted and defeated Zhongshan, seized its capital and devastated the nation. Half a century later between 408 and 406 BCE, while the old scars had barely healed, a second mishap descended. This time the Wei kingdom in the south won a decisive victory over Zhongshan and annexed the entire country. But the Zhongshans were known for their extraordinary tenacity and courage in facing defeats and disasters. Sometime between 380 and 378 BCE, while Wei was weakened in a battle against Chu and Zhao, Zhongshan, supported by the Qi kingdom, seized the opportunity to reclaim their state.⁵⁶⁹ But almost immediately they began facing waves after waves of military attacks. Eventually in 299 BCE, after eight years of ceaseless bloody campaigns, the Zhao army crushed the defense of Zhongshan and forced its king to flee to the Qi kingdom. In the following year, the king of Zhao put

⁵⁶⁸ Yang 1998: 286.

⁵⁶⁹ There are different opinions regarding the year of the kingdom’s reestablishment, though not dramatically different. Yang Kuan believed it to be 380 BCE and Meng Wentong 蒙文通 held 378 BCE. While Yang’s view was shared by Duan Lianqin, Meng’s theory was supported by Li Xueqin and Li Ling. See Yang 1998: 299; Meng 1958: 87; Duan 1982: 105-9; Li and Li 1979: 166. See also He 2011: 72-73.

Shang 尚 (or Sheng 勝), a member of the Zhongshan royal house, onto the throne and turned the hostile nation into an ally.⁵⁷⁰ But the peace did not last for long as the two states soon became enemies again.

The historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (d. 87 BCE) offers a succinct but explicit account on the final destiny of the last Zhongshan king and his family:

In the second year of King Huiwen 惠文, Zhufu (King Wuling 武靈) paid a visit to the New Land (Xindi 新地).⁵⁷¹ He henceforth exited the Dai 代 prefecture, journeyed westward, and met the king of Loufan by the West River (Xihe 西河) to call up the [Loufan] army. In the third year, [Zhufu] annihilated Zhongshan and sent its king to exile in Fushi.

惠文王二年，主父行新地。遂出代，西遇樓煩王於西河而致其兵。三年，滅中山，遷其王於膚施。⁵⁷²

These two events, i.e. Zhufu's travel and the demise of Zhongshan, were directly related. A year prior to his military action, the Zhao king inspected the newly conquered Zhongshan territory, and then immediately paid a diplomatic visit westward to the Loufan, another "barbarian" tribe active in the middle Yellow River valley (Xihe) in northern Shaanxi and Shanxi (see Map 4b).⁵⁷³ According to an account in the early 2nd

⁵⁷⁰ Sima 1959: 5.210.

⁵⁷¹ The term "Xindi" 新地 in the Warring States period often referred to newly conquered lands. Here it most likely denotes the land the Zhao had just seized from the Zhongshan during the 298 BCE campaign; see Lin 2003: 331.

⁵⁷² Sima 1959: 43.1813.

⁵⁷³ Meng 1958: 101-2. The "West River" (Xihe), as the Qing historian Gu Donggao 顧棟高 (1679-1759) noted, was a land around Fushi, which was considered as the place of origin for the White Di people: "There were three branches of White Di, all originated in the same prefecture with the Qin

century BCE, the southern end of the Loufan territory was only about 291 kilometers to the north of Chang'an 長安, the imperial capital of the Western Han.⁵⁷⁴ Then the Loufan tribes were active somewhere to the north of Gaonu 高奴 in present-day Yan'an 延安 in Shaanxi, precisely in the area near Fushi 膚施, the capital city of Xihe near present-day Mizhi 米脂 in northern Shaanxi province (see Map 4). There a military pact was signed.⁵⁷⁵ Under the treaty, in the following year the Zhao, with the help from the Loufan, successfully annexed the Zhongshan. The booties were subsequently divided: the Zhao seized the land, and the Loufan took the people, or the Zhongshan royalty, back to their Fushi.⁵⁷⁶ The deal was cut into a win-win situation for both victors. While Zhongshan's

people in nowadays Yan'an in Shaanxi, a place called the 'land of West River' (Xihe). And the derivative branches in nowadays Zhending, Gaocheng, and Jinzhou were called respectively as Xianyu, Fei, and Gu." 白狄之種有三，其先與秦同州，在陝之延安，所謂“西河之地”。其別種在今之真定、城、晉州者，曰鮮虞、曰肥、曰鼓。See Gu 1993: 2160. For Xihe in the Warring States period, see Wu 2006; Tian 2014.

574 According to Sima 1959: 99.2719, the closest Loufan was only 700 Chinese *li* away from Chang'an: 劉敬從匈奴來，因言「匈奴河南白羊、樓煩王，去長安近者七百里，輕騎一日一夜可以至秦中。」

575 Here the key phrase is “zhi qi bing” 致其兵, which suggests that the Zhao requested military aid to come from the Loufan, although the purpose was only implied in the next sentence. One example appears in *The History of Jin* (Jin shu): “Since the ancient times, in terms of asking for military aid, without sending high-ranking ministers as envoys, large troops would not come to the rescue.” 但自古乞援，不遣大臣則不致重兵. Fang 1974: 128.3182.

576 Almost all historians used to believe it referred roughly to present-day Mizhi, but recently this view was challenged by Li Ling, who with paleographic evidence from dated inscriptions on excavated weapons of the Qin kingdom argued that Fushi was then under the control of the Qin rather than the Zhao. Based on bronze inscriptions, he demonstrated that there could be multiple places during the Warring States period that shared the name (or the sound) Fushi, and further suggested that what Sima Qian really meant was a synonymous place near present-day Taiyuan in Shanxi province (Futi 膚虜); see Li 2008: 29. But Li's argument that Fushi equals Futi is not without questions. Wu Liangbao pointed out that the bronze inscriptions Li cited as evidence was not sufficient; see Wu 2012. I just want to supplement that even though the Qin kingdom might have established the Shang Prefecture 上郡 around Fushi before the demise of Zhongshan, it does not mean the whole vast area was entirely populated by (or in the firm hands of) the Qin immigrants. As Meng Wentong has noted, Loufan and other mobile “barbarians” were still thriving between the Chinese cities in the vast prefecture as a formidable power; see Meng 1958: 103.

land was closer to the Zhao and useless to the Loufan, its people (especially the elites) were ethnically more related to the Loufan and dangerous to the Zhao. It seems that the Zhao's "final solution" to the Zhongshan question was to drive them far away from the Central Plains back to their distant "barbaric" place of origin. It was northern Shaanxi that greeted the defeated Zhongshan royal house back to their ancestral land in 296 BCE. In the years that followed, they might have dissolved in this hybrid local population, which at that time was under the sway of the increasing power of the nomadic Xiongnu.⁵⁷⁷ These people were the last "barbaric" Zhongshan.

When Liu Sheng became king of Zhongshan in 154 BCE, the Chinese empire had already begun setting up a string of colonies and military forts in the *Xihe* prefecture (*jun* 郡) to claim its ownership of this "new land." But in reality, Loufan, the nomadic tribe, descending from the pastoral Rong-Di and then a member of the nomadic Xiongnu Confederation, still roamed in the vast, largely unpopulated frontier area.⁵⁷⁸ It had remained independent until being assimilated into the Xiongnu during the early 2nd century BCE, and stiffly stood in the way of the expanding Han power, only to be driven

What's more, the only Han-dynasty Fushi existed in Shaanxi according to the "Treatise of Geography" (*dilizhi* 地理志) in *Hanshu*. There is no evidence in any extant Han literature about a second Fushi. Had it been indeed another Fushi where the Zhongshan royalties were exiled, it would be very surprising that such an important place would have become totally lost in the map of the Han dynasty. Furthermore, located in the region called "River Loop" (Hetao 河套) in Shaanxi, Fushi occupied such a strategic spot between the Xiongnu and the Han, which Liu Sheng should have never ignored. According to Sima Qian, Fushi fell into the hands of the Xiongnu soon after the Qin Empire collapsed and was not retaken by the Han by force until 127 BCE, almost under the direct watch of Liu Sheng; see Sima 1959: 110.2897. In 61 BCE, the court established four imperial shrines at Fushi, showing its importance and fame; see Ban 1962: 94.3750.

⁵⁷⁷ Di Cosmo 2004: 83-87.

⁵⁷⁸ Chen 2013. However, Chen identified Loufan mainly in southern Inner Mongolia and ignored their presence in Northern Shaanxi.

away by force in 127 BCE, that is, 26 years into Liu Sheng's reign.⁵⁷⁹ Even though politically Liu Sheng's Zhongshan was an enemy of Loufan, culturally it was still associated with those vigorous people, who preserved part of its lost past.

Whilst the royal house was sent by the Zhao victor back to their "barbaric" origin on the other side of the Yellow River, the majority of the Zhongshan population remained in their land and became subjects under the Chinese (Zhao, and later Qin and Han) rule. However, even without the leadership of the royal house, the Di stone culture did not come to an end. The Zhongshan funerary practice of using stone caskets was taken up by the Zhao conquerors, who modified it further to develop a full-fledged mountain-cut tomb, so far the earliest known one in Hebei, a possible missing link between the Eastern Zhou Zhongshan burials and the Mancheng tombs.

In 1997 a group of treasure-hunters broke into the royal Zhao Mausoleum 2, located on a high ground to the northwest of the Chensanling 陳三陵 village near present-day Handan 邯鄲, Hebei province, where the last capital city of the Zhao once stood.⁵⁸⁰ When archaeologists went in, they discovered a vertical mountain-cut tomb dated to the late Warring States period about the mid-3rd century BCE, the earliest known example of this kind. Because an inscription from the tomb suggests that the tomb

579 Sima 1959: 110.2889-2890. 東胡初輕冒頓，不為備。及冒頓以兵至，擊，大破滅東胡王，而虜其民人及畜產。既歸，西擊走月氏，南并樓煩、白羊河南王。（侵燕代）悉復收秦所使蒙恬所奪匈奴地者，與漢關故河南塞，至朝**邯**、膚施，遂侵燕、代。

Sima 1959: 111.2923. 明年，匈奴入殺遼西太守，虜略漁陽二千餘人，敗韓將軍軍。漢令將軍李息擊之，出代；令車騎將軍青出雲中以西至高闕。遂略河南地，至于隴西，捕首虜數千，畜數十萬，走白羊、樓煩王。遂以河南地為朔方郡。

580 For a latest survey of the Zhao royal cemeteries, see Duan 2009: 141-47.

occupant might have ruled over 31 years, the excavators have identified the tomb occupant as King Huiwen of the Zhao 趙惠文王 (r. 298-265 BCE).

This mausoleum (B) in many formal aspects stands between the earlier Eastern Zhou Zhongshan tombs (A) and the later Mancheng tombs (C) (Table 1).

On the one hand, like the Mancheng tombs, the Zhao mausoleum consists of two parallel burials both oriented to the east. Approached by two ramps (*mudao* 墓道) in the east and the west respectively, the plundered burial cutting into the mountain features a square base and a vaulted top, which resembles the front chamber at Mancheng. The vault, which boasts a remarkable height of 17 meters, once caused some speculations on the tomb being the earliest known cliff-cut one in China, but the excavators rejected this possibility and insisted that this special shape was a result of the collapse of the interior ceiling.⁵⁸¹

On the other hand, like the Pingshan tombs, the Zhao royal burial was a vertical shaft surmounted by a single-leveled rectangular terrace constructed of pounded earth. This terrace measures 234 by 190 meters in area, peaking at an impressive altitude of 168 meters, nearly as tall as the Mancheng tombs. On the east side of the terrace, an upward path was paved for people to reach the terrace, similar to the Pingshan and Mancheng tombs. On top of the terrace stand two pyramidal mounds side by side, each surmounting a tomb chamber below.

581 Zhao and Li 2009: 91.

What's more, like both the Pingshan and Mancheng tombs, the Zhao mausoleum 2 also included, on the earth terrace, wooden structures, which have been tentatively identified as ritual halls.⁵⁸²

Although the formal excavation report of the tomb is yet to be released, the general structure, a single-chamber, vaulted burial cut vertical into the mountain has already rewritten our understanding of the history of mountain-cut tombs in Hebei.⁵⁸³ It suggests that Mancheng's audacious constructions penetrating deep into the hillside were probably not derived from Liang or Chu as previously assumed, but nurtured locally, at least partially, with the inspiration of the Zhao vertical mountain-cut burial, which itself might have been appropriated from the lithophilic burials of the Zhongshan they had recently conquered. Bridged by the Zhao Chinese and the Rong-Di people living between the Han and the Xiongnu, the two Zhongshan kingdoms, though 150 years apart, were intrinsically related. This bond was rooted in their common "barbaric" Di origin and identity. This trait of the Zhongshan culture is easy to be ignored because it is

582 Le 2007.

583 Scholars used to believe that mountain-cut burials began with Ba Mausoleum, tomb of Emperor Wen of the Western Han (r. 179–157 BCE), based on an account from Sima Qian's *Shiji*. Located about 29 kilometers to the southeast of Chang'an, this well-known Ba Mausoleum is believed as cut into the broken cliff of the Bailu 白鹿 plateau. According to the story, one day in 169 BCE, he ascended onto his own Mausoleum Ba 霸陵 and expressed himself emotionally: "Alas! Making my casket with stone from the Northern Mountains, securing it with linen cloth and then gluing the cloth with lacquer, how could the casket still be shaken!" 孝文皇帝居霸陵，北臨廁，意悽愴悲懷，顧謂群臣曰：“嗟乎！以北山石為槨，用紵絮斫陳漆其間，豈可動哉！” Sima 1959: 2753. Translation by Wu Hung, slightly modified; Ban 1962: 1951, 2309. Although whether Emperor Wen's tomb was indeed made of stone will require direct archaeological evidence to prove, the text does suggest his sentiment about a rock-cut burial. However, the new archaeological discovery at Chensanling suggests that the emperor's idea of a mountain-cut stone casket might have derived from the Zhao burial practice. Emperor Wen had been King of Dai, a small state located on the northern border of the Zhao in present-day northern and middle Shanxi and northwestern Hebei, for 17 years before he was chosen to be emperor. Throughout his life, he might have had a strong identification with the Dai and other nearby northern cultures. The native Dai people, according to Lin Yun, were ethnically related to the Di, whose another branch established the Zhongshan in the Eastern Zhou; see Lin 2009b: 6.

overwhelmed by the dominant Chinese Huaxia or Han cultural elements adopted by the Zhongshan rulers.

5. The Sensuous Hall of the “Decadent” Zhongshan

After the fall of Zhongshan in 295 BCE, most of the Zhongshan people remained where they had been for centuries in the new Chinese regime, merged up with the Huaxia into a special local custom, which was reflected in the Mancheng tombs.

In the simulated “temple” of Mancheng Tomb 1, filled with dozens of plain and sober ritual vessels, there was a full spectrum of sensuous pleasures. The incense-burner released aroma; the tripods, steamers, and cauldrons presented delicious food; tasty wine flowed; lamps shone; the entertainers noised; even sex was no longer a taboo.

One of the most controversial findings in the front chamber was a bronze phallus located in front of the primary tent (no.179) (Fig. 3.16). With two heads but one body, the object bends into a V shape. In the north bay of the front chamber archaeologists found another similar bronze phallus with two egg-shaped pebbles (no.18), and a third single-headed silver one (no.370), whose original location remains unknown.

The placement of the phalli raises the question of the nature of the space. Although closed tents (*weibo* 帷薄), a synonym of sex, in the Han dynasty were often used to shield sexual activities from the public view, none of the dildos was found inside the tents. Instead, one phallus was laid ostentatiously in front of the primary tent next to the ceramic attendants. Another one in the northern bay was situated by the ceramic lamps in one of the brightest areas in the chamber. It seems these inappropriate objects

were not meant to be concealed in hidden, secret spots, but overtly displayed with the least sense of shame.

Identified as dildos made for female users during sexual games, these multiple sexual toys represent a randy carnival.⁵⁸⁴ The lustful scenario contradicts, or at least complicates, the solemnity represented by the orderly arranged and dedicated ritual vessels. The place was no longer an ascetic religious one, but a secularized occasion endorsing and celebrating the pleasure of body.

Liu Sheng was not the only active sex pursuer in the royal houses.⁵⁸⁵ Robert van Gulik masterfully studied the shockingly brazen sadistic tendencies of some Western Han princes, entertained by horrible open shows of sexual intercourse between palace ladies and male animals.⁵⁸⁶ Some illustrations of such carnival banquets popular in the Western Han courts can be found on the exterior face of a group of third-century lacquerwares in General Zhu Ran's (182-249) tomb. These paintings feature erotic and even lewd scenes that violate Confucian ethics. In one painting, the male host in the tent holds two ladies in his arms, a salacious scene rarely depicted in conventional banquet scenes, and a young male guest named Ziben 子本 is lustfully chasing a woman labeled as "Empress" (*huanghou* 皇后). In a second painting, a person labeled as "Emperor Wu of the Han" (*Han Wudi* 漢武帝) is flirting with the wife of the Prime Chancellor (*chengxiang* 丞

584 Li 2001: 450. *Zhongguo* 1980a: 1: 100, 120.

585 Most recently in 2011, archaeologists excavated two bronze penises in the gallery of a royal tomb at Dayunshan (Tomb 1), attributed to a King of Jiangdu named Liu Fei 劉非 (d.127 BCE); see Nanjing nd Xuyi 2013.

586 van Gulik 1961: 55–72.

相).⁵⁸⁷ Such lascivious activities later called the “secret play” (*mixi* 秘戲) were outrageous taboos from a Confucian point of view.

As shown in the paintings, Liu Sheng’s “secret play” was accompanied with other playful entertainments. Two little human figurines, both cast in bronze were placed around the table before the primary tent (Fig. 3.17). Although initially manufactured as “mat weights,” the figurines were also fashioned into vivid statuettes.⁵⁸⁸ Of the same scale and about the same motif, these two objects clearly make a pair. Each man wears a circular pointed hat and a loose robe with half of the torso exposed.⁵⁸⁹ Compared with the ceramic figurines, the two half-naked men display non-Chinese physiognomies. The face is particularly exaggerated with a prominent snout and bulging cheeks, whilst mongloids in which Chinese belong have a flat face and a low nose. One of the figures opens his mouth in a moment of speaking, chanting, or singing. His companion in response holds his right palm upright close to his right ear and rests the other palm on his left knee as if he was attentively listening. This posture, reminiscent of the later Buddhist “Feat Not” mudra, might have impressed the Western Han viewer as enigmatic and outlandish. Perhaps because of the funny facial expression and body gestures, scholars have identified these two figurines as “entertainers.”⁵⁹⁰

587 Anhui 1986.

588 Sun 1983. Early mat weights appeared in the Eastern Zhou tombs; see Sun 1995. For a recent exhibition catalogue of such mat weights, see Wang 2006. A group of four similar bronze figurines were uncovered in Xinyiqu Tomb 5 at Yima. They were just slightly smaller than the two counterparts in Liu Sheng’s front chamber and less elaborate in decoration. See Li 1995. Another four-piece set was recently unearthed at Dayunshan Tomb 1 in 2010, see Nanjing and Xuyi 2013.10: 36.

589 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 100.

590 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 100. Rawson identifies them as “storytellers” from southwest of China. See Rawson 1996: 83–4.

Alcohol was abundant in both tombs at Mancheng. Almost all the vessels displayed in the tent and before it were containers of wine or alike. In the south side chamber, archaeologists found sixteen giant clay jars (*gang* 缸), each measuring 66–76 centimeters tall and about 50 centimeters in diameter with a capacity of over 1,000 liters. Inscriptions on the shoulders of some of these jars list names of different kinds of brew.⁵⁹¹ Stains on the interior faces of the jars confirm that these containers were once fully loaded.⁵⁹² In contrast, grains – the major source of food for the Chinese — were not well supplied, for the excavators uncovered not one granary (*cang* 倉) among hundreds of vessels in the side chambers, the commonest burial object in many contemporary tombs.⁵⁹³ Nor did they find any inscriptions on other containers indicating grains. The sharp contrast between too much alcohol and too few provisions releases only one message: the deceased cared far less about regular food than about pleasing, addictive drinks.

At Mancheng, these fun-making instruments in the temple setting side by side with ritual jades and bronzes appears utterly inharmonious, if not outrageous, if the viewer remembers what Confucius said in *The Book of Rites*: “When a sacrifice has come to the point of greatest reverence, it should not be immediately followed by music.”⁵⁹⁴ In fact, the official ritual manual *Old Han Rituals* (*Han jiuyi* 漢舊儀), which documented

591 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 126–27.

592 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 126.

593 Hayashi 1975. Sterckx 2011.

594 祭極敬，不繼之以樂。Legge 1967: 2: 330.

props used on sacrificial occasions in the imperial temple, contained none of such contents.⁵⁹⁵

6. Ruling the “Decadent” with Decadence

Wasn't it an irony that the tomb designer methodically set up a solemn “temple,” only to be disturbed by such unorthodox indulgence as drinking, playing, and even sex at an unparalleled degree? Similar “contradictions,” in effect, made perfect sense in the local and historical context of the revived Zhongshan kingdom during the 2nd century BCE.

In the first month of 154 BCE, seven most powerful satellite kingdoms in the east half of the empire committed a joint military insurgency, and the fate of the empire was hanging in the balance.⁵⁹⁶ Although the callow rebels were shortly crushed and the fate of the empire rescued, Emperor Jing's shock and resentment about the overt betrayal was not easy to heal.⁵⁹⁷ In the immediate aftermath of this event, the emperor dismembered the Zhao 趙 kingdom, one of the largest rebelling states in present-day Hebei in north China, into six much smaller kingdoms.⁵⁹⁸ The harshest revenge the emperor took to the rebels, however, was his plan of hammering out a new kingdom called Zhongshan, literally meaning “[the Kingdom] within Mountains,” right in the heartland of the Zhao, which destroyed Zhongshan, its irreconcilable foe, in 196 BCE (see Map 4b). The purpose of the strategy was unambiguous: the emperor wanted to forge a reliable and

⁵⁹⁵ Sun 1990: 100.

⁵⁹⁶ For a historical background of this well-known rebellion, see Hulsewé 1981; Akikawa 2001.

⁵⁹⁷ Sima 1959: 2082; Ban 1962: 2208.

⁵⁹⁸ Zhou 1987: 79-97; Wang 1984: 55-61.

strong ally in the hostile territory by restoring his enemy's bitterest enemy. The reviving Zhongshan was part of the emperor's greater political scheme to secure the imperial control of the rebellious provinces and people, once and for all. The job went to his ninth son, prince Liu Sheng, the first king of Zhongshan.

From his first day on the throne, Liu Sheng's mission was to assist the empire in securing its unruly north frontier through a strong and peaceful kingdom of Zhongshan. This was no easy task, particularly after hostility and warfare between the Han and the Xiongnu began to escalate in 133 BCE after the pacifying "peace marriage" (*heqin* 和親) policy had collapsed. Wars between the two sides were imminent.⁵⁹⁹ Zhongshan, which stood near the border of Han and Xiongnu, should have served as an important staging post and supply base for the Han army.⁶⁰⁰ Any new insurgencies in this region, once taken advantage of by the Xiongnu, could have caused turmoil and even havocs. It must have been a vivid and poignant memory that in 177 BCE Liu Xing 劉興居 (d. 177 BCE), then the king of the Jibei 濟北 kingdom, surprised Emperor Wen, who was away with his generals in a military action against the Xiongnu, with a sudden rebellion.⁶⁰¹ The Han Empire simply could not afford another such treacherous stab in the back at such a critical moment.

Liu Sheng took this challenge seriously and achieved a notable success: the northern region remained relatively calm and peaceful throughout his 42-year-long reign without any turmoil being reported. Perhaps for this achievement, upon his death in 113

⁵⁹⁹ Sima 1959: 110.2905; Watson 1993: 138; di Cosmo 2004: 227, 247.

⁶⁰⁰ Sima 1959: 94.3764; see also Tan 1982: 2:17. During the early 1st century CE, however, there were direct reports about Zhongshan directly facing the Xiongnu threat; see Fan 1965: 22.779.

⁶⁰¹ Sima 1959: 10.425.

BCE, Liu Sheng was posthumously awarded the title “jing” 靖, meaning “the Pacifier.”⁶⁰²

The emperor respected Liu Sheng so much that he even composed four poems as a gift to Liu Sheng’s descendants after Liu Sheng’s death.⁶⁰³

Although Liu’s secret of success has been a mystery, due to the lack of written documents, the mortuary architecture and visual materials that echo the barbaric past of Zhongshan reveal an effort of reiterating the tradition of Zhongshan. The powerful culture weapon was to forge a strong bond and identification among the local population and to effectively rule his kingdom and people.

To the imperial historians in the Han dynasty, there was not much to say about Liu Sheng except his being a brazenly indulgent, lustful character. According to historian Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), Liu Sheng was notorious for his insatiable desire for women and had more than 120 children. He was also addicted to alcohol.⁶⁰⁴ Nevertheless, he never felt a shred of shame for his apparently decadent lifestyle: on one occasion he openly justified his behavior by claiming that “As kings, we should enjoy music and sex every day!”⁶⁰⁵

But how did the carnival scene fit into the heroic political mission?

602 According to the “Explanations of Posthumous Titles” (*shifajie* 謚法解) chapter in *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書 (comp. before 4th c. CE), the title “jing” meant the following virtues or good deeds: “Pacify the people with gentle virtues,” “fulfilling the people’s wishes and giving them peace,” “Keeping oneself respectful and upright,” “speaking little but wisely;” “being tolerant, happy, and dying a good death,” “having easy personality and fond of literature,” “dying a natural death with good deeds;” see Kong 1937: 3693: 201-2.

603 Ban 1962: 30.1754.

604 Ban 1962: 53.2425–6.

605 Ban 1962: 53.2425–6.

Liu Sheng, like many successful politicians in Chinese history, might have deliberately led an indulgent, lustful life to gain political advantage. This assumption is based on a historical episode, which sufficiently portrays Liu Sheng as a very smart man who knew precisely how to achieve this goal with shrewd methods.

In 144 BCE with the death of his father and the ascension of his half-brother, Emperor Wu, onto the imperial throne, Liu Sheng suddenly faced another political foe in the imperial court: those officials who constantly bad-mouthed him in front of the suspicious emperor, who loved to exploit any chance to weaken his sibling rivals. On one occasion in 138 BCE he attended a party the emperor hosted for his brother kings. When everyone was in high spirit and the atmosphere was in perfect harmony, Liu Sheng suddenly wept. After the emperor wondered what had gone wrong, Liu Sheng, threw all his literary talent and made a heart-touching speech about his deep sorrow and sadness of being vilified by imperial officials and mistrusted by the emperor. Hearing these complaints, the emperor, who was playing his role as a benign host and big brother at the moment, was forced into a situation in which he could not say “no.” As he hoped, Liu Sheng cleverly achieved all his goals: the emperor dismissed the criticism from his officials and rewarded his uncles, brothers, or cousins with more generosity.⁶⁰⁶

Liu Sheng was a thoughtful actor. By behaving “decadently,” he not only evaded the emperor’s suspicion of his political ambition but also found a good way to rule the Zhongshan by following its essentially “barbaric” customs.

Eastern Zhou authors classified the people of Zhongshan into the barbarians (Rong-Di), which unlike Chinese *huaxia* lived an unethical life as “jackals and wolves”

606 Ban 1962: 53.2422.

(*chailang* 豺狼).⁶⁰⁷ One of their bad customs was severe enough to be criminal to the Chinese eyes: the addiction to alcohol. According to *Zuozhuan*, the Jin state, one of the Chinese *huaxia*, launched a military assault on the Rong-Di in 594 BCE. One of Jin's five excuses to justify the war was the latter's addiction to alcohol.⁶⁰⁸ Indeed, according to some folk stories, the Zhongshan alcohols were deadly intoxic. Legend has it that a native of Zhongshan named Dixi 狄希 was able to brew a strong beverage that could turn the drinker into lack of consciousness for a thousand days.⁶⁰⁹ Although the story might be exaggerating, the surviving liquor in King Cuo's tomb after 2,400 years and the sheer quantity of liquor jars stored in Liu Sheng's north chamber both testify to this lost drinking culture.⁶¹⁰

Another terrible blemish frequently criticized by Han Chinese authors was Zhongshan people's "shameless" indulgence in sex. In *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), Tu Shu 屠黍, a legendary wise historian, ascribed the demise of Zhongshan to its lustful custom: "The customs of Zhongshan allow people to make the day into night, and the night to continue into the day. Men and women are always kissing and hugging and never want to stop. They indulge in pleasures, revel in debauchery..."⁶¹¹ Sima Qian associated this excessive sexual drive with the decadent "leftover people of the lustful place" (*yindi yumin* 淫地餘民) of the notoriously lustful King Zhou 紂 (d.

607 戎狄豺狼，不可厭也。Ruan 1980: 2: 1786.

608 狄有五罪:不祀,一也;嗜酒,二也;棄仲章而奪黎民地,三也;虐我伯姬,四也;傷其君目,五也。Ruan 1980: 2: 1887.

609 Gan 1979: 235.

610 Hebei 1996: 1: 509-10.

611 中山之俗，以昼為夜，以夜繼日，男女切倚，固無休息。Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 374-76.

1046 BCE), the last king of the Shang dynasty.⁶¹² The three silver and bronze dildos, which were used to prolong sexual intercourse, make a perfect footnote to these probably not entirely fabricated reports.

The Zhongshan people were also known for their fondness and talent for playing dramas.⁶¹³ Lady Li, one of Emperor Wu's favorite lovers, was a dancer and native of Zhongshan.⁶¹⁴ In addition to the storytellers in Liu Sheng's front chamber, his rear chamber held a unique bronze statuette of a strange man (no.89) (Fig. 3.18). Although he has a large and realistically modeled head, his body – particularly the legs – is disproportionately short and minimally fashioned.⁶¹⁵ I identify this short and funny-looking man as a dwarf (*zhuru* 侏儒) whose job was to entertain the audience with his funny looks and acts. In the Western Han imperial court, as the official historian Sima Qian has reported, dwarfs were popular actors and performers (*changyou* 倡優).⁶¹⁶

Although the new king of Zhongshan was not a Xianyu royal descendant, but a Chinese king from the imperial Liu family, the original imperial edict (*ceshu* 策書) was lost, three other surviving examples from the 117 BCE revealed a relatively formulaic mission statement for the provincial kings: herding the local people, knowing their

612 中山地薄人眾，猶有沙丘紂淫地餘民。Sima 1959: 129.3263.

613 Sima 1959: 129.3263.

614 Ban 1962: 97a.3950.

615 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 100.

616 For examples, see Sima 1959: 1222, 1915. Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192) left a rhapsody titled “Rhapsody of Dwarfs” (Duanren fu) portraying these popular entertainers; see Fei 1993: 576.

customs and harnessing their bad habits.⁶¹⁷ Playing the tactics of culture and custom, Liu Sheng might have taken up the traditional strategy of “ruling the people by their customs” (*cong su zhi* 從俗治), which had long been implemented by Chinese rulers to harness a foreign people.⁶¹⁸ In *The Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮, comp. 4th-3rd c. BCE), the author advised that instructing people by customs could achieve peace.⁶¹⁹ On another occasion, the same author repeated that “rites and customs can be used to administrate the people.”⁶²⁰ Another Confucian classic, *The Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記, comp. 2nd-1st c. BCE), included a similar caution: “You should cultivate the people without changing their customs.”⁶²¹ A well-educated aristocrat, Liu Sheng must have been familiar with these classic teachings.

During the 2nd century BCE, the strategy was theorized. Liu An 劉安 (179-122 BCE), an uncle of Liu Sheng’s and king of the Huainan principality in Jiangsu, commissioned a comprehensive volume titled *The Master of Huainan* (*Huainanzi* 淮南子, comp. 2nd c. BCE), which blended various philosophic currents of the time. A whole lengthy chapter, titled “Placing Customs on a Par” (*Qisu xun* 齊俗訓), was devoted to justifying local customs. While introducing the text, Andrew Meyer correctly noted the historical context of Chinese imperialization in which this chapter was conceived and

617 “[The edict] respectively advised and admonished the kings with their kingdoms’ customs” 各以國土風俗申誡焉; Ban 1962: 63.2749, 2759.

618 Chen 2004.

619 Ruan 1980: 1:703. 以俗教安.

620 Ruan 1980: 1: 646. 六曰禮俗,以馭其民.

621 Ruan 1980: 1: 1338. 修其教,不易其俗.

composed: “Not only were the striking differences in ritual and customs among the Sinic people united under the empire, but, with the expansion of the territorial boundaries into the non-Sinic world, imperial officials now had to face the challenge of governing people who had no knowledge of sense of participation in the culture of the central court.”⁶²² Liu Sheng’s Zhongshan kingdom fell into the non-Sinic situation.

The author of the *Qisu xun* chapter contended, in an acrimonious tone, that “arrogant falsehood that deludes the age and haughty conduct that separates one from the masses—these the sage does not take as customs for the people.”⁶²³ This statement is nearly a perfect footnote for a well-known dialogue occurring between Liu Sheng and his brother Liu Pengzu 劉彭祖 (d. 92 BCE), King of the Zhao kingdom, who actively participated in governing his people. According to historian Ban Gu, Liu Sheng and Liu Pengzu often reprimanded each other. “My brother,” said Liu Sheng, “you are too preoccupied with taking the role of officials to handle political business. As kings, we should listen to music and have sex every day!” Pengzu quickly rebutted: “You, the king of Zhongshan, lead a lustful life every day and refuse to assist the Son of Heaven to administrate the people. How can you deserve the title of ‘vassal’?”⁶²⁴ Liu Sheng’s non-interfering attitude made him a natural ally of the author of the *Qisu xun*, who went as far as to claim that it was a legitimate modern manner for men and women to touch each

622 Major 2010: 393.

623 矜偽以惑世，佞行以違眾，聖人不以為民俗。Zhang 1997: 1116; English translation from Major 2010: 400.

624 常與趙王彭祖相非曰：「兄為王，專代吏治事。王者當日聽音樂，禦聲色。」趙王亦曰：「中山王但奢淫，不佐天子拊循百姓，何以稱為藩臣！」 Ban 1962: 59.2099.

other's body on the busy streets of a metropolis, totally against what had been condemned by orthodox Han-dynasty authors as "barbarianism."⁶²⁵

Although whether Liu Sheng read this famous book under his uncle's name remains a mystery, he precisely faced the same question that obsessed the author of *Qisu xun*: how did a Chinese ruler effectively govern a people with "barbaric" customs. His eccentric behaviors including excessive drinking and sex, and especially his open promotion of them, suggest his sympathy to the political wisdom: to rule the Zhongshan people by being one of them.

7. Conclusion

The variety of "barbarian" elements or "customs" in the largely Chinese tombs suggests two possible situations: these objects were either brought into the burials without intention or made deliberately for the tombs.

Most likely, the truth hangs somewhere between the two ends. On the one hand, the non-Han elements might reflect the actual cultural hybridity in the northern Hebei area during the 2nd century BCE: the fragmentary but resilient presence of the non-Han tradition under the Han Empire and the powerful cultural impact pouring eastwards from the nomadic Eurasian steppe. On the other hand, because the Mancheng tombs were unparalleled "barbaric" in the northern frontier, it seems some sort of intentional design is plausible.

I have demonstrated that Liu Sheng was intentionally reviving the lost Zhongshan material culture, borrowing ingredients from the extant non-Han cultures in the

625 今之國都，男女切躋，肩摩于道，其于俗，一也。Zhang 1997: 1137.

“barbarian” west. In such a cultural hybrid, he recreated the Zhongshan, who had been “dead” in history for 150 years. In this perspective, it is possible to reach a uniform theory that explains the tombs’ unusual combination of distinctive non-Han cultural elements in both architecture and burial objects, and on both external and internal levels. As the founding king of the ancient kingdom, Liu Sheng was presumably charged with the mission to summon the dead culture, and make it as a useful tool to rally the local people, suppress the rebellious Zhao, and support the imperial dominance.

To do this, Liu Sheng would have needed convincing visual and material elements that could evoke the cultural image of the Zhongshan which the erudite prince must have known was “barbarian” in origin. Although the original Zhongshan material culture was irretrievably shattered and lost, there remained its fragments, let alone memories. Liu Sheng made this through his borrowing from the Rong-Di cultures, whose remains might have still been active in northern Shaanxi and Inner Mongolia by the mid-2nd century BCE. He might have even gone further to the west Eurasian steppe peoples, which had left a strong impact on the Rong-Di peoples in China’s northern frontiers. And as the lustful front chamber suggests, Liu Sheng also consulted the real or legendary Zhongshan “decadent” customs as the guidance to shape his own image as a faithful and genuine king of the people and culture he represented.

As believed by the Han political thinkers, this was an effective way of ruling the state (*zhiguo* 治國) and helping the emperor pacify the world (*ping tianxia* 平天下).

CONCLUSION

At Mancheng, between the body and the soul, the outer coffins and caskets that enclosed the inner coffin became the buffer zones between the disembodied soul (empty seat) in the front chamber and the soulless body (corpse) in the inner coffin. The Mancheng designer then furnished these intermediary zones as if a gradual mediation between a solid corpse and an ethereal soul was taking place within. Across these transitional buffer zones, a three-level “union” happened throughout the tomb, from the whole tomb all the way down to the coffins.

Whereas the “enclosing structure” links up the body and the soul through a succession of transitional phases, the “parallel structure” holds the husband and the wife together by turning their tombs into each other’s “reflections,” either physically or symbolically. It looks as if the deceased couple was conceived as one unity, “united on one body” (*fufu yiti* 夫婦一體).⁶²⁶ The parallel logic also extended to other inferior family members, buried in 18 satellite burials whose stone pyramids dot the lower mountain slopes, and put the family in order.⁶²⁷

The “overlapping structure” occurs between the Han and non-Han elements in the tombs. The minority of non-Han elements permeates the tomb space in all major living aspects including clothing, kitchen, building, and transportation. Under the “Sinicized” cover, the deceased put on the “barbaric” jewelry and swords, ate with their food and wine vessels and tableware, “lived” in their tombs, and rode their horses and vehicles.

626 Jia Gongyan, *Yili zhushu* 儀禮註疏, juan 30, in Ruan 1980: 1: 1105. John Steele’s translation is “husband and wife...are of one flesh;” Steele 1917: 2: 17.

627 Zheng 2003: 65-69.

More importantly, these non-Han remains were not “exotica” that boast the owner’s social status, wealth, and distinction, but associated specifically with the local tradition in north Hebei with few parallels in other royal or high-ranking tombs of the Western Han.

The three symbolic structures at the Mancheng tombs represent a special variation of the influential political discourse of “fixing the self, putting the family in order, and managing the state, and pacifying all-under-Heaven” (*xiushen, qijia, zhiguo, pingtianxia*) shared among the rulers in 2nd century BCE China.⁶²⁸ This agenda was accepted not only by Confucians but also by some other schools of philosophers in early China, though their interpretations of specific terms such as *xiu* 修 might vary.

Longevity sat at the bottom of the royal political agenda. The opposite of longevity was death, which meant losing union (harmony) of body and soul, and the failure of self-cultivation. The most basic design at Mancheng was to secure the inseparable relationship between body and soul.

At the same time, public welfare stood at the top of the political mission of the Western Han rulers above the self. All-under-Heaven (*tianxia*), after all, was made up of not only the Chinese “central kingdom” (*zhongguo* 中國) but also “barbarians” living on the peripheries of the *Huaxia* civilization.⁶²⁹ One of the most hotly debated issues in ancient political thought was about the wise handling of the relationship between “us” and “the other,” or foreigners.⁶³⁰ And early China was no exception.⁶³¹ In the Mancheng

628 Liu 2006.

629 For the concept of *tianxia*, see Pines 2002. For Sarah Allan’s comment, see her Allan 2015: 13, note 7; Watanabe 2003.

630 Honig 2001; Dorfman 2008: 13-22; Fabia 2007.

631 Poo 2005; Kim 2009.

tombs, one of the most pervasive characteristics in the pattern of furnishing was the interaction between the Chinese and non-Chinese cultural elements.⁶³²

The Western Han philosophers made the cultivation of the self and the governance of the state a parallel. *Huainanzi* offer the principles for both missions: to cultivate the self, one must first nurture the spirit and then the body; to rule the state, it is primary to educate and secondary to reinforce the laws.⁶³³

And the two were not of an equal status. The self was the basis for the state. Thus the failure of self-cultivation, for the rulers, was not just a personal disaster; it meant the undermining of the basis for ruling the country and the world. The reason was simple, as *Zhuangzi* bluntly put it: “If you would (only) forget the energy of your spirit, and neglect the care of your body, you might approximate (to the Dao). But while you cannot regulate yourself, what leisure have you to be regulating all-under-Heaven?”⁶³⁴

In alignment with this simple and almost self-evident point, the author of *Lüshi chunqiu* lamented that many contemporary rulers busied themselves to benefit other people at the cost of their own health: “The ordinary ruler diminishes his own life to supply the men of the world,” just like “a wine-cup from which many drink always quickly emptied.” Although the ruler may have achieved great things without, within, his

632 The definition of “Chinese” and “non-Chinese” is a tricky one. The meaning of China changed over time with the expansion of China’s border. I will use “Chinese” in different contexts to mean Hua, Xia, or Han.

633 治身，太上養神，其次養形；治國，太上養化，其次正法。English translation from Major 2010: 815.

634 汝方將忘汝神氣，墮汝形骸，而庶幾乎！而身之不能治，而何暇治天下乎？Legge 1891: 1: 320-21.

life has been depleted.⁶³⁵ Therefore the author advised these mistaken rulers to learn from the ancients in modeling themselves after the natural laws of Heaven and Earth in order to maintain an enduring, healthy life, both physically and mentally. Indeed, one of the reasons modern historians considered as contributing to the triumph of the Qin kingdom over all the six rivaling states is the general “longevity of rulers,” which provided “political continuity and stability.”⁶³⁶

The idea that the ruler should first cultivate the self and then the world was widely circulated among different schools of political philosophy from Eastern Zhou to Western Han. However, as many philosophers also pointed out, between the self and all-under-Heaven (or the state), there were several gaps. The most critical one was family, and the relationship between husband and wife lay at the heart of it. An early Western Han commentator of *The Book of Changes* (Zhouyi 周易) considered husband and wife the very first social relationship for the mankind after the creation of the world: “Heaven and earth existing, all (material) things then got their existence. All (material) things having existence, afterwards there came male and female. From the existence of male and female there came afterwards husband and wife. From husband and wife there came father and son. From father and son there came ruler and minister. From ruler and minister there came high and low. When (the distinction of) high and low had existence, afterwards came the arrangements of propriety and righteousness.” And only then did everything

635 Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 86. 尊酌者眾則速盡。萬物之酌大貴之生者眾矣，故大貴之生常速盡。非徒萬物酌之也，又損其生以資天下之人，而終不自知。功雖成乎外，而生虧乎內。耳不可以聽，目不可以視，口不可以食，胸中大擾，妄言想見，臨死之上，顛倒驚懼，不知所為，用心如此，豈不悲哉！

636 Loewe and Twitchett 1986: 48.

else start to forge.⁶³⁷ This view can be traced back to a 4th-century BCE manuscript excavated from a tomb at present-day Guodian in Hubei province.⁶³⁸

The author of “Cultivation of Political Power” (*quanxiu* 權修) in *Guanzi* took up this idea and emphasized the hierarchy among these steps. If a ruler cannot manage his self well, he surely cannot manage his family properly. And if he fails to order his family, he can hardly order the state and all-under-Heaven.⁶³⁹ The same idea was repeated in a manuscript excavated from present-day Yinqueshan in Linyi, Shandong province, dating from the early 2nd century BCE.⁶⁴⁰ Reversing the same logic, the Chapter of “The Great Learning” (*Daxue* 大學, compiled in 1st c. BCE) in *Liji* asserts: “The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons.”⁶⁴¹ The only difference is that to the Confucians, the person (self) was not the most basic step for pacifying the world but

637 有天地然後有萬物，有萬物然後有男女，有男女然後有夫婦，有夫婦然後有父子，有父子然後有君臣，有君臣然後有上下，有上下然後禮義有所錯。Sung 1971: 350.

638 “All living people must have husbands and wives, fathers and sons, and lords and subjects.” 生民斯必有夫婦、父子、君臣，此六位也。Jingmen 1988: 188.

639 W. Allyn Rickett trans., *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China*, Volume 1 (Boston: Chen and Tsui Company, 2001), 96. 有身不治，奚待於人？有人不治，奚待於家？有家不治，奚待於鄉？有鄉不治，奚待於國？有國不治，奚待於天下？天下者，國之本也；國者，鄉之本也；鄉者，家之本也；家者，人之本也；人者，身之本也；身者，治之本也。

640 “if the self is not managed well, one cannot save himself; if the family is not managed well, family members cannot gather together; if the government is not managed well, functionaries cannot be dispatched; if the state is not managed well, the country will not belong to the ruler. 身不治，不能自保。家不治，不能相聚。官不治，不能相使。國不治，非其主之有也。

641 古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者，先修其身。Legge 1967: 1: 411.

should be reduced further back to the “heart” (*xin* 心), the “mind” (*yi* 意), and the “intelligence” (*zhi* 知).⁶⁴²

At Mancheng, the three major steps for a ruler to fulfill his mission, including the self, family, and the state (all-under-Heaven), were clearly “cultivated” by visual and material means to show rigorous orders. Even some hierarchy among the three was visible. We can see the self was “contained” by the family, as the two individual tombs were encompassed by the joint cemetery of the royal couple; the state was the most pervasive being “containing” the family and the self, as cultural hybridity spread ubiquitously in almost every aspect of the tombs.

1. Tomb as History

This dissertation differs from traditional visual and material culture studies in its historical approach.

The story took place during the 2nd century BCE, not long after the inception of the Chinese empire. To extend the imperial authority to the newly conquered lands and to form a defense against “barbarians,” such as Xiongnu or Yue, the Han emperors dispatched their most trusted sons and brothers to reign over a number of remote kingdoms in the unruly border regions, whose people still possessed vivid memories of their independent past, the target of imperial suppression and “cultivation.” As a norm, these kings ruled in the “East of the Mountain (*Shandong* 山東),” that is, east of Mt. Taihang 太行 in present-day Shanxi province, while the emperor who granted the lands

642 欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先誠其意；欲誠其意者，先致其知，致知在格物。Legge 1967: 1: 411.

ruled in the “Inside of the Pass (*Guanzhong* 關中),” or, to the west of the Hangu 函谷 Pass (Map 3).⁶⁴³ But even in the east, the kingdoms coexisted with *jun* 郡 commanderies or provinces, directly governed by administrators appointed by the emperor.

Made king of the restored Zhongshan kingdom in 154 BCE, Liu Sheng was one of these “migrating” or “displaced” royal subjects. During the latter half of the 2nd century BCE, the power of kings was no longer absolute, but subject more and more to the imperial will. Although many kings still held partial political and administrative authority in their states (which means they still ruled), they lost the power of appointing the top officials, including the Grand Councilor (*Chengxiang* 丞相 or *Xiang* 相) and Two Thousand Bushel Officials (*Erqianshi* 二千石). And that power went to the emperor, who could legitimately switch, replace, and, when necessary, depose the kings.⁶⁴⁴ It happened regularly that an emperor had several states merged into one or one split into a few. And it was also normal for His Majesty to abolish a kingdom and turn it into a commandery, or the other way round.⁶⁴⁵ Within this circumstance, the political tension between the king and the emperor became increasingly high. More than ever, the kings were entangled in their multiple identities, both as the heirs to the local cultural traditions and as Chinese imperial representatives, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 3.

On the one hand, whereas historians have long been interested in these Han princes who immigrated to a remote province to rule the non-Han people, the official

643 For geopolitical circumstances, see Loewe and Twitchett 1986: 1: 136–49.

644 For historical studies of the principalities, see Loewe and Twitchett 1986: 1: 136–49; Bu 2005; Goi 1950: 33–43; Nunome 1953.

645 For such changes, see Zhou 1987; Wang 1984.

biographies of the kings are too succinct and fragmentary to reveal the whole story. On the other hand, although archaeologists excavated dozens of tombs belonging to these kings, they usually approached them from outside a historical context. As a result of this gap, little scholarship has addressed the question of religious, social, and political identities of the kings, who used their tombs to address basic concerns concerning contemporary life and their historical conditions.

To this day, Liu Sheng has been the highest-ranking early Chinese ruler beside the First Emperor of Qin in having both an undisrupted tomb and official historical accounts.⁶⁴⁶ Although the latter's tomb is obviously more vast, it may never be opened by archaeologists in the future, leaving the Mancheng tombs the best available candidate for a comparative reading of the visual and the textual materials.

All surviving Western Han texts about the Zhongshan kingdom are fragmentary and, when taken in isolation, succumb to misunderstanding. In contrast to the eloquence of visual and material remains, not much literary information has passed down about the powerful provincial kingdoms thriving during the early period of the Western Han dynasty; moreover this written information comes entirely from the hands of imperial writers with a not unbiased perspective. This means these accounts might not have entirely reflected the will and mind (or, subjectivity) of the provincial kings as their tombs did. During the period when the first emperors of China were tightening their grip on the newly conquered lands and fighting by all means to harness the rebellious cultures on the east, south, and north frontiers, which had enjoyed their cherished independence for hundreds of years, it would not be surprising that the Chinese imperial court would

⁶⁴⁶ The recent discovery of Liu He's tomb at Nanchang is another example, but Liu died as a marquis rather than a king or emperor. See Wang 2015.

have deliberately lowered, if not distorted, their profile in the written history in favor of its own political agenda and ideology.⁶⁴⁷ Indeed, in the official history of the Western Han, Liu Sheng's literary image, utterly licentious and morally depraved, appears almost like a caricature: indulged in drinking and sex excessively, without even the slightest interest in governing. Yet, he was at the same time a successful king, reigning over Zhongshan, a notoriously unruly non-Han people, for as long as 42 years without provoking a single rebellion or riot. How did he achieve such success? In light of the archaeological materials, as I will show through the chapters, we are finally able to make sense of the scant, ambivalent, and seemingly contradictory historical texts.

And reversely, the texts can also help us correctly interpret the materials from the tombs. The Mancheng tombs' visual and material idiosyncrasies, which I will elaborate over and over, may find answers in Liu Sheng's multiple identities and eccentric behaviors forged in this highly politically-charged period of Chinese history: the young Western Han Empire was struggling to consolidate its power on the frontiers, fighting both internal and external enemies. Therefore this dissertation aims to weave object (the Mancheng tombs), subject (the Liu Sheng couple), and history (Western Han dynasty) together to better understand all three.

2. Tomb as Subject/Identity

Using tombs to embody the royal subjectivity of Zhongshan should not strike us as a bizarre idea. It is widely acknowledged that throughout the history of mankind people of various times and places use artistic works as symbols to express their ideas,

647 A good example is Nanyue, or the Southern Yue. For a recent study, see Brindley 2015.

will, belief, etc. – all components of the human subjectivity.⁶⁴⁸ For example, the Egyptians resorted to pyramids and obelisks, the Greeks, temples and sculptures, the Romans, baths, arches, and the Colosseum. Chinese culture is no exception. However, the Chinese emperors and kings during the early imperial period (i.e. Qin and Han dynasties) had a special interest in one special type of art, the tomb, for good reason: it was the tomb that ultimately embodied the noble owner's social identity.

The seed was sown in the Warring States period (475-221 BCE) prior to the Western Han. The sociopolitical center shifted from ancestral temples, where a collective lineage was commemorated, to tombs, which were occupied by individual persons.⁶⁴⁹

Evidence of an explicit correlation between subjectivity and tombs can be found in the Lishan necropolis, the mausoleum of the First Emperor of Qin, who unified China from a number of belligerent kingdoms into an empire in 221 BCE. The First Emperor began building his tomb shortly after his enthronement, and the lengthy construction continued until the news of his death was announced.⁶⁵⁰ So as the royal subject grew older, his tomb became larger, until death finally descended upon him. When that happened, even if the construction was not yet complete, the workers must hastily bring it to an end.⁶⁵¹ The Western Han emperors and the kings followed the Qin example. Liu Sheng's tomb, like some other royal tombs, indeed bears similar signs of incompleteness,

648 Bryson 1981.

649 Wu 1988. For the concept of "person," see Powers 2006.

650 Sun 1990: 106. See also Liu 2006: 157–9.

651 For example, in the Shizishan tomb at Xuzhou, archaeologists were surprised to find that the tomb was actually not finished before a hasty entombment. See Wang and Ge 2005: 139.

which suggests a hasty finish. Hence these tombs were not only secret sites to conceal the corpses, but also had a construction “life” parallel to the political life (reign) of the kings.

The connection between the royal subject and the royal tomb is further strengthened by another fact. No matter who directly planned the mausolea or designed the tombs, the project was under the supervision of its living client, who had the power to change the plan despite the cost. It was reported that the First Emperor once gave specific instructions to the minister in charge of the tomb construction.⁶⁵² During the Western Han, for example, when Emperor Cheng 漢成帝 (r. 33-7 BCE) took the throne, he soon began building his necropolis called the Yan mausoleum near Weicheng 渭城. Ten years into the construction, worrying about the inauspicious geomancy of his mausoleum site, the emperor suddenly stopped the work halfway and chose another place at Xinfeng 新豐 for his new necropolis, the Chang mausoleum. But the emperor abandoned the new mausoleum and switched back to the previous Yan mausoleum after another five years of costly investment and against many complaints from his ministers.⁶⁵³ It can be extrapolated that each plan of the imperial mausoleum must have received the approval and endorsement of its commissioner and future occupant, the emperor, who himself was not necessarily the designer, thus reflecting the royal subject’s will and idea.

The royal tomb mirrored not only the king but also his political real estate – the kingdom. As I have shown elsewhere, the First Emperor, the direct inspiration for all Western Han monarchs, incorporated various elements taken from the Eastern Zhou royal tumuli in both the pre-imperial Qin and the eastern kingdoms he conquered to forge his

652 Ma 1521: 124.1b.

653 Loewe 2015: 201-28.

gigantic, multilayered, and all-inclusive tomb.⁶⁵⁴ As the most visible structure occupying the very center of the entire mausoleum, the towering tomb mound is, in some sense, the embodiment of the emperor himself. It can also be said that the mausoleum epitomized the new empire—the emperor’s political self. Indeed, according to the Chinese archaeologists, the numerous satellite burial pits and aboveground ritual structures formed a mirror image of the capital city of Xianyang 咸陽 and even the entire empire.⁶⁵⁵ Although the concealed grave is not yet opened, historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145 or 136–87 BCE) reported that Qin Shihuangdi turned it into a miniature universe: using art to represent the sun and the moon (heaven), and mercury to imitate the rivers and oceans (earth).⁶⁵⁶ To continue “ruling” his subjects in this world after death, the emperor also demanded a city called Liyi 驪邑 (City of Li) to be built next to his necropolis at Lishan and forced thirty thousand families to populate it.⁶⁵⁷ In this and other symbolic ways, the First Emperor consolidated a multilevel correlation between the imperial mausoleum and the emperorship.

The Western Han emperors followed the First Emperor’s imaginative practice in turning their necropoleis into a miniaturized empire. The founder of the new dynasty, Emperor Gao 漢高祖 (r. 206–195 BCE) and his son, Emperor Hui 漢惠帝 (r. 195–188 BCE), were buried respectively in two parallel mausolea right to the north of the imperial capital of Chang’an across the Wei River. The names of the two mausolea were carefully

654 Shi 2014: 359–91.

655 Duan 2011.

656 Sima 1959: 6.265.

657 Liu 1990: 235; Sun 2009.

chosen: one was called the Chang mausoleum 長陵, and the other was the An mausoleum 安陵, collectively forming another “Chang’an.”⁶⁵⁸ As recent studies suggest, Emperor Jing 漢景帝 (r. 156–141 BCE), Liu Sheng’s father, emulated the First Emperor in transforming his mausoleum into a miniaturized version of his empire.⁶⁵⁹ Evidence, both textual and archaeological, indicates that Western Han kings emulated the emperors in many administrative and institutional aspects (*tong zhi jingshi* 同制京師).⁶⁶⁰

Perhaps under the influence of these imperial and royal examples, the two concepts of tomb and state were conceptually correlated in Western Han speech. The lexicographer Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) reported this fact in his dictionary *The Dialects (Fangyan 方言)*: “*Zhong* 塚 (tomb or tumulus)... is otherwise called *cai* 采 (fief).” Yang then further explained: “Because ancient feudal lords were given fiefs in which they were to be buried after the death, their fiefs, therefore, became synonymous as their tombs.”⁶⁶¹ In other words, the tomb symbolized the king’s land and royal identity.

Reflecting their occupants’ social identity and his personal will and ideas, tombs became the ultimate embodiment of the deceased subjects. A modern subject, who tends to look at the tomb as a posthumous monument of a person’s social existence, might be puzzled by the Qin and Han mausolea. To the emperors and kings, the massive funerary construction, which cost as much as one-third of the entire state revenue, was obviously

658 Liu and Li 1987: 27.

659 Jiao 2007.

660 Ban 1962: 14.394; for a detailed study, see Wu 1990.

661 塚，……或謂之采。古者卿大夫有采地，死葬之，因名也。Yang 2005: 997.

more than a remote and desolate grave in the modern sense.⁶⁶² Rather, the purpose for such an astronomical expenditure was far more ambitious: making not only a necropolis, i.e. town of the dead, but also a bustling “mausoleum city” (*lingyi* 陵邑), with a population sometimes even greater than the capital city Chang’an, as essentially a shrunken version of the empire.⁶⁶³

It is in the deeply rooted correlation between tomb and kingship in the Western Han dynasty that the Mancheng tombs were designed and constructed.

3. Tomb as Structure

The Mancheng tombs express ideas of history and subjectivity through constructions of meaningful structures with architecture and burial objects.

My use of “structure,” which theoretically harks back to Jacques Lacan’s “symbolic order,” or Claude Levi-Strauss’s “order of culture,” denotes the conceptual order in the construction of tombs. In the Lacanian view, the “imaginary” is associated with any idealized identification the subject desires beyond him or herself in the “other,” whereas the “symbolic” defines the way in which the imaginary is structured and the desire channeled.⁶⁶⁴ In this dissertation, however, the word “structure” refers to a concrete, namely architectural and material, order that encompasses individual architectural features or burial objects, which are not only imaginary but also symbolic

662 漢天子即位一年而為陵，天下貢賦，三分之一供宗廟，一供賓客，一充山陵。Fang 1974: 60.1651.

663 Yang and Wang 2014.

664 Lacan 1997: 11, 95, 327, 332; Levi-Strauss 1949: 32.

Archaeologists have already noted that “horizontal” and “axial” principles govern the physical structure of Mancheng tombs and connect the coffins at the rear and the chamber in the front following the east-west central axis of the tombs.

The horizontal principle is obvious. Let me take the better-known Tomb 1 as an example (Fig. 0.1). Oriented to the east, the tomb consists of a group of interconnected passages and chambers. In the front, an open passage penetrates into the mountain slope and leads towards the door of concealed tomb. Inside the door, a short tunnel flanked by two elongated side chambers leads to a spacious, crudely vaulted front cave⁶⁶⁵, in which a timber house-shaped structure once stood. Behind the front cave another roughly vaulted cave tightly holds a stone house-shaped construction, in which the coffined body rested. At the threshold of the rear chamber workers dug into the both sides of the door to form a poorly polished narrow corridor or gallery embracing the rear chamber on three sides.⁶⁶⁶ A total of 5,509 burial objects of different types and functions furnished all these spaces.⁶⁶⁷

And the tomb is more than horizontal; it faces a specific direction and follows the east-west central axis, which connects the entrance, via the front chamber, with the rear chamber. Robert Thorp describes such a configuration as the “axial plan.” According to Thorp, such a plan “comprises a long entry passage or ramp, central and rear chambers, and pairs of symmetrically arranged rooms to each side of the passage and

665 The archaeological report calls it the “middle chamber” (*zhongshi* 中室), as opposed to the “main chamber” (*zhushi* 主室), the rear chamber; in this dissertation, I will use “front chamber” and “rear chamber” instead throughout.

666 *Zhongguo* 1980a: 1: 10–23.

667 The gallery was empty except for a pottery pot, jar and basin found in the middle of the west section. *Zhongguo* 1980a: 1: 30.

chambers.”⁶⁶⁸ Indeed, among all the architectural units, the front chamber and the rear chamber are markedly different from the side chambers in terms of positions and material content.

Liu Sheng’s front chamber remained open without gates or doors. Occupying the central position in the entire tomb plan, it was the tallest and largest apartment, larger than all other four chambers combined.⁶⁶⁹ The front chamber in Tomb 1, for instance, measures 14.92 meters long, 12.6 meters wide, and 6.8 meters tall, spacious enough to hold a great party in it.⁶⁷⁰ In the original plan, a roofed structure is erected in this space with its interior divided into three parallel bays by two parallel grooves chiseled in the floor. These grooves, 0.3–0.4 meters wide and 0.2 meters deep, are probably the spots where wooden floor beams (*difu* 地袱) and pillars were initially installed to support the roof, which was covered by real tiles. These two grooves shaped the space into a standard Chinese hall, with a middle chamber flanked by two side-chambers (*fang* 房).⁶⁷¹ The intention to imitate a real house is evident.

Objects in the front chamber of Tomb 1 all surrounded the two tents installed in the central and south bays. The author of the excavation report has roughly identified nine groups of objects in the front chamber. At the east end of the central bay, there was a group of large food vessels; behind it was another group of little jades and metal ornaments; the center of the chamber was occupied by a third large group of weapons,

668 Thorp 1980: 141.

669 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 15–6.

670 Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 15–6.

671 See Zheng 1971.

tools, figurines, lacquer wares and small cups, in or around the primary tent; behind the tent was a fourth group of metal cups and coins; at the west end of this row, the fifth group of miniature chariots was stationed in two rows; the secondary tent accompanied by a sixth group of weapons, tools, food vessels and lacquer wares dominated the southwest corner of the chamber; three more groups of figurines and basins filled the northern bay on the other side.⁶⁷²

Passing through this wooden “house” and advancing farther inward, the advancing visitor would be stopped by a door, which leads to the rear part of the cliff-cut structure, another quite different “house.” Circled by a corridor, this stone compound consists of three connected architectural units including a central main chamber, a side-chamber, and a doorway which approached the main chamber from east. All other three units were assembled stone structures in a man-made horizontal cave dug behind the front chamber (or as the excavators call it, the “central hall”). The stone house took almost the entire cave, leaving between the house and the cave only a narrow gap filled by small pebbles.⁶⁷³ Liu Sheng’s two nested coffins lay on the rectangular platform assembled with four marble slabs which occupied the north side of the main chamber.

In the rear chamber burial objects, including personal items, weapons, tools, food and wine vessels and lacquer wares and others, were centered on the body rather than on the tents. They spread in three nested zones: first in the inner coffin shrouding the corpse, then in the outer coffin in company with the corpse, and finally outside the coffins, on and around an offering dais and table.

⁶⁷² Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 24, 29.

⁶⁷³ Zhongguo 1980a: 1: 22.

Holding the two nested coffins, the rear chamber was designed essentially like a box within a box. The outer case, namely the stone casket, was a compound assembled with stone slabs to imitate a two-room apartment under hipped roofs. Between the two rooms, the main room in the north housed a set of two nested coffins, while the side room to the south was used as a bathroom. Whereas the stone casket was constructed on site, the coffins, with wheels beneath them, must have been pushed or pulled into the casket before it finally settled on the rectangular stone platform on the north side of the main chamber.

The only structural defiance to the east-west central axis happens in the two flanking side chambers. Oriented from the north to the south or vice versa, the two side-chambers meet up at the tomb tunnel, which like the throat of the tomb connects the tomb door with the front chamber. Like the front chamber, the two side-chambers were sheltered beneath a tiled roof supported by a series of wooden beams and poles and were floored with a thin layer of pounded earth.

However, the emphasis on the central axis is eloquently expressed by the difference between the side chambers and the axial chambers, including the front and the rear chambers. Despite the similar interior decoration, the two side-chambers were different in form and position from the front chamber.

The front chamber is spacious and tall. Sitting on the east-west central axis of the tomb, it is the only pass toward the rear chamber that housed the corpse. In contrast, the side-chambers, though elongated, are narrow and short. For visitors who entered the tomb through the entrance, they might easily ignore and pass these two side-chambers, which lay beyond their immediate visual focus. It is thus clear that these peripheral chambers

must have played a marginal role in the entire tomb. The function of the axial chambers, which was indicated by the material contents, was also different from that of the flanking chambers. The axial chambers were sites of ritual presentation, which I will elaborate in the following chapters; the side chambers were only storage or warehouse, represented by some extremely heavy and large containers such as giant clay jars found nowhere else in the tomb.

The above two basic principles, as I will elaborate below, led to more sophisticated structural patterns in and between the two parallel tombs.

4. Tomb as “Text”

In order to delve deeper into the Mancheng tombs as horizontal and axial structures, the previous analytical methods, which can be branded as “typological,” are insufficient, because they deal only with categories of objects or architecture rather than objects linked up in a meaningful space. To borrow the concepts from literary studies, they approach tombs as vocabularies instead of as texts.

In typology, “a system used for putting things into groups according to how they are similar,”⁶⁷⁴ each type is defined by external morphological or material characteristics shared among its specimens. For example, a tomb was generally divided either by material into stone, brick, and timber or by form into vertical pit grave and horizontal chamber grave. An important task for typologists was to map the genealogical relationships among these types, tracing how they evolved stylistically over time and spread across space. The same method applies to everything contained in the tomb, such

674 Courtesy of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

as ceramics, bronzes, ironware, jades, lacquer ware, fabrics, and so forth. In some sense this mode of thinking may be analogous to the way in which early modern biology deals with its subject matters: discovering new species and positioning them properly in the tree of species was basic.⁶⁷⁵

Artworks, however, are not as taxonomically straightforward as plants or fish. Although typology is a powerful and universal method that can be applied to virtually anything, be it small or large, even the best typological work comes at a price: it only looks at the object's "hard," external, physical characteristics and ignores its "soft," internal, symbolic structures of meaning. For example, in the case of ceramic pots, what matters in typology is the object's physical shape: whether the side is straight or curved might account for a distinct tradition of craftsmanship. But typologists usually don't consider, for example, how the curving shape fits with the decorative pattern on the surface, and how this correspondence reflects any cultural dispositions or mentalities. Because of this weakness, typology is especially effective when dealing with large quantities of specimens with relatively simple features, such as undecorated ceramics, and becomes less and less accurate as objects grow artistically more sophisticated. The Mancheng tombs certainly represent such greatest complexity: with many unusual features, they appear so intimidatingly complicated and chaotic. In the idiosyncratic rock chambers, thousands of various objects followed distinctive sequences in a cluster of interrelated rooms, while dozens of exquisite pieces proclaimed their artistic distinction.

675 Mayr 1982: 147-208.

This dissertation departs from the previous typological scholarship in implementing a topological approach, which takes the tomb as a spatial “text” (model) composed of relationships between burial objects rooted in ancient Chinese thought.

Unlike the earlier tombs during the Shang 商 (1600-1046 BCE), Zhou 周 (1046-221 BCE), and Qin 秦 (221-210 BCE) periods, the chambers in the Mancheng tombs were characterized by a new relationship between space and objects. As the architectural setting shifted from the vertical casket (*guo* 槨) to the horizontal chamber (*shi* 室), the tomb became a truly “furnished” apartment. A horizontal tomb was no longer a compartment of “concealed” grave goods; it became a maze of things. Objects were interred not only as entities but also with spatial connections, sometimes stretched out. More importantly, the relation between two objects is measured not by the physical distance between them, but by their internal symbolic links. For example, Figurine A, which represents the servant, is more related to the tent of the master, which faces vis-à-vis the figurine two meters away, than to Object B lying only one inch aside. In this sense, Figurine A and the tent are part of a meaningful structural unity, which excludes Object B by meaningful orientation.

Thus it is necessary, conceptually and methodologically, to first draw a distinction between *objects-from-the-tomb* and *objects-in-the-tomb*, because the Mancheng tombs were not only typological but also topological constructions. The meaning of the tombs was twofold, hinged upon not only what cultural traditions the architecture or buried objects were derived from, but also how objects were positioned, assembled, and ordered across different areas of the tomb. These two levels of meanings describe two different ways of contextualization. The former redeems an aesthetic, socio-historical, or cultural

context for a collection of objects. In contrast, the latter method sets priorities on the spatial connections between these objects themselves in a concrete material environment. Rather than being mutually exclusive, these two perspectives complement each other and represent two forms of contextualization which ask quite different questions.

Although this dissertation will not ignore the typological aspect of the tombs, I will pay special attention to the internal symbolic structures behind the apparent disorder, which stretch, deform, and vary to fit the shape of the tombs—the topological aspect.

Topology is a branch of geometry fundamentally different from Euclidean geometry.⁶⁷⁶ Intuitively, topology is the study of the properties of topological spaces that do not change under deformations, stretching and bending, but not cutting and gluing. Topology is qualitative rather than quantitative, because it is concerned with “the properties of figures and surfaces which are independent of size and shape,” and therefore “with those abstract spaces that are invariant under homeomorphic translation.”⁶⁷⁷ For example, stretching a mug into a torus without rifting it apart is a homeomorphic translation, in which the object remains topologically identical. In such continuous deformation points that are near each other on the mug remain near each other on the torus. Also, note that such a map does not change the overall shape, there is one hole and always one hole. Briefly put, topology is all about boundary, linkage, passage, connectivity, mediation, and itinerary. This mathematic concept quickly extends its impact on natural sciences such as chemistry and physics and usually denotes a study of

⁶⁷⁶ Richeson 2008; James 1999.

⁶⁷⁷ Moore 2007.

relationships among a family or group of elements rather than individual elements themselves.⁶⁷⁸

In terms of human cognition, recent studies in the psychology of visual perception have shown that human perceptual organization is fundamentally topological. According to experiments, even though a black visual stimulus (blot) constantly varies its shape against a white ground without breaking down into smaller parts, the perceiver has no difficulty differentiating the stimulus from the ground, no matter how strange the shape is. This indicates that the identity of the shapeless visual stimulus remains invariant as long as it stays untorn.⁶⁷⁹

The human intuitive capacity of identifying topological space also occurs in cultural realms in Han China. The visual stimulus, in this context, artworks or artifacts rather than a shapeless blot, may vary its physical form but remains topologically invariant as long as it abides by a constant symbolic structure. For example, although the circular TLV mirror and the square Liubo 六博 chessboard are completely different in terms of physical shape, their internal decorations both resemble the early Chinese cosmology called the “Theory of Vaulted Heaven” (*gaitian* 蓋天).⁶⁸⁰ Imagine one transforms continuously into the other, then points that are near each other on the mirror remain near each other on the chessboard, even though the actual distance changes. Thus we can say the two typologically completely different objects are topologically identical, thanks to the artistic decoration that occupies the entire surface of the object. Even the

678 James 1999.

679 Chen 2005b.

680 See Tseng 2004.

apparently very different imperial temple called “Bright Hall,” which looks like a mirror turning three-dimensional is topologically identical. Despite the variable physical shapes, these different objects can be recognized by their common symbolic structure, which, unlike Levi-Strauss or Jacques Lacan’s conceptual dualistic structure, has a basic, concrete shape – an enclosing structure with T, L, and V patterns symbolizing different directions of the universe that surround the center point, the North Pole.⁶⁸¹ In Han Chinese art and visual culture, such artistic topological spaces existed ubiquitously and people had no difficulty identifying them despite the unpredictable metamorphoses.

Topology is similar to a variation with an invariable tune (theme) comparable to the symbolic structure. A variation is a way of organizing a piece of music by taking a tune (theme) and then repeating it in several different ways. A variation may play the tune much faster or much slower; it may change the tune by adding extra sharps and flats or other ornamental notes, or by playing the tune in octaves; it may change the harmony or the rhyme or use different instruments; it may combine the tune in different parts (counterpoints). Take Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) Goldberg Variations (BW988) for example. The entire piece is a work consisting of an aria and a set of 30 variations of the aria’s bass line, which sets up the tune (theme).

Analogously, early Chinese tombs were also “variations” of certain generic “tunes,” though rendered in a concrete form. In the furnished burial space, it is convenient to compare the occupied floor of the chamber, where all objects found their positions, to a painted canvas, on which images were arranged into meaningful compositions, literally meaning “being positioned together” – *com-position*.

681 Steinhardt 1984; Wu 1995: 176–87.

Therefore the basic questions to be solved in this dissertation include: among all the objects what is linked to what? What is the invariable symbolic structure, how does it vary, and for what purpose? The case is far more complicated than the mirror and chessboard because the Mancheng tombs are not simple circular discs or square boards decorated with generic patterns, but multi-chamber architectural spaces furnished with thousands of burial objects. There is no easy answer, because unlike real living spaces whose organization always serves pragmatic needs in daily life, “posthumous homes” are not confined to mundane orders, but made to express imaginary and symbolic concepts. We must closely analyze the space to identify the hidden topological structures (“tunes”) associated with early Chinese thoughts and social realities.⁶⁸²

682 The term *Analysis Situs* (Latin for “analysis of position”) was appropriated from the title of a seminal paper published in 1895 by French mathematician Henri Poincaré as the founder of modern topology in mathematics.

APPENDIX I: Brief Survey of Excavated Western Han Princely or Royal Tombs

1. The Northern Zone

(Guangyang, Zhao 趙, Zhongshan 中山, Hejian 河間, Changshan 常山, Zhending 真定)

This region includes today's Hebei 河北 and Beijing 北京, former territories of the Yan state and the so-called "Three Jins 晉" (i.e. the Han 韓, Zhao, and Wei 魏 states) during the Eastern Zhou 周 period (475–221 BCE).⁶⁸³ In the Western Han, the region fell into the inspectional prefecture of Jizhou 冀州. The earliest known princely tomb in this area is located at the Xiaoyan 小沿 village near Shijiazhuang 石家莊.⁶⁸⁴ A seal inscription identifies the tomb occupant as Zhang Er 張耳 (d. 202 BCE). Zhang won the crown of the Zhao state as an ally of Liu Bang 劉邦, the founder of the Western Han (r. 206–195 BCE), during the civil war that followed the fall of the Qin 秦 Empire (221–207 BCE).⁶⁸⁵ By the 140s BCE, the Zhao state had fallen apart into a few commanderies and principalities. These newborn principalities included the states that built the next major set of tombs in the area: Hejian, Changshan, and Zhongshan.⁶⁸⁶ Xianxian 獻縣 Tomb 36, excavated in the 1990s, has been attributed to Liu Pijiang 劉辟疆 (r. 178–168 BCE), a Hejian prince.⁶⁸⁷ Another tomb at Gaozhuang 高莊 probably belonged to Liu Shun 劉舜

⁶⁸³ Li 1985: 59.

⁶⁸⁴ Shijiazhuang 1980.

⁶⁸⁵ This identification is not conclusive. See Sun and Zhao 1981.

⁶⁸⁶ Zhou 1987: 76–97; Wang 1984: 55–62.

⁶⁸⁷ Hebei and Cangzhou 1998.

(r. 145–114 BCE), the Prince Xian of the Changshan.⁶⁸⁸ The largest group of tombs, however, is located in the princely cemetery of the Zhongshan state near Baoding 保定, probed and excavated in the 1960–70s. Six tombs have been identified, the best-known of which are Mancheng 满城 Tombs 1 and 2.⁶⁸⁹ Four other tombs were built in Dingxian 定縣, sixty kilometers south of Baoding. One is located at Bajiaolang 八角廊, the other three at Sanpanshan 三盘山 (numbered as M120, 121, and 122).⁶⁹⁰ These tombs have all been attributed to three other Zhongshan princes or their wives, postdating Liu Sheng 劉勝 (d. 113 BCE), the occupant of Mancheng Tomb 1.⁶⁹¹ More recently, archaeologists have tentatively attributed two large tombs excavated in Xincheng 新城 (Tombs 1 and 2) to a princely couple of the Zhending state.⁶⁹² Three tombs near Beijing, two at Dabaotai 大葆台, and one at Laoshan, comprise the northernmost extent examples.⁶⁹³ These most likely belonged to members of the princely house of the Guangyang state in the first century BCE.⁶⁹⁴

Past scholarship concentrated mainly on the twin tombs at Mancheng. These two tombs, cut into a limestone cliff, are distinctive and not representative of this region, where most princes preferred constructing tombs in a vertical earth pit dug into a plateau.

⁶⁸⁸ Hebei 2005.

⁶⁸⁹ Zhongguo 1980a.

⁶⁹⁰ For excavation reports, see Hebei 1981; Wenwu 1979: 46.

⁶⁹¹ Zheng 2003: 41–5.

⁶⁹² Hebei and Shijiazhuang 2008.

⁶⁹³ Dabaotai 1989. Laoshan Tomb 1 has not yet been published.

⁶⁹⁴ Zhou 1987: 64–9.

In fact, horizontal cave tombs did not gain much popularity in this area until the late first century BCE—much later than in the metropolitan areas of Shaanxi and Henan.⁶⁹⁵

Caskets were usually wooden, buried under an earth tumulus as in Dabaotai Tomb 1.

Occasionally, as in Gaozhuang, cut slabs of stone encased the wooden casket.

2. The Eastern Zone

(Qi 齊, Lü 呂, Ji'nan 濟南, Ji'bei 濟北, Zichuan 淄川, Lu 魯, Changyi 昌邑, Liang 梁, Chu 楚)

This region covers present-day Shandong 山東, eastern Henan 河南, and northern Jiangsu 江蘇. It belonged to the adjacent inspectional prefectures of Yanzhou 兗州, Qingzhou 青州, Xuzhou 徐州, and Yuzhou 豫州 during the Han period. The earliest known princely tomb at Luo Zhuang 洛莊 near Ji'nan was discovered in 2000, but awaits further excavation. It most likely belonged to a prince of the Lü state, buried around 186 BCE.⁶⁹⁶ Another unexcavated but slightly later tomb was found near Linzi 臨淄. It has been attributed to a Qi prince.⁶⁹⁷ Both tombs are characterized by a central earth pit surrounded by multiple sacrificial pits, reminiscent of Eastern Zhou royal tombs in the Qi state.⁶⁹⁸

Other tombs in this region differ. The incredibly rich cemeteries of the Chu and the Liang states, one in Xuzhou 徐州 and one in Yongcheng 永城, occupy hilly areas, with

⁶⁹⁵ Hu 1998; Mu 2001.

⁶⁹⁶ Cui and Gao 2004.

⁶⁹⁷ Shandong 1985.

⁶⁹⁸ See Shandong 2007.

most of the tombs cut horizontally into the rock. So far, archaeologists have identified sixteen tombs at both Xuzhou and Yongcheng.⁶⁹⁹ Some scholars attribute the earliest tomb at Xuzhou as Yuanwangshan 元王山 Tomb 1, belonging to Liu Jiao 劉交 (r. 202–178 BCE), the founder of the Chu state.⁷⁰⁰ This attribution is still inconclusive, but the two large tombs at Shizishan 獅子山 and Tuolanshan 馱籃山 almost surely date to the first half of the second century BCE.⁷⁰¹ The Liang cemetery at Mangdangshan 芒碭山, built in the same period, lies merely eighty kilometers west of Xuzhou. Both the Chu and the Liang cemeteries remained in use until the very end of the Western Han dynasty. Five similar mountain tombs dating to the first century BCE are located in a cliff-cut cemetery of the Lu state located at Jiulongshan 九龍山, Qufu 曲阜.⁷⁰² While these cliff-cut tombs open laterally, a tomb at Changle 昌樂 possesses a vertical passage cut into the mountain from above.⁷⁰³ Inscriptions on clay seals identify the owner as a queen of the Zichuan state. Another group of mountain tombs are constructed not as horizontal caves, but as vertical pits. The best preserved example is Shuangrushan 雙乳山 Tomb 1, excavated in the 1990s and attributed to Liu Kuan 劉寬 (r. 97–87 BCE), a Ji'bei prince. The unexcavated Tomb 2, possibly belonging to Liu Kuan's wife, lies parallel.⁷⁰⁴ Another

⁶⁹⁹ Nanjing and Tongshan 1985. You 1985; Xuzhou 1997; Xuzhou 1984; Xuzhou 1988; Shizishan 1998; Qiu and Xu: 1991: 173; Henan 1996; Yan 2001; Zheng 2001.

⁷⁰⁰ Archaeologists probed this tomb after it suffered a severe robbery in 1997. For the result, see Liu and Liang 2006.

⁷⁰¹ Liang 2001; Liu 2004.

⁷⁰² Four of the tombs have been excavated. See Shandong 1972.

⁷⁰³ Weifang 1993.

⁷⁰⁴ Archaeologists have detected two other parallel tombs at Fulushan 福祿山, only one kilometer

vertical rock-cut burial is located at Juye 巨野. Though smaller in size, this intact tomb is probably linked to a Changyi prince from the first century BCE.⁷⁰⁵ A recent probing at Weishan detected yet another princely tomb attributed to Liu Piguang 劉辟光 (r. 164–154 BCE), a prince of Ji’nan who committed suicide after a failed insurgency.⁷⁰⁶ Like the two earlier examples, this tomb also consists of a vertical pit below a mountaintop.

In this region, most princely tombs, both horizontal and vertical, are situated in the mountain, cut into rock, and covered by an earth tumulus. However, there was no local tradition of rock-cut tombs before the Western Han.⁷⁰⁷ Most modest tombs in this region are vertical graves with an earth pit and wooden caskets.⁷⁰⁸ This suggests that local vassals might have intentionally distinguished their tombs from those of their subjects.

3. The Southern Zone (Changsha 長沙, Guangling 廣陵, Liu’an 六安; Sishui 泗水; Southern Yue 南越)

This region includes the Yangtze River Valley from Northern Hunan 湖南, across Anhui 安徽, and down to southern Jiangsu. Most of this area was part of the inspectional prefectures of Yangzhou 揚州, Jingzhou 荊州, and Jiaozhi 交趾 during the Han. The tomb at Shazitang 砂子塘, excavated near Changsha in 1961, is the first Western Han

away from the Shuangrushi tombs. Unexcavated, these two huge tombs each with a tumulus over thirteen meters tall, perhaps belonging to princely house members. See Shandong 1997.

⁷⁰⁵ Shandong 1983.

⁷⁰⁶ Wang 2004.

⁷⁰⁷ Jin 1994.

⁷⁰⁸ Zheng and Yang 1996: 97.

princely tomb ever discovered.⁷⁰⁹ This discovery unveiled a large cemetery belonging to the princely house of the Changsha state, established by Wu Rui 吳芮 (d. 201 BCE) in 202 BCE. Three more princely tombs, including Xiangbizui 象鼻嘴 Tomb 1, Doubishan 陡壁山 Tomb 1, and Wangchengpo 望城坡 Tomb 1, came to light later in this cemetery. All the tombs are associated with the Wu lineage during the first half of the second century BCE.⁷¹⁰ The fifth tomb at Fengpengling 風篷嶺, dated to the late Western Han, probably belonged to a princess from the Liu lineage.⁷¹¹ Most recently, a sixth tomb at Fengpanling 風盤嶺 from before 118 BCE has been excavated, though its occupant remains unidentified.⁷¹² In the lower Yangtze River Valley, two more tombs have been uncovered in the past five years. These include a Liu'an princely tomb found at Shuangdun 雙墩, Anhui,⁷¹³ and a Sishui princely tomb at Daqingdun 大青墩, Jiangsu.⁷¹⁴ Unofficial reports of the tombs released by various media show two earth-pit graves with timber caskets.

The twin tombs at Tianshan 天山, excavated in 1979–81 at Gaoyou 高郵, are still among the most important discoveries in southeastern China.⁷¹⁵ Cut vertically into the mountain, these two tombs consist of large wooden caskets approached by ramps. Most

⁷⁰⁹ Hunan 1963.

⁷¹⁰ Hunan 1981; Changsha 1979; Changsha 2010. See also Song 1985.

⁷¹¹ Changsha and Wangcheng 2007.

⁷¹² Excavation report unpublished.

⁷¹³ Wang and Yang 2007.

⁷¹⁴ Jiangsu 2003.

⁷¹⁵ Liang 2005.

scholars assign them to the couple of Liu Xu 劉胥 (r. 117–54 BCE) or Prince Li of the Guangling state, who committed suicide after being accused of disloyalty.⁷¹⁶ Another tomb at Baonüduan 寶女墩 near Yangzhou 揚州, unprobed and unexcavated, has been tentatively attributed to the last Guangling prince, Liu Shou 劉守 (11 BCE–7 CE).⁷¹⁷ However, the best-known princely tomb in southern China is perhaps an intact tomb at Xiangshan, Guangzhou 廣州, whose occupant is identified by inscription as Zhao Mo 趙沫 (or Zhao Mei). Many scholars believe this person to be the second king of the Southern Yue kingdom, recorded as Zhao Hu 趙胡 (fl. 130 BCE) in transmitted texts.⁷¹⁸ Located at the bottom of a pit cut vertically into the mountain, this distinctive tomb was assembled using large stone slabs rather than the more common wooden structures.

Except for the two tombs at Shuangdun and Daqingdun, vertical pit graves dug into mountains dominate the southern region. Horizontal cliff-cut tombs, such as those found at Xuzhou and Yongcheng, are rare. This implies a close connection between these Western Han princely tombs and the earlier Eastern Zhou, especially the Chu vertical pit graves.⁷¹⁹ Consequently, in continuity with that tradition, most lesser burials in this area consist of simple earth-pit graves with wooden caskets.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁶ For a different opinion, see Wang 1999.

⁷¹⁷ This identification is based on the discovery of two smaller tombs (Tombs 104 and 105), believed to be two satellite burials of a larger princely tomb. So far, this princely tomb is only speculation. See Yangzhou and Hanjiang 1991.

⁷¹⁸ Guangzhou 1991.

⁷¹⁹ For large tombs of the Chu, see Guo 1995: 75–86; Cook 2006; and Lai 2015.

⁷²⁰ Takahama 1994.

APPENDIX II: Reconstruction of Central Tent in Mancheng Tomb 1

1. Purpose, Principle, and Limitation

This reconstruction is an attempt to put all objects back to their original positions to restore a larger composition, which serves as the basis for further analysis. In the formal excavation report, there is a very brief description of how objects distributed across the tomb space, which only takes half page. Some thoughts of reconstruction are expressed in a widely circulated drawing of the tomb with grave goods restored to their supposed locations, but it must be noted that this convenient drawing is a mixture of scientific reconstruction and artistic imagination, and is not included in the final excavation report. My following reconstruction aims to offer a more detailed (and rigorous, I hope) reconstruction based on recent scholarship. Ultimately, this reconstruction attempts not only a restoration of the material order of the objects in the tomb, but also an interpretation of this order.

But the excavation report has already established three basic facts, which remain as the cornerstones of further studies. First, in the initial plan, most of the objects appeared in groups rather than existing alone. Secondly, each object was assigned a unique position and orientation in the group, which in turn possessed its distinct place in the chamber. Thirdly, each group was in some relations to other groups. These three observations have these implications. Objects within one group are closer to one another than they are to objects from other groups. This means the study of these burial objects should begin with an examination of individual groups before considering the relationships among them.

It is necessary to note two major limitations about the following reconstruction. The first constraint is of the available data. Intact as it was, Mancheng Tomb 1 suffered significant loss of its perishable grave goods, including but not limited to fabrics and wooden objects. For example, the south bay of the antechamber was originally filled with lacquer wares, most of which did not survive. The other difficulty is nonhuman disruptions, caused by unknown factors such as seeping water, which might have more or less altered the positions of some extant objects. However, it is not wise to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The limitations, which should always be kept in mind, must not thwart the reconstruction, as a majority of objects left their traces in a relatively pristine condition, which preserves invaluable information of the original state of the “material picture” in the chamber.

2. Front Chamber

2.1. Central Bay

Sitting on the east-west central axis of the tomb, the central bay was the richest and presumably the most important area among all the three bays (see Fig. 1.12). In this area the tent, presumably the highest and largest object in the center of the central bay, must have been the focus of the whole chamber.

The later disintegrated skeleton of the tent was once made of a series of wooden or bamboo poles and beams connected by 102 gilded bronze joints of fourteen different shapes (numbered as Types 1 to 14).⁷²¹ Silk or cloth curtains and hangings might have

⁷²¹ Zhongguo 1980a: 1:161–4.

covered the exterior of the tent. The excavators have proposed a reconstruction of the tent (see Fig. 1.17),⁷²² which makes it possible to resituate the tent in the front chamber.

The outer boundary of the tent consisted of twenty-eight rafter caps (no.181, Type 9) (Fig. X.1a), four legs (Type 1) (Fig. X.1b), and twelve side joints (no.181, Type 5) (Fig. X.1c) which once formed a metal skeleton to frame the rectangular tent. The distributions of the three kinds of components on the floor, marked in three different colors (purple, red, and blue) in the map, outline a field about 2 by 4 meters, which can be temporarily called the “tent area.” In this area eighteen rafter caps were found in the west and the south, six in the east, and five more in the north, which somehow leaped over the central bay and fell onto the adjacent northern bay. Therefore, the rafter caps resting in the northern bay (as “ordinates”) and in the east central bay (as “abscissas”) provide general coordinates for the original position of the tent (Fig. X.2).

The height of the tent is implied in the broken state of the tent after its final collapse. The top part of the tent, including the rafter caps of the roof, lay in the westmost of the tent area (Fig. X.2, blue marking); the middle section, indicated by the side joints, scattered slightly eastward (Fig. X.2, red marking); the base of the tent, framed by the legs, generally sat in the eastmost (Fig. X.2, purple marking). This layout suggests that the tent might have fallen westward when it crashed down. Assuming that the tent still maintained its basic form after the collapse, we might estimate based on the distance between the roof and the legs the height of the tent to be between 1.5 and 2.5 meters.

With regards to the size of the tent, a couple of reconstructions have been proposed, but neither was based on mapping the scattered tent components, which in my view constitutes the only reliable evidence for reconstruction. The first reconstruction, supplied

⁷²² Zhongguo 1980a :1: 175–7.

by the excavators, defines the tent as being 2.8 by 1.8 meters in area. This size is perhaps based on the excavators' assumption that the tent must have shared the same width as the central bay, which is 3 meters wide. In the second, more recent reconstruction, although the proposed measurements differ, the author takes the same assumption for granted.⁷²³ I assume, however, that a majority of the imperishable tent parts must have retained the basic physical condition upon the collapse.

Although I have no intention to make a different reconstruction of the tent structure, I hope to call people's attention to the contour of the roof which has been forgotten in both reconstructions. The majority of rafter caps in the west follow a regular shape and all the heads of the caps uniformly point outward (Fig. X.2, blue marking). These are the signs that this shape belongs to the collapsed roof structure with most of its rafter caps in original positions. The regularly distributed rafter caps gave shape to the roof which covered a rectangular area about 2 by 1.3 meters. Since the roof was supposed to cover the tent from above, the tent should not have exceeded the frame of the roof. With this clue, we have good reason to assume that the original tent should have measured about 2 by 1.3 meters in area.

Although the current scale is much smaller than the two previous reconstructions, the excavation of Hougudui Tomb 1 at Gushi in Henan province (dated to the 5th c. BCE) reinforces my theory with two well-preserved roofed sedans (nos. 115 and 116) similar in structure (Fig. X.3).⁷²⁴ Thanks to the sticky clay that sealed up the burial pit and turned the latter into a dehydrated environment, the perishable wooden components of this much older object remained almost intact upon discovery, making its reconstruction much

⁷²³ Zhao 2007: 66.

⁷²⁴ Henan 2004: 73–9. See also Guo 1981.

easier and reliable. The result, so far the closest material parallel of the Mancheng tent, shows a rectangular house-shaped structure under a sloping roof in a modest scale of 1.34 by 0.9 meters in area and 1.23 meters in height. Assuming that the Mancheng tent was a proportionally enlarged version of the same design, its height after calculation would be around 1.84 meters, exactly within the range suggested (1.5-2.5 meters) by the material remains.

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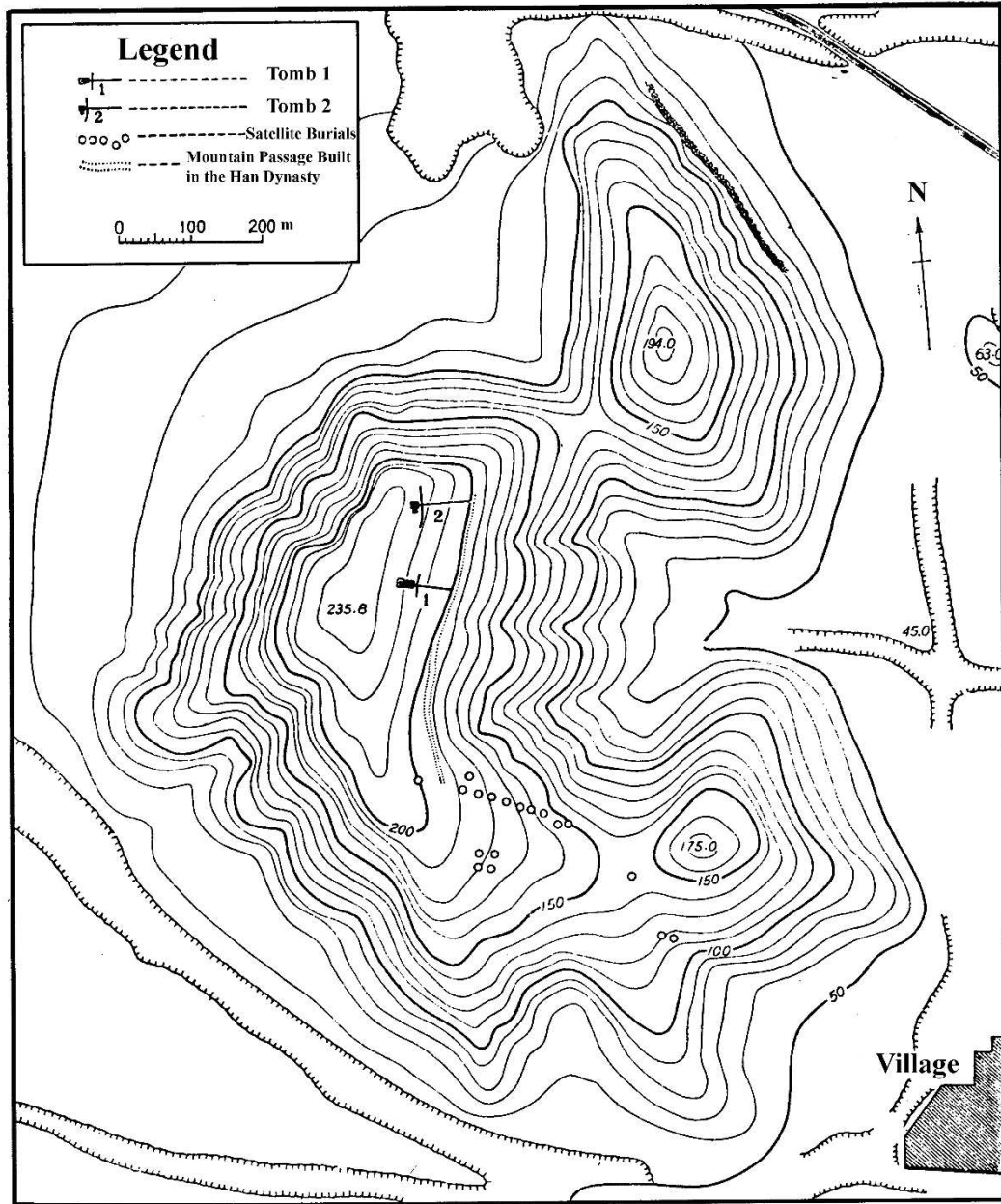
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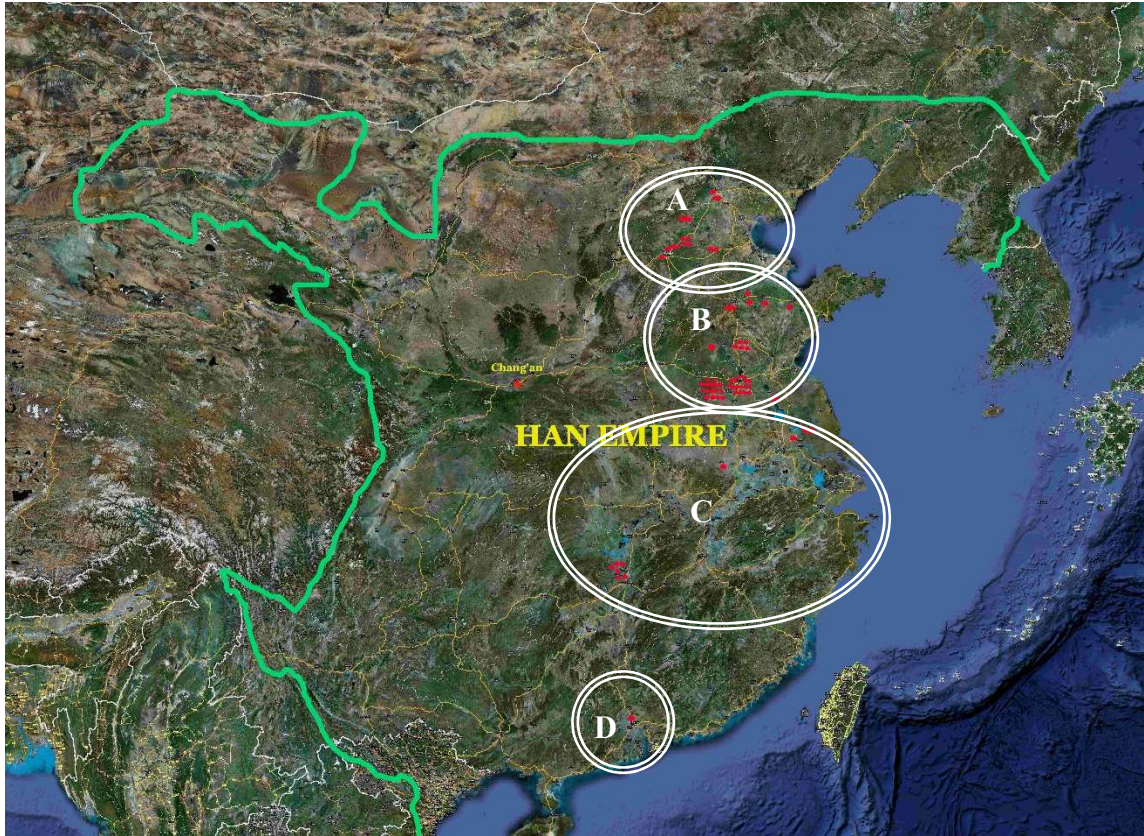
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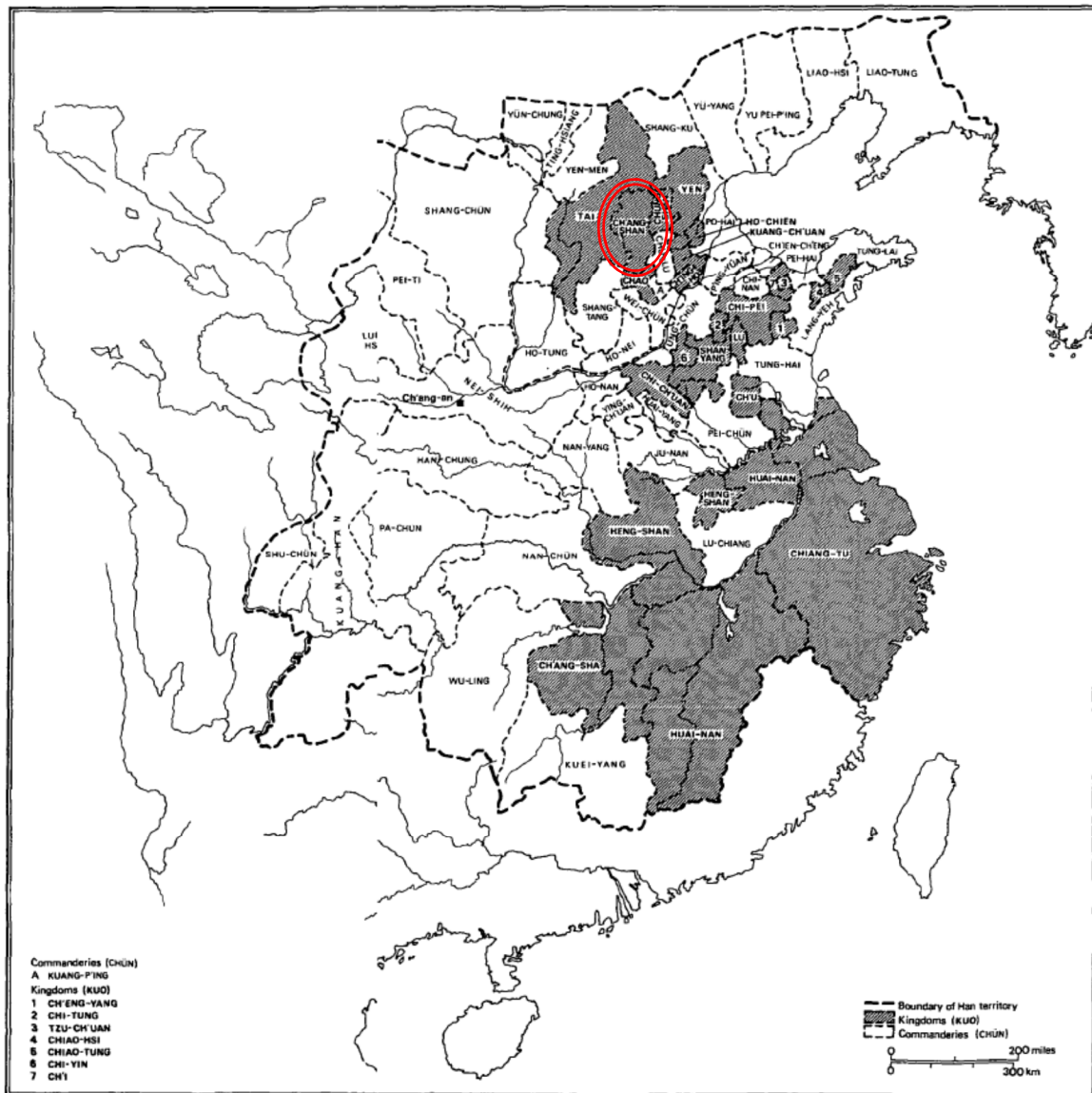
Maps and Illustrations



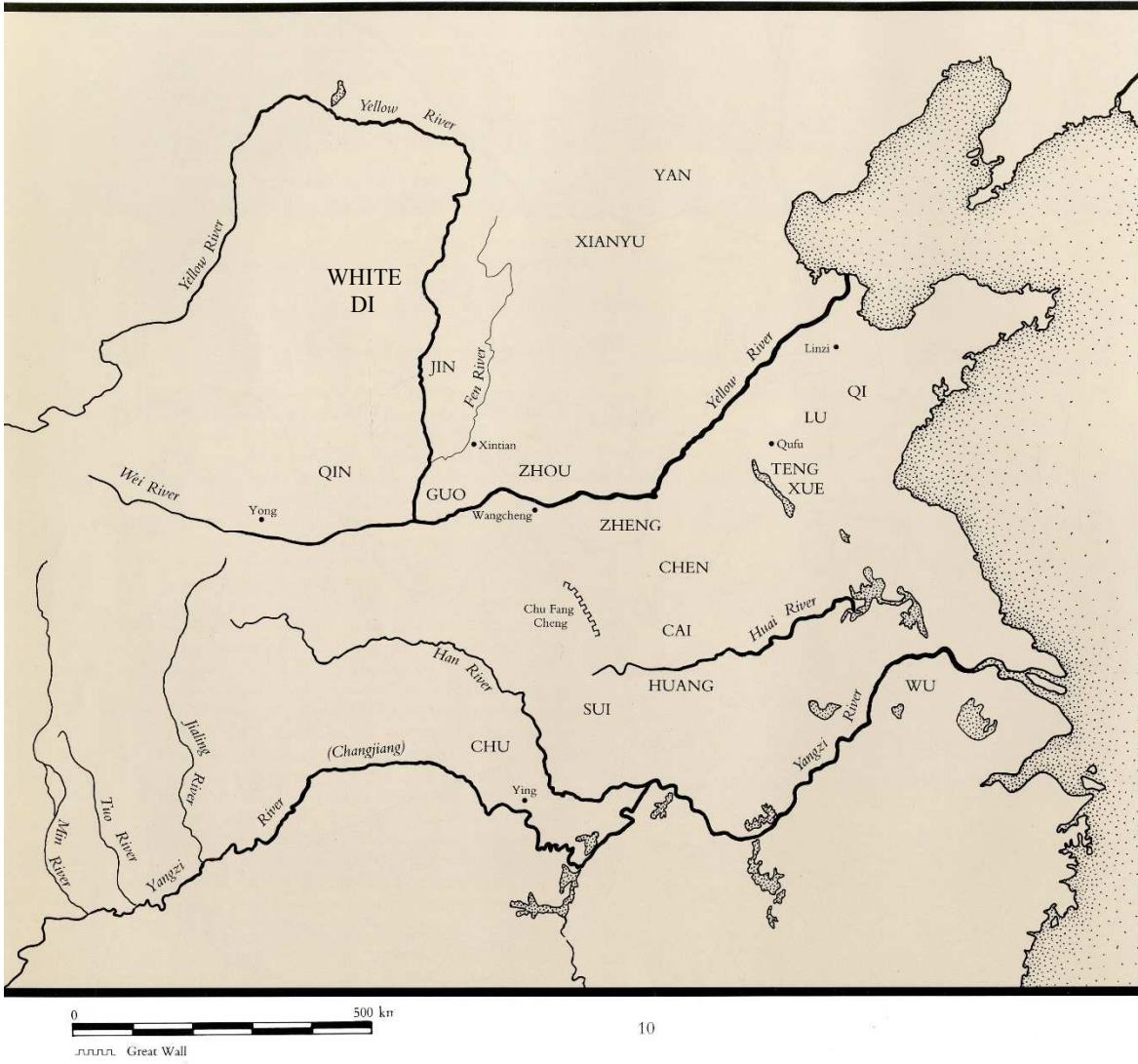
Map 1 Topographic Map of Mancheng Tombs 1 and 2 at Mt. Ling, Mancheng, Hebei.



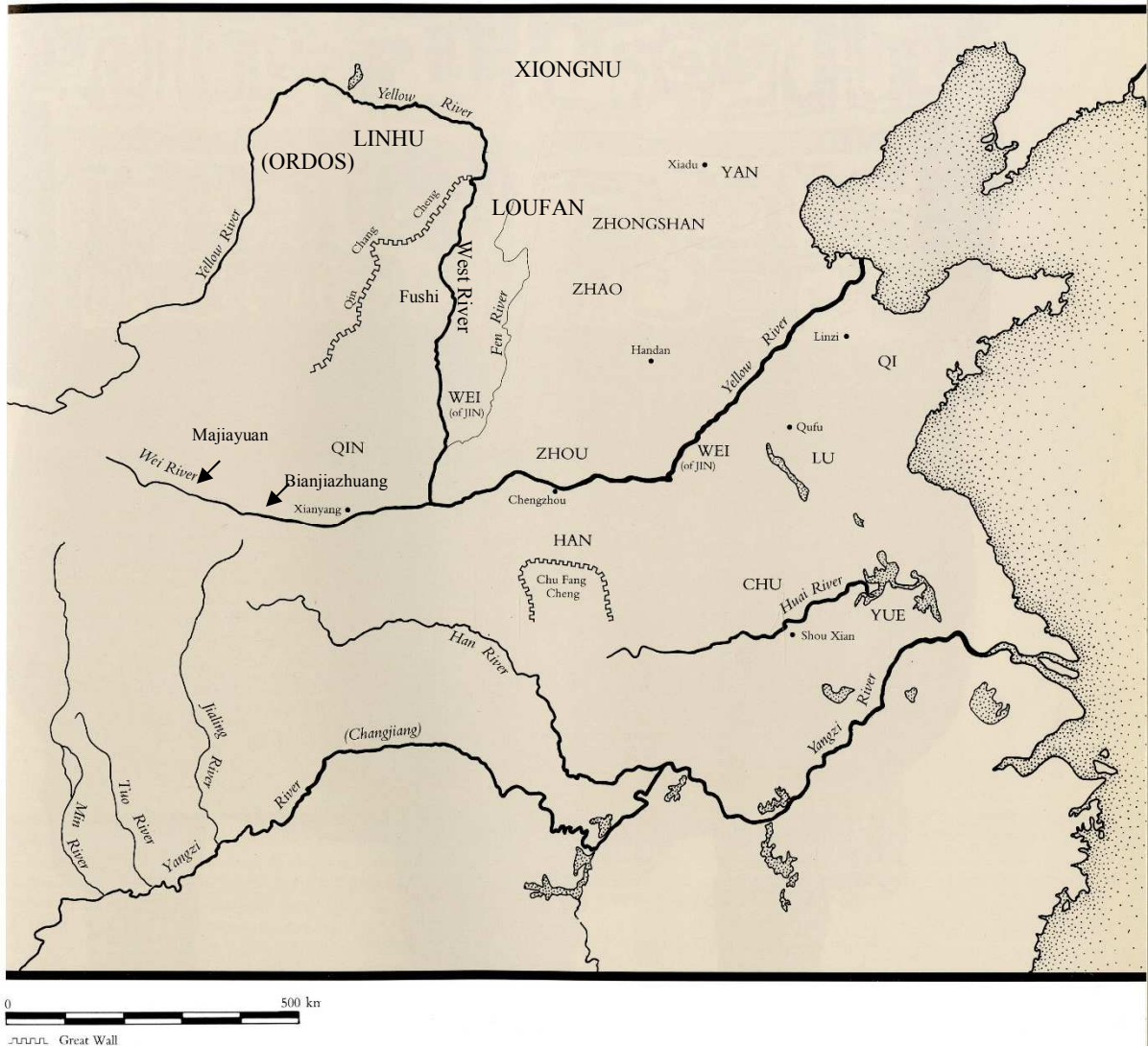
Map 2 Distribution of Western Han princely tombs (one red dot represents one tomb), 202 BCE- 8 CE.



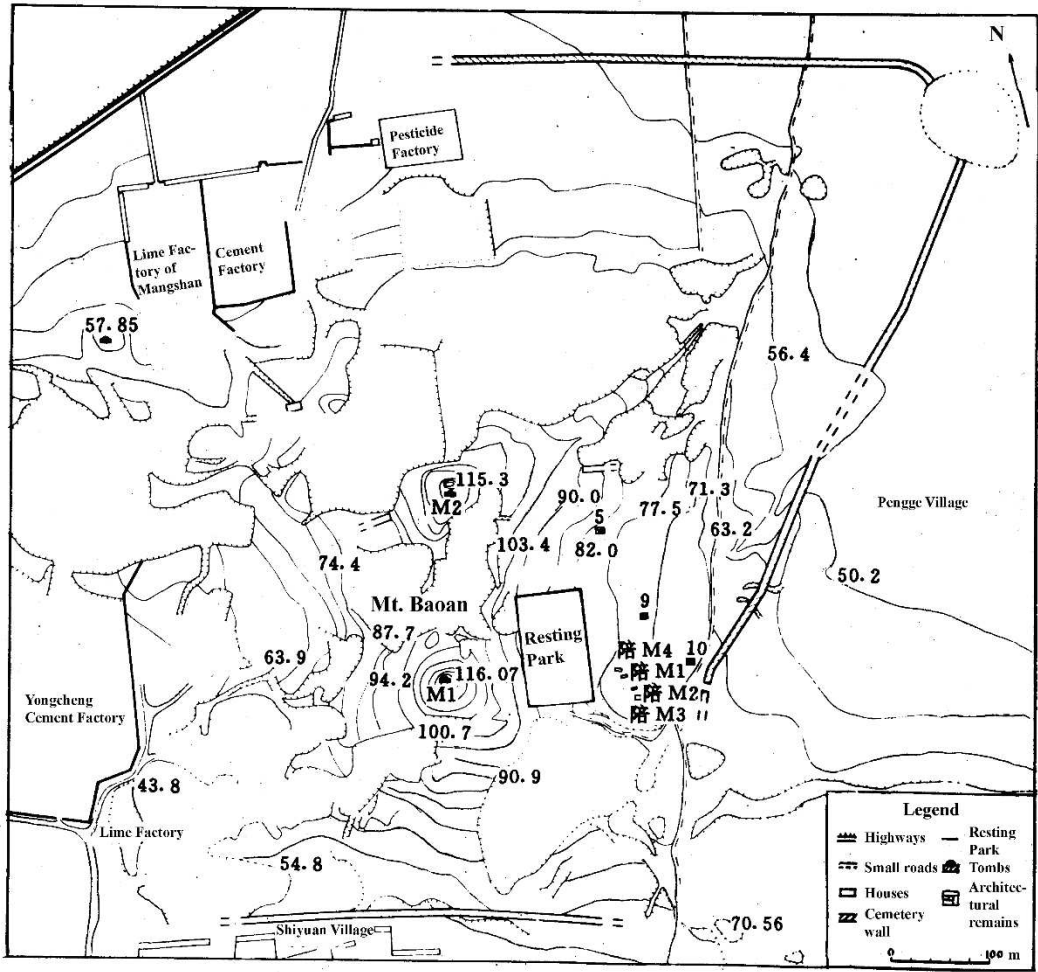
Map 3 Western Han principalities (kingdoms), ca. 143 BCE (Red highlight denotes the Zhongshan Kingdom).



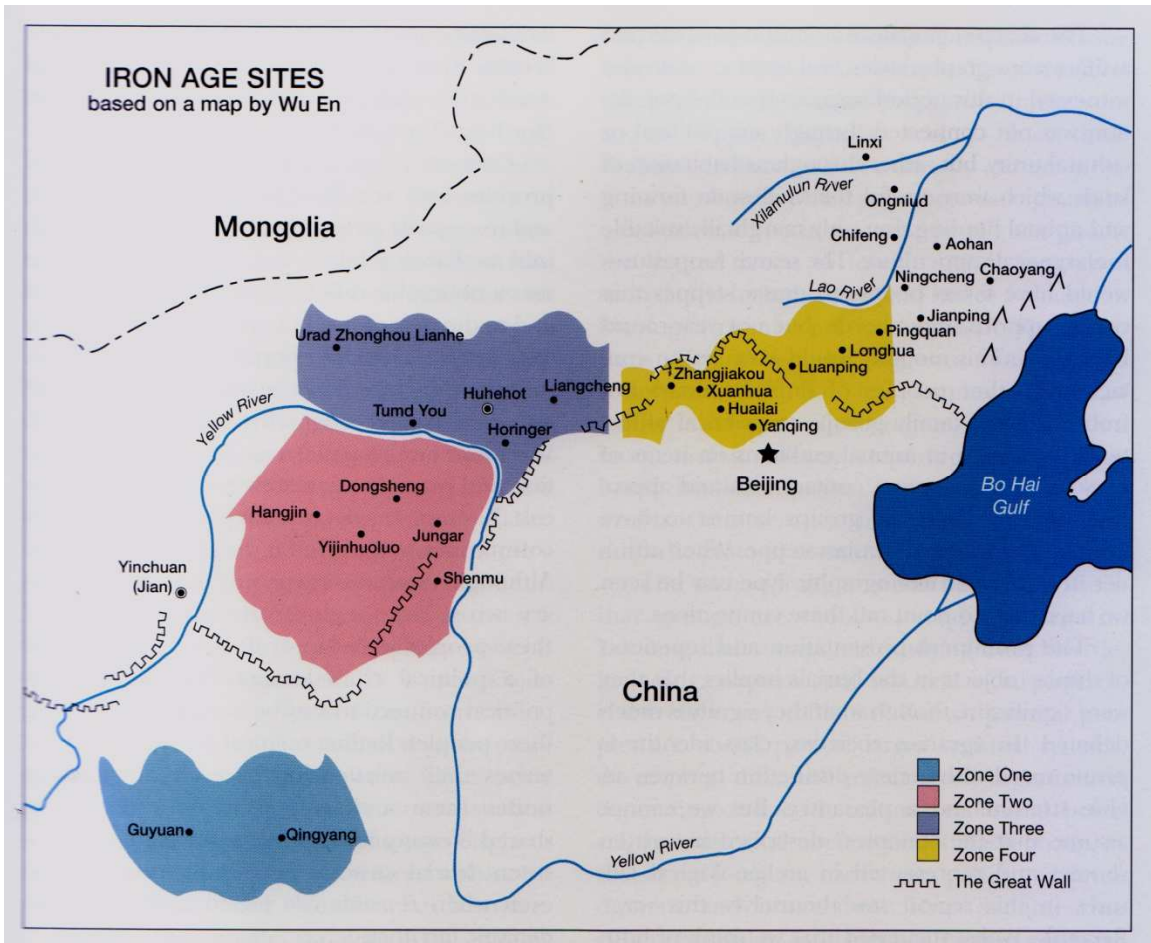
Map 4a Map of China during the Spring and Autumn period (771-475 BCE).



Map 4b. Map of China during the Warring States period (475-221 BCE).



Map 5 Baoanshan Cemetery of the Liang Kingdom, Yongcheng, Henan.



Map 6 Cultural Spheres in North China during Western Han. After Linduff 1997: 33.

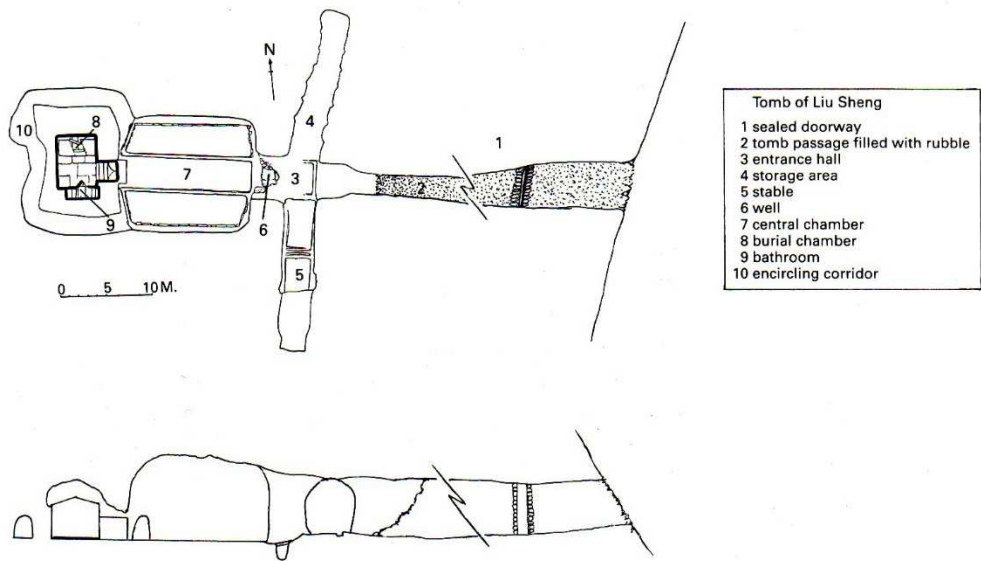


Fig. 0.1 Plan and Section of Mancheng Tomb 1, 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

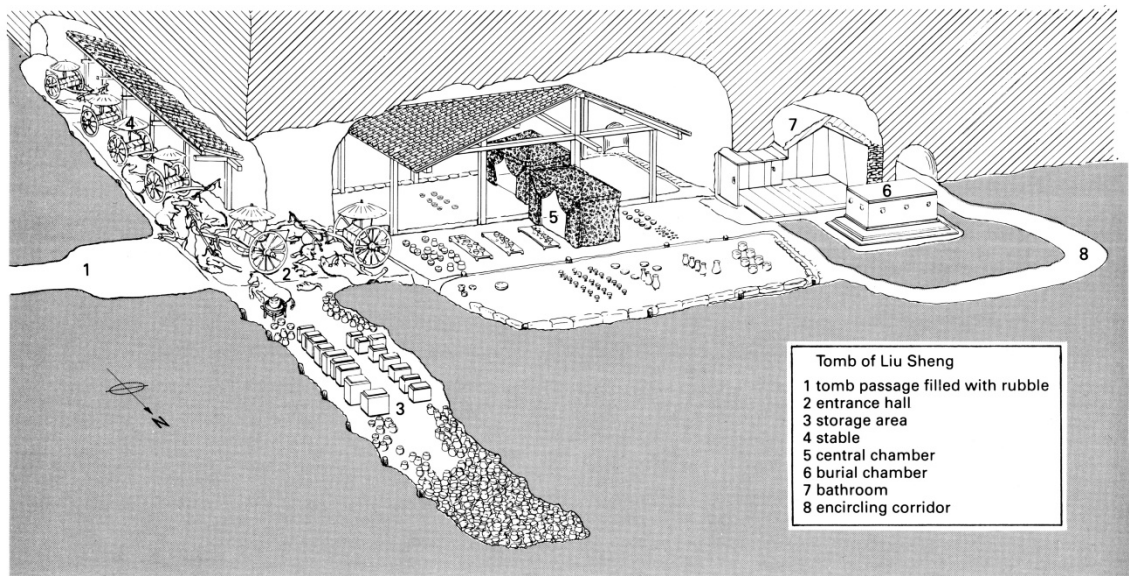


Fig. 1.1 Reconstruction of Liu Sheng's Tomb in Scenograph. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.2 Jade Suit, Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

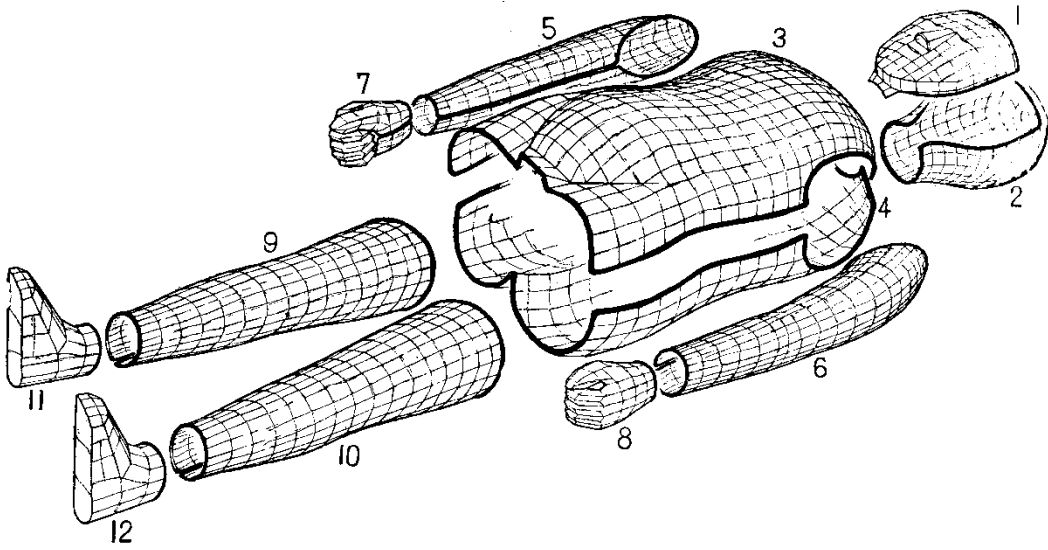


Fig. 1.3 Twelve sections of the jade suit, Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

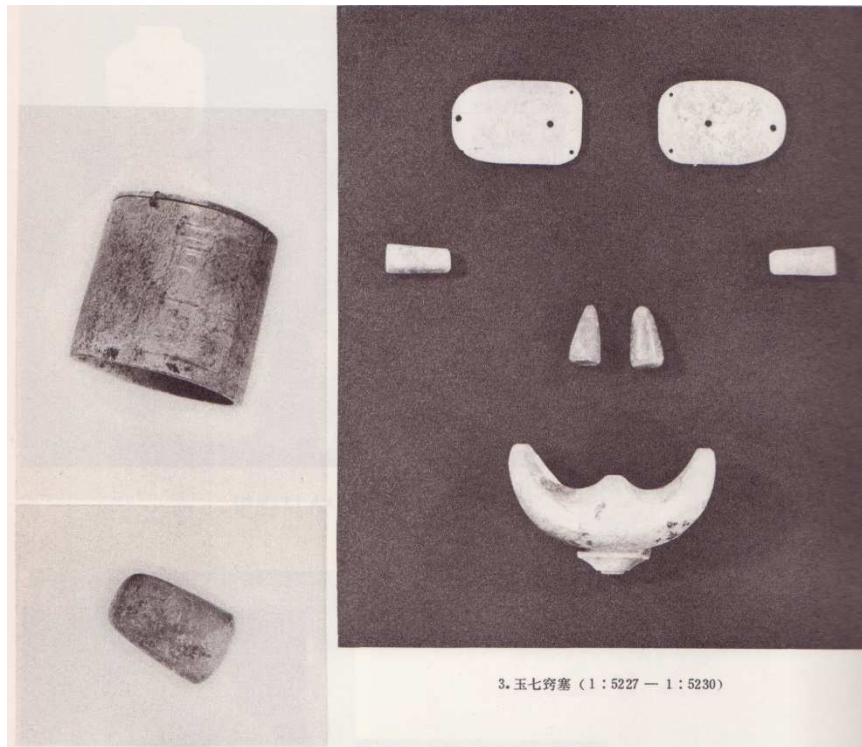


Fig. 1.4 The jade plugs of the “Nine orifices” from Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

- d. The eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth covers;
- e. The penis cover;
- f. The anus plug.

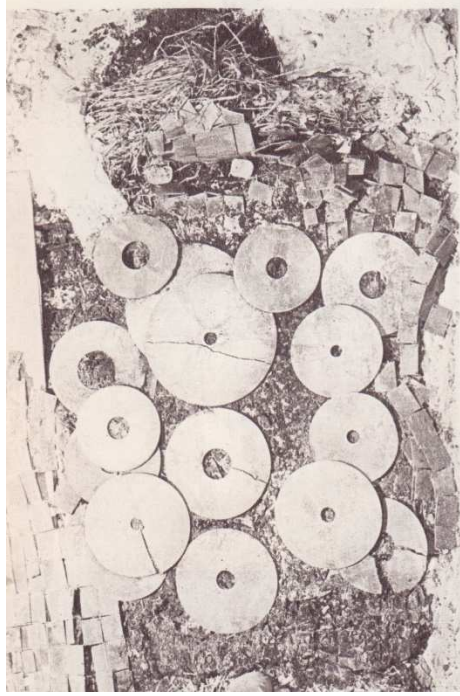


Fig. 1.5 Jade “Vest” on and beneath Liu Sheng’s Corpse in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.6 Jade bi Disc with Double Dragon Ornaments in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.7 Pair of Jade Seals in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.8 Jade Figure in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

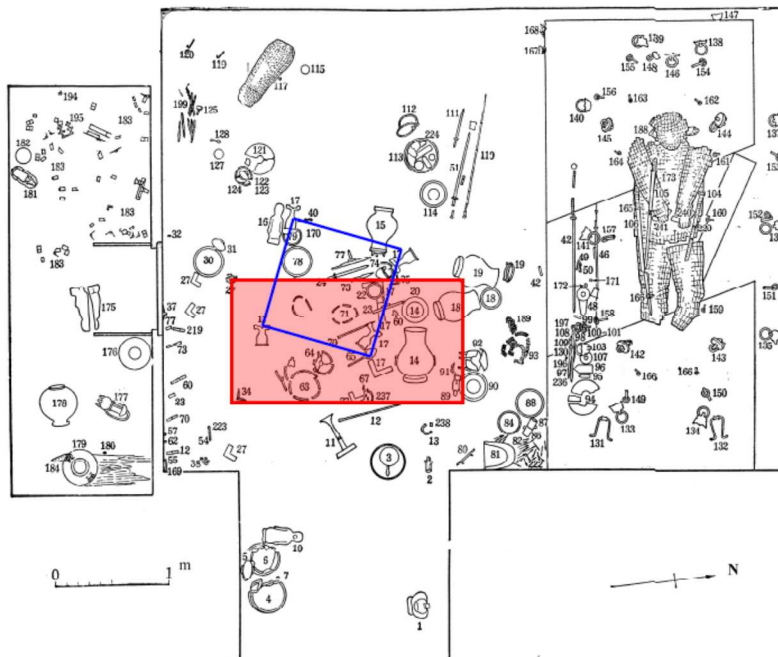


Fig. 1.9 Plan of Rear Chamber in Mancheng Tomb 1. Dais (marked in red) and Table (marked in blue). 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

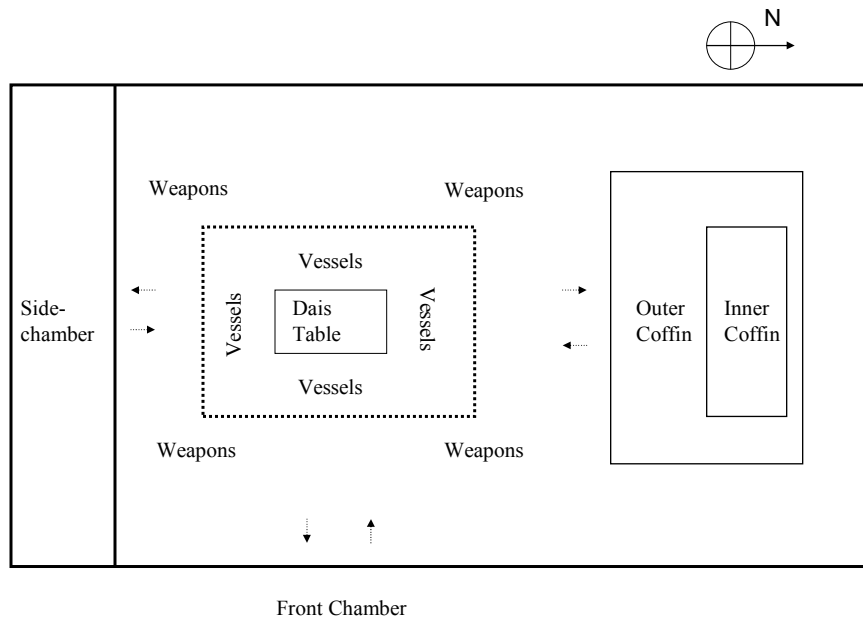


Fig. 1.10 Layout of Objects in Rear Chamber in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.11 Glass Winged Cup from Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

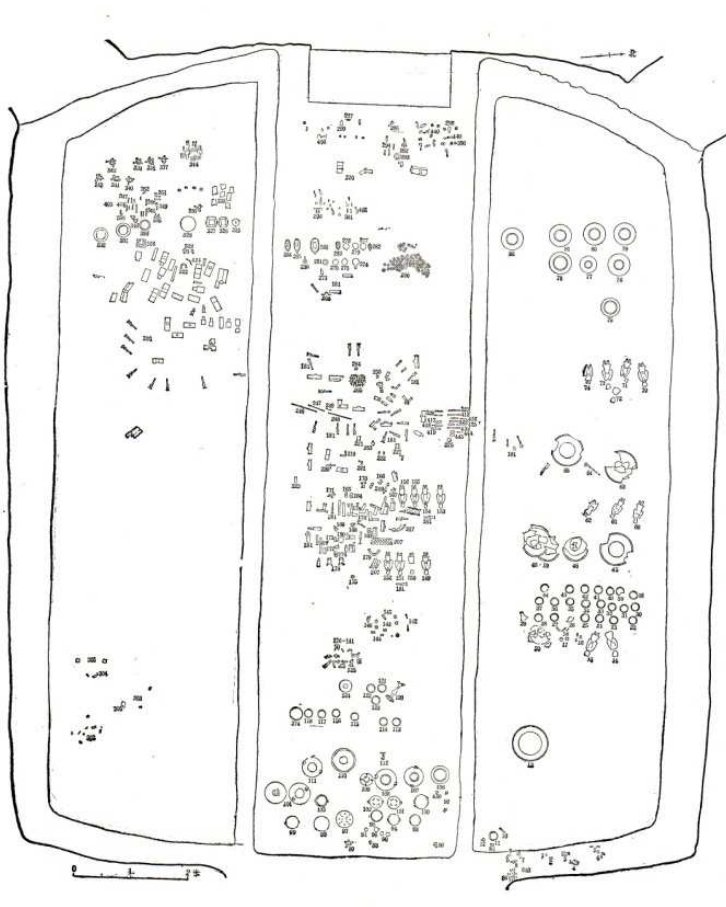


Fig. 1.12 Plan of Front Chamber in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.13 Two inlaid Bronze *hu* Vessels in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.14 Two Inlaid Bronze *hu* Vessels with Bird-script Inscriptions Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.15 Bronze *fang* Pot and *ding* Tripod in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 1.16 Bronze Lamp from “The Jiaolin Bright Hall” in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

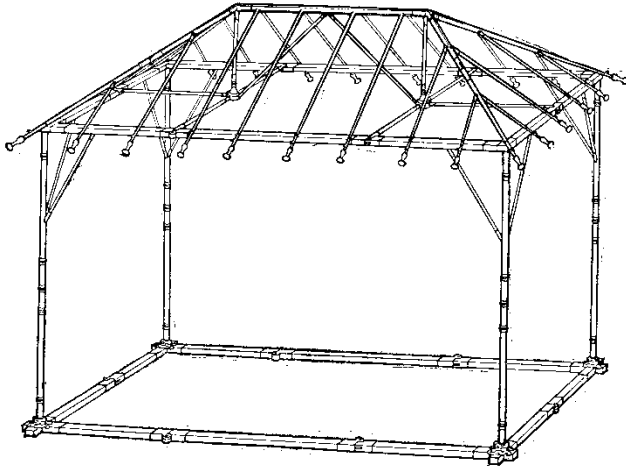


Fig. 1.17 Excavators' Reconstruction of Central Tent in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

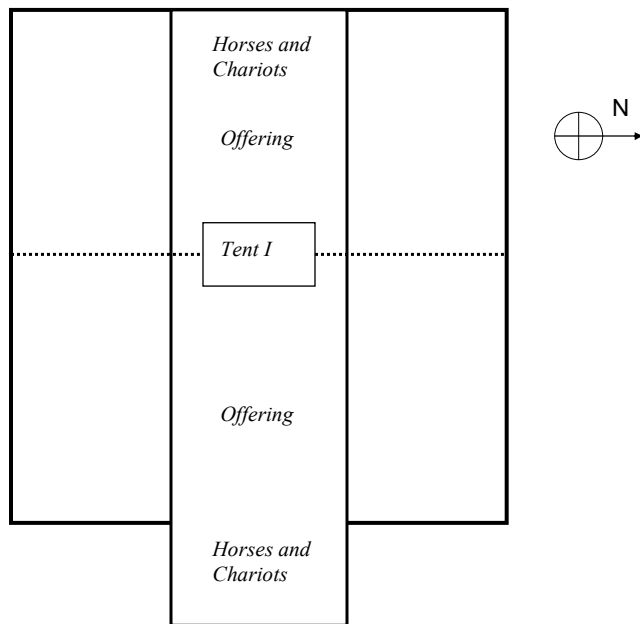


Fig. 1.18 Diagram Showing Layout of Central Bay in Front Chamber of Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

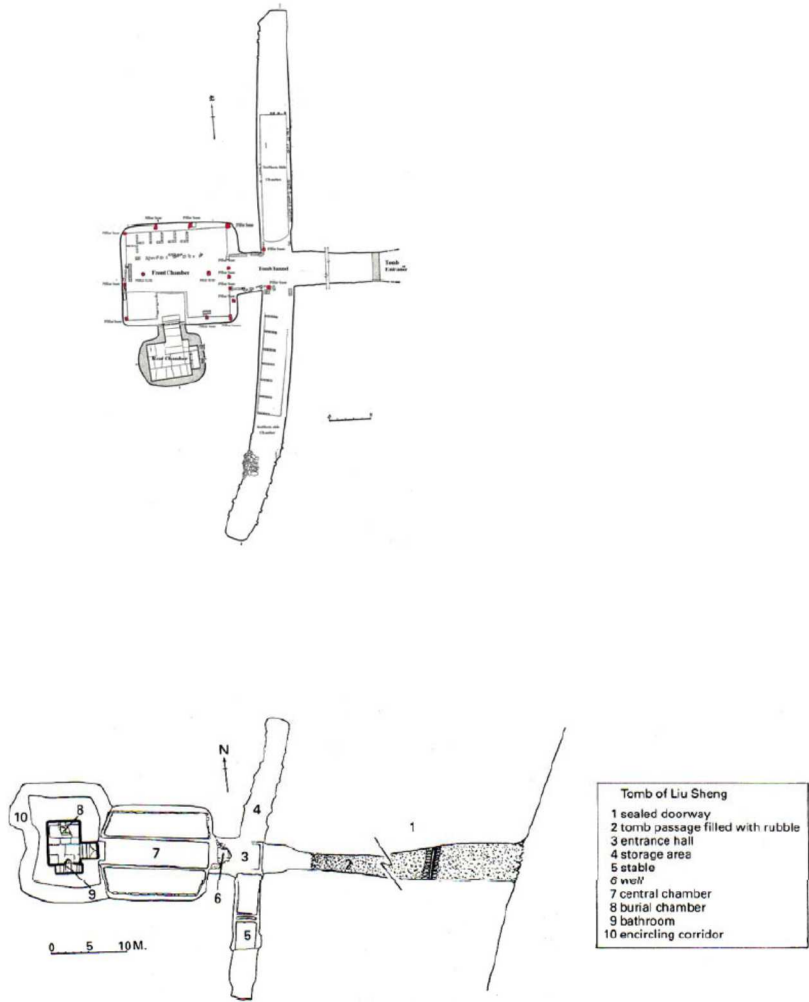


Fig. 2.1 Plan of Mancheng Tombs 1 and 2 in Parallel. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 2.2 Sexual Organs of Jade Suits in Mancheng Tombs 1 and 2. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 2.3 Dou Wan's Necklace and Jade Decoration in Shape of Female Dancer. 109 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 2.4 Miniature Bronze Ritual Vessels in Mancheng Tomb 2. 109 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

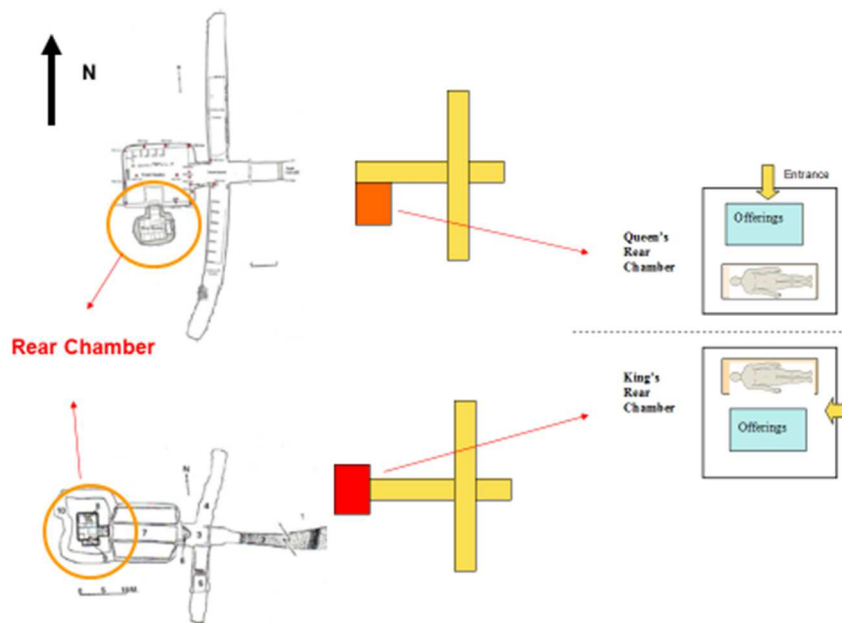


Fig. 2.5 Inverted Relationship between Rear Chambers in Mancheng Tombs 1 and 2. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

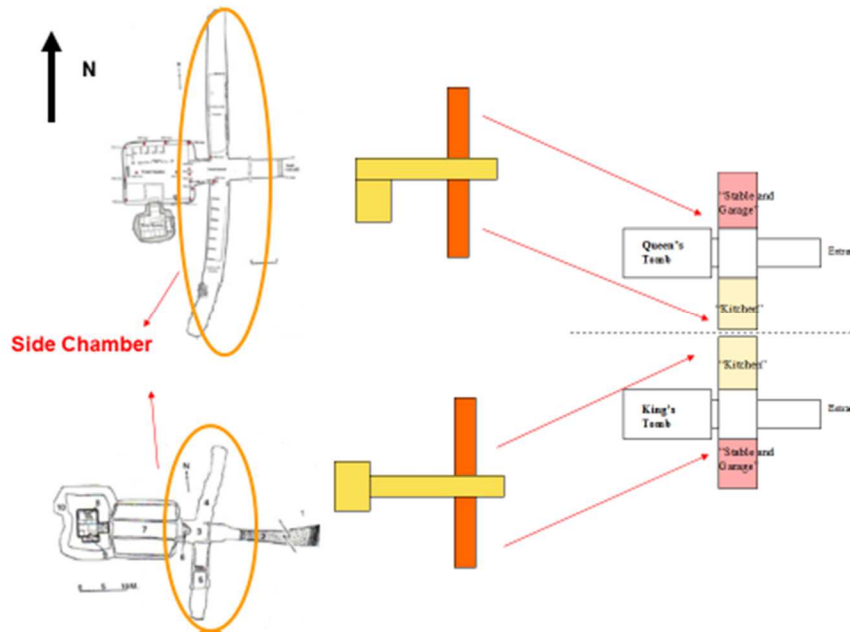
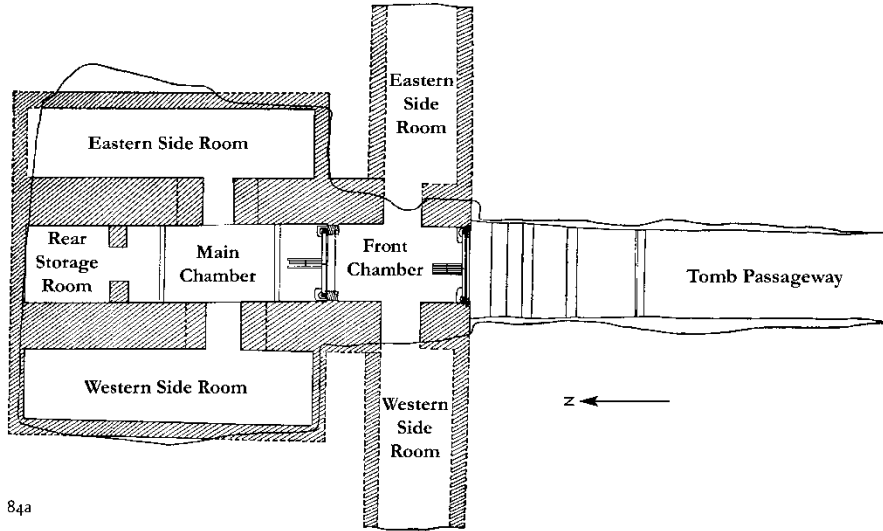


Fig. 2.6 Inverted Relationship between Side Chambers in Mancheng Tombs 1 and 2. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 2.7 Inverted Husband and Wife in Chinese Myth, Fuxi and Nuwa. 151 CE. Jiaxiang, Shandong Province.



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Fig. 2.8 Plan of Zhao Mei's tomb at Guangzhou. Late 2nd c. BCE. Guangzhou, Guangdong Province.

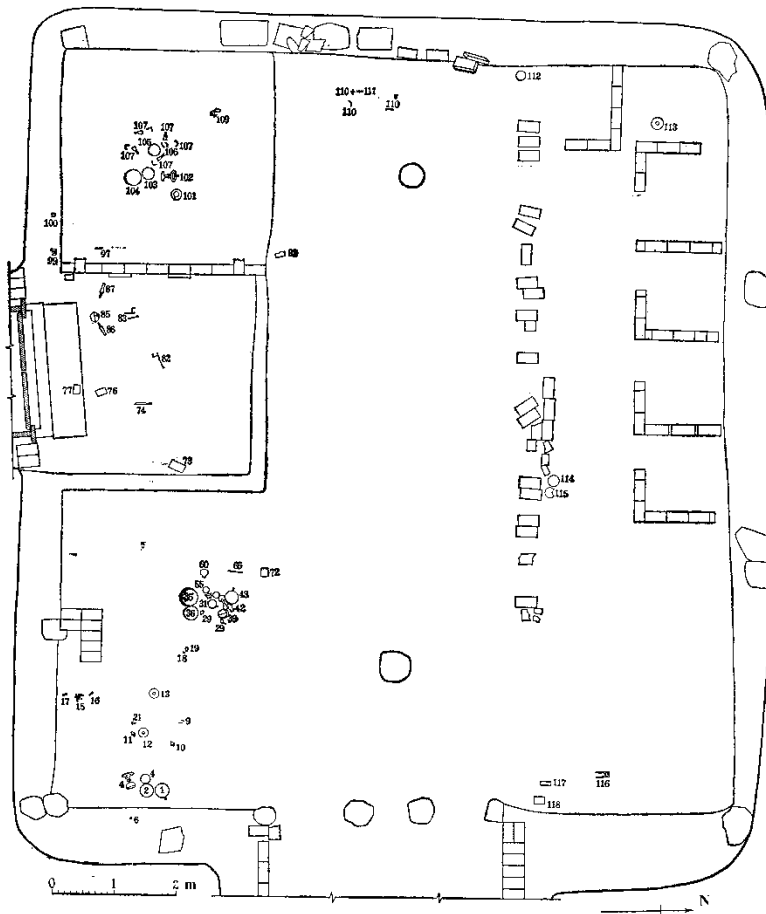


Fig. 2.9 Plan and Layout of Front Chamber in Mancheng Tomb 2. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

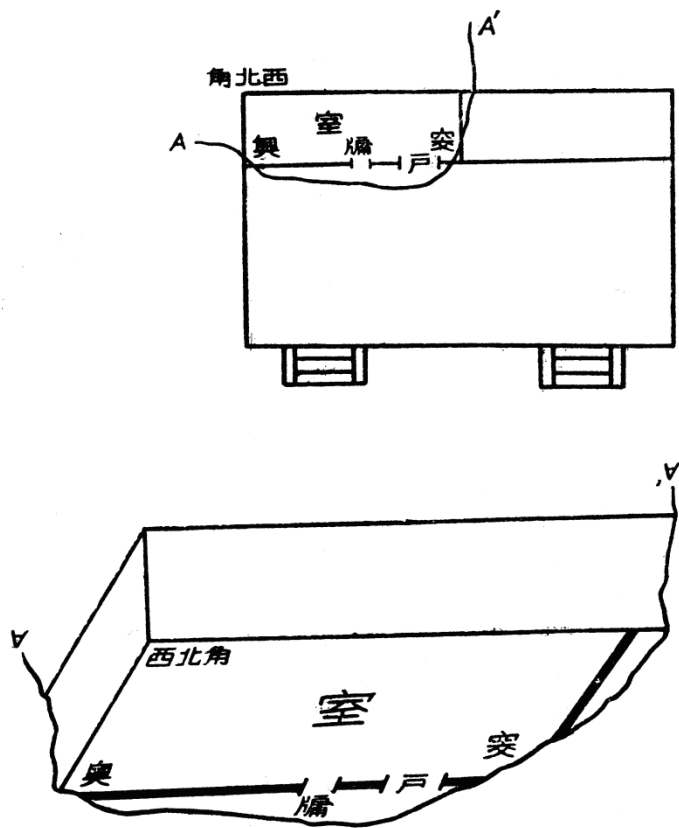


Fig. 2.10 Diagram Showing Ritual Locations of sacrifices in Chinese House.

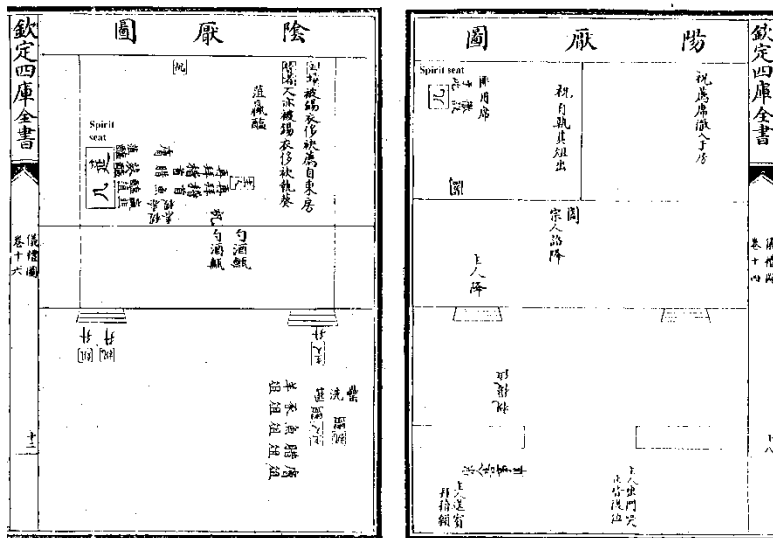


Fig. 2.11 Diagrams of *yinyan* and *yangyan* Sacrifices in Chinese Temple.

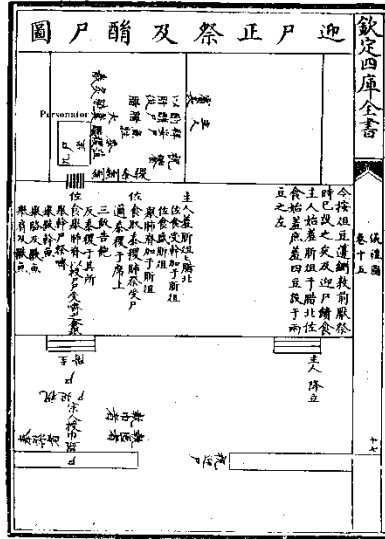


Fig. 2.12 Diagram of *zhengji* Sacrifices in Chinese temple.

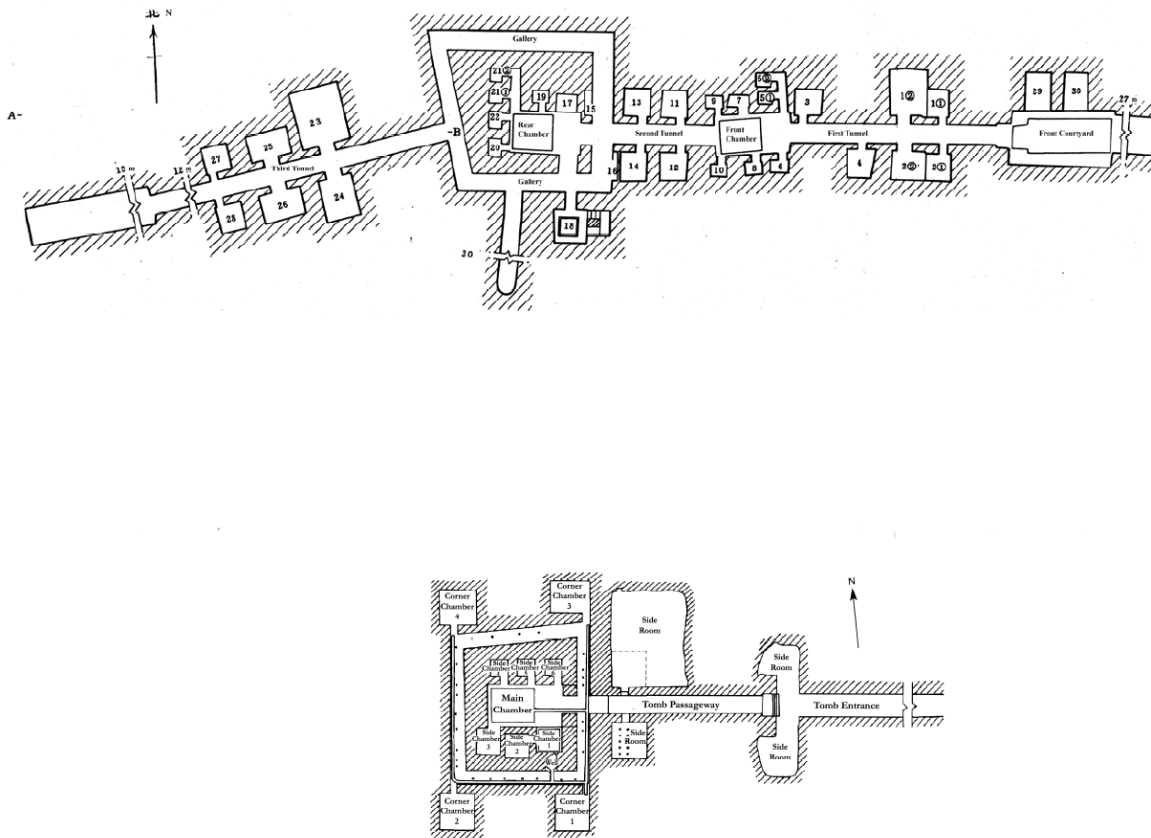


Fig. 2.13 Plan of Baoanshan Tombs 1 (below) and 2 (above) in Parallel. Mid-2nd c. BCE. Yongcheng, Henan Province.

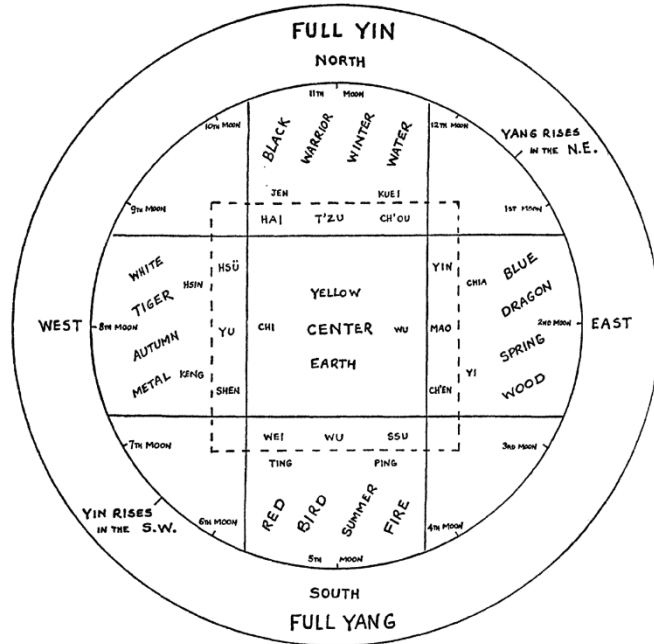


Fig. 2.14 Diagram of *yinyang* Polarity and Five Phases.

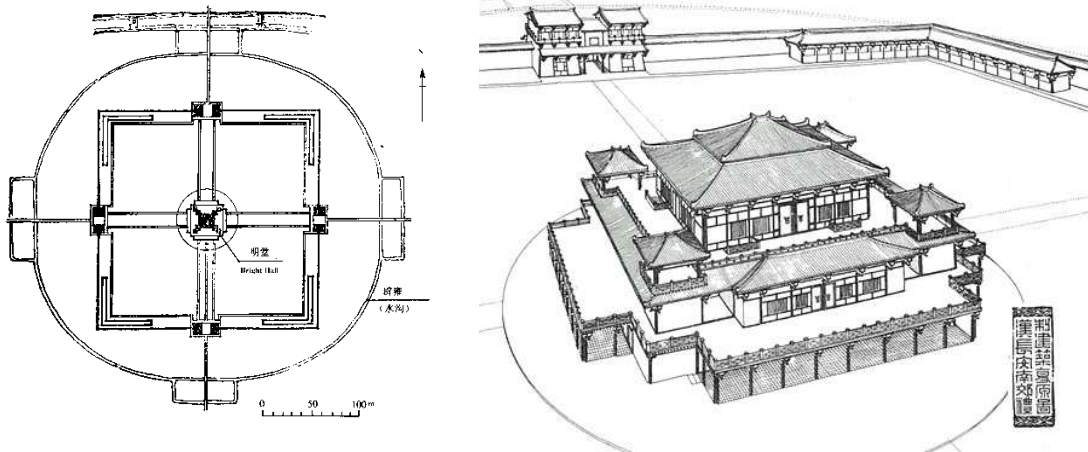


Fig. 2.15 Plan and Reconstruction of Bright Hall of Wang Mang. 9-23 CE. Xi'an, Shaanxi Province.



Fig. 2.16 *Gongzhong xingle qian* from Mancheng Tomb 2. 109 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 2.17 Changxin Palace Lamp in Mancheng Tomb 2. 109 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

Two Major Burial Styles in Early 2nd century BCE China

- *Guo* Casket
- Vertical
- *Shi* Chamber
- Horizontal

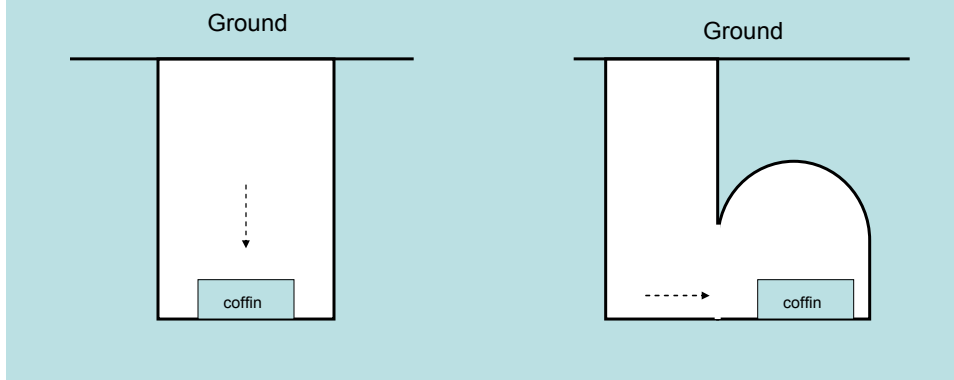


Fig. 3.1 Two Major Burial Types in Early China.

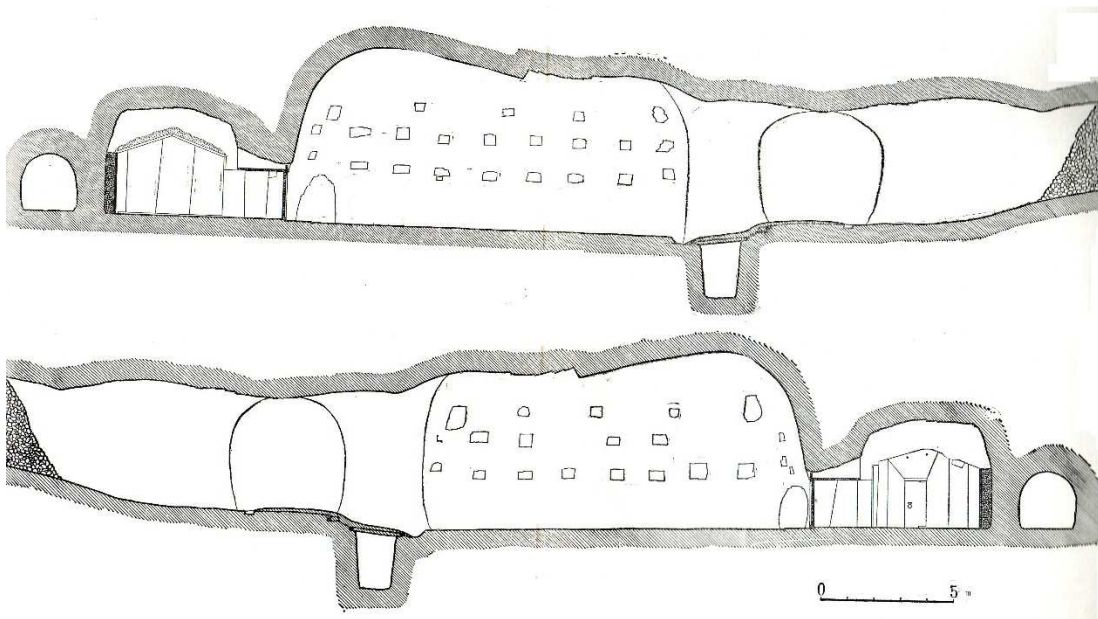


Fig. 3.2 Vaulted Rock-cut Shell of Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

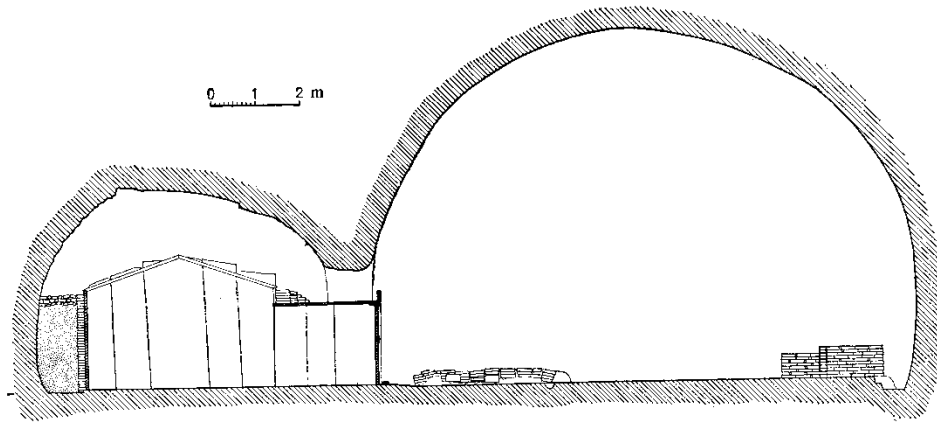


Fig. 3.3 Domed rock-cut “Shell” of Mancheng Tomb 2. 109 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

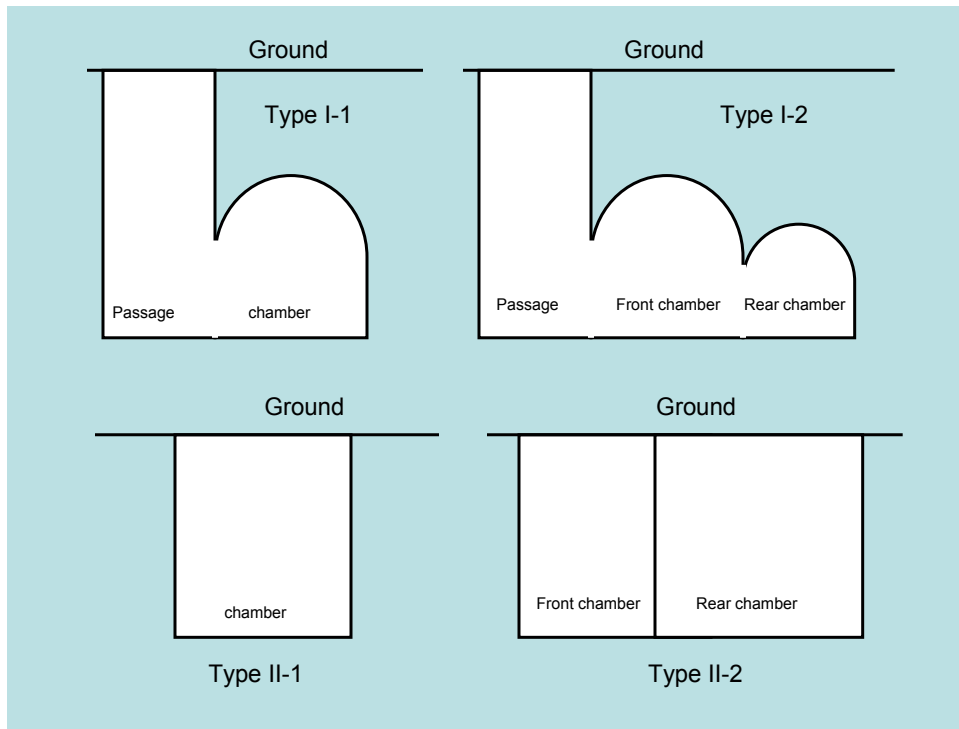


Fig. 3.4 Development of Two Major Types of Burial in Early China.

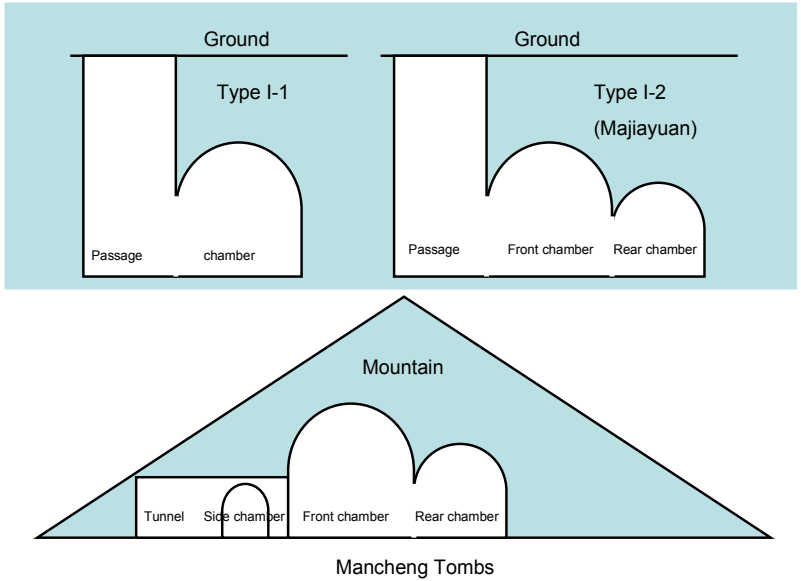


Fig. 3.5 Diagram Showing Formal Relationship between Catacombs and Mancheng Tombs.

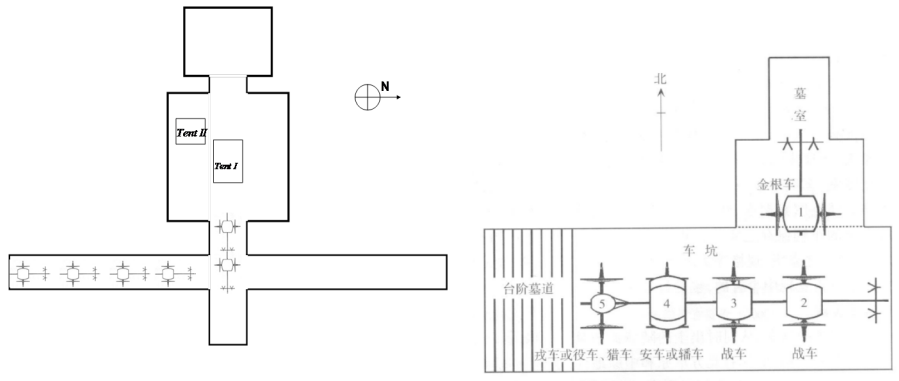


Fig. 3.6 Diagram Comparing Distribution of Chariots between Mancheng and Majiyuan.



Fig. 3.7 Bronze Felines in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.8 Inscriptions on Bronze Felines at Mancheng Tomb 1 (ink rubbing). 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.9 Necklace of Carnelian Beads in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.10 Iron Poniard in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.11 Bronze Plaque Decorated with Animal-combat Motif. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

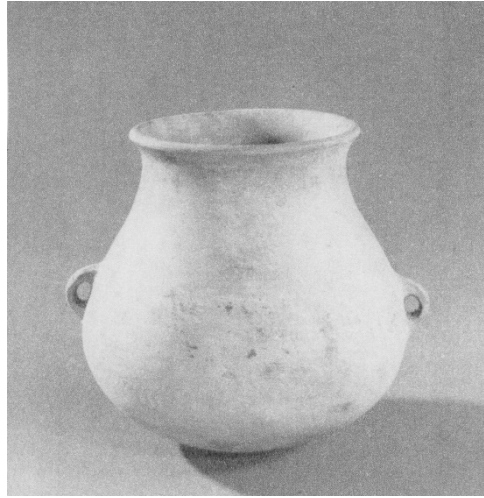
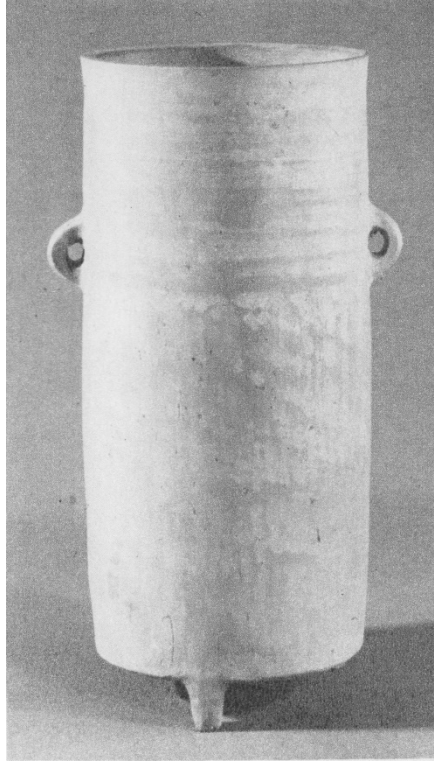


Fig. 3.12 Cereramics in Mancheng Tomb 1 in Local non-Han Style. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



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Fig. 3.13 Horse Face Mask (Frontlet) in Mancheng Tomb 1 in Rong-Di Barbaric Style. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.14 Bronze Feline Attacking Deer in King Cuo's Tomb. Late Eastern Zhou. 4th c. BCE. Pingshan, Hebei Province.

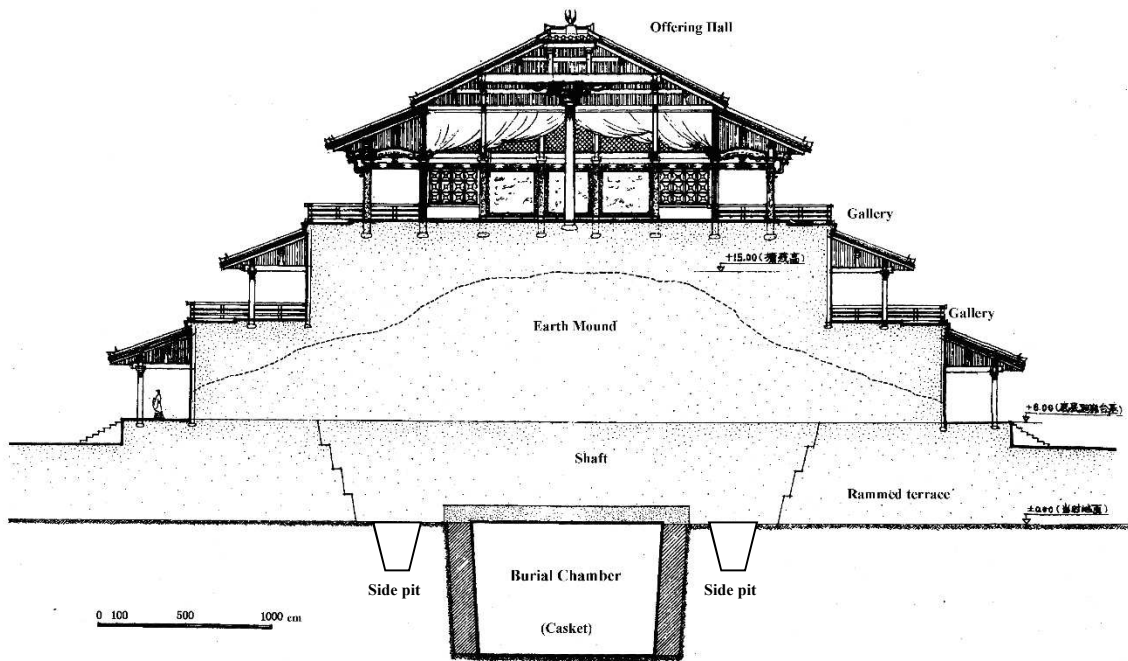


Fig. 3.15 Reconstructon of King Cuo's Tomb. Late Eastern Zhou. 4th c. BCE. Pingshan, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.16 Bronze Phallus and Testicles (?) in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.17 Bronze Figurines of Foreigner-looking Story-tellers in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.



Fig. 3.18 Bronze Figurine of Dwarf Entertainer in Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

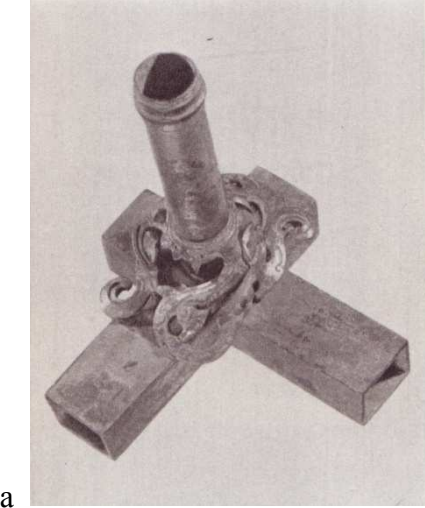
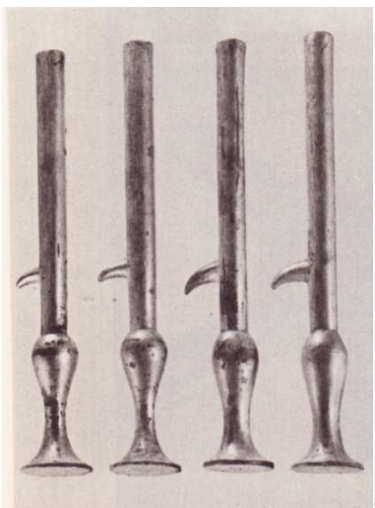


Fig.X.1 Three types of bronze joints of the central tent. Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

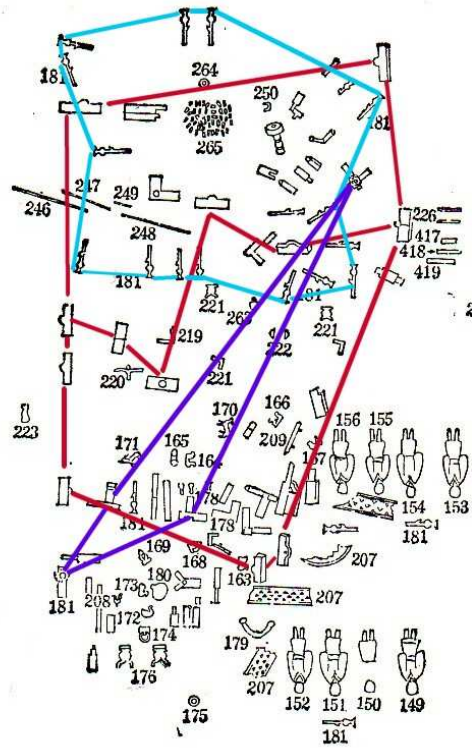


Fig.X.2 Distribution of the three types of tent joints. Mancheng Tomb 1. 113 BCE. Mancheng, Hebei Province.

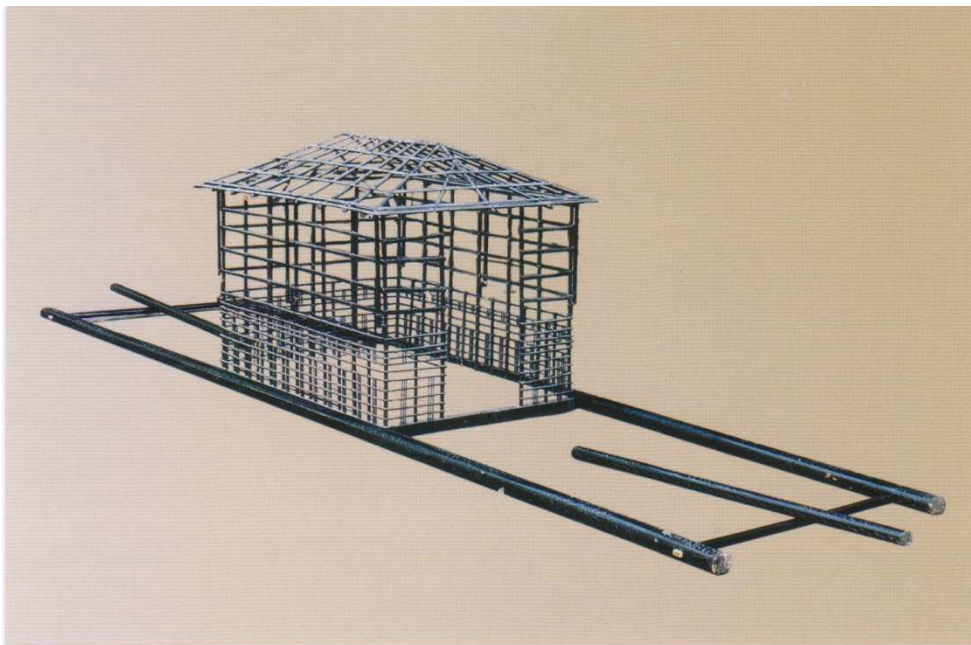


Fig. X.3 Reconstructed sedan from Hougudui tomb, 5th c. BCE. Gushi, Henan Province.