Cosmology, Fashion, and Good Fortune: Chinese Auspicious Ornament in the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220)

by

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Abstract

This thesis studies ‘auspicious ornament’ in the tombs of Han dynasty China. It offers a new reading of highly decorated tombs found near the two imperial capital cities, Chang’an (Western Han) and Luoyang (Eastern Han), and the elite tombs in central and eastern China. The thesis argues that a system of varied decorations, motifs, and materials developed in the Han dynasty as a means to convey good wishes and engender favourable outcomes, such as protection and well-being in the afterlife, immortality, and blessings for offspring. It interprets the significance, functions, relevant historical perspectives, and symbolic associations of ornament in China through an account of ornamentation on murals, carvings, jade, and gold objects in tombs, which are contextualised within the cosmological and philosophical background of the Han period.

The transition to using more auspicious ornament in the Han period was related to the formation of correlative cosmology around the third century BC and Confucian rationalisation in the Western Han court, as well as other factors, including increasing concerns about an ideal afterlife. This is demonstrated through a critical analysis of pre-Han and Han dynasty historical sources to highlight the ideological development, and a contextual archaeological approach to the development of burial forms, materials and structures.

On this basis, the three main analytical chapters discuss ornament on murals, carvings, jade, and gold objects in Han tombs, all of which exhibit changes in their

motifs and uses. The discussion compares relevant pre-Han discoveries to establish these changes and to reveal the potential origins of the auspicious ornament. The analysis also incorporates local and foreign traits in the material assemblage suggested to have been adapted by Han dynasty people as popular practices through communications both within the Empire and its border regions populated by outsiders. In addition, this thesis presents a theoretical interpretation of the material agency of objects to understand how ornament acted upon people, i.e. bringing auspiciousness. Overall, the thesis explores the Han repertoire of ornamental motifs which may have provided the basis for the development of the prominent concept of auspiciousness throughout Chinese art and culture.

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1. Research questions, definitions, and main subject

This thesis focuses on the concept of auspiciousness embodied in ornament from Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220) tombs in China. The core argument is that a system of auspicious ornamentation developed during the Western Han period (206 BC–AD 9), and this is reflected in the wealth of objects and arts found in tombs. Through examination of a considerable body of archaeological material from tombs and contemporary philosophies, this thesis demonstrates that a wide variety of decorations, motifs, materials, and technologies became desirable in Han China as a means to convey good wishes and engender favourable outcomes, such as eternal life.

The role of auspiciousness in art and archaeology has largely been examined by only a few scholars, including Jessica Rawson and Wu Hung.[1] This is because the concept has almost been taken for granted as having a long history in China, thus scholars have not felt the need to question it.[2] Yet by the very fact that auspiciousness is considered to have a 'long and unquestioned history'[3] shows that it is a prominent part of Chinese culture, and thus deserves attention and investigation. Where previous

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[1] Wu 1984; Rawson 2000. A thorough overview of the literature is provided in Section 1.2.
[2] Shen Lihua and Qian Yulian 2005; Zhou Xing 2015.
[3] Shen Lihua and Qian Yulian 2005: 2.

studies have examined auspiciousness directly, they have only focused on auspicious meanings embodied in single ornamental motifs, such as dragons and phoenixes.[4] As a result, later scholars questioned how appropriate it was to examine auspicious motifs outside of the specific contexts in which they were devised,[5] and broader questions pertaining to the role of ornament in reflecting and understanding the concept of auspicious, material culture, and ancient society as a whole were also raised.

Recent publications have drawn attention to a greater number of archaeological and textual sources, as well as adopting more contextual and historical approaches in the study of motifs, patterns, and objects with auspicious meanings.[6] Nevertheless, research so far has neglected to examine the definition of auspiciousness depending on culture and time period, which has great influence on understanding the development of its role in Han society. This thesis thus fills a gap in archaeological and art historical study of early China's auspicious ornamental system. The aim is to show that the physical forms of auspicious ornament, as well as the materials considered appropriate to represent auspicious concepts and its symbolic meanings, started to develop as early as the Han dynasty. This is demonstrated using a holistic approach that includes the ideology and social history that caused such a development to take place. Before presenting the materials, theories, and methods to be used in this thesis, there are three

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[4] Wang Shucun 1990; Qu Jianwen *et al.* 2008.

[5] Rawson 2011: 343.

[6] General studies include Wang Aihe 2000; Tseng 2004; Wu 2015; Rawson 2016 etc. Specific studies on related motifs and materials include Zhang Wen *et al.* 2013; Pan Pan 2016; Tseng 2017 etc. For details see Section 1.2.3 below.

questions that need to be defined and answered: 1) what is ornament and an ornamental system; 2) what is auspiciousness; 3) what (if any) significant developments in the ornamental system occurred during the Han dynasty?

1.1.1 **Ornament and an ornamental system**

Ornament, as an enhancement of the shape or surface of an object, is employed widely throughout the world on items such as dress, artefacts, and buildings.[7] The term is closely related to, but more inclusive than, words such as pattern, decoration, and decorative art.[8] It is important to analyse ornament contextually, i.e. to approach it as a package comprising the materials used to make it, the skills of the craftspeople, and the motifs that are visible,[9] which serves to better highlight the relevant historic information, symbolic associations, values, and sources of materials.[10]

It is also crucial to understand that ornament is not unordered or random. In fact, ornament usually comes as part of a system built from an array of culturally-specific motifs, rules governing the ways of combining them, and artefact types.[11] Over the course of centuries, the defining characteristics of a certain culture or group of people's ornamental system may change alongside the growth of local and exotic variants,

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[7] Rawson 2016a: 371. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ornament as something used to adorn, beautify, or embellish a decoration or embellishment. For a complete, detailed morphological definition, see *Oxford English Dictionary* 2017.

[8] Rawson 2006a: 380 and 389.

[9] *Ibid*: 371–2. Jessica Rawson developed this idea from Stuart Piggott, see Piggott 1992: 45–8.

[10] Many scholars have argued for the importance of conducting contextual analysis on artefacts, see DeMarrais *et al*. 1996: 18–9; Robb 1998: 341; Ekengren 2013: 181–4.

[11] The motifs refer to the designs, patterns, and smaller elements; the ways of combining motifs means certain rules followed by craftsmen or artists. Rawson 2006a: 380 and note 1; Rawson 2016: 3.

improvements in manufacture and techniques, and developments in forms and meanings.[12] In a Western context, this is best illustrated by the example of evolving artistic and architectural 'styles', e.g. Gothic or Romanesque.[13]

China and the West have two of the most enduring but also strikingly different ornamental systems in the world.[14] In the West, ornament is often imbued with features of architectural design,[15] whereas in China, where architecture features infrequently as a design feature;[16] interior ornaments, including textiles, lacquers and porcelains, were considered more important. These typically had strong literary links and linguistic themes, such as puns and rebuses,[17] as well as representations of natural and imaginary beings, such as dragons, animals, and plants.[18]

Western ornament is exemplified by the early-seventeenth-century cabinet depicted in Figure 1.1 from Germany.[19] The paired Corinthian columns, pedimented projections, and buttress mouldings are all features indicative of Western classical architectural composition,[20] with the ornament serving to define the physical space and reflect the

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[12] *Ibid*.

[13] Summerson 1980; Pothorn 1983; Mastandrea *et al.*, 2011.

[14] Rawson 2016: 389.

[15] It is also true the other way around, i.e. buildings are often highly ornamented. Internal furnishing and decorations were equally important. For a detailed discussion, see Semper 2000.

[16] In contrast to the West, architectural features in China are not frequently found on other artworks, furniture, or objects. Applications of architectural design outside of buildings mostly appear only on building models, coffins and reliquaries, or in tombs to create a resemblance to a building, especially after the introduction of Buddhism at the end of the Han dynasty. See Laing 1992: 182–3; Rawson 2006a: 382 and 387.

[17] Rawski and Rawson 2005: 356–81; Rawson 2016: 372.

[18] Bartholomew 2006: 16; Rawson 2006a: 380.

[19] For more examples and discussions, see Summerson 1980: 42.

[20] The 'classical' composition and decorative elements of Western architecture stem from the architectural vocabulary of ancient Greece and Rome. For definitions and discussion, see *Ibid*: 7–8.

intellect of the commissioners.[21] Like a real building, the architectural embellishment inside the structure and artefacts in the cabinet all harmonise to create a coherent visual effect (Figure 1.2),[22] which reflects the Western notion that ornament should express cosmic laws within the phenomenal 'world of sense'.[23]

In contrast, a lacquer box inlaid with mother-of-pearl in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art is a typical example of Chinese visual motifs and verbal puns being combined (Figure 1.3). The child figures in the entertainment scenes on the lid and sides represent the desire for progeny, while the flowers and plants signify prosperity.[24] The magpie on the side also implies a wish for happiness, as the word for this bird in Chinese, *xique* 喜鵲, contains the character *xi* 喜, meaning happy.[25] This exemplifies the most prominent feature of the Chinese ornamental system: finding ways to express auspicious meanings.[26]

1.1.2 **The definition of auspiciousness**

The word 'auspiciousness' in English is derived from Latin and generally refers to the taking of 'auspices' by the augurs of ancient Rome; it thus denotes a good omen.[27] The

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[21] Rawson 2006a: 380–1. Also refer to Bourdieu 1986.
[22] Layton 2003: 450; Rawson 2006a: 381.
[23] The source of this notion on ornament can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. See Semper 2000: 91.
[24] For more details see the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mother-of-Pearl: A Tradition in Asian Lacquer, 2017. Available at http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2006/mother-of-pearl/photo-gallery, accessed 30th January 2017.
[25] Bartholomew 2006: 58 and 76.
[26] The ornament that appears in later China, especially after the Han dynasty, had a few precedents in early China. This development in the repertoire of ornament is discussed in detail in Chapter Two. See also Rawson 2000: 135 and 143; Rawson 2016: 372.
[27] Auspicious is defined as something being of good omen; giving promise of a favourable issue. For details see *Oxford English Dictionary* 2017.

Chinese equivalent is *xiang* 祥 or *jixiang* 吉祥, meaning blessing, good wishes, having good outcomes, and beneficial things.[28] The etymologies of both the Chinese and English words relate to mantic practices, i.e. divination.[29] In China, divination persisted as a tradition up to the imperial period and even today as a way of searching for answers to different questions.[30] As is examined in detail in Chapter Two, such practices may have resulted from the ideology that all things within the universe were correlated, which was formally theorised as correlative cosmology in the third century BC.[31] Against this philosophical background, ancient Chinese people increasingly believed that a visual or material representation of a good sign had the same efficacy as the original, thus could be used to produce the intended favourable outcome.[32] This contrasts with the Western tendency to regard an image or copy as not as good as the original, whereas Chinese people tend to perceive the image (*xiang* 象) and the actual

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[28] Rawson 2000: 159 and 2016: 372. Xu Shen 許慎 (AD 58–148) in his *Explaining Graphs and Analysing Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字), the first Chinese dictionary to analyse the rationale of Chinese characters, explained: *xiang*, means blessing… also means kindness. 祥，福也。……一云善。*Shuowen jiezi*, 7. The earliest instance of the character *ji* 吉 is found on the oracle bones. See Chen Zheng 1986: 194–5.

[29] For the words 'auspicious' and 'auspice', and the related practice that can at least be traced to the ancient Greeks involving premonitions of future, favourable events (*mantike*), see Cicero 2006: 46–9; Struck 2016: 3. Divination generally denotes the attempt to elicit the answers to questions from some higher power or supernatural being. See Blacker *et al.* 1975: 1.

[30] The imperial period, or Imperial China, began in 221 BC when the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC) unified the Warring States (Warring States period c. 480–220 BC) under a single ruler for the first time, and ended in AD 1911 (the last year of the Qing dynasty, AD 1644–1911). Divination in China can be traced back to before the Shang dynasty (1600–1046 BC). Loewe 1994a: 89.

[31] Correlative cosmology refers to the philosophical concept that the cosmos is a unified and integrated whole with all parts linked and affecting one another. Graham 1986: 1–15. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two of the thesis.

[32] Often using a correlative compositional principle: images are linked according to conceptual relationships, which reflects the fundamental 'dualistic' structure in ancient Chinese cosmology. Zhang Guangzhi 1976 and 1983: 56–80; Allan 1991: 69–70; Wu 1989: 218–12 and 2010: 131.

object as almost the same.[33]

Based on the above, 'auspiciousness' can be understood as certain or general good outcomes that are pursued or made more likely—but in no way completely guaranteed—by taking specific actions. Instead of being a static state, auspiciousness can be regarded as a process that ended ultimately in a good result. A few Chinese practices thought to achieve favourable results:[34]

1. Divination and consulting fortune tellers: oracles, fortune telling sticks, and the *Book of Change* (*Yi jing* 易經, c. ninth century BC);[35]
2. Negotiating the calendar: consulting almanac calendars (*huangli* 黃曆) to decide on appropriate days to hold important events, such as weddings and funerals, which can be traced back to the early Han dynasty;[36] ritual and historical texts that dictate the appropriate season to conduct certain rituals or activities (see Section 2.2.2 in Chapter Two);
3. Wearing charms and amulets for protection or for bringing good fortune: carrying a piece of jade against the body;[37]

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[33] For detailed discussion on the universe envisaged according to the rules of social relations and structures rather than a correlated universe, see Rawson 2000: 142–3; Rawson 2002b: 123–4.

[34] This categorization can also be considered applicable in China today. Li Falin 2000; Professor Dame Jessica Rawson, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford, pers. comm. and Rawson 2016: 374.

[35] *Book of Changes* is one of the oldest ancient Chinese divination texts and the oldest of the Chinese classics. *Yi jing*; Blofeld 1984; Schwartz 1985: 355; Loewe 1994a; Rawson 1999a: 16; Section 2.2.1.

[36] Major 2012.

[37] Sun Ji 1991; Lin 2009: 10–3.

4. Preserving the body: the integrity of the physical body, i.e. refraining from damaging the body;[38]
5. Conveying good wishes explicitly: customary sayings and good wishes in inscriptions;[39]
6. Visualising and materialising certain motifs and objects: patterns (Chapters Four, Five and Six), interior furnishings (Chapter Four), and architecture including tombs (Chapter Three).[40]

This thesis mainly explores the sixth practice, as material remains from tombs are important archaeological sources. As will be demonstrated in other chapters, these tomb objects and ornament actually incorporated rather broad definitions of auspiciousness that also touch upon practices 1 to 5. Compared to the textual sources, these material remains provide a valuable source of primary information on ancient societies (see Section 1.2.2).

1.1.3 A major change in the Han dynasty ornamental system

Just as the architectural ornaments of Greek temples gradually came to form the foundations of the later Western ornamented world,[41] it took time for auspiciousness to

[38] This also includes the integrity of hair and refraining from cutting hair. *Classic of Filial Piety*, 2. *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao jing* 孝經) is a Confucius text on social relationships including the family relationships and rules, compiled around late Warring States to early Han period. For the prevalence of similar idea in later dynasties, see Zhu Honglin 2005.

[39] Inscriptions on objects like bronzes, tiles, bricks, and artefacts. For instance, see Figure 4.5 in the thesis; for more objects, see Bartholomew 2006.

[40] Images of plants, animals, and landscapes formed part of the vocabulary of Chinese auspicious motifs. See Rawson 2016: 372–3. These images are explained in later chapters.

[41] The decoration of temples and architectural features were extended to palaces and other buildings and artefact categories of the society across most of Europe. See Riegl 1992; Rawson 1984

become a prominent feature in the Chinese ornamental system.[42] Some scholars have discussed ornament in the context of the major transitional period of the third century AD, when Buddhism was introduced to China and sources of Western and Central Asian ornamental motifs—including architectural motifs, foliage scrolls, and significant Buddhist patterns like lotuses—entered and influenced the ornamental system.[43] However, this thesis focuses on the fundamental system of ornament that was established earlier in the Han dynasty, arguing that this period was as important as the post-Han Buddhist phase. This is due to the fact that the system formed the foundation for later dynastic Chinese ornament, with many of the motifs persisting later into the imperial period. Unprecedented numbers of depictions appear on different materials, like murals, stone carvings, jade, and gold, and these depict a wide array of motifs that can be classed as cosmological, pictorial, or mythical, as well as patterns expressing for the desire to conquer fear and achieve immortality/longevity. In addition, the use and adaptation of exotic motifs continued throughout China's history of ornament and material culture. A brief comparison of the ornament in a Han tomb and Warring States tomb is presented below to illustrate the changes that occurred around the third century BC. Many of the ornamental motifs in the Han tomb are also found in the later dynasties.

The tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (*Zeng hou yi* 曾侯乙, c. 475–433 BC) in Suizhou 随州, Hubei Province, was excavated in 1978 and dates to the early Warring States

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and 2000: 142.

[42] Lei Guiyuan 1979; Shen Lihua and Qian Yulian 2005.

[43] Rawson 1984: chps. 2 and 4; Amster and Chen 2004; Ji Zhe 2011.

period (Figure 1.4).[44] The tomb of Marquis Licang 利蒼 of Dai 軑, his wife Xinzhui 辛追, and their son at Mawangdui 馬王堆 (c. 186–168 BC) in Changsha 長沙, Hunan Province, was excavated 1972–1974 and dates to the early Western Han (Figure 1.5) (Map 1.1).[45] Both are vertical pit tombs, though the divisions of space in each were different. The effects that differences in tomb planning, structure, and materials had on ornament designs are expounded upon in Chapter Three.[46] As both tombs are large in scale with huge numbers of burial goods, only the inner coffins are examined in detail for this example. Marquis Yi of Zeng had one outer and one inner coffin, the latter being made of lacquered wood (Figure 1.6).[47] The deceased in Tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui was interred in the innermost of four coffins (Figure 1.7), with the third one, similar to Marquis Yi of Zeng's inner coffin, also made from lacquered wood with a red background (Figure 1.8).[48]

Several key differences in the use of ornamentation on these two coffins can be observed. The first lies in the motifs: on the inner coffin of Marquis Yi of Zeng, the dragons are closely entwined (Figure 1.9).[49] This shows continuity from similar

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[44] Zeng was a minor state near the powerful neighbour, Chu 楚 State (1030–223 BC). Both Zeng and the later early dynasties were influenced by the culture of Chu. Beijing 1989; see more discussion in Section 4.2.1 in Chapter Four of the thesis.

[45] Not all objects from the two tombs can be covered in full detail here, but major differences between the motifs used for objects made from similar materials, such as lacquer, are evident. Continuity in the development of art also existed. Beijing 1973 vol. 1: 4–6. For the dating of the three tombs, see Loewe 1994b: 27.

[46] Loehr 1967–68: 8–19; Powers 1991 and 2006; Lai 2015: 55–98.

[47] Marquis Yi of Zeng's tomb measures 21×16.5m. For a detailed overview of the structure and size, see Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 7–10, 19–21.

[48] Tomb no.1 at Mawangdui measures 8×5.4m. The outermost coffin is made from all black lacquer on wood, the second has a black background, the third has a red background, and the innermost coffin was wrapped in a piece of textile. For details, see Beijing 1973 vol. 1: 3–14.

[49] The crossed-dragons motif (*jiaoti longwen* 交體龍紋) may have developed from those found

ornamental motifs used on earlier bronzes.[50] On the Mawangdui coffin in Tomb no. 1, however, the creature is no longer just a dragon but combines the features of a dragon and a beast (Figure 1.10). Such hybrids were typical from the beginning of the Han and coincided with the development of correlative cosmology,[51] popular belief in an afterlife, and the idea that one could protect oneself in the afterlife with certain motifs.[52] Composite creatures were represented in the liminal context of death and may have been imbued with the ability to help the dead to immortality.[53]

A change in decorative styles from the Warring States to Han is reflected by the decorations on the two coffins. The geometric motif layout typical during the Zhou (1046–256 BC)[54] has been replaced by the more fluid artistic style popular under the Han. The cloud motifs, specifically cloud swirls, visible on the side of the Mawangdui coffin in Figure 1.8 are found on all kinds of objects from the Han dynasty.[55] In other tombs, creatures and deities were often depicted with the swirling cloud (Figure 1.11).[56] Other motifs depicting heavenly bodies, such as the sun and the moon, also became dominant, which was most probably related to the development of the correlative

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on pottery. See Bagley 1999: 124–231.

[50] Bagley 1987: 32–6; Rawson 2016: 372.

[51] See note 31 above; the various strands contributing to this concept of correlative cosmology are also discussed in Rawson 2000: 133–4.

[52] Zhang Guangzhi 1963: 115–46; Wu 2015: 228 and 235. This is also examined in more detail in Chapters Three to Five of this thesis.

[53] Loewe 1994a: 134; Wu 2015.

[54] Loehr 1967–68: 19; Rawson 1984: 66.

[55] From the Han onwards, clouds have been used to decorate architecture, lacquer and bronze utensils, and tombs. Loehr 1967–68: 12–5; Rawson 1984: 66. The unified cosmology of the Yin-Yang school had a great impact on Han art, especially the representation of cloud swirls which were used to symbolise energy (*qi* 氣), which is the foundation of the five-phases (*wuxing* 五行). Cheng Te-k’un 1957: 164 and 173. For details, see Section 4.2.1 in Chapter Four of the thesis.

[56] Wang Zhongshu 1984: 45; Sections 4.2.1 and 6.3.2.

cosmological perspective.[57]

Ornament in the two tombs reflects development and differences in how understandings of the afterlife were expressed. The ornament on both lacquer coffins express certain fear and concern for the afterlife, and lacquerwares at Mawangdui additionally resemble those from Chu State during the Warring States period.[58] But in the Han, depictions of the immortal island of Penglai 蓬萊 and divine mountain Kunlun 昆侖, in addition to funerary art with motifs expressing a desire for immortality, flourished to an unprecedented degree.[59] Frequently depicted were scenes of heaven and the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母), as seen on the silk banner from Mawangdui (Figure 1.12) and on so-called incense burners or hill censers (*boshanlu* 博山爐) from Han tombs (e.g. Figure 1.13).[60] In the Han dynasty, various local traditions that existed before the Qin (221–206 BC) united the Warring States were synthesised.[61] Remains of texts have also been discovered at Mawangdui, and these reference good omens in the state of Lu 魯 (1032–249 BC), as well as belief in immortal islands among the states of Qi 齊 (c. 1044–221 BC) and Yan 燕 (c. 1044–222 BC) (Map 1.2). The changes to the belief system and its apparent influence on ornament and material is investigated in more detail in Chapters Two and Three.

The Han fashion of incorporating motifs from regions further west of imperial

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[57] Rawson 2000: 134–5; Section 4.2.2.

[58] Wu 1984: 55; Nie Fei and Yang Huiting 2010: 102–5.

[59] Fu Juyou and Chen Songchang 1992: 132–4; Wu 2010: 53.

[60] For the finds and details of hill censers in the Han dynasty, see Erickson 1992: 6–28; Rawson 2006b; Section 6.3.2 in Chapter Six of the thesis.

[61] Zhu Shaohou *et al.* 2000: 219 and 246; Lewis 2010: 19 and 23.

territory is evident in the hybrid horned mythical creature with a dragon-like body on the second innermost coffin at Mawangdui (Figure 1.14). The motif has been acknowledged to have originated from Central Asia and have been depicted to serve as one of the protecting creatures in people's afterlife in Han China.[62] The influx of western motifs probably stemmed from the Han court's fascination with the lands and people to its west, which is explored in Chapter Six.[63]

The changes to ornament between the Warring States and Han periods—a relatively short space of time—as shown above are interesting given that major changes to ornamental systems are perceived to be quite rare. This prompts the question: why did motifs found in tombs become increasingly related to conveying good wishes and favourable results at this time?[64] Was the driving force the earlier political unification by Qin or did the development of a shared understanding of cosmology[65] stimulate markedly different uses of ornament? The distinction is salient to understanding the impetuses that drove the changes in the ornamental system, as the first explanation prioritises the role of the government, whilst the other emphasises developments in philosophy and worldview. These questions are the focus of this thesis.

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[62] Sun Ji 1982; Jacobson-Tepfer 1985: 133–80; Rawson 2017 and pers. comm.

[63] Xu Zhongshu 1935: 569–618; Wu 1984: 50; Zhu Shaohou *et al.* 2000: 279–81; Lin Meicun 2006: 4; Rawson 2016: 380.

[64] Previous research has suggested that continuity is the norm in ornamental systems, even when new elements are added. See Rawson 2016: 387.

[65] The appearance of a shared cosmological belief could not have happened without the philosophical basis provided by different schools of thoughts that developed in the pre-Han period. See Graham 1986: 14. Concepts of prognostications and miraculous objects in the Han also appear to have started developing in the Warring States. See Lippiello 2001: 26.

1.2. Sources

Three sources of evidence inform our understanding of the changes in the Chinese ornamental system around the third century BC: archaeological evidence from excavations and field surveys; primary historical texts written by people around the period; and secondary analyses, i.e. studies by modern researchers.

1.2.1 **Burials**

Most of the material evidence for Han dynasty beliefs comes from tombs, where various kinds of items and decorations have been found. Objects with auspicious motifs and inscriptions, such as bricks and tiles, have also been discovered in non-burial contexts; however, the variety and number of objects are much lower than those from contemporary burial sites.[66] This thesis therefore focuses on auspiciousness as exhibited in the burials of the Han dynasty. A thorough examination of the tens of thousands of Han tombs is beyond the scope of the present work,[67] so this thesis focuses on the decorated tombs in the regions of the two capitals—Chang'an 長安 (modern Xi'an) in Shaanxi Province and Luoyang 洛陽 in Henan Province[68]—and elite tombs in central and eastern China, f. Interactions with other areas within and without Han China are also reflected in these tombs, which means a more

[66] For instance, archaeological work on the palaces in Chang'an, Shaanxi Province, has produced architectural remains decorated with mythical creatures, including dragons and phoenixes. See Shaanxi Sheng Wenwuju and Shaanxi Sheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2012: 92–107.

[67] More than 30,000 Han tombs have been discovered up till now. For an overview on the number and distributions of Han dynasty tombs, see Zhao Huacheng and Gao Chongwen 2002.

[68] Chang'an and Luoyang were the political and economic centres of Han China, and represent major concentrations of decorated tombs. See Chapter Four of this thesis for more detail.

comprehensive interpretation of the archaeological and material culture can be made.[69]

As a general overview, the two capital areas represent the major concentrations of decorated tombs, with the burial interiors in particular including much visual (painted and carved) information on auspicious depictions. The elite tombs of central and eastern China, however, mostly comprise the tombs of high-ranking relatives of the Han dynasty's imperial Liu family, and all share certain similarities in tomb assemblages despite some regional differences.[70] Most of the tombs contain jade objects such as plugs, suits, and items of personal adornment; metalwork, such as ornaments, vessels, and mirrors; pottery utensils or models; human figurines, horse models, chariots, and weapons.

It should be acknowledged that the archaeological data have their limitations. Most of the tombs containing numerous objects were for people of relatively high social rank. The use of auspicious ornament by the ordinary people of Han society cannot be inferred from their tombs, which barely display any decoration. Lai Guolong has attempted to discuss the beliefs of the most humble people in ancient China, but there is too little data to reconstruct their attitudes towards auspiciousness.[71] Outside of tombs, there are some scattered finds with auspicious motifs or inscriptions that have been found in different parts of Han territory, but they are often from unclear contexts

[69] Xi'an 2004.

[70] For instance, tombs in south-west China, i.e. Hunan and Hubei provinces, usually have more lacquerware due to local demand for it and favourable preservation conditions that facilitate the survival of organic materials like lacquer. See Hubei Sheng Bowuguan 2007. Also see Appendix 5.1.

[71] See Lai 2015: chp. 6.

and are so few that they are of little use to understanding common social practices and ideologies. More excavations and publications are necessary to allow the reconstruction of different types of beliefs between social strata.[72]

As the comparison of Warring States and Han burials conducted in Section 1.1.3 demonstrates, archaeological remains from pre-Han China cannot be completely ignored, as they provide the reference point by which to assess changes or continuity in Han materials. For this reason, pre-Han burials are described briefly in Chapter Three to contextualise ornament in transition.[73] Overall, the archaeological record offers a rich array of material through which to explore auspicious tomb decorations and what ancient people intended to achieve by using them.

1.2.2 **Classical Chinese texts**

Texts that are relevant to study of auspiciousness in ancient China can be traced back to the Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771 BC) in the form of the *Book of Odes* (*Shi jing* 詩經), in which good signs are described and both corresponding themes and objects are characterised.[74] Other pre-Han texts that address the topics of auspicious and inauspicious things, rituals or rules to procure favourable outcomes, and the organisation of tomb space mainly include *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*

[72] Li Hong 2006.

[73] Ekengren argues that to identify changes in tombs and the intentions of the tomb builders, it is necessary to compare tombs and tomb contents with others from different periods. See Ekengren 2013: 181–4. Chapter Three of the thesis.

[74] This include few examples of bronze vessels. Lippiello 2001: 66; Cheng Te-k'un 1963: 13–29. *Book of Odes* is the earliest extant Chinese poetry collecting poems from the Western Zhou dynasty to the Spring and Autumn period (770–465 BC), compiled around the Spring and Autumn period.

(*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), compiled in 239 BC by Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (d. 235 BC),[75] and *Book of Rites* (*Li ji* 禮記), a Confucian ritual canon put together in the early Han, though many of its chapters were written earlier in the Warring States period.[76] It is important to note that these sources, together with others mentioned in later chapters, only represent the authors' personal perspectives on how to ideally achieve good outcomes.

As is discussed in detail in Chapter Two, major changes in society, politics, and cosmology occurred in the Han, which set the historical stage for a systematic repertoire of auspicious ornament to be formed.[77] Zou Yan's 鄒衍 (350–270 BC) *Book of Master Zou* (*Zouzi* 鄒子) is the foundational text for the theory of correlative cosmology and thus also for beliefs in good omens in early imperial China.[78] Chronicles, such as the *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145–87 BC), also provide essential information on the beliefs, religions, ritual practices, and social mores of the Han dynasty that drove the developments seen in material culture.

Almanacs, charms, incantations, and medical texts written on bamboo strips have also been discovered, many of which deal with demons or baleful influences, the stability of the afterlife, or star charts.[79] Similar concerns with omens and the afterlife

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[75] Wu 2010: 7–8. For details see Section 2.2 in Chapter Two of the thesis.

[76] *Ibid*.

[77] Rawson 2000: 134–5.

[78] Zou Yan's work was fragmentally recorded in Ma Guohan 1883; for details, see Section 2.2 in Chapter Two of the thesis.

[79] One such textual source is the *Statute on Funerals* (*Zang lü* 葬律), which was written on five bamboo strips found in Shuihudi 睡虎地 M77 (post-157 BC), Yunmeng 雲夢, Hubei Province. See *Jianghan kaogu* 2008.

can be found in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhaijing* 山海經), a collection of heterogeneous texts dated to around the third century BC, as well as other Han texts, such as the *Book of Documents* (*Shang shu* 尚書) and the *Huainanzi* 淮南子.[80] These sources demonstrate that a fear of unknown worlds, including the afterlife, has long been a part of Chinese cultures. Knowing this facilitates our understanding of how tomb decorations and objects were intended to counteract negative outcomes, and therefore were crucial to auspiciousness.

As mentioned above, however, and discussed in greater detail in the following literature review (Section 1.2.3), the texts are potentially biased, suffer from idealised notions of human control over the uncontrollable, and in many cases are unclearly sourced.[81] This means a critical attitude is always necessary when utilising them in studies of auspiciousness, material culture, and ancient Chinese society and ideology more broadly.

1.2.3 **Prior scholarship**

Few previous studies on auspicious ornament have been published, though the topic has been mentioned fleetingly in studies of ornament and Chinese art and archaeology. Decorative motifs, such as immortal figures, are typically approached from a descriptive perspective that focuses on their origins, styles, and functions in tombs, as

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[80] For detailed information on these texts, see Section 2.2 in Chapter Two of the thesis.

[81] Much of the evidence or sources the historical texts base their claims on are unknown. Additionally, the dates and original authors of some texts are often unrecorded. *Ibid*.

opposed to potentially auspicious features.[82] Such studies, however, have laid a solid foundation for the study of auspiciousness by their use of comparative methodologies, which have highlighted key issues and lacunae.

Studies on ancient Chinese ornament

Studies of ancient Chinese ornament have been conducted by Western scholars and cover a wide range of materials within a broad historical context. These studies often feature cross-cultural comparisons.

Max Loehr was one of the first to identify a lack of systematic definition or investigation of Chinese ornamental art when he summarised the historical phases of the Chinese decorative arts in the 1960s. Though the materials he used were relatively sparse and tentative, Loehr outlined recognisable transformations carefully, noting the appearance of pictorial representation at the beginning of the Han dynasty.[83] Susan Bush later wrote about the development of typical Chinese auspicious ornament motifs, such as clouds and lotuses, from the Han Dynasty onwards.[84] Though her focus was on sixth century China, she traced the motifs' origins through pre-Han and Han texts, providing a good example of how to understand auspicious ornament on objects that have been studied separate from related ideological or textual sources, and the auspiciousness of motifs, such as clouds, that has frequently been taken for granted.

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[82] See Wen Yiduo 2006.

[83] The Han dynasty marked the beginning of pictorial representation, with features including waves, imaginary creatures, and interrelated images becoming common. Loehr 1967–68: 11–2.

[84] Bush 1975.

Since the 1980's, Jessica Rawson has systematically studied Chinese ornament, carefully examining common motifs in the Chinese ornamental system—clouds,[85] so-called spiritual animals like phoenixes, deer, and fish[86]—their auspicious meanings, and their development. In her 2000 article on cosmological systems as sources of content for art and ornament,[87] she considers more deeply concepts that were generally referred to as 'auspicious creatures' in her earlier work.[88] In other work, Rawson has stressed the importance of materials, examining within both archaeological and historical contexts the different roles that motifs played when depicted on objects of jade,[89] ceramic, or bronze.[90] She is among the earliest to have proposed that, in early dynastic China, there was a growing trend towards representing nature and the cosmos in tombs or palaces, due to a stronger desire to pursue auspiciousness and good fortune.[91] Although Rawson does not discuss the changes to ornament in the Han dynasty in the context of afterlife in much detail, her studies have highlighted the importance of auspicious ornament to China and laid a substantial foundation for this thesis' research.

Wu Hung is another scholar who has analysed the relationship between tomb

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[85] Rawson 1984: 65–8.

[86] *Ibid*: 99–116.

[87] Rawson 2000.

[88] The article argues that what are normally treated as separate artistic and ornamental genres can be better understood as aspects of a single integrate system of visual signs; images and models were essential components of the universe for the afterlife against the idea of the close link between the intellectual framework and the world, and thus the decoration of tombs including various auspicious creatures were important to a better afterlife. *Ibid*: 133 and 144–5; Rawson 1984: 107; Rawson 1999a: 16.

[89] For instance, see the motif of deer and its development before and after the Tang dynasty (AD 618–907), Rawson 1995a: 370.

[90] Rawson 2016: 371–91.

[91] For details see *Ibid*: 380–9.

structure and ornament especially well. He has demonstrated that more chamber graves emerged to imitate dwellings and cosmological space in the Han dynasty. In Wu's research, socio-political and philosophical factors are taken into consideration, together with a wide range of archaeological materials.[92] But, the wide range of materials he uses are often not systematically presented, and only case studies of certain motifs or objects are discussed in detail.[93] It is thus likely that Wu has recorded much more evidence and knows the numbers and contexts of the objects, but the lack of thorough data in appendices makes it difficult for readers to understand the patterns he identifies. Additionally, some of his interpretations of the function of objects, such as jade suits transforming the interred into immortals, may be slightly over imaginative, as is discussed in Chapter Five.[94] Overall, however, Wu's articles and books are essential to the study of auspicious ornament in China, as he is one of the few to have explained the complexity of the concept of the auspicious and its reflection in art, especially funerary art, in China. Additionally, his arguments are mainly founded upon textual, art historical, and archaeological materials.

Chinese scholars, particularly Li Xueqin[95] and Zhang Guangzhi,[96] have written about cosmology, good omens, and their relationship with objects. Such scholars have

[92] Wu 2010.

[93] Wu 2015: 228–38. A detailed study on the immortal island of Penglai is provided by Wu 2010: 53. This motif typically reflected the concepts on immortality and afterlife in the Han dynasty. Other scholars, such as Wolfgang Bauer, have also paid much attention to it, see Bauer 1976.

[94] Wu 1997: 147–70. For detailed discussion, see Chapter Five of this thesis.

[95] Li Xueqin 1992–93: 1–8.

[96] Zhang Guangzhi 1982.

predominantly kept to methods seen more commonly in China, mostly relying on texts and Chinese archaeology's traditional typological method.[97] Other researchers have further studied the symbolism of contemporary cosmology, including the four directions, five phases, immortals, and constellation,[98] all of which have been heavily studied in the discipline of early Chinese visual art. Wang Aihe specifically has proposed that during the Han dynasty cosmology was synthesised from different ideological concepts due to the need to define and explain sovereignty,[99] which is something rarely discussed by Chinese scholars studying the visual arts.

In general, Chinese scholarship has ignored auspicious ornament as a source for understanding intellectual and social history, and it is more often considered a subject for folk art and ethnographic studies.[100] Other studies that address the subject include dictionary or catalogue-type books on auspicious ornament.[101] Though lacking in interpretation, such books are practical references for auspicious motifs and their meanings. Among the most informative is C. A. S. Williams's encyclopaedia on Chinese art motifs, which offers historical, textual, and even archaeological references for each.[102]

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[97] For the typological method in China, see Su Bingqi 1984: 225–34; Yu Weichao 1989; for comments and criticism of such method, see Bagley 2008.

[98] For instance, Pan Pan 2016. One of the latest discoveries of the related Han dynasty ornament is the Eastern Han mural tomb at Jingbian Qushuhao 靖邊渠樹壕 in Shaanxi Province, central China. Archaeologists have studied the astronomical chart from the tomb to understand the material resources used in burial customs, myths, and auspiciousness. Duan Yi and Wu Jiabi 2017.

[99] Wang Aihe 2000.

[100] Wang Shucun 1990; Gao Bingzhong *et al.* 1994; Zhou Xing 2015: 54–68.

[101] Yue Sheng 2005. Other scholars, such as Terese Tse Bartholomew, have also written on a similar topic. See Bartholomew 2006.

[102] Williams 1976.

Studies of history and ideology relevant to ornament

Good omens, signs, and divinations considered to relate to fortune and fate have been studied by many scholars for a variety of historical periods, though only a few have examined the visualisations or material representations of these concepts in art and archaeology. These studies are, however, fundamental to understanding the cosmology and ideological background that structured the material world of early ancient China.[103]

Michael Loewe argues that a pervasive notion in early dynastic China was that good outcomes could be assured by producing pictures or models of the good omens that heralded their arrival.[104] The importance of these omens in political and historical context is also the subject of Tiziana Lippiello's 2001 book, in which she studies the meaning and role of auspicious omens in relation to the cosmic scheme.[105] Though much of the discussion concerns individual emperors and their political ambitions, and few archaeological materials are referenced, Lippiello covers a complete list of texts related to auspicious omens.

How pre-Han thinkers and schools of philosophical argument influenced cosmological and political concepts in early imperial China was the topic of Angus C. Graham's work in the 1980s,[106] and he concluded that China draws its basic cosmological ideas from the time between 800 and 200 BC. Though not a recent study, Graham's work serves as a useful reference for examining how different schools of

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[103] Peterson 1982: 80–1.
[104] Loewe 1994a.
[105] Lippiello 2001.
[106] Graham 1989.

thought influenced people's ideas towards auspiciousness and decorations in Han dynasty (explored in Chapter Two). More recently, Lai Guolong has firmly grounded the important changes in attitudes toward the dead and ritual practices in the socio-political transition from the Warring States to imperial China. Although some of the generalisations Lai makes about Han tombs sharing the same basic burial structure require further examination,[107] the abundance of both textual and archaeological materials that Lai makes use of is unparalleled elsewhere. However, he does not explicitly mention the important role of auspiciousness in the transition reflected in burial practices.

Another feature of studies on the ways people have tried to ensure favourable future outcomes in China has been a growing emphasis on the material facet of such practices. Mark E. Lewis conducted a systematic study of early imperial Chinese philosophy, and his interpretation of Han ideas of being human, as well as a person's relationship with the cosmos, is often cited, but relies solely on texts.[108] In addition to texts, it is important to integrate material evidence with interpretations of the past, i.e. artefacts, which Martin Powers argues offer a material substrate that reflects abstract thinking in ancient times.[109] A novel method of focusing on the materiality of omens and superstition in burial rites is exhibited by Anthony Barbieri-Low, who examines the life and careers of Han artisans. This is unique and important, as Barbieri-Low provides

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[107] Lai 2015: 89–98.
[108] Lewis 2006.
[109] Powers 2006: vii and 313.

detailed information on how monuments, buildings, and tombs were built, but more importantly describes how raw materials like gold, bronze and jade were a key part of production in the first place.[110] This method can be used as a counterpart by which to compare the intellectual background of the production of Han material culture.

Finally, the origins, meanings, and cosmological ideas associated with Iron Age Scytho-Siberian images have been explored by Esther Jacobson-Tepfer, who examines how they influenced metal object designs in Han China.[111] Kost takes a theoretical approach, agency, to systematically study and classify the animal and animal combat motifs to look for the hidden information of the society and the communication.[112] The western impact on Han Chinese art has, however, been less researched by Chinese scholars. Liu Yan was one of the few who argues that the influence of external aesthetics on local production may have helped imbue steppe and western artefacts with the prestige and significance of the owners.[113] Although other scholars have proposed similar opinions,[114] Liu carefully studies the techniques, workshops and imperial control of gold objects, which is systematic and informative.

Together, however, the studies outlined above offer both research material and theoretical ideas concerning transition, human-cosmology relations, and materiality

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[110] Barbieri-Low 2007: 24–6.

[111] Jacobson-Tepfer 1993: 33. For instance, Jacobson points out that the gold in which the deer motif was cast by the Scytho-Siberian nomads prompted a particular focus on the symbolic significance of gold within their cosmology. *Ibid*: 28.

[112] Kost 2014.

[113] Liu Yan 2017.

[114] Bunker 1993; Rawson 1995a: 64–7 and 1995b; Chapter Six of the thesis.

that form the intellectual foundation that this thesis is based on.

Archaeological studies

Archaeological studies provide detailed information on Han dynasty tomb objects, structures, and burial practices. The materials and methods used are typically subject to the availability of remains, and what researchers choose to emphasise typically also reflects the limitations imposed on studies of auspicious ornament by the archaeological record.

Several studies have focused on ornament from burial contexts. The catalogue of China's terracotta army, edited by Kristian Göransson and Jessica Rawson, presents some auspicious ornaments from Qin and Han China, mostly from emperors' mausoleums. The authors view early dynastic China within the scope of trans-Eurasian interactions, attempting to reconstruct Chinese emperors' self-identities, as well as inferring representations of identity from materials and art.[115] As opposed to the examination of isolated artefacts, Cary Liu stresses that Han mortuary structures and burial decorations should be approached as parts of an ensemble within a shared artistic, ritual, and cosmological program.[116] He identifies both material and immaterial aspects of a tomb as active agents in shaping and filling the emptiness. He argues that this was achieved through objects and decoration that were used to build magical spaces

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[115] Göransson and Rawson 2010.

[116] Liu Cary Y. 2005: 17–29. In this article, Liu focuses on tombs in Shandong that contain few burial goods, but he refers to assemblages in other areas of Han China when necessary.

(geomancy), a practice prevalent in ancient China.[117] By looking at tomb ornament and its auspicious features from a systematic spatial and three-dimensional perspective, Liu manages to contextualise them within a network of diverse cultural factors.[118] In contrast, Katherine Tsiang highlights a particular cultural aspect of tomb ornament, focusing on the tradition of depicting images of the ancestors, sometimes in association with historic figures, heavenly spirits, or fantastic creatures and stars. Tsiang uses this to argue that, within the ideological system of Han China, these served to prevent the dead from returning to haunt the living, as well as acting as foci for public or ritual performance by the living.[119] Though the transition from pre-Han to Han China is not expounded upon explicitly, Tsiang's interpretation pertains to ornament during the transition period, which is key to this thesis.

There is a great amount of research on specific auspicious motifs, which demonstrate methods for conducting studies on auspicious ornament. Cheng Te-k'un investigates bronze mirrors, belt-hooks, and tomb bricks, grounding them thoroughly within the context of the increasingly popular Han period belief in correlative cosmological doctrines.[120] Mary Fong looks at iconography used in depicting the three popular gods of Happiness (*Fu* 福), Emolument (*Lu* 祿), and Longevity (*Shou* 壽). Though the heyday of the three gods occurred during the later imperial dynasties from the Tang (AD 618–907) onwards, Fong traces their origins to early China, as well as

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117 Beningson *et al.*: 195–211.
118 *Ibid* and Liu Cary Y. 2005.
119 Tsiang 2016: 165
120 Cheng Te-k'un 1957: 162–86.

the cultural events that nurtured their development. Most of the materials referred to are art-historical, i.e. paintings, and only a few other objects are mentioned in the discussion.[121] However, Fong's work remains a model for studying the legacy of Han ornament.

Similarly, Susan Erickson and Jessica Rawson have both separately examined the origins of Han period hill censers, demonstrating the censers' symbolism as immortal mountains, and as material allusions to immortality.[122] Rawson further proposes elsewhere that 'the burning of incense in such censers might have invoked the search for contact with immortals on those islands,'[123] meaning that the action and process of using the censers was as, if not more, important than the auspicious objects themselves.[124]

The study of individual motifs has also contributed to understanding of the contemporary socio-political context. Lillian Tseng analyses a piece of silk from Niya in the Taklamakan Desert that was embroidered with auspicious omens and creatures, such as winged unicorns. Though a short article, Tseng examines the auspicious motifs from the perspectives of physical form, design, as well as broader themes of ideology and the political and geographical uniqueness of the Xinjiang area in the western regions.[125] The perspective that ornament is a 'package' of related social and historical

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[121] Fong, Mary 1983: 159–99.
[122] Erickson 1992: 6–28; Rawson 2006b: 75–83.
[123] Rawson 2006b: 82.
[124] The process of using an object with auspicious decoration and how the auspiciousness functions will be discussed in later chapters. For the theoretical base, see Section 1.3 below.
[125] Tseng 2017: 82–94.

significance also appears in Tseng's other studies,[126] and can be considered a useful blueprint for studies of ornament.[127]

Chinese scholars have also conducted research on communication between East and West as represented by auspicious motifs,[128] but most are simply lists of sites or reviews of previous, related studies. Lin Meicun's publications, however, have covered East–West communications quite extensively, and he discusses the spread of Eurasian objects on the borderland of China in detail.[129] China's borderlands have also been the focus of work by Emma Bunker, who traces gold use in ancient China and its origins to China's west, along with various adaptations of motifs and techniques.[130] These studies are more ambivalent towards claiming the objects and motifs had auspicious significance, but they provide useful examples for analysing the multiple origins of auspicious Chinese motifs and studying some common patterns in the spread, development, and adoption of non-local practices.

Finally, there have been several studies that have gone beyond examining individual motifs in isolation. Xin Lixiang and Japanese scholar Hayashi Minao have conducted systematic studies on Han dynasty stone and brick tombs, as well as their

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[126] Tseng 2004. Tseng relies almost entirely on the theory that people during the Han period believed one rose to heaven after death. However, this is still very controversial. See Miao Zhe 2014: 305–18.

[127] Tseng also conducted another study on the visual representation of heaven in early China, which can also be seen as a model study on ornament in tombs and other sites such as steles with eulogies. See Tseng 2011.

[128] Zhang Wen *et al.* 2013: 100–12; Pan Pan 2016.

[129] Lin Meicun's publications are numerous, but the most detailed overview of Eurasian objects in modern China's borderlands is found in Lin Meicun 2006.

[130] Bunker 1993.

ornament.[131] Xin notes the need to consider motifs in groups for a more thorough and systematic picture of Han society.[132] This strongly influenced the organisation of motifs in this thesis, which are presented according to themed categories, such as cosmic and narrative ones (Sections 4.2 and 4.3, Chapter Four). Hayashi Minao also takes this a step further by examining the connections between tomb furnishings and various aspects of social life, which includes the ideological background, though this is not fully reviewed.[133]

As highlighted above, the majority of research on Chinese auspicious ornament has focused on individual motifs as opposed to systematically examining ornament in general. Crucially, no detailed contextual study has been conducted on ornament during the transitional period in the Han dynasty. Additionally, studies in the disciplines of history, art history, and archaeology generally avoid discussing the concept of auspiciousness in too concrete a way. However, through a critical, contextual, and theoretical analysis of material remains in Han tombs, in addition to prudent use of textual evidence, this thesis aims to show that auspiciousness has been a crucial feature of the traditional Chinese ornamental system since the Han period. Within this tradition, particular motifs were used in varying ways on different objects and in different forms to express diverse auspicious meanings, but all with the fundamental goal of ensuring

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[131] Another systematic study is Chang Renxia *et al.* 1988, but this is more of a catalogue with little critical analysis.

[132] Xin Lixiang 2000.

[133] Hayashi Minao 2010: 6–15.

a good life and afterlife.[134] The following section outlines the theoretical approaches adopted to understand the complex world of tomb ornament and their arsenal of auspicious motifs.

1.3. Theoretical approaches

Tomb ornament, objects, and the tomb space may all reflect the ideas and wishes of those who made them and of the deceased.[135] But, how exactly was the ornament used to express meaning and promote good outcomes?[136] In order to answer this question, the concept of agency needs to be introduced, which is a widely applied theoretical notion in archaeological and art historical studies, with particular utility in facilitating our understanding of the mutually-constructive relationship between objects and human beings in specific social contexts.[137] As is explained in Section 1.3.1 below, ornament and objects in Han tombs can be conceptualised as agents that enact human will, intentions, and ideas within a physically present society, institutional structure, and set of beliefs.[138] The functions and symbolic meanings of objects are reflected in various aspects of objects, including the physical materials, shapes, decorations, and other aspects of their original contexts, such as their positions. These material characteristics can be more informative when examined in-depth using the theories of materiality and

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[134] Puett focuses on sacrifice and divination in early China, as well as the ways in which people tried to gain control of or benefit from Heaven. Puett 2002: 3–6 and 23–8.

[135] Tambiah 1985: 3.

[136] Wang Aiwen and Li Shengjun 2011: 1–2.

[137] One of the meanings of ‘agency’ is: a being or thing that takes an active role to produce a particular effect or result. Both ‘agent’ and ‘agency’ have their origins in the Latin word *ago*, meaning ‘to do’. *Oxford English Dictionary* 2017.

[138] Gosden 2005; Rawson 2007a: 110–3.

agency, which provide structured ways of illuminating the intangible components of lived human experience that cause the creation of objects, specifically their intentions, customs, and even their unconscious habits.[139] Significantly, such an approach has not been previously used to examine the archaeological material presented in this thesis.

While it is necessary to examine ornament using archaeological theories and methods, it is also important to consider the context of archaeological remains, as well as to take the social background of the Han dynasty into consideration. The following sections elaborate on the concepts of agency, material culture, and decorative arts, and explain why and how such concepts help us to understand auspicious ornament in tomb context.

1.3.1 **Agency and material culture**

An agency-oriented archaeology emphasises the importance of the historical actors inhabiting a particular context, so that the dynamics of human practice can be better explained.[140] As a popular theory since the end of the last century,[141] many ways of interpreting agency have emerged.[142]

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[139] Tilley *et al.* 2006: 4.

[140] Lynn 2002: 109 and 133.

[141] The popularity of agency in the social sciences started in the 1960s. See Dobres and Robb 2000: 3.

[142] *Ibid*. In the social sciences, agency theory appeared in the 1960s to consider individuals' capacities to act independently and influence the world external to them. By contrast, structure is factors of influence (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability, customs, etc.) that determine or limit an agent and his or her decisions. Barker 2012: 304 and 448. The architects of the theory in the context of the social sciences were Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens. Garfinkel 1984. Foundational works are the writings of Bourdieu 1977 and Giddens 1979. For a detailed overview of the history of the development of agency theory, see Dobres and Robb 2000: 304.

There is a large divide among archaeologists regarding the application of agency,[143] namely to what degree the intention of an individual agent is important.[144] Following the perspective adopted by Marcia-Anne Dobres and John Robb, this thesis conceptualises societies as guiding and empowering agents, their ideals, and the material conditions and aims.[145] The agency of objects is reciprocal to society, no matter what different ideologies, practices, or characteristics this may entail.[146] Therefore, agency as relevant to the particular question of auspicious ornament can be understood as a medium that plays a role of expressing auspicious wishes of people and producing good effects from an ideological perspective.[147] Such agency is not necessarily inherent to the objects; instead, it is a process that is begun and realised through the interaction between human beings and objects within the parameters imposed by the social context, such as the jade suits engaging with the bodies of the deceased in Han tombs to realise the deceased's immortality.[148]

In addition, to lower the risk of losing information about objects, such as social situations where they played significant roles,[149] this thesis follows Alfred Gell's idea

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[143] In archaeological studies, the theory became most popular in the 1980s, with Ian Hodder arguing that any 'adequate explanation of social systems and social change must involve the individual's assessment and aims.' Hodder 1982: 5

[144] Shanks and Tilley consider unintended actions to be as important as intended ones. Shanks and Tilley 1987: 116; Dobres and Robb go further, arguing that personal intentions are unimportant, with the unintended consequences all that really matter. Dobres and Robb 2000: 10.

[145] Dobres and Robb 2000: 8.

[146] For example, artists in Europe from the Renaissance period onwards were usually identified with their paintings, whereas tomb builders in ancient China were rarely identified. See Freedberg 1989; Rawson 2007b: 98; Barbieri-Low 2007

[147] Dobres and Robb 2000: 10.

[148] Tythacott 2011: 228. See more detailed discussions in Sections 4.4 and 5.4 of the thesis.

[149] Stevenson provides an inspiring way of reading tomb objects and decorations as a way to offer an image of the deceased entangled with the material world, although his work concerns Pre-dynastic Egypt. See Stevenson 2009.

of the relationship between art and agency: art is produced to influence the thoughts and actions of others, to act upon the world and other persons, interact with the people who gaze upon it, use it, and try to possess it.[150] However, it is noteworthy that Gell rejects the aesthetic effect of objects, nor does he consider the degree of effects between person to person and rank to rank, which should be considered for the Han context.[151]

The materials on which ornament was represented has also been a distinct area of archaeological inquiry in agency theory since the 1980s.[152] Materiality is fundamental to this study, as various symbolic meanings and even religious functions were attributed to the physical qualities of objects' materials.[153] Other elements including the location of the objects, as well as the re-use and adaptation of ancient or exotic materials, all have strong influences on the function and symbolism of the motifs and ornament examined in this study.[154]

The materiality of tomb architecture and decoration is a pertinent issue in this thesis, and questions on the meaning and ideology signified by the materials used to build the structures will be discussed, with particular emphasis on how such materials were thought to bring auspiciousness. It is important to consider multiple materials (stone for

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150 Gell 1998.

151 Rawson 2007a: 98–110.

152 Dobres and Robb 2000: 7. See also Carr and Neitzel 1995.

153 For instance, the demand for jade in the Han dynasty and the practice of adhering it to the body probably related to the material's durability and mineralogical purity that came to symbolise eternity and morality. See Chapter Five of this thesis for further discussion.

154 Wobst 1997: 426–48. It has been questioned whether the material is responsive to the will of free agents or if it limits the possibilities of agency. Dobres and Robb 2000: 12. When an agent acts, it is simultaneously constrained and empowered by the material and social structures in which it lives, and by acting within those structures it contributes to its reaffirmation. See Giddens 1984: 25; Wu 2010: 85.

tombs, jade and gold for burial objects etc.) and their connections to the beliefs, thoughts, technical and institutional changes behind. Not only did patterns and motifs change over time, but the materials on which they were depicted also changed. In a similar way, the materiality of the objects and tombs is also crucial, as the material is responsive to the will of the agent.[155] Materials serve as a contact point between people and the physical world where expressions of social or ideological belief can be actively created,[156] and abstract beliefs can even be formed and brought into being.[157] Different elements interacted with one another so that the function and symbolism of a tomb was only completed with the 'correct' materials. In this way, material could affect style, meaning, positioning of objects, as well as their functions.

A brief word on the supposed viewers of the auspicious ornament is required, namely the intended objects of the motifs, materials, and objects. Scholars have agreed that, although the principal audience for tomb images was the deceased,[158] auspicious ornament can be considered a medium through which the tomb owners' wishes were expressed to heaven, the immortals, or various spirits, and finally the tools by which they expected to benefit themselves and their offspring.[159]

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[155] For instance, the durable stone and jade were responsive to the individual and social desire for immortality and perpetuity. See Sections 3.3.2 and 5.4.1.

[156] For instance, the gold adopted by Han Chinese people to make or decorate tomb objects such as incense burners and belt buckles to show that they had the social status, financial ability, and aesthetic taste for exotic materials and objects to live a fashionable and luxurious life and afterlife, as well as to express their pursuit for immortality by using this material which became ideologically strongly related to immortality by then. See detailed discussions in Chapter Six.

[157] Rawson 2007a: 108; Dobres and Robb 2000: 12

[158] Wu 2010: 14.

[159] For similar ideas see Rawson 2007a. Also, in the early Chinese context, the constructed cosmos and the associated rituals for maintaining the cosmos were not always separate from the secular world. Lai 2015: 22.

1.3.2 Western studies on decorative art and a combined theoretical framework

As Ledderose and Barbieri-Low have pointed out, ornament on many objects in ancient China was produced by artisans in workshops.[160] The production was a series of movements that embodied the historical processes of the artisans' society, closely related to materiality, the economy, and aesthetic tastes.[161] A rich field of ornamental theoretical studies in the West since the Industrial Revolution serves as a good comparative reference against which to examine Chinese ornament and its production. Western studies of the decorative arts mainly focus on three basic aspects of ornament: functions, materials and techniques, and style.[162] Such studies have demonstrated that individuals pursued prestige or power through certain practices using ornament, which seems to have been a common strategy worldwide.[163] Though auspiciousness receives little attention,[164] discussions in Western art history have produced detailed theories[165] that provide different perspectives for studying the originalities, designs, and craftsmanship of ornament in Han China.[166]

In this thesis, ornament, usually considered as part of art history and decorative

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[160] Ledderose 2000; Barbieri-Low 2007.

[161] The ornament that is the focus of this thesis, though it has nothing to do with machines, could have been modified and not made entirely by hand. Rawson 1984: 65.

[162] *Ibid*; Rawson 2016: 371–2.

[163] This could have even probably lead to large scale social changes. The study of emerging inequality is one of the hotbeds of agency-oriented theories. Actors are believed to have been motivated by a desire for power and prestige. For discussions, see Marcus and Flannery 1996; Dobres and Robb 2000; Lippiello 2001.

[164] The discussion of the favourable outcomes produced by Christian iconography may be considered as being related to auspiciousness. Grabar 1969.

[165] Gombrich 1979.

[166] *Ibid*; Loehr 1967–68: 8.

theory study in the West, is to be examined in the context of burials. It has been acknowledged that burial is an arena where people communicate and transform through a series of events, including constructing a tomb, dressing the deceased, using ornament, and carrying out funerary rites.[167] Therefore, the forms, functions, and symbolic meanings of objects and ornament are to be understood in the context of the tomb, rather than as art historical artefacts.[168] Only by considering the ornament within the original physical contexts while referring to theories of decorative art will functions, symbolic meanings and the related social beliefs be critically and objectively understood.[169]

1.4. Thesis structure

In addition to this introductory chapter, this thesis comprises six chapters that explore the nature and changes of auspicious ornament in Han dynasty China.

Chapter Two examines changes from the Warring States period to the Qin/Han dynasties in cosmological and philosophical ideas, and how these ideas helped to shape the use of images of good omens in early China. I argue that one of the governing factors for the transition to creating auspicious ornament was the change from multiple competing ideologies before the Warring States' unification, to a Confucian-centred correlative cosmology in the Han. However, as is also proposed, this intellectual

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[167] Howard 2000; Jones 2008; Wong 2019: 13.

[168] The objects and ornament may have been used differently in and outside the burials. Ekengren 2013: 181–4; Wong 2019: 16.

[169] Insightful examples of such studies have been made by scholars such as Jessica Rawson and John Robb. See Robb 1998; Rawson 2011; others include Max Loehr, Wu Hung, and Tseng Lillian Lan-ying, who are mentioned in Section 1.2.3 above.

background was an overarching framework that provided the potential driving force and social conditions for the formation of more auspicious ornament, but it should be remembered that historical texts can be limited and should not overshadow material evidence. This thesis deviates from many previous studies, which treat texts as broadly credible and argue that the prevalence of depicting auspicious omens and images only started in the Eastern Han (AD 25–220).[170] Instead, through a critical analysis of received and excavated texts and materials, it is argued that the date of widespread use of auspicious ornament in ancient China should be brought forward to the Western Han.

The thesis examines the particular role of auspiciousness in the Chinese ornamental system mainly using the archaeological materials described in Section 1.2. Therefore, in light of the findings on philosophical concepts in Chapter Two, Chapter Three deals with questions concerning the act of creating auspiciousness in the context of the afterlife as exhibited in Han tombs, what drove the Han to include auspicious ornament in tombs, and what they expected to achieve. Chapter Three specifies that the use of motifs in Han tombs was governed by two major factors: the new tomb types replicating dwellings, and beliefs in immortality and an ideal afterlife especially. This chapter draws attention to people's understandings of and concerns about the afterlife, which provide the necessary background against which burial practices and tomb ornament may be better understood. Overall, this chapter builds a foundation for studying the

[170] The Eastern Han dynasty witnessed an abundance of texts explaining the close relationship between the representation of auspicious images and good things that would happen. It has also been argued that the earliest auspicious depictions found are remains from that period, such as the auspicious omen slabs from Wu Liang Shrine (*Wuliangci* 武梁祠). See Section 2.3 in Chapter Two of the thesis.

material sources in the following three chapters, because these materials can all be regarded as various foci representing for people's concerns and expectations for the afterlife.

Chapter Four looks at mortuary ornament in murals and carvings inside decorated tombs within the immense framework of the Han art in the areas around the two capitals: Chang'an in the Western Han, and Luoyang in the Eastern Han (Map 1.1).[171] Changes took place from the former Han to the later Han dynasty,[172] and the sources of various auspicious motifs and their development over time are considered in this chapter. More importantly, this chapter explains that the physicality of motifs (forms, sources, and designs etc.) can be different from its intended meaning. How an image was believed to be real and functioning, as well as how it thus brought certain good outcomes, is discussed.

Chapter Five focuses on the material most associated with Chinese culture, jade, and changes to its forms and uses in the Han dynasty. As explained in Section 1.2.1 above, material remains from before the Han dynasty are crucial to characterising the transition from pre-Han to Han period; therefore, describing discoveries in tombs dated earlier than the Qin unification is important. In Chapter Five, both continuity and

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[171] The reasons and criteria for choosing the areas is discussed at the beginning of Chapter Four. More than 30,000 Han tombs have been discovered up till now. We cannot use them to generalise about all Han dynasty tombs, as they comprise only a tiny portion of tombs in different parts of China. For an overview of the number and distribution of Han dynasty tombs, see Zhao Huacheng and Gao Chongwen 2002.

[172] Scholars tend to divide the Han dynasty into three parts, the Former or Western Han, the Xin Dynasty and the Later or Eastern Han dynasty. For details, see Twitchett and Loewe 1986: 224–5. This thesis focuses on the Western and Eastern Han periods, when major development and trends in tomb structure and decoration took place. Yu Weichao 1985: 118–24.

change in the uses of jade are elucidated via comparative descriptions and analyses. The argument is then made that some typical Han practices, such as using jade suits to encase the bodies of the deceased, were an integral part of attaining protection and a good situation in the afterlife. This argument is influenced by James Lin's analogy of jade suits and iron armour, in which he compares their physical features and symbolic functions.[173] Lin argues that, just as iron armour protected soldiers on the battlefield in life, so too were the durable jade suits intended to protect the deceased throughout the afterlife.[174] This chapter builds on Lin's approach by highlighting the materiality, position, and relationship (engagement) between objects and human bodies to analyse how objects functioned. The chapter argues that favourable outcomes were only assured through the specific placement, use, or ornamentation of objects. Similarly, other functions of auspicious ornament, apart from protecting the deceased, were assumed by Han people, and these can be understood by examining jade's other uses, such as for drinking vessels believed to impart immortality.

Chapter Six focuses on gold, the popular use of which originated outside of the Chinese cultural milieu, and its integration into the Han portfolio of auspicious materials. In contrast to jade, which had a long history of use in ornament by the Han period, gold was in itself a 'new' element of Chinese culture. This chapter outlines the introduction of gold objects from Europe and Central Asia via the Eurasian Steppe and

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[173] Lin 2003.
[174] *Ibid*: 25–38.

borderland of China from around the eighth century BC. The process by which foreign types of objects, such as incense burners, belt ornaments, and zoomorphic motifs, were adopted and connected with locally relevant motifs is explored, as well as how the composite system of motifs, materials, and objects came to be associated with auspiciousness.

Finally, Chapter Seven summarises the arguments put forward in the previous chapters and explains the wider impact of this thesis' conclusions on current understandings of Han dynasty burial practices, ornament in China, and the concept of auspiciousness, as well as raising questions and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2
The correlative cosmology and the visualisation of auspicious motifs

2.1. Introduction

The ancient Chinese developed a cosmogonic theory by which they could explain all phenomena observable in the universe. Within this system, natural portents were considered to be omens and prophecies. Anomalous phenomena that occurred in the heavens or on earth were thus observed, interpreted, and recorded in text or illustrations. Good signs, such as the purple vapour (*ziqi* 紫氣), included phenomena that were believed to cause favourable events.[175] As a result, auspicious motifs were thought to serve as positive agents that brought about good things.[176] This is evident, for example, in the specific cases of murals that depict the sun and moon to reflect cosmic balance and harmony in the microcosm of the tomb space,[177], as well as the heavenly horses carved from jade or gold that facilitated immortality.[178]

This chapter focuses on changes in philosophical and cosmological constructs from the Warring States period to the Han dynasty. The understandings of philosophical, ideological, and cosmological issues in the preceding pre-Han period and during the

[175] There were also bad signs that could cause unfavourable things, such as floods or devastating fires. See Lippiello 2001: 19.
[176] Wu 2006: 103.
[177] See Section 4.2.2.
[178] See Section 6.3.3.

two Han dynasties can enhance appreciation of the material culture of early imperial China. This means that the concepts presented in this chapter help us to understand the underlying motives and reasons behind changes in the objects and designs that subsequent chapters deal with.

A preliminary discussion of the cultural background to the appearance and spread of some auspicious motifs, such as dragons, phoenixes, and heavenly bodies, is presented in this chapter, followed by more systematic examination of more ornament in Chapters Four to Six. Overall, this chapter sets out what Rawson and others have argued, that the unification of various territories under first the Qin and then the Han dynasty led to the systematisation of ideas that formed the concept known as correlative cosmology.[179] The chapter relates this argument to this thesis' research by focusing more on the 'auspicious mentality' within this new, widespread ideology, which was actively visualised by the upper echelons of Han society through practices including court rites and tomb construction.[180] It was in this way that the social elite reinforced their political control and social status through cosmologically-granted benefits, like immortality. Ritual, burial, and ornamental practices in the Han dynasty were strongly influenced by prevalent beliefs in the forces of yin 陰 and yang 陽, as well as the 'five phases' (*wuxing* 五行). The Han dynasty also saw the ideas of Confucian philosopher

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[179] *Ibid*; Rawson 1999a: 15; 2000: 135–40; 2016: 371–4.

[180] For court rites, see Loewe 1986: 649–723; Lin Sujuan 2009: 1–44; Section 2.2.2. For tomb buildings, see Chapter Three. The term 'auspicious mentality' was coined by Tseng, Lillian Lan-ying, meaning the collective attitudes of ordinary people toward auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. See Tseng 2004: 163–5. For more related discussion, see Sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.3 in Chapter One.

Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BC) become particularly significant.[181] Yet, these influential ideas have generally been neglected by both Western and Chinese scholars as a means to understand the auspicious mentality of Han people and the growing abundance of auspicious ornament throughout the Han dynasty.[182] Furthermore, tracing intellectual and philosophical developments that stimulated the demand for auspicious ornament will allow for a better understanding of Han society and art more broadly.

It is necessary, however, to go beyond merely listing historical and philosophical texts that relate to contemporary theories of the cosmos and auspiciousness, as well as artistic depictions of the concepts. A more analytical and source-critical approach is adopted in this chapter to reflect the political uses and social functions of ornament in different contexts, in addition to the individual and collective expectations that constructed it. The process of visualising some philosophical ideas and textual motifs mentioned in written sources, such as clouds, vapour, or dragons, is then examined. Although words are incapable of providing the same level of detail found in visual media,[183] the transformation in auspicious motif—a form of visual communication[184]—was prompted by developments in ideology that relied strongly on textual methods of dissemination.

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[181] See discussion below; Feng Youlan 1952: 7–20 and 337–78; Gu Jiegang 2008: 3–5; Rawson 2016: 372.

[182] References illustrating that this evidence has been ignored include He Xilin 2001, Lippiello 2001, and Tseng 2004.

[183] Baxandal 1985: 1–3.

[184] This means to visually depict certain motifs to express certain ideas. See Sections 1.1 and 1.2.

2.2. The formation of correlative cosmology

2.2.1 The pre-Han period: ancestors, divination, and early associations of auspiciousness with the five phases

From the Shang and Zhou dynasties, deceased ancestors and spirits were believed to play active roles in society, ensuring the health, peace, and even success of their descendants.[185] Prayers to the ancestors were made during rituals where offerings were presented. Such rituals also allowed the social elite to affirm their authority and status. Bronze artefacts and ornaments, as well as sacrifices of animals and sometimes humans, formed the basic components of these rituals (Figure 2.1).[186] More specifically, the ancestors were believed to play a vital role in mediating relations between the human world and that of the 'spirits' (*shen* 神) and the High God Di (*Shangdi* 上帝). Thus, practices of divination, sacrifice, reward, tribute, and burial construction all revolved around the maintenance of ancestral relations, with the kings of the Shang and Zhou specifically aiming to placate the High God and ensure positive outcomes for their actions.[187]

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[185] The participation of deceased ancestors in societies of the living occurred against the backdrop of a world governed by various spiritual and natural forces, namely the High God Di, the mountains, rivers, winds, and land. See Campbell 2018: 105–6.

[186] Zhang Guangzhi 1982: 258. For different categories of bronze vessels, see Ma Chengyuan 2002; for more ritual uses of the food and wine bronze vessels, see Rawson 2000: 142–3; Selbitschka 2018. People had already started to conduct sacrifices for the dead in the Neolithic. Instead of bronzes, though, pottery vessels were used in burial practices during this early period. Zhang Jiangkai and Wei Jun 2004; Rawson 2010a: 12–3.

[187] Campbell 2018: 102–7 and 212. It was likely that Di was used as a name for all the ancestors contacted through divination. See Zhang Guangzhi 1982: 264.

There are two major factors important to understanding the interactions between the ancestors, spirits, and the living in the Shang dynasty that most studies do not highlight. The first is that the spirits and ancestors were hierarchically arranged from the High God Di at the top to the living kings at the bottom. The ritual vessels for the offerings to these spirits and ancestors were arranged according to this hierarchy; thus, the vessels' shapes, sizes, decorations, inscriptions, and even the ways they were arranged on the altar communicated the spirit or ancestor's status and significance to observers.[188] This can be regarded as an early example of modelling the universe in ritual and burial assemblages, which implies that the human world was also thought to be structured this way.[189]

A second major influence on Shang cosmology was the ancient belief in the unitary nature of the universe, which is reflected in the practice of divination.[190] There persisted a strong tradition that ensured divination procedures remained centred around the act of answering questions using signs evident in nature,[191] which were only comprehensible to people gifted with certain skills.[192] This is evident for the Shang period, as well as the divinatory practices of later ages, though the materials used to conduct divinations changed (Figure 2.2). It is noteworthy, however, that, from the Qin

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[188] Rawson 1993: 67–95; Campbell 2018: 9–10; Campbell 2018: 246.

[189] Qian Xinzu 2013: 39–51. This 'modelling of the universe' means that the ranks and social information etc. within the living world were reflected by the otherworldly burial and ritual practices, and thus should be viewed differently from the practice in the Qin and Han dynasties where natural phenomenon and mythical creatures etc. were depicted in architecture, on objects and ornamentation and so on. Keightley 1991: 232–91 and 255–6.

[190] See Section 1.1.2 in Chapter One; Loewe 1994a: 89.

[191] Graham 1986: 10.

[192] Loewe 1981: 38–9.

onwards, there were more acts of divination that were deliberately designed to cause certain signs to appear,[193] which may have been caused by a stronger belief in correlative cosmology, which is discussed below.

While the offerings to the ancestors continued, the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States period also witnessed the flourishing of the Hundred Schools of Thought (*Zhuzi baijia* 諸子百家).[194] With the victory of Qin over the other states in 221 BC, the philosophy of one of these schools in particular stood out due to Qin Shi Huang's 秦始皇 (r. 221–210 BC) use of its theories:[195] the School of Yin-Yang (*Yinyang jia* 陰陽家),[196] founded by Zou Yan 鄒衍 (305–c. 240 BC).[197] This school's philosophy has been highlighted as having provided the main foundation for Chinese people's understanding of the cosmos, namely that is there a correlation between all things.[198] It is this key idea of correlation that led to the notion of images as agents that brought about favourable events and consequent developments in auspicious ornament: the physical presence of images allowed the sighting of these representations of real or even

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[193] For example, emperor Xiaowen 孝文 of Han (r. 180–157 BC) complied with this procedure before acceding to the throne by 'resorting to' the divination result suggesting his enthronement, which was likely to have produced in advance. *Shi ji*, 10.253–4. As pointed out by Michael Loewe, we cannot be certain that whether the Chinese people of the Qin and Han periods could recognize the deliberately caused signs subjected to interpretation. Nor did any related shell or bone dated in Qin or Han survived. For reasons for the increased frequency in divinations attempting produce specific answers, see Loewe 1986: 673 and 1988b: 500–1. Loewe also discusses the relationships and differences between religion, myth, and ancient belief. Loewe 1986: 693–9

[194] Feng Youlan 1952: 132.

[195] This should be differentiated from the School of Legalism (Fajia 法家) which was the official Qin dynasty state ideology. *Ibid*: 312–36.

[196] *Ibid*: 17; Graham 1986: 11–2.

[197] Zou Yan was a man of Qi who won patronage in Yan during the Warring States period. For more information, see Feng Youlan 1952: 159–63; Sun Kaitai 2004; the following two paragraphs.

[198] Gu Jiegang 1935: 543–753; Graham 1986: 3–5; Ge Zhaoguang 2014: 189.

imaginative things within the cosmos, and the correlation between all things implied the perception that the images not only represented as symbols, but were equally effective as the depicted things. The ornament also played a role in creating a certain image of the deceased and people by then, by showing the ways of their entanglement with the material world, and suggesting their perceptions and wishes.

The philosophical theories of the School of Yin-Yang were specifically centred on the concepts of yin, yang, and the five phases. Within this cosmological structure, the Universe was conceptualised as a mass comprising the two opposing forces of yin and yang, which manifested as the binaries of male and female, sun and moon, hot and cold, light and dark, hard and soft, movement and stillness, etc. These gave rise to the five phases or elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water, which were simultaneously material elements and dynamic powers that created different phenomena in the universe. They were alternatively called the 'five powers' or 'five morals' (*wude* 五德).[199] As a belief system, yin, yang, and the five phases were used by diviners, scholars, and politicians to explain the mutual interaction between nature or Heaven (*Tian* 天) and people.[200]

Qin Shi Huang was not the first earthly ruler to be associated with one of the five phases. One of the earliest texts to apply the five phases to particular rulers is *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*,[201] in which a chapter assigns the protective powers of

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[199] This ideology was also based on the expression from the *Book of Changes*, see Schwartz 1985: 355; Carty and Nijman 2018: 255.

[200] Gu Jiegang 2009: 430; Ge Zhaoguang 2014: 188–9.

[201] It is an encyclopaedic text compiled around 240 BC by the Qin dynasty chancellor Lü Buwei.

earth to the legendary Yellow Emperor (*Huang di* 黃帝), wood to King Yu 禹 of the Xia dynasty (before 1600 BC), metal to King Tang 湯 of the Shang dynasty (r. c. 1676–1646 BC), and fire to King Wen 文 of the Zhou dynasty (r. c. 1125–1051 BC).[202] After the Qin conquest of the Warring States, Qin Shi Huang claimed that the fall of a preceding dynasty was correlated with the cycle of the five phases. He used this to justify his rule, arguing that he reigned by the power of water, whereas the Zhou dynasty had been fire.[203] Thus, not only was the fall of the Zhou dynasty part of natural processes that governed the universe, but it was also the result of correlation between earthly affairs and forces of the universe.[204]

For a history of the book, see Carson and Loewe 1993; Loewe 1994b: 56; Riegel 1995: 301–30. Other earliest extant text that records the five phases and applies them to politics and society includes the 'Great plan' (*Hong fan* 洪範) chapter of the *Book of Documents*. *Book of Documents* is thought to have been compiled by Confucius (c. 551–479 BC), or Kong Qiu 孔丘, the founder of Confucianism, but the extant version was compiled in the Han dynasty. See *Shang shu*, 126–41; Legge 1893–95 vol. 3: 320–44; Cheng Te-k'un 1957: 163–4; Ge Zhaoguang 2014: 189. The *Zuo Commentary (Zuo zhuan* 左轉), attributed to Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (556–451 BC), was most probably compiled c. 375–351 BC, and the chapter 'The twenty-fifth year of Duke Zhao' (*Zhaogong ershiwu nian* 昭公二十五年) records: people make a model of the brightness of heaven, they go along with the nature of earth, and they are born in the midst of the six vapours, emerge as the five colours, and form patterns as the five tones (則天之明，因地之性，生其六氣，用其五行。氣为五味，發为五色，章为五聲). See Durrant *et al.* 2016: 1636. For the history of the *Zuo Commentary*, see Zhang Yiren 1993. A comparative approach of looking at the Han dynasty tombs together with pre-Han ones may be worth conducting, as the pre-Han period was a time with different schools of philosophical thoughts which laid the basis for the flowering of Confucian and correlative cosmology in the Han. For more comparative information, see Graham 1986.

[202] 'Resonating with the identical' (*Ying tong* 應同), *Lüshi chunqiu*, 3.426–7; Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 282–5. For the specified dates of the kings, they are based upon the chronology of traditional historiography.

[203] Though the First Emperor's success in unifying China largely stemmed from the adoption of Legalism, he also wanted to prove himself morally worthy of leadership by selecting the colour black (which was related to water according to the theories of the School of Yin-Yang, also see in Figure 2.3) and the number six to legitimise the dynasty according to Zou Yan's theory of constant, cyclical rotation of the five virtues. *Shi ji*, 6.124; Watson 1971 vol. 1: 22–3.

[204] For more on the role of the five phases in dynastic succession, see Cheng Te-k'un 1957: 165–9.

The pre-Han period is characterised by the crystallisation and spread of ideas focused on the correlation between the signs in nature and the order of the cosmos.[205] Prophetic omens and signs were first related to the five phases during the Warring States period, but auspicious signs were mostly identified in association with rulers.[206] Compared to the Han period, the number of creatures recognised as auspicious—such as dragons, phoenixes, cranes, and deer—in texts is low.[207] Additionally, most texts do not explicitly define motifs as auspicious, instead they only describe mantic omens that were thought to herald the coming of a moral ruler, peace, or prosperity.[208] Finally, a key distinction between pre-Han and Han period attitudes towards omens lies mainly in the former requiring signs to appear naturally, whereas the latter both accepted and encouraged the artificial production of signs.

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205 Li Falin 2000: 258; Ge Zhaoguang 2014: 188–90.

206 For a relatively complete list of auspicious signs in pre-Han and Han period texts, see 'Section on omens and portents' (*Xiangrui bu* 祥瑞部), in *Classified Collection Based on the Classics and Other Literature* (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚). See *Yiwen leiju* vols. 98 and 99. The collection was compiled by Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (AD 557–641) around AD 661 as a source book for establishing literary authenticity. Kaderas 1998: 57; *Yiwen leiju*, 98.1965.

207 Zhu Heping 2001: 88–9.

208 This means the concept of auspiciousness was not fully developed by then and was different from the situation in the Han dynasty when related canonisation was conducted (Section 2.2.2 below). In the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, a classical text of mythical places and creatures from the third century BC that was edited by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BC) and Liu Xin 劉歆 (50 BC–AD 23) in the Western Han dynasty, records: whenever [a bird that looks like a chicken, has five-colours and patterned plumage, and is named the Divine Wind] appears, there will be order and peace over all under heaven' (見則天下大安寧). *Shanhaijing*, 1.12; Birrell 1999: 8. The *Shanhaijing* also mentions motifs that became auspicious in the Han dynasty, such as *biyi* birds or two birds flying wing to wing *(biyiniao* 比翼鳥), the island of Penglai, and the Kunlun Mountains etc. See Munakata 1991: 12–20; Birrell 1999: 109. The *Classic of Mountains and Seas* was a pseudo-geographical text; however, it is probable that its exploration of the so-called mythological places and the universe was not purely novel and could be a tool for understanding the known world (e.g. the potential source of gold in early China, see Section 6.2.2 of the thesis), and these motifs were gradually integrated into the correlative cosmology of the Han era. See Rawson 1999a: 23.

2.2.2 The Western Han: Confucian scholars and correlative cosmology

Pre-Han ideological developments concerning cosmological correlation in the universe strongly influenced Han era understanding of the universe's structure. After the foundation of the Han dynasty, the doctrine of the five phases, an ordered universe, and immortality proved attractive to the Han emperors too.[209] Whilst the Han historian Sima Qian categorised pre-Han thinkers into six schools of thought (*liu jia* 六家),[210] it was the fundamental theories of Zou Yan[211] and the School of Yin-Yang that were most influential. Yin, yang, and the five phases were used to justify the emperor's authority and explain signs from Heaven as indicators of good governance (*ruiying* 瑞應).[212] These theories became so important in Han political and social life that the School of Yin-Yang has been described as 'the backbone of Han thought'[213] and thus also a key influence in shaping Han art.[214]

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[209] The end of the Qin dynasty provided an opportunity for the revival of different schools of thoughts. However, the correlative cosmology of yin, yang, and the five phases was the most influential. The Han dynasty's first emperor, Gaozu 高祖 (r. 202–195 BC), reasoned that the Qin dynasty had ruled too briefly to represent a proper link in the political cycle; therefore, he named himself the Black Emperor (*Hei di* 黑帝) and adopted water as the dynastic element, just as Qin Shi Huang had done. See *Shi ji*, 28.985–6; Cheng Te-k'un 1957: 167–8; Gu Jiegang 2008: chp. 1.

[210] Sima Qian's father, Sima Tan 司馬談 (?–110 BC), was the first to classify the Hundred Schools of Thought and categorise them into six main schools: Yin-Yang (*Yinyang* 陰陽), Confucianism (*Ru* 儒), Mohism (*Mo* 墨), Nominalism (*Ming* 名), Legalism (*Fa* 法), and Daoism (*Dao* 道). See *Shi ji*, 130.2743–7.

[211] Zou Yan's life is almost exclusively known through Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian*. See *Shi ji,* 74.1787–8; Graham 1986: 11–3.

[212] There are also Han dynasty records of signs that suggest the ruler was governing badly. But, since this thesis concerns auspicious ornament, bad omens or signs that are not depicted on ornament or other artefacts are not discussed. For more details of negative omens in the Han dynasty, see *Shi ji*, 6.132 and 27.933–74; Wu 2006: 96; Zhongguo Zhonggushi Yanjiu Bianweihui 2011. From at latest the Zhou dynasty onwards, emperors were also called Son of Heaven (*Tianzi* 天子). Queen 1996: 227.

[213] Cheng Te-k'un 1957: 163.

[214] *Ibid*; Gu Jiegang 2008: 1–3.

Another significant influence on the Han period understanding of correlative cosmology was the canonisation of Confucian learning. This theoretical philosophy was developed by the scholar statesman Dong Zhongshu, and it eventually won a position of prominence in the Han dynasty as the official political ideology.

Though not as controlling as the Legalist Qin emperors, the first Han emperor, Gaozu, aimed to create a centralised government.[215] Some Confucian scholars serving in the government thus incorporated theories from the schools of Yin-Yang and Daoism[216] into their interpretations of politics and ritual, as these philosophies included different teachings on social order, loyalty to one's superiors, cultural refinement, and ritual,[217] all of which were considered beneficial to maintaining the unity and stability of the empire (Figure 2.3). The ideology of Confucianism in the early years of the Han dynasty therefore explained the cosmos as a systematic universe maintained by the *dao*, meaning 'way' or 'method', and the force of *qi* 氣, meaning literally 'breath' or 'air', but holding connotations of 'energy' or a 'vital lifeforce'.[218] At the same time, the forces of yin, yang, and the five phases were in a constant cycle

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[215] *Shi ji*, 8.212–4; note 204 above.

[216] This philosophical school focused on the concept of *dao*, literally meaning 'the way', is different from the religious Daoism believed to have formed after the Han dynasty. Daoism gradually based its philosophy on the fundamental idea of life and conceived life, not merely in terms of a vast vital force that pervades the entire universe, but also in terms of the concrete individual life. Thus both Laozi 老子, also called Li Er 李耳 (c. 571–471 BC) and Zhuangzi 莊子, also called Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (369–286 BC), the two masters of philosophical Daoism, show deep concern for people's lives and deaths, and they also discuss the cultivation and prolongation of life. *Laozi*, 5–42; *Zhuangzi*, 47–8; Yü Ying-shih 1964: 81. The proper development of religious Daoism flowered in the Tang dynasty. Rawson 1995a: 75, and notes 186 and 187. Some scholars have argued that there was 'proto-Daoism' in the late Eastern Han, see Seidel 1987a: 39–41; Hsu 2004: 110–1; Ge Zhaoguang 2014: 124–36.

[217] Feng Youlan 1952: 168–9; Gu Jiegang 2008: 64–76. For a detailed introduction to Confucianism, see Feng Youlan 1952: 43–75; Goldin 2011.

[218] Rawson 2006a: 389.

of alternation that allowed the 'ten thousand things' (*wanwu* 萬物), i.e. everything in the world, to transform and change[219].

In addition to establishing Confucian thought as the state philosophy, one of Dong Zhongshu's greatest accomplishments was to interpret the structure of the cosmos in terms similar to the Zhou, which helped to establish the Han's political legitimacy by situating the dynasty within the constant cycle of cosmic transformation. [220] Importantly, Dong emphasised that the cosmos was constructed around principles of correlation, with Heaven taking a central role. It has been argued that this Heaven-centred cosmos was mirrored by the central role of the emperor on earth, a cosmological system that scholars have argued originated with the Zhou.[221] He also stressed that the relationship between Heaven and the human world in a correlative cosmos was mutual, which means that there Heaven and humanity were influenced mutually by each other.[222] To some extent, this resembles one of the central ideas in the Huang-Lao Silk Manuscript (*Huanglao boshu* 黃老帛書) discovered at the second century BC cemetery of Mawangdui which includes both Confucius and Daoist thoughts (Figure

[219] Rawson 2000: 134.

[220] The Confucians glorified the cultural refinement (*wen* 文) and inner simplicity (*zhi* 質) of the Zhou dynasty, and the argument that Zhou institutions were proper for the Han to model themselves on dominated throughout the early years of the Han dynasty. See Twitchett and Loewe 1986: 14–5 and 105; Queen 1996: 184–5.

[221] See Lippiello 2001: 31.

[222] This idea emerged early in China. The pre-Qin texts the *Book of Odes* and *Book of Documnts* contain numerous examples. See *Shi jing*, 19; Legge 2014; *Shang shu*, 5–33; Legge 1893–95 vol. 3; Bernhard 1950a and 1950b. Other texts counted among the classics, including the *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子) and *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong* 中庸), also emphasise the commonality between humanity and Heaven. See *Mengzi*, 176–87; *Zhong yong*, 123–32; Chan Wing-tsit 1969; Queen 1996: 236–7.

2.4),[223] demonstrating again that Confucianism and other schools of thoughts were mingled in the Han period.

Even though Dong Zhongshu's philosophy changed with the political environments of emperors Jingdi 景帝 (r. 157–141 BC) and the seventh emperor Wudi 武帝 (r. 141–87 BC),[224] his theory of correlative cosmology was eventually institutionalised and published in the *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露) (Appendix 2.1).[225] The correlative cosmology in this book differs, however, from the cosmology of the Huang-Lao Silk Manuscript in three ways: yang aspects of Heaven are privileged over yin aspects; Heaven is attributed with a strong intentionality; and its workings correspond closely to the ethical principles established by the Confucian scriptures.[226]

Dong Zhongshu also systemised imperial ritual practices, including special rites for dealing with Heaven's relationship to the natural and human worlds. These included:

1. Recurrent rituals that reflected the way Heaven revealed its will in nature on a regular annual basis. The emperor was required to mirror

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[223] Zhong Zhaopeng 1978: 63–8; Huang Wuzhi 2011: chp. 4. More introduction on the Han dynasty tombs at Mawangdui is provided in Section 1.1.3 of the thesis. Also refer to Beijing 2004: 281–381.

[224] For instance, during Jingdi's reign when the Han Empire had just gradually recovered from the chaos of the change of dynasties, the governance tended to use more of the no-ado (*wuwei* 無為) Daoist philosophies; but later during Wudi's reign, Dong stressed the necessity of a more centralized strong governant. Twitchett and Loewe 1986: 155–6; Queen 1996: 206–7.

[225] This is a work traditionally ascribed to Dong Zhongshu but was composed by Dong and some other authors who elaborated on his ideas. It has 82 chapters and approximately 72,000 words. Though three chapters were lost and some parts of the texts in other chapters can be vague and confusing in meanings, it has been regarded as one of the important sources of topics like the five elements and their relation to politics. Cheng 1985: 27; Lippiello 2001: 26

[226] *Chunqiu fanlu*, 43.323–7; Queen 1996: 210 and 212–3.

the heavenly cycles by conducting the appropriate rituals, such as those linked to the four seasons (e.g. the sacrifices to the Heaven and Earth at the beginning of each season for getting the *qi* of that season which was believed to bring prosperity) and ceremonies associated with the dynasty's founding.[227]

2. Special rituals that responded to irregular events (e.g. when rain was desired during drought, rituals such as offering wine and meat to the Heaven or setting up clay models of dragons on an altar were conducted).[228] The need for such rituals was derived from the belief that Heaven sometimes revealed its will through auspicious or inauspicious signs in response to good or evil conduct, as well as the moral or immoral behaviour of the human world's ruler.[229]

The necessary rituals generally took place at ancestral temples and mausoleum complexes in Chang'an, as well as at the altar of 'The Great One' (Taiyi 太一),

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[227] *Chunqiu fanlu*, 60.371–80. Three versions of a ritual and administrative schedule modelled on an annual cycle exist. The first is the 'Monthly records (almanacs)' (*Yueji* 月紀) of the *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*. *Lüshi chunqiu*, 1.2–414. See also Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 59–273. The second is the 'Monthly ordinances' (*Yueling* 月令) of the *Book of Rites*. *Li ji*, 16.498–531 and 17.532–65. The *Book of Rites* is a collection of texts on social etiquette and ceremonial rites of the Zhou dynasty, believed to have been first composed in the Warring States and early Han periods, then later in the Western Han dynasty by Liu Xiang, Dai De 戴德 (fl. c. 43–33 BC), and Dai Sheng 戴聖 (fl. c. 74–48 BC). See also Legge 1885: 296–310. The third is the chapter 'Treatise on the seasonal rules' (*Shizexun* 時則訓) in the *Huainanzi*, a philosophical text composed sometime before 139 BC and consists of essays on scholarly debates held at the court of Liu An 劉安 (179–122 BC), Prince of Huainan 淮南. See *Huainanzi*, 79–92; Major 2012: 57–8. Further information is also available in Queen 1996: 182–6; Wu 2010: 152–3.

[228] Dragons and the clouds for forming the rain were believed to attract one another. *Chunqiu fanlu*, 16; also see Michael Loewe's discussion in 'The Cult of the Dragon and the Invocation for Rain,' Loewe 1994a: chp. 6.

[229] *Chunqiu fanlu*, 16.157; Queen 1996: 182–3.

established by Wudi in the south-eastern suburb of Chang'an.[230] Many sacred sites where rituals were conducted had been established before the Qin unification as places to worship spirits, a classification of supernatural beings that seems to have expanded to include the ancestors, as well as more invisible gods and immortals.[231] Such sites were maintained as ritual sites into the Han. One example is the ritual site for the central figure in Han correlative cosmology, Heaven, and its complementary aspect Earth (*di* 地), both of which were worshipped earlier by Qin Shi Huang and pre-Qin rulers.[232] In Wudi's reign, rites for Heaven and Earth seem to have constituted a major portion of the Emperor's ritual schedule, and he made regular visits to the altars dedicated to Heaven at Ganquan 甘泉 Palace—originally a Qin imperial residence—and its counterpart for the Queen of the Earth (*Houtu* 後土) located at the older cult site of Fenyin 汾阴 near today's Yuncheng 運城, Shanxi Province.[233] A reason for the continued use of sites was that older sites were thought to concentrate spiritual power,[234] and Wudi's ritual activities became increasingly more complicated to acknowledge their venerable nature.

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[230] Tian Tian has noticed that current scholarship, including several fine studies by Marianne Bujard, pays little attention to the decisions by the Qin and Western Han emperors to participate in sacrifices to deities throughout the realm. It is notable, however, that they often participated, either in person or through their bureaucratic representatives, even when they deemed such sacrifices to be 'local' and so less important than the state sacrifices. See Bujard 2000; Tian Tian 2014a: 264.

[231] Tian Tian 2014a: 8. Lagerwey and Kalinowski 2009: 178–80.

[232] Watson 1971 vol. 2: 11–3.

[233] Although this changed in the late Western Han when the idea of sacrifices should be conducted with the emperor rather than the spirits at the centre became dominant. For details see Tian Tian 2014a: 24–9.

[234] In order to exhibit his uncontested power and authority to the former nobles of the eastern states, Qin Shi Huang intended to appropriate their cults, so that he might call upon all the gods of his realm to support his legitimacy. See Watson 1971 vol. 2: 28; Rawson 1999a: 18; Tian Tian 2014a: 264–6.

In addition, the locations for ritual worship were typically politically or culturally significant. Wudi particularly emphasised cults focused on mountains throughout his domain, especially the Five Great Mountains (*Wu yue* 五嶽).[235] This was probably due to the fact that mountain peaks were perceived as being physically closer to the Heaven and the immortals,[236] which is also why some of the buildings constructed for their worship were quite high.[237] Additionally, the lands on which the mountains were located had been allotted as commandery counties to Han kings and nobles.[238] Wudi's extensive cultic activities at various key locations thus served to build a controlled ritual 'network' that ordered political space throughout the Han's vast empire.[239]

From the late Western Han, various reforms to sacrifices and rituals took place.[240] Overall, however, a new cosmological and intellectual order fixed the cult of Heaven at the centre of a correlated universe, with the spirits and deities associated with various regions also playing significant roles. These developments occurred alongside the

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[235] The Five Great Mountains refer to the Northern Great Mountain Heng (*beiyue hengshan* 北岳恆山), the Southern Great Mountain Heng (*nanyue hengshan* 南岳衡山), the Eastern Great Mountain Tai (*dongyue taishan* 東岳泰山), the Western Great Mountain Hua (*xiyue huashan* 西岳華山) and the Central Great Mountain Song (*zhongyue songshan* 中岳嵩山). It was first coincided in the *Erya* 爾雅, which was a dictionary composed around the Warring States period and the Western Han dynasty and is the oldest surviving Chinese dictionary and the earliest known single-language dictionary on the world. See *Erya*, 11.457.

[236] Expeditions were sent across the Eastern Sea (Dong hai 東海), i.e. the Pacific Ocean, in search of the floating islands of the immortals. In the west, the realm of the immortal Queen Mother of the West was believed to be on the heights of Kunlun Mountain, the axis mundi. Record describes how King Mu 穆 of Zhou (r. 956–918 BC) visited her, which provided a historical precedent for the aspirations of later Chinese emperors. *Shi ji*, 43.1307; Tian Tian 2014a: 181. The immortals were also believed to have travelled to the Five Great Mountains from time to time. *Shi ji*, 28.975.

[237] Such as in the Ganquan Palace mentioned above, there was a 'Terrace Leading to Heaven' (*tongtian tai* 通天臺). *Shi ji*, 12.296; Tseng 2011: 155.

[238] Tian Tian 2014a: 264.

[239] Meanwhile, Mount Tai served as the focal point for a number of secondary cults throughout the peninsula. See *Ibid*: 268; Li Dudu 2016: 43–4.

[240] Tian Tian 2014a: 224–6.

establishment of a political philosophy that amalgamated Confucian values with the cosmological structure posited by the School of Yin-Yang and other pre-Han schools of thought. The resultant ideology considered certain signs that appeared in nature to reflect the correlation between Heaven and royal or human activities. Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed overview of the complete aims and significance of these rituals,[241] developments during the Han period increasingly emphasised the importance of Heaven, in addition to the existence of a spiritual world that both embodied natural processes and responded to the actions of human beings.

It is remarkable that the Han emperors, instead of relying on their governments to explain or resolve problems in the Empire, seem to have devoted themselves more deeply to these rituals or, as they have been called, religious cults.[242] The intentional choice of particular seasonal dates for certain rituals or activities can be understood from the perspective that the people of the Han retained had deep faith in divination as a means to receive guidance, which had a long tradition.[243] In addition, the *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* demonstrates how Dong Zhongshu tried to ensure good fortune for the emperor, the state, the living, and even deceased ancestors and other holy spirits through a system of effective worship, ritual regulation, and philosophical theory.[244] This systemisation most likely prompted more widespread

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[241] For a more detailed description and analysis of these imperial cults in the Han dynasty, see Loewe 2005a: chp. 5.

[242] Loewe 2005b: 147–8.

[243] It has been shown that fortunate moments in time were probably selected using some geomantic devices set to identify fortunate sites in space. Loewe 1981: 56.

[244] See note 227 above; Appendix 2.1.

interest in finding ways to ensure good fortune using knowledge of auspicious signs.[245]

2.3. Visualising auspiciousness: textual and material evidence from Western to Eastern Han

From the Western Han onwards, several hundred auspicious motifs were recorded in official historical records, including the 'Annals' (*ji* 紀) and 'Treatises' (*zhi* 志) sections of the *Book of Han* (*Han shu* 漢書) and *Book of the Later Han* (*Hou han shu* 後漢書).[246] The former is the official dynastic history for the Western Han and the latter for the Eastern Han. Even more records of appearances of auspicious signs are recorded for the Eastern Han than earlier, as the political chaos of the early centuries AD mean that emperors and provincial leaders relied more heavily on signs from Heaven to justify their authority and suggest ways to solve practical problems.[247] For instance, the scholar and writer Ban Gu in the *Comprehensive Discussions at White Tiger Hall* (*Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義),[248] provides a systematic overview of many auspicious motifs.[249]

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[245] Wu 1984: 44, 47, 52–4; Du Junjie 2011.

[246] Lippiello 2001: 21. The *Book of Han* was predominantly written by Ban Gu 班固 (AD 32–92) and completed by Ban Zhao 班昭 (AD 45–120) during the Eastern Han dynasty, with contributions by their father Ban Biao 班彪 (AD 3–54). *Han shu*, vol. 26; the *Book of the Later Han* was written by Fan Ye 范曄 (AD 398–445), *Hou han shu*, 3265–41. Hulsewé 1993.

[247] Ren Jiyu 1985; Jin Chunfeng 1987: 342.

[248] The *Comprehensive Discussions at White Tiger Hall* was an official report of discussions of the Confucian scriptures held under imperial auspices in AD 79. It was finished in the Eastern Han dynasty, and analysed similarities and differences between different classics. The work is considered to be representative of thought at the time. Tjan 1949–52 vol. 1: 1–4; Queen 1996: 199; Li Falin 2000: 241.

[249] See the chapters 'The Feng and Shan offerings to Heaven and Earth' (*Feng shan zhi yi* 封禪之義) and 'The correspondence of tallies and omens' (*Fu rui zhi ying* 符瑞之應), both in *Comprehensive Discussions at White Tiger Hall*, see *Baihu tongyi*, 3.141–7. When combined with those listed in the Weft Prophecy Texts (*Chenwei* 讖緯), this produces a total of more than one

However, it has been acknowledged that the Xin dynasty (AD 9–23), between the Western and Eastern Han dynasties, was a turning point in the discourse surrounding auspicious omens. Prior to this period, Western Han emperors and Confucian scholars had mainly interpreted auspicious omens as signs of Heaven's mandate and will.[250] The sole emperor of the Xin dynasty, Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BC – AD 23), took the Western Han ritual system a step further by canonising specific omens for particular purposes, such as supporting his right to rule.[251] Thereafter, Wang Mang implemented policies to disseminate the knowledge of positive images or signs, not only among nobles and scholars, but also the general populace, who were rewarded for reporting the appearance of auspicious signs to the court.[252] This development—more pragmatic then ideological—harnessed the power of texts, illustrations, and catalogues to standardise and systemise auspicious motifs, which is discussed in more detail below.

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thousand formally recognised auspicious motifs during the Eastern Han. Most of the Weft Prophecy Texts have been lost, and their names are only found in later dynastic encyclopaedias (*leishu* 類書), such as the *Classified Collection Based on the Classics and Other Literature* and *The Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping yulan* 太平預覽) from the Song dynasty (AD 960–1279). *Taiping yulan*, vol. 89; Li Falin 2000: 259. In addition, these texts were considered to be superstitious and subjective, as well as religious to an extent, as they were used in early Daoist and Confucian practices. The academic and historical legitimacy of the Weft Prophecy Texts has thus been questioned, so this thesis does not take them into consideration. For more information, see Sun Yinggang 2014: preface and 6–13. The Han dynasty not only saw the first flowering of a Confucian correlative cosmology, but also saw the first major critics of its extravagances. These are represented by the sceptic Wang Chong in his *Discourses Weighed in the Balance* (*Lun heng* 論衡), in which he criticises the extravagant, superstitious obsession with auspicious omens, but Wang concedes that certain omens and signs existed. See the chapter 'Thoughts on omens' (*Zhi rui* 指瑞). *Lun heng*, 746–7; Forke 1907 and 1911 vol. 2: chp. XXVIII, 306–24; Graham 1986: 14.

[250] Heaven does not speak with a voice but reveals its will through the workings of nature. Queen 1996: 232 and note 4. Both the emperor and Confucian scholars claimed to be able to interpret at least some of the occurrences of auspicious omens in the Western Han, but emperors tended to emphasise the legitimacy of their rulership, whilst Confucian scholars focused on the implications of benevolence. Tseng 2011: 116.

[251] Li Falin 2000: 248; Tseng 2011: 89–148.

[252] *Han shu*, vols. 6 and 8. Lippiello 2001: 24; Tseng 2011: 95.

It is also crucial to point out that the success of the Xin interregnum—though lasting less than 15 years—further demonstrates that, by the end of the Western Han dynasty, most people were familiar with quite a few auspicious motifs and their symbolic meanings. Evidence from the Eastern Han shows that written inscriptions were often accompanied by visual motifs of increasingly imaginary creatures, such as dragons, phoenixes, and winged lions, to imbue them with auspicious or apotropaic qualities. Later scholars relied heavily on these combinations of text and visual image to classify auspicious motifs,[253] and catalogues are known to have been created and spread.[254] The earliest such catalogue discovered so far is a set of 24 carved stone 'omen slabs' that date to the mid-second century AD at Wu Liang Shrine (*Wu Liang ci* 武梁祠) in Jiaxiang 嘉祥, Shandong Province (Map 2.1 and Figure 2.5),[255] and its existence is the main reason why most modern scholarship on early Chinese auspicious motifs has focused on this period, as there is as yet no comparable reference for earlier periods.[256]

There is, however, earlier evidence from the Western Han comprising a few records that describe members of the general public being rewarded for reporting auspicious signs.[257] It is possible that similar practices for cataloguing auspicious motifs also

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[253] Bush 2016: 67.

[254] Lippiello 2001; Wu 2006: 94 and 96–8.

[255] The original slabs have been worn and only the rubbings are comparatively well preserved. For details, see Fairbank 1972: 43–86; Wu 1989: 72–96.

[256] Many studies have focused on the carved stones or bricks of the Eastern Han dynasty, as discussed in Section 1.2.3 of this thesis. Another example is the five auspicious omens–a yellow dragon (*huang long* 黃龍), a white deer (*bai lu* 白鹿), sweet dew (*ganlu jiang* 甘露降), auspicious grain (*jia he* 嘉禾), and interconnecting trees (*mu lianli* 木連理)–carved on the cliff of the West Passage (*Xixia* 西狭) around year AD 171, now in Gansu Province. For details see Tseng 2011: 101–7.

[257] *Han Shu*, vol. 8; Li Falin 2000: 249; see also note 247 above.

existed then, if not earlier. This is demonstrated by a silk manuscript dated to the Warring States period, which was discovered in Hunan Province (Figure 2.6). The manuscript has a similar format and style of combining motifs with inscriptions to the plaque at Wu Liang Shrine.[258] In addition, a silk chart of clouds, comets, and other patterns in the sky that could be used for divination were excavated from Tomb no. 3 at the Western Han cemetery of Mawangdui (Figure 2.7),[259] and later dynastic histories also mention the existence of other nonextant illustrated catalogues of auspicious omens.[260]

Although the textual records and archaeological evidence mentioned above may seem sparse, there is a more abundant source of material that can facilitate the study of auspicious motifs earlier in the Han dynasty. The Han imperial and elite tombs and burials belonging to the middle and upper ranks of the nobility in central and eastern China were highly decorated and offer a rich source of evidence for the philosophies,

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[258] There is no study that has been able to show a direct relationship between the silk manuscript from Chu State and the Wu Liang Shrine plaques. Some historians also argue that this Chu manuscript was probably a shamanistic manual, and the omen pictures were copied from different omen indexes. See Fairbank 1972: 77. However it is still worth noting, due to its early date and style. For details on the omen slabs and related discussions, see Wu 1989: 234–45; 2006: 92–8.

[259] Beijing 2004: 89; Tseng 2011: 107–9. The *Records of the Grand Historian* also contains a lengthy discussion of astrological stellar divination. *Shi ji*, 27. For a relevant discussion, see Tian Tian 2014a: 182.

[260] These lost catalogues include *Illustrations of the Responses of Auspicious Omens* (*Ruiyingtu* 瑞鷹圖), recorded in *Records of the Grand Historian*, see *Shi ji*, 10.34; *Commentaries on the Responses of Auspicious Omens in the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu ruiying zhuan* 春秋瑞應傳), recorded in *Comprehensive Discussions at White Tiger Hall*, see *Baihu tongyi*, 7.360. See the list and discussion in Lippiello 2001: 85–6. For a complete list of catalogues from the Han to Tang dynasties, see Shen Yue 沈約 (AD 441–512)'s *Treatise on Auspicious Omens as Tokens* (*Furui zhi* 符瑞志), in *History of Liu-Song* (*Song shu* 宋書). *Song shu*, 27–9: 959–878; Lippiello 2001: 87–8. More Eastern Han examples include catalogues from tombs in Wangdu 望都 County, Hebei Province, and Horinger County (*Helinge'er xian* 和林格爾縣) in Inner Mongolia. See discussions in Tseng 2011: 113.

arts, and auspicious ideology of the Han period. These are outlined in the following chapters and utilised to gain a more comprehensive understanding of society, ideas, beliefs, and perspectives of the afterlife in early imperial China.

2.4. Conclusion

The auspicious motifs and tomb decorations that are the topic of this thesis were closely connected to ancient Chinese ideology and cosmology.

According to the texts examined in this chapter, a space-time structure built around the concept of a unified and integrated whole probably started to form in the third century BC. Its principal features included celestial aspects, such as heavenly bodies, the natural landscape, the four seasons, and different mythical creatures. All these constituent parts were linked, and, if one was affected, the correlated features would be impacted and 'respond' (*ying* 應) in some way.[261] The dominant clans of the Warring States held together the many semi-autonomous and semi-independent territories that populated the contemporary political landscape by manipulating kinship ties and controlling civil and religious rituals. When these were integrated into a unified empire ruled by a single Son of Heaven,[262] this profound political change intensified an ideological shift initiated during the Warring States. The unification of Qin in the late third century represented a triumph of *Realpolitik* over the ideals of the philosophical schools, which key figures during the Han, such as Dong Zhongshu, reconciled with

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[261] Rawson 2000: 140–3.
[262] Queen 1996: 227; note 212 above.

understandings of cosmological structure by resurrecting an earlier Zhou ideal of rulership.[263]

A more complicated ritual system thus formed in the Han dynasty that stressed the correlation between Heaven, spirits, and the human world. The spirit world, believed to parallel the human realm, had been offered sacrifices from earlier times. The concept of the 'spirit', however, seems to have grown to denote the ancestors, as well as gods and immortals. Both China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, and Wudi of the Han dynasty sought to communicate with the immortals by constructing high buildings and ascending to the peaks of mountains.

It is important to note that change in ideology in early China was not a linear development, though some 'spotlight' schools of thought[264] sometimes came to prominence. During the Han dynasty, Confucianism alone could not fully satisfy all the demands of a state ideology, and key concepts underpinning Han rule were used justified using other schools of thought, such as Daoism[265] and School of Yin-Yang.[266] From this amalgamation of philosophies, a highly organised ideological system, centred around the concept of *qi* and the alternating, binary forces of yin and yang producing the 'ten thousand things' of the universe, arose. A cyclical sequence of five phases

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[263] Queen 1996: 227. For more edited texts, see Tian Tian 2014a: chp. 3.

[264] Professor Robert Chard, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, pers. comm.

[265] Chen Guying 1991: 17–22.

[266] The triumph of Confucianism in the Han dynasty did not mean the absolute extinction of other schools of thought but their perpetuation in modified forms, as proved by the importance of the School of Yin-Yang etc. in this chapter. See also Wu 2006: 103–4 and notes 33–4; Feng Youlan 1952: 406.

provided a mechanism by which all things changed.[267] By this time, there was a sense in Chinese thought that everything in the universe had its place and correlated with all other aspects of the cosmos.[268] The Han developed visual ways to portray this correlative universe as realistically or vividly as possible, in the belief that an image was the agent and had the power of the thing or person depicted. In other words, the notion of correlation was no longer merely theoretical by the Han dynasty but had taken on practical significance, which manifests in the use and belief in auspicious imagery in almost all parts of society.[269]

The choice of new tomb types in the Han period, in addition to new vessels and ornament categories, will now be examined in light of contemporary developments in philosophical concepts. As it has been established that the Han period saw people invest increasingly in ideas of replicating positive omens to attain good fortune, the following chapters examine the types of auspiciousness being sought and whether changes or differences in the meanings of auspiciousness can be distinguished.

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[267] Rawson 2002a: 135.

[268] Queen 1996: 3–5; Lagerwey and Kalinowski 2009: 178–80; Wu 2010: 151.

[269] Ge Zhaoguang 2014: 190–1. However, Ge only points this out but does not extend the discussion further to cover the practical meanings. For detailed discussion, see Chapters Four to Six.

CHAPTER 3
Burial practices and concepts of the afterlife in the Han dynasty

3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the development of burial practices and burial concepts in the Han dynasty, which were the two factors that strongly influenced the uses of objects, images, and auspicious motifs interred in tombs. Throughout history, the Chinese have believed that a person's spirit continues to exist in some form after death.[270] Therefore, it is essential to explore and define auspiciousness in the context of beliefs in the afterlife.

Despite the fact that a diversity of practices and concepts are evident in different parts of Han China, major changes to tomb structures and object assemblages can be observed across the region as a whole.[271] More than 30,000 Han tombs have been discovered, which means that it is not possible to discuss all of them in detail here.[272] Since no emperor's tomb has been excavated, the tombs of imperial family members are discussed instead. In addition, some tombs of nobles and officials in the areas

[270] For instance, in the Shang and the Zhou dynasty, people's spirits were venerated as ancestors with influence in the world of the living, thus bronze food and drink vessels used in their worship became the main burial objects for society's upper ranks. Gao Chongwen 2006: 447–72; Rawson 1999b and pers. comm.; Section 2.2.1.

[271] Rawson 1998: 122.

[272] For an overview of the number and distribution of tombs of different ranks (empirical mausoleums, kingly and marquise tombs, and mid-ranking tombs etc.) all over China, see Zhao Huacheng and Gao Chongwen 2002: chps. 2–4.

around the two Han capitals—Chang'an, Shaanxi Province, and Luoyang, Henan Province—are also examined. Detailed information pertaining to all burials is provided in the appendices of Chapters Four and Five.

This chapter examines the following overarching questions relate to the theme of the thesis, auspiciousness:

1. What general changes in burial practice occurred in the Han dynasty, and what influenced the changes in burial form, tomb furnishing, and burial assemblage? What did people want to achieve through these changes, i.e. what form of auspiciousness did they desire?[273]
2. What concepts of afterlife existed in the Han dynasty? What was the relationship of these concepts to the concept of auspiciousness in the context of Han tombs?[274]

Investigation of ideas about life and death will lead to a better understanding of developments in modes of burial, which will facilitate discussion of related changes to artistic and ornamental styles in Chapters Four to Six. The following sections are not designed to establish the prevalent ideas in Han society with absolute certainty but to introduce and show how different burial practices and related ideas—including auspicious features specifically—were integrated into Han culture. Within the frameworks of materiality and agency, this chapter brings an academic focus onto the

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[273] See Section 3.2.
[274] See Section 3.3.

significance of materials as agents in their own right in constructing, developing, and even determining the meaning of auspiciousness in the context of Han tombs and the afterlife. Envisaged within such a theoretical structure, the study of auspicious ornament becomes more holistic, breaking the boundaries that have been established by definitions to reveal the link between life and the afterlife. In this thesis, this refers particularly to the contexts of cult, sacredness, and the significance of mountains (Section 2.2.2). These intangible aspects of the material world are thus theorised, canonised, and conceptualised in a funerary context. This approach is applied further in the following chapters to decode the nature of different motifs and objects, as well as their social and ideological affinities, by examining broader categories of materials, related technologies, their uses, and relevant practices in the context of Han tombs.

3.2. General trends of development in tomb structure and burial assemblage in relation to social rank

The tomb space is where various activities related to burying the dead took place. Changes in the structures of tombs also accompanied the development of new objects and additions to burial assemblages, which provide sources of evidence for the thoughts and beliefs of people in Han dynasty China.[275] Awareness of tomb features and changes to these also enables us to gain a more nuanced understanding of contemporary mortuary and ideological developments.

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[275] Rawson 1998: 122.

Prior to the Han dynasty, tombs in China were mostly vertical, rectangular, earthen pits,[276] though a small number of multi-chambered tombs dating to the Eastern Zhou (770–256 BC) have been found, such as the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng in Suizhou, Hubei Province (Figure 1.4).[277] In the early Western Han period, the vertical earthen pits popular in the Warring States period continued in use, and wooden coffins were also used to contain the deceased. In some places along the Yangtze River and peripheral areas in north and south China, the burial practice of wooden coffins placed in vertical pits continued into the late Western Han or Eastern Han periods.[278]

Major changes to burial practices began in the mid-Western Han dynasty, when horizontal tombs grew popular (Figure 3.1). This heralded the start of developments that eventually manifested in the practice of dividing tomb space and providing burial goods to create an ideal afterlife for the deceased.[279] Tombs of high-ranking people, especially imperial and royal tombs, were cut into rocky mountains. This was previously unprecedented and probably occurred because the enduring stone came to be perceived as protective in securing a long and demon-free afterlife.[280] Rock-cut structures first appeared in Pengcheng 彭城 (modern Xuzhou 徐州) in Jiangsu Province, where 15 tombs of the Chu royal house dated 179 BC–AD 8 were found,

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[276] Wang Zhongshu 1981: 449–58; Lai 2006; Nylan *et al.* 2015: 143–5.

[277] The tomb is composed of a tomb passage, an entrance hall/antechamber, a main chamber, and side chambers. See Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 7–9.

[278] Sometimes there were several coffins composed of one or multiple inner coffin (*guan* 棺) and an outer coffin (*guo* 槨). See no. 31–6 in Appendix 5.1.

[279] Huang Xiaofen 2003: 71–92; Qi Dongfang 2015: 29.

[280] Paludan 1991: 9; Lin 2009: 39; Professor Jessica Rawson and Dr James Lin, senior assistant keeper of the Asian art collection at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, pers. comm.

including the largest rock-cut tomb Shizishan 獅子山 (c. 154 BC).[281] Rock-cut tombs had a big effect on burial practices, for the structure allowed the construction of multiple chambers along a horizontal passage.[282] This also led to what became another main feature of Han tombs: the inclusion of features that mimicked residences of the living.[283] This innovation probably reflected the belief that people continued to exist in an afterlife;[284] however, it has been hotly debated what form life continued in after death, which is the topic of Section 3.3. Understanding how people perceived the afterlife is crucial to unveiling uses and expectations of auspicious ornaments and motifs of burials in the Han dynasty.

Horizontal hollow-brick tombs appeared in the early Western Han (Figure 3.1: 5), first in Central China—mostly in Luoyang—and later all over the Han Empire.[285] These tombs were replaced by hollow- and solid-brick tombs in the mid–late Western Han period (Figure 3.1: 3). The Eastern Han still saw, however, the creation of tombs combining both stone and brick.[286] These stone-and-brick chamber tombs typically had ample interior space and vaulted roofs (*quan ding* 券頂) or domed roofs (*gong ding* 拱頂) (Figure 3.1: 4).[287] In horizontal tombs, only one coffin was used, and the tomb

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[281] Liu Yan 2015: 27. In total, the Shizishan tomb was 5,139 m^3 in volume, comprising a long, neatly squared-off access passage and chambers on both sides. See *Wenwu* 1998: 3–20.

[282] Wu 1995: 127–42; Rawson 1999a: 8.

[283] Beijing 1959a: 23–45; Wu 1988: 78–115.

[284] Rawson 1988: 122. For more discussion and evidence for theory that Han tombs were modelled on real houses, see Lewis 2006: 119–30.

[285] The part of the Central Plain (*Zhongyuan* 中原) where stone or brick tombs were first used includes present-day Henan and Hebei provinces. Huang Xiaofen 2003: 96–116; Liu Yan 2015: 25.

[286] By Eastern Han times, solid bricks replaced hollow bricks to become the principal material for tomb constructions. Huang Xiaofen 2003: 153–6; Hsu 2004: 122.

[287] Huang Xiaofen 2003: 156–9; Liu Yan 2015: 26–7.

chamber itself served the function of an outer coffin.[288] The stone-carved tombs are believed to imitate rock-cut royal tombs, as both types were constructed by similar groups of artisans.[289]

The change to tomb structures allowed more space for different burial assemblages and decorations. In Han tombs, there are large numbers of daily utensils, murals and reliefs depicting both daily and mythical themes, and precious objects made of jade, lacquer, and gold.[290] It has been argued that the rock-cut royal tombs thus allowed the tomb owners (kings) to create underground palaces for their afterlives,[291] which also prompted entirely new tomb structures and objects that mimicked aspects of life to be created for people at all levels of Han society.[292]

This idea can be demonstrated by examining the tombs of royal and mid to high-ranking people in the Han dynasty (Appendices 4.1, 4.2 and 5.1). Most such tombs were horizontal and comprised: a tomb passage; an antechamber that acted as the entrance hall where ceremonies or banquets were held; a main chamber that housed the main coffin and the tomb occupant, symbolising the bedroom; and several side chambers for the arsenal, storage for chariots and horses, storeroom, kitchen, granary, and lavatory, as in a real palace or dwelling.[293] Even the few vertical tombs of the early–mid Western

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[288] Wang Zhongshu 1984: 91.

[289] Li Chen 2017: 707.

[290] Ritual bronzes no longer dominated burial assemblages like they had in pre-Han tombs, but this was more likely due to political factors, such as the attitude of the Qin. See Rawson 2002a: 17–23.

[291] See Li Chen 2017: 706. The popularisation of stone for building has been argued to be a western idea. Rawson 2010b; Li Chen 2017: 706.

[292] Li Chen 2017: 706.

[293] Huang Zhanyue 1998: 12–28. For the interior of a palace in the Han dynasty, see vols. 2 and 3 of the historical and geographical text *Plan of the Three Capital Regions* (*San fu huang tu* 三輔黃圖).

Han that had wooden chambers were similarly structured around a central chamber, and with the outmost chamber divided into several compartments.[294] An excellent example of this is the second-century Mawangdui cemetery, where all three tombs included wooden caskets to contain the deceased, which in the biggest, Tomb no. 1, was placed in a central chamber surrounded by four other compartments.[295] The decorative motifs on all four coffins and the silk banner from Tomb no. 1—the latter being regarded as one of the most important tomb objects of the Han dynasty[296]—depict the invisible spiritual world as it was widely perceived in southern China (Figures 1.8 and 1.12). The southern perception of the other world gradually assimilated beliefs from other parts of China and similarly influenced ideas about the afterlife in many other regions.[297] Han period beliefs about the afterlife and its expression in burial practices were not merely formed and developed on the basis of imperial ideology, but also from traditions in different areas of the Empire, as is shown in Section 3.3.

Before further discussion of the afterlife, another new phenomenon in the Han dynasty deserves particular attention to further demonstrate the auspicious mentality prevalent in Han China. In the second century BC, stone rather suddenly became the

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The work was composed no later than the Northern and Southern dynasties (AD 386–589) and is an important reference for the capitals and palaces of the Qin and Han dynasties. See *San fu huang tu*, 2.4 and 3.1–3.5; also see He Qinggu 2005 and 2006.

[294] Liu Yan 2015: 14; 'Biography of Huo Guang' (*Huo Guang zhuan* 霍光傳) in *Book of Han*, *Han shu*, 68.2948.

[295] The seals show that the tomb owners were Li Cang, the Marquis Dai and Chancellor of the Changsha Kingdom in Tomb no. 2, and his consort Xinzhui, Lady Dai, in Tomb no. 1. See Beijing 1973 vol. 1: 13–27; Beijing 2004: 9–10 and 38–40; Liu Yan 2015: 14.

[296] For scholarship on Mawangdui, see Fu Juyou and Chen Songchang 1992; Huang Bingyi 2005; Wu 2015.

[297] Rawson 1998: 122; Wu 2015: 231 and 235. For more discussion on the influence of beliefs from south China and practices in the Han Empire, see Wang Yu 2014: 181–203.

material of choice with which to build tombs.[298] Prior to the Han dynasty, tombs were dug vertically downward into the earth; this is the case even for the timber *huangchang ticou* 黄腸題湊[299] tombs (Figure 3.1: 2) of highly-ranked individuals, as well as most pre-Han tombs that often feature wooden shrines constructed above them at ground level. A common explanation for the sudden, rapid interest in stone as a building material and rocky mountains as burial locations is that stone's natural characteristics of strength and endurance became linked to favourable concepts of durability, protection, eternity, and immortality.[300] However, in addition, this thesis argues that there was another reason: mountains occupied an important position in the cosmology of the Han dynasty, as well as in state cults (see Section 2.2.2). The peaks of mountains were believed to be sacred places where the human beings and spirits gathered together.[301] For instance, the immortal Queen Mother of the West, whom the Han emperors may have dreamt of meeting, was thought to dwell on the heights of Kunlun Mountain in the west.[302] The natural rocky landscape of mountains in China, therefore, became related to ideas of an eternal afterlife and immortality in a spiritual and religious sense, thus they were included in tomb designs.[303]

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[298] Wu 1995: 126–42; Rawson 1998: 126; Li Chen 2017: 700–1.

[299] *Huangchang ticou* tombs take their name from their structure: *huangchang* 黄腸 literally means 'yellow intestines' and refers to the yellow heart of the cypress trunks that were used; *ticou* 題湊 refers to how the logs were piled up neatly, all aligned to form a thick timber wall that enclosed sets of corridors, the coffin chamber, and the multiple inner and outer coffins. See Li Zebin 2014: 2.

[300] Wu 1995: 126–42; Rawson 1998: 126–7; Rawson 2005: 110–2; Lin 2012a: 50–2; Li Chen 2017: 700–1.

[301] Tian Tian 2014a: 181.

[302] *Han shu*, 25 (upper).1220; Sections 2.2.1 and 4.3.2 in the thesis.

[303] For more discussions of rock-cut and smaller stone tombs, in addition to their possible relationship to Western and Central Asian tombs, see Rawson 1999a: 24–5; Rawson 2010b; Rawson

Most of the archaeological evidence in this thesis comes from the royal tombs in which diverse objects can be found, in addition to much rich evidence for the arts, technologies, and philosophies of the Han period.[304] Some highly-decorated, mid-rank tombs in the two capital areas will also be examined, as their interior ornamentation is pertinent to the discussion of auspiciousness. The social and political hierarchy of the Han and tomb ranks are briefly described here to provide context, as well as to justify the selection for the archaeological materials being used.

The Han Empire was divided into commanderies (*jun* 郡), controlled by the central government, and semi-autonomous regional kingdoms (*guo* 國) ruled by members of the royal family (Map 3.1).[305] Such role of kings was established in 202 BC by the first emperor of the Han dynasty, Gaozu, in an attempt to reward key relatives and followers. Gaozu divided the populous areas of eastern China and the Yangtze Valley into ten kingdoms.[306] The largest kingdoms, mostly in eastern China, were governed by members of the imperial Liu 劉 clan.[307]

2012; Li Chen 2017.

[304] Huang Zhanyue 1998: 11–2; Rawson 1999a: 8–11 and pers. comm.; Huang Xiaofen 2003: 71–89 and 218–20.

[305] Liu Yan 2015: 67–82; Li Chen 2017: 714.

[306] *Han shu*, 14.393–4.

[307] In spite of a brief and partial return at the beginning of the Han to the Zhou policy of distributing fiefs, China became a centralised empire administered by an appointed bureaucracy of literati not by a hereditary aristocracy whose power lay in military might. The regional powers threatened the authority of the Emperor and a major rebellion took place in 154 BC as mentioned below. *Han shu*, 14.393–4; Liu Yan 2017: 1592–3. In addition, by the end of the Warring States period, there were four recognised social classes ranked descending from knights (*shi* 士)—a term that has later been more conveniently translated as 'scholars' or 'literati'—peasants (*nong* 農), craftspeople (*gong* 工), and merchants (*shang* 商). They were ranked in this order by their presumed value to the state. Thinkers of the Warring States were all either in or on the edge of the fluid, partially literate, knightly class. See Graham 1989: 3.

The tombs of the 11 emperors of the Western Han at Chang'an and 12 of the Eastern Han at Luoyang have not been excavated. However, the emperors' sons, brothers, and other close relatives, some of whom were kings and rulers of designated areas as mentioned above, were buried in ancestral Han territory.[308] A particularly dense concentration of royal tombs is found in Pengcheng, Jiangsu Province, and features tombs belonging to the kings of Chu, a hereditary kingdom granted to a branch of the imperial family by the Han emperors.[309] Some of the least disturbed examples, such as the tomb at Shizishan, are examined in detail in the following chapters. Other archaeological materials in tombs of high-ranked individuals in Han China also reflect the Han predilection for Chu practices, behind which lay the fact that regional beliefs from south China had contributed to and strongly influenced the formation of ideas about cosmology and the afterlife, and by extension also the ceremonies, objects, and ornament used in burials in the Han Empire.[310]

In 154 BC, the regional kingdoms threatened the authority of the Han Emperor and a major rebellion took place, after which the kingdoms were either reduced in size or absorbed into the imperial domain.[311] The tombs of the rulers of these kingdoms mostly date to the period after this rebellion; however, they are still large in scale and rich in

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[308] Potts 2012: 5.

[309] Pengcheng County was the hometown of the first emperor of the Han dynasty. *Ibid*; *Shi ji*, 8.195.

[310] Rawson 1999a: 20. See more discussions in Sections 4.1.1, 5.3 and 6.3.2.

[311] After this incident, the Government no longer ceded important powers to regional kings, nor relied on them to support the State against local enemies or outside intruders. Twitchett and Loewe 1986: 107, 173, and 196.

content, particularly the Mancheng 滿城 and Dayunshan 大雲山 tombs. They were either cut into the mountainsides or built as massive timber structures and furnished with extravagant artefacts and even sacrifices of people, including concubines, cooks, servants, and others.[312] The objects and people that formed the burial assemblages to some extent reflect the life of the Han royal court, as well as some expectations of its members towards the afterlife.[313]

3.3. Concepts of the afterlife

The changes in the burial practices of the Han dynasty were not restricted to tomb structures, materials for construction, burial assemblages, or ornament. People's ideologies, attitudes towards death, and perceptions of the cosmos also developed.[314] This section reviews scholarship on Han period concepts of death and the afterlife, exploring what they suggest about people's expectations for life after death and laying the foundation for further discussion of the meanings of decorations, objects, and visual depictions in Han dynasty tombs in the following chapters. This section also shows how the changes in tomb structures and burial assemblages outlined in Section 3.2 reflect changing concepts of the afterlife.

3.3.1 **The concept of a refined bodily substance**

The silk painting from Tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui depicts what is thought to be the soul

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[312] Liu Yan 2017: 1592–3.
[313] Lin 1996: 49; Chapters Five and Six in the thesis.
[314] Qi Dongfang 2015: 3.

of the tomb owner, Xinzhui, the Lady Dai, ascending to Heaven (Figure 1.12). A silk piece from Tomb no. 3 features similar imagery, and Michael Loewe has pointed out in *Ways to Paradise* that this reflects the underlying beliefs regarding the afterlife amongst people of the Han era.[315] But, a question that arises from this interpretation is why, if the departed soul was supposed to go to Heaven, were all the tomb objects for the afterlife arranged underground?[316] This issue requires a more thorough understanding and examination of what people in the Han dynasty perceived to be the fundamental composition of a human being.

The 'Conveyance of rituals' (*Li yun* 禮運) chapter of the *Book of Rites* states that:

> Humanity is [the product of] the attributes of Heaven and Earth, [by] the interaction of the dual forces of nature [yin and yang], the union of the animal and intelligent [souls], and the finest subtle matter of the five elements.[317]

Based on abstract accounts like this, some scholars have argued that a person was considered to be composed of a body and a spirit, each of which was governed by a soul. The soul governing the body was the *po* 魄, a vital force or energy without which the body could not operate, and that governing the spirit was the *hun* 魂, which was

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[315] Loewe 1994b: Preface.

[316] Yü Ying-shih 1981: 82–3.

[317] 故人者，其天地之德，陰陽之交，鬼神之會，五行之秀氣也。*Li ji*, 22.690. This is based on James Legge's translation in Legge 1885: 380–1. Similar records can be found in the *Records of ritual matters by Dai the Elder* (*Dadai liji* 大戴禮記), a late Western Han collection on Confucius' thoughts, as well as ritual observations written during the Western Han period by Dai De. See Huang Huaixin *et al.* 2006: 618 for more information. See also Yü Ying-shih 1987: 374; Lewis 2006: 42.

responsible for activating intellectual and emotional activities and reactions. The spirit was also thought to depend on the vital lifeforce *qi* for its existence.[318] The *hun* was characterised as yang (male and active) and went to Heaven at death, whereas the *po* was yin (female and passive) and went to the underworld at death.[319] To reach the heavenly world, probably conceived of as a sort of paradise, the *hun* soul passed through the magical isles of the Eastern Sea, especially the isle of Penglai off Shandong. During, or at the end of the first century BC, however, this imaginary land was transformed into a cosmic mountain in the west called Kunlun, which was a paradise inhabited by immortals and ruled by the Queen Mother of the West.[320]

At first glance, this dualistic categorisation of the soul into *po* and *hun* aspects that separated at death may be considered a likely explanation for the contradiction where people were willing to inter their dead below ground, despite believing that part of them would ascend to Heaven.[321] Nevertheless, careful examination of some more texts and materials from tombs reveals that people did not necessarily distinguish between the two types of souls, sometimes considered it to be one entity,[322] or even only had little

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[318] The energy came into the body from Heaven, and life was maintained through the two basic activities of breathing and eating. Yü Ying-shih 1981: 83; Yü Ying-shih 1987: 376; Selbitschka 2018: 180.

[319] 'The intelligent spirit returns to heaven; the body and animal soul return to the earth; and hence arose the idea of seeking [for the deceased] in sacrifice in the unseen darkness (yin) and in the bright region above (yang).' 魂氣歸于天，形魄歸于地。故祭，求諸陰陽之義也。 'The single victim at the border sacrifices' (*Jiao te sheng* 郊特牲) in *Book of Rites*, see *Li ji*, 26.817. Translation adapted from Legge 1885: 444; Loewe 1994b: 9–10.

[320] Seidel 1987a: 226–7; Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens 2009: 975–6; Section 2.2 in the thesis.

[321] See note 319 above.

[322] Brashier 1996: 138; Poo Mu-chou 1998: 62–6 and 163–5; Li Qingquan 2016. In addition, the boundaries between Confucian ideology and popular Daoist religion in the late Han period were also often blurred, which further suggests that it is hard to prove that most Han Chinese people had a consistent understanding towards the exact compositions of human beings. See also Yü Ying-shih

understanding of the issue. In the *Book of Han*, death was described as 'the spirit and refined bodily substance leaving the body' (*jing shen li xing* 精神離形);[323] and in the *Writings of Master Guan* (*Guanzi* 管子), words or phrases other than the soul are seen, like 'the essence of energy' (*jing qi* 精氣), 'the sublime abode' (*jing she* 精舍) and 'the refined bodily substance' (*shen* 神).[324] Relevant archaeological remains include the wooden slip document (*mu du* 木牘) dated to the late third century BC discovered at Fangmatan 放馬灘 in Gansu Province,[325] and quite a few inscriptions carved on stones or written on potteries in Eastern Han tombs such as the '*hun*-spirit and refined bodily substance' (*hun shen* 魂神), '*hun* and *po'* (*hun po* 魂魄), '*hun*-spirit and soul' (*hun ling* 魂靈),[326] and even '*hun*-spirit and zero' (*hun ling* 魂零) in which the character *ling* 零, literally meaning zero, may have been wrongly written or used as a rebus for the character *ling* 靈 or soul.[327]

There has long been confusion and disagreement about the early Chinese belief in the coexistence of two souls and its relevance to the construction of tombs and burials.[328] It is probably more appropriate to say that, in the Han dynasty, there was a common belief that a human being was composed of a body and a refined bodily

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1987: 374; Lewis 2006: 42.

[323] See *Han shu*, 67.2908.

[324] See *Guanzi*, 16.931–50. The *Writings of Master Guan* is an overview text of different schools of thoughts in the Zhou dynasty, and it is attributed to the seventh-century BC philosopher and statesman Guan Zhong 管仲 (c. 725–645 BC) of the Qi State. The text was collected and annotated by Liu Xiang, and probably extended by other scholars in the Han dynasty. See Zhang Dainian 2018: chp. 1, part 5.

[325] Li Xueqin 1990: 43–5; *Wenwu* 2012: 81 and 84.

[326] Chen Zhi 1957; *Kaogu* 1975a: 126; Li Qingquan 2016: 16.

[327] Luo Fuyi 1960: 178–82; Li Qingquan 2016: 16, note 48.

[328] Barnhart *et al.* 1997:151; Wu 2010: 32; Carlson 2015: 73 and note 210.

substance.[329] Maintaining the refined substance was believed to prevent the body from dispersing, and thus the *qi* endured for longer.[330] In this context, the increase in the use of mountain locations for burials and stone to construct tomb spaces makes more sense: the tomb was the final destination for the deceased's body in this human world but also the start of the refined bodily substance's eternal afterlife.[331]

Sacrifices to supernatural entities other than the spirits of the dead were also a part of some burials, and it has been widely agreed that burial procedures also catered to the needs and interests of the ancestors.[332] Such practices show that it was a common belief that an aspect of the deceased continued to exist in some form in the afterlife. Although the exact composition of human beings remains a contested issue in some cases, this section has provided a general outline of what Han dynasty people understood to occur to someone after death.

3.3.2 The development of the idea of immortality

In order to understand Han dynasty people's views towards death and the afterlife, the

[329] For more detailed discussion based of the literary evidence, see Lewis 2006: 55–60.

[330] *Ibid*: 52. This is also evident in the tombs mentioned above, see notes 325–7. Writers in traditions represented by medical literature and accounts of funerary practice from the fourth century BC onwards emphasised the importance of holding together the body and the refined bodily substance for as long as possible, first in order to preserve life and second to keep the deceased in peace in the tomb. *Ibid*: 74–5. See also Ying Shao 應劭 (fl. c. AD 189–194)'s *Comprehensive Meaning of Customs and Habits* (*Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義). *Fengsu tongyi*, 6. This is a book on social customs, traditions and different objects in life. As mentioned in previous chapters, texts may not be all correct. But those like *Comprehensive Meaning of Customs and Habits* may still worth mentioning here because they reflect the popular beliefs and practices in the social life of the Han period to a large extent, and thus helping us to know more about the Han society.

[331] For the preservation of the physical body, further discussion is provided in Chapter Five of the thesis.

[332] Huang Xiaofen 2003: 247–5; Rawson 2011 and pers. comm.; Selbitschka 2018: 183.

idea of immortality (*xian* 仙) must also be considered, as the pursuit and discussion on immortality peaked in this period.[333] This section traces the origin and development of the concept of immortality, proposing that its meaning was expanded and changed in accordance with mainstream Confucian ideology (see Section 2.2.2), as well as the political situation.[334]

In the Zhou dynasty, prayers for blessings to the ancestors or Heaven were inscribed on bronze vessels, and *shou* 壽, meaning longevity, was by far the most popular character used.[335] This may be understood as a desire to prolong human life. After the eighth century BC, however, and especially at the end of the Warring States period, the specific idea of immortality began to appear, as reflected in inscriptions that refer to 'no death' (*wusi* 毋死) and 'impeding old age' (*nanlao* 難老).[336] Scholars' opinions vary as to where the idea of physical immortality originated,[337] but one thing has been widely acknowledged: the concept denoted the process of leaving this world to become immortal in the afterlife, as opposed to living forever in the human world.[338]

The search for immortality, as well as a drug to prevent death, reached its peak in the reigns of the first emperor Qin Shi Huang and the Han emperor Wudi. Textually,

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[333] Yü Ying-shih 1964: 65; Yü Ying-shih 1987: 373 and 386; Loewe 1994b: 54–5.
[334] Also refer to Feng Youlan 1952: chp. 17.
[335] Xu Zhongshu 1936; Creel 1937: 333; Kern 2008.
[336] Xu Zhongshu 1936: 25; Yü Ying-shih 1964: 87.
[337] Xu Zhongshu insisted that the idea of physical immortality was introduced to China by the northern Di 狄 people at the beginning of the Eastern Zhou period, see Xu Zhongshu 1936: 25–6 and 43; Wen Yiduo proposed that immortality, or 'no death', was imported from the Qiang 羌 people to the west; see Wen Yiduo 1956: 154–7. Yü Ying-shih argued that the transition from the idea of longevity to immortality was not prompted by the introduction of allochthonous beliefs. See Yü Ying-shih 1964: 88, an article that represents one of the most comprehensive studies on early Chinese concepts of immortality.
[338] *Ibid*.

the idea of 'no death' developed into an imagined, faraway 'no death land' (*busi guo* 不死國), where the 'no death people' (*busi min* 不死民) lived.[339] Historical records like the *Records of the Grand Historian* show that, after the Qin unification, numerous 'immortalists' or 'necromancers' (*fangshi* 方士) convinced Qin Shi Huang that immortality could be realised by taking 'drugs of no death' (*busi zhi yao* 不死之藥) under certain circumstances.[340] In the Western Han period, *fangshi* from the coastal region of Qi flocked to the court in Chang'an to offer the Han Emperor their services in seeking the 'drugs of no death' at sea.[341] One of the most famous of these was Li Shaojun 李少君 (fl. c. 2nd century BC), who told Wudi that the legendary Yellow Emperor had achieved the state of no death after meeting immortals on Penglai and performing the sacrifice to Heaven (*feng* 封) and sacrifice to Earth (*shan* 禅).[342]

However, a relationship existed between the resurgence in interest in immortality in Wudi's reign and the contemporary political situation. A more comprehensive, or 'greedier', concept of immortality flourished to denote both worldly and otherworldly eternal life. As a result of Zhang Qian's 張騫 (164–113 BC) expedition in the late second century BC to the western regions (*xiyu* 西域), geographical knowledge of the

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[339] *Shanhaijing*, 6.145–53, 14.204–12, 15.213–20; *Huainanzi*, 4.66; *Shi ji*, 28.983, 989–90 and 992; Watson 1971 vol. 2: 26.

[340] *Shi ji*, 6.129–31; Yü Ying-shih pointed out the contradiction of worldly and otherworldly immortality during the reign of Qin Shi Huang. Since the state of 'no death' denoted immortality, to achieve the former was to become an immortal. This is evident in Qin Shi Huang's preference to refer to himself as a 'true person' (*zhenren* 真人), another word for an immortal. See Yü Ying-shih 1964: 107 and 118.

[341] *Shi ji*, 12.288; Watson 1971 vol. 2: 25–6.

[342] Further elaborations on the tale by Gongsun Qing 公孫卿 and other *fangshi* had the Yellow Emperor actually becoming an immortal and ascending to Heaven on a dragon's back. *Shi ji*, 28, 996–7 and 1002. For more information on the Feng and Shan sacrifices, see *Shi ji*, 28; Watson 1971 vol. 2: 3–52; Rawson 1995a.

lands west of the Han Empire increased, and, as the imperial quest for immortality grew larger in scope, more of the Emperor's and immortalists' attentions were directed westward.[343] Wudi expressed his desire to ascend Kunlun Mountain in the west to meet the immortals and become immortal himself.[344] The opening-up of the west to Han trade may have partially occurred because Wudi coveted Ferghana horses, or 'heavenly horses' (*tian ma* 天馬), believing that they acted as media of communication between the human world and the immortals. Possessing these horses, Wudi believed, would finally make immortality possible.[345]

What is noticeable in Wudi's quest for immortality is that what he believed he would achieve after meeting the immortals on Kunlun Mountain was not the otherworldly immortality described in pre- and early Han literature.[346] At least from Wudi's reign onwards, one's worldly pleasures were also intended to be kept after death. For example, according to some Han texts, when the Yellow Emperor ascended to Heaven, he apparently went with his whole entourage, including a harem of over 70 women.[347] Similarly, Liu An, Prince of Huainan, was said to have risen to Heaven with his whole

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[343] Yü Ying-shih 1964: 97–8.

[344] *Han shu*, 25 (upper).1220. There is not enough evidence or record showing that Wudi intended to join the immortals, but may have only wanted to meet them. See Rawson 1999a: 19.

[345] Wudi may have allowed this personal concern to affect the Han Empire's foreign relations. 'That the Emperor's opening up of the western region was motivated not only by military and diplomatic considerations but also by his personal craving for foreign rare products, such as the well-known Heavenly Horses' of Ferghana (Ta-wan or Ta-yuan), is a fact which has been observed by almost every historian dealing with the period.' *Ibid*. For more discussion on the 'heavenly horses', see Section 6.3.3 in Chapter Six of this thesis; Qian Mu 1957: 133; Lü Simian 2010: 120.

[346] One of the earliest descriptions of the otherworldliness of immortality may be the first chapter in the *Zhuangzi*, attributed to the philosopher Zhuang Zhou of School of the Dao. *Zhuangzi*, 1.75–83. It is unknown exactly when the concept first appeared, but the consensus of opinion amongst modern scholars dates its rise late in the fourth century BC. Yü Ying-shih 1964: 91; Seidel 1987a: 223–32; Yue Nan and Hu Yuan 2008: 60–3; Kirkova 2016: 24.

[347] See note 342 above.

household, including his dogs and cockerels, after taking a drug for immortality.[348] These cases reflect that both an eternal afterlife and the transplant of one's life to another world were considered desirable.[349] The incorporation of beliefs that one's worldly belongings could be taken in the transition to the afterlife was also likely the result of the influence of Confucian teachings, which emphasised close family life and ties.[350]

The beliefs outlined above, nonetheless, cannot be considered to have been prevalent amongst all social classes nor can they be assumed to have persisted throughout the entire Han period.[351] In the Eastern Han, some literati, especially Wang Chong 王充 (AD 27–c. 100) and Ying Shao, criticised the idea of immortality; however, the wider public in the same period seems to have still believed in various ways of achieving immortality.[352] Additionally, most of the time, the two concepts of worldly and otherworldly immortality were not exclusive, and sometimes they even merged into one overarching concept of immortality.[353]

As the above discussion shows, there were several concepts of immortality that

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[348] Thus considered, I agree with Yü Ying-shih's argument that the Daoist idea of a heavenly world where immortals live developed from the process of worldly desires being pushed to the extreme and attempts to prolong the human world. See Yü Ying-shih 1964: 106–9.

[349] *Ibid*: 104–5; *Shi ji*, 6.134 and 12.284; Qian Mu 1957: 52.

[350] See the *Analects of Confucius* (*Lun yu* 論語), the classics and collection of sayings of Confucius and his contemporaries and students, composed after Confucius's death during the early Warring States period. *Lun yu*, chp. 1. Also see *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*. *Chunqiu fanlu*, 76.442; Yü Ying-shih 1964: 108; Yü Ying-shih 2005: 17 and 27; Appendix 2.1.

[351] Seidel 1987b: 21; Rawson 1999a: 15; Lai 2015: 13–4.

[352] *Lun heng*, 145–57; 'Right and wrong' (*Zheng shi* 正失) in *Comprehensive Meaning of Customs and Habits*, *Fengsu tongyi*, vol. 2; Forke 1907 and 1911 vol. 1: 332–50; Yü Ying-shih 1964: 110.

[353] Yü Ying-shih 1964: 90.

coexisted and developed throughout the Han dynasty.[354] In general, however, there was a clear pursuit of immortality in the sense of both no death and the ability to enjoy worldly pleasures indefinitely in Han China, which formed from the reign of Wudi.[355] These beliefs influenced material expressions of auspiciousness in terms of both architecture and artefacts, and as is discussed in the following section, there is clear evidence for practices that imply the importance of the tomb in its role as home, house, or palace where the deceased would spend an enjoyable afterlife.

3.3.3 The function of tombs

Having explored the Han concepts of refined bodily substance, different forms of immortality, and the importance of preserving the physical body, the relationship of these ideas to the concept of auspiciousness in the context of Han tombs can be better explored.

The Han dynasty inherited the belief that the afterlife resembled the human world from the Shang and Zhou dynasties, and it was thought that a proper tomb was essential to the well-being of the tomb owner and their surviving descendants. For the Shang and Zhou, proper tombs can be represented by sets of bronze vessels for ancestral offerings that were interred in tombs in the Yellow River area. However, by Qin dynasty, these ritual food and drink vessels had declined in importance.[356] A reason for this is that,

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[354] Most of these beliefs were not logical; however, logic does not necessarily matter, as religious ideas are not strictly logical. For discussions on religious beliefs, see Guthrie 1995.

[355] Yü Ying-shih 1987; Rawson 1999a: 17–9; Wu 2010: 127.

[356] Rawson 1999a: 20; Rawson 2002a; Section 3.2.

with the changes in tomb structure and material, the setting for the act of making offerings to ancestors, deities, and spirits moved from temples to tombs.[357] This means that the deceased was possibly also intended to conduct rituals and sacrifices in the central hall continuously after the tomb had been sealed.[358] The enlarged tomb space also offered more space for living descendants to conduct rituals.[359] Such changes reflect a shift from a lineage/ancient ancestor-based to a family-based social structure, mostly influenced by the dominant Confucian ideology of the Han dynasty.[360]

Providing space for offerings to be made and funerary rituals to be conducted was just one of the functions served by tombs.[361] Previous scholars have variously interpreted their other functions as being microcosmic representations of the universe,[362] residences (palaces),[363] or places for the deceased to prepare to rise to the immortal realm or land (*xian jie* 仙界).[364] In the same way that the Han concept of immortality was not unitary,[365] no clear or systematic statement regarding what the 60 million registered citizens of the Han Empire were trying to convey through tomb

[357] There is no history of using stone-chambered tombs or large stone monuments in Central China before the Han dynasty. See Li Chen 2017: 702; Section 3.2.

[358] Selbitschka 2018: 257.

[359] The tombs in general became more accessible. The increased space probably allowed the rituals conducted by the offspring before sealing the tomb, and there was also space outside the tombs for more ritual practices. See Huang Xiaofen 2003: 71; Wu 2010: 25–6; Lai 2015: chp. 1.

[360] Lewis 2006: 77–133; Lai 2006: 34–40; Lai 2015: 55; Section 2.2.

[361] Lai 2006 and 2015: 55–6.

[362] Rawson 1999a: 13; Rawson 2005; Wu 2010: 20, 64, and 131.

[363] Qi Dongfang 2015: 2–30; Rawson also argues that Han tombs were residences or palaces for the elite, whilst simultaneously being spaces where the cosmos was ‘brought to the tomb owner’, so that ‘he or she did not have to leave the confines of the tomb to partake of its realms’. Rawson 1999a: 13 and 24.

[364] The tomb builders intended to create, not only settings that mirrored daily life, but also ones that reflected the cosmos. He Xilin 2001: 131–2; Chuang Hui-chih 2014. For more discussion on the concept of the immortal realm, see Xin Lixiang 2000: 61, as well as the last part of Section 3.3.3.

[365] See Section 3.3.2. Also, see Loewe 1994b: 15.

structure exists.[366] The following is a review and critique of prevailing theories for the tombs' functions.

Tombs as residences

The space to be inhabited during the afterlife was meant to imitate a real residence in many Han tombs, with major and minor chambers, food storage, and lavatories provided.[367] There was also an increase in the use of stone for building tombs and coffins. Compared to wood, stone was more durable and infinitely available, whilst it was also firmer than earth, which meant that the tombs would not collapse, and the interred would be protected forever.[368] The use of stone was probably prompted by people's aim of securing a long-lasting and inviolate residence for the afterlife. Stone may also have been considered to be a lesser form of jade, which was a precious mineral used in the Han dynasty for making suits, plugs, and coffins to preserve the deceased and ensure physical immortality.[369] New uses of jade in the Han dynasty are closely examined in Chapter Five.

Objects put in the tombs were intended for the long-term use of the dead in the afterlife.[370] Scholars have established that the provision of food was important in Han

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[366] This population number was recorded in the year 26 BC: see Loewe 2014: 142. For the custom of calling back the soul, see Loewe 2014: 143.

[367] Huang Xiaofen 2003: 84 and 217–27.

[368] Rawson 1999a: 52.

[369] Like the ancient Egyptians, people of the Han dynasty believed that the soul or spirit could only survive in a well-preserved body. Boettner 1956: 61–2. Archaeological discoveries also show that at least two methods were used to ensure the body remained incorruptible. Loewe 2014: 143.

[370] Selbitschka 2018: 182.

tombs.[371] For instance, the King of Chu buried at Shizishan had his chef sacrificed to ensure that all his banquets in the afterlife would be perfectly prepared.[372] By contrast with earlier periods, bronze ritual vessels were increasingly substituted with objects of daily use from the fourth century BC.[373] This does not mean, however, that tomb objects with ritual functions had disappeared by the Han dynasty. Tomb owners were supposed to continue making offerings to their own ancestors in the afterlife, as inscriptions on ceramic food containers inscribed with 'meat [food] for sacrifices' have been found, such as at Shaogou 燒溝 in Luoyang and the tomb of Zhao Mo 趙眜 (r. 137–122 BC), King of Nanyue 南越, in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, both of which are discussed in the following chapters.[374]

The fourth-century BC *Zuo Tradition* (*Zuozhuan* 左轉) also records that divinations to ascertain auspicious dates and times to bury the dead were mandatory to prevent the deceased being attacked by bad spirits.[375] The *Book of the Later Han* states that auspicious locations for burial plots could be determined by divination, and burying the deceased at such places would ensure future fame and fortune for the family, i.e. living descendants.[376] In this sense, the tomb space featured almost all the amenities

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[371] *Ibid*; Lai 2015: 52.

[372] *Wenwu* 1998: 6–12; Rawson *et al.* 2011: 252 and 295.

[373] Poo Mu-chou 1993: 197; Wu 2010: 33–47; Lai 2015: 70–4; Selbitschka 2018: 184.

[374] Beijing 1959a: 115; Beijing 1991a: 63–4; Keightley 1991: 12–24; Falkenhausen 2006: 298–9; Selbitschka 2018: 186 and 236.

[375] See the record of year 8 (601 BCE) in chapter 'King Xuan' (*Xuan gong* 宣公) in *Zuo Commentary*. *Zuo zhuan*: 697–8; Durrant *et al.* 2016 vol. 1: 622–3; Selbitschka 2018: 206. Fear of being attacked by bad spirits and demons was common in Han China, but it probably had its origins in south China, especially the Chu area. Lai 2015: 28–50.

[376] *Hou han shu*, 45.1522; Selbitschka 2018: 296.

that a dwelling for a living person might include: items for daily activities, ritual needs, and even blessings for the prosperity of later generations.

Tombs as cosmos

Some excavation has been undertaken at the funerary complexes of Han emperors, and there is evidence suggesting that the Han imperial tombs were designed to mirror palaces as thoroughly as possible. The tombs thus included members of the imperial army, concubines, advisors, jesters, musicians; as well as living quarters, stables, hunting parks, armouries pleasure gardens, slaves, courtiers, etc. The idea that accompanying people and objects were also projected into the afterlife relied on understandings of power, namely that the emperor held immutable status in an unchallengeable, eternal world order.[377]

Many of the excavated rock-cut royal tombs, which are believed to have similar decorations to the imperial tombs, were most likely plastered and painted. This is suggested by some fragments of decorated plaster discovered in the tomb of Liu Mai 劉買 (d. 137 BC, the tomb c. 136–118 BC), King Gong 共 of Liang 梁, at Shiyuan 柿園 in Yongcheng 永城, Henan Province, as well as the tomb of Zhao Mo, King of Nanyue, in Guangzhou.[378] Motifs on the plaster include cosmic patterns and mythical creatures, which were most probably designed invoke a balanced and harmonious

[377] See Rawson 1999a: 6. The tomb provided the emperor with an effective army, as well as other important people, animals, and things, at the centre of a spirit court, described in terms of the contemporary worldview as 'a system of inscribed squares' centred on the emperor. Di Cosmo 2002: 94; Loewe 2010: 213; Carlson 2015: 134–5 and 147.

[378] Rawson 1999a: 52. For detailed discussion, see Chapter Four of this thesis.

cosmic order, the precondition for an ideal afterlife.[379] Han dynasty tombs in general were decorated both with scenes of day-to-day life—banquets, hunts, kitchen scenes, etc.—and cosmic and mythical motifs,[380] and the practice of including the latter most likely originated in Chu, as the majority of archaeological evidence for such motifs has been found in Chu territory.[381]

For people during the Han, of evil was considered an issue of cosmic order rather than a theological, ethical, or psychological matter, and thinkers before the Han had already started to develop a scheme of cosmic regulation that could explain worldly occurrences and be utilised to ensure favourable outcomes.[382] Therefore, as is shown in Chapter Four, many motifs depicted in the murals of Han tombs were probably auspicious in the sense that they were intended to create a good cosmic order in the tomb space, so that only good spirits could stay with the deceased.

Tombs as places to prepare for ascension to the immortal realm

The immortality of the tomb owner's spirit was achieved through the tomb structure and burial practices, namely constructing entire tombs from stone and in some cases enclosing corpses in jade. The conceptualisation of death as a transition to immortality is expressed in a Han dynasty song: 'at death, he has attained the way of the holy

[379] For detailed discussion, see Sections 4.1 and 4.2 in the thesis.
[380] Li Xingming 2005: 6–7.
[381] But, this concentration of motifs in Chu territory may also simply be the result of the better preservation of organic materials in the region as compared with other parts of China. Huang Xiaofen 2003: 203.
[382] Loewe 1994b: 3.

immortals.'[383] The medical equipment excavated from the Mancheng tombs in Hebei Province, in addition to jade cups and pills from the tomb of Zhao Mo, King of Nanyue, were most likely used in alchemical practices conducted by *fangshi* to assist individuals in leaving the human realm.[384] The inclusion of such items indicates that they were intended for use in the afterlife, suggesting that the deceased thought to continue working towards immortality after death. More detailed analysis is presented in Chapters Five and Six, along with exploration of where the spirit, i.e. the deceased's refined bodily substance (Section 3.3.1), was believed to eventually travel to. Many of the tombs' furnishings and objects depict heavenly, supernatural, and ideal realms, indicating that it was probably hoped that the spirit of the deceased would reach the immortal lands.[385] One such landscape can be seen on the Mawangdui silk banner (Figure 1.12), as already mentioned above.[386]

The first written evidence for the idea of ascending to the immortal realm appears in the form of the poem 'Far-off Journey' (*Yuan you* 遠遊), attributed to the famous poet Qu Yuan 屈原 (340–278 BC) in *Songs of Chu* (*Chu ci* 楚辭),[387] in which the central theme is an immortal's flight through space. This is probably the first written

[383] Birrell 1988: 75. Wu Hung states that 'we may say that these tomb owners [Liu Sheng and Dou Wan] had indeed achieved immortality, but only through death and only through the alchemy of funerary symbols.' Wu 2010: 140. Liu Sheng 劉勝 (d. 113 BC), King Jing 靖 of Zhongshan 中山 (154–35 BC) and his consort Dou Wan 竇綰 (d. 104 BC) were the tomb owners at Mancheng, Hebei Province. Beijing 1980a; Appendix 5.1.

[384] The *fangshi*, or 'Daoist adept' as put by Seidel, avoided the earth prison by good moral conduct and physiological, alchemical, and ritual practice. For more detail, see Seidel 1987b: 39–44; Lin 1996: 46.

[385] Carlson 2015: 149–50; Zheng Shubin 2016.

[386] See Section 3.3.1.

[387] *Songs of Chu*, the anthology of the poetry of Chu State attributed to Qu Yuan and assembled in early Han dynasty. It was influential throughout the Han dynasty. Hawkes 1985.

expression of immortality that is expressed explicitly using the term *chushi* 出世, meaning 'to transcend this world'.[388] It is, however, not definite that the tomb was designed to be the place where such a transformation occurred,[389] as there are also Han dynasty texts appear to be concerned with the maintenance of the deceased within the tomb, rather than its journey to the immortal realm.[390] This issue will also be considered in the analysis of auspiciousness in the following chapters.

3.4. Conclusion

At present, there remains no consensus amongst researchers regarding the Han concepts of afterlife and the function of Han tombs. However, the outline and discussion above indicate that Han dynasty people tried to prepare optimal conditions for the deceased to enjoy eternal afterlives in the microcosmic realms of tombs.[391] Although no text describes the exact process of burial and what was believed to occur afterwards, some written sources facilitate understanding of concepts relating to the afterlife.

Before the introduction of Buddhism at the end of the Eastern Han,[392] Confucian ethics, Yin-Yang philosophy, Daoist mysticism, statecraft, and traditional folk religions

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[388] Yü Ying-shih 1964: 90–2.

[389] Wu 1997: 160–5.

[390] *Chunqiu fanlu*, 14.151–3; *Xunzi*, 181–9. There were also other types of texts that address the existence of bureaucracies of the underworld. These are typical of the Eastern Han dynasty but have a potential origin in the third century BC, such as a document (bamboo slip) found at Fangmatan in Gansu Province, which describes the offices, land contracts, and a person's experience of identifying himself to the offices of the underground bureaucracy after death. Li Xueqin 1990; Rawson 1999a: 14–5. However, there have only been few controversial archaeological discoveries of related texts from Han elite tombs, and scholars have not reached an agreement on the formation of a mature underground world in pre-Buddhist China. Therefore, this issue is not discussed in detail in the thesis. For more information and opinions, see *Ibid*; Poo Mu-chou 1998; Yü Ying-shih 2005; Lai 2015: 147–50.

[391] Selbitschka 2018: 242.

[392] For the introduction of Buddhism into China, see Zürcher 2007.

etc. formed a fluid and porous system of spiritual-philosophical-pragmatic ideology.[393] Some cosmic motifs and fantastic creatures depicted in tombs also attest to the prevalent concept of a correlative cosmology and a desire to maintain the balance and harmony of the cosmos.[394] At the same time, Han people at all levels of society seem to have both venerated their ancestors and worshipped a variety of immortal deities, which seem to conversely represent two categories of theoretically divergent powers.[395]

The conviction that life continued in the tomb was informed by the belief in an eternal paradise developed around the end of the Warring States and early Han periods, and is mentioned in some philosophical Daoist texts prior to the Han dynasty.[396] Two fundamental changes to tombs in the Han period—the shift to horizontal chamber-style tombs from vertical pit-style burials and the increase in numbers of objects for various daily uses—suggest the development of a widely accepted concept of an afterlife. The new types, structures, and burial assemblages in Han dynasty tombs also exhibit clear resemblances to dwellings or palaces, demonstrating that the tomb owners, or those who buried them, believed that the pleasures of life could be enjoyed after death.[397] Additionally, the transition to stone, brick, and rock-cut tombs indicates a desire to preserve the tombs' contents, including the tomb owner, strongly implying that people

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[393] Potts 2012: 3.

[394] Section 2.4; Chapter Four below.

[395] Rawson 1999a: 55.

[396] See Section 3.3.1 above; Section 2.2.1 and note 211 in Chapter Two.

[397] There had been a long-term belief in the afterlife that extended the lives that people had enjoyed to some extent as mentioned in Section 3.3.1, especially the elite, though this concept seems to have been reinforced in the Han dynasty as more archaeological evidence from Han tombs strongly suggest. See Rawson *et al.* 2011: 190–3; Qi Dongfang 2015; see also Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

wished to attain some kind of eternal state or immortality. It is essential, however, to stress that the evidence shows that an afterlife spent *in* the tomb was the dominant idea. It is possible that people hoped that the tomb would become a home in an immortal realm or land, or that immortal lands would become accessible from the tomb. As previously mentioned, it is difficult to give a definitive explanation, and the functions of the tombs as residences or the cosmos may not have been exclusive,[398] but this issue is explored further in the following chapters.[399]

The developments in burial practices seen in the Han dynasty were the outcome of various social changes pertaining to ideology, bureaucracy, and foreign relations, as well as to access to materials, technologies, and aesthetic trends. Compared with the pre-Han period, the tombs came to provide new spaces in which layout and ornamentation were used to express ideas and desires within the context of the contemporary cosmic scheme. The tomb thus functioned as an abstract representation of the cosmos and simultaneously as a mirror of life in the human realm. Now that the ideological background underpinning the construction of tombs has been established, the following chapters explore how people tried to realise the ideal afterlife in the tomb space through visual representations and other parts of the burial assemblage. In this way, we draw nearer to understanding the nature of auspiciousness—protection, immortality, or a happy afterlife etc.—as perceived by the people of the Han dynasty.

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[398] Professor Zhefeng Yang, School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University, and Professor Jessica Rawson, pers. comm. Also, see the opening paragraphs of Section 3.3.3 and notes 357–9 above.

[399] Sections 4.4, 5.3.2, 5.5, 6.1, and 6.3.3.

CHAPTER 4
Creating an auspicious landscape below ground: paintings and engravings

4.1. Introduction

In the same way that the meaning of artwork changes once the gallery guard has turned out the light at the end of the day,[400] so did the significance of the tomb interior and any decorated surfaces change after the tomb builders had sealed the entrance. Why did the ancient Chinese, from the Warring States period at the latest, put such effort into depicting specific motifs when they knew that the images were destined for darkness, and how does this reflect the early Chinese concepts of the afterlife previously explored in Chapters Two and Three? How and why did people create and organise motifs related to auspiciousness? What did these motifs mean, and who was intended to see them?

In answering the questions above, this chapter focuses on highly decorated Han dynasty tombs with murals and carvings, mainly located in the two Han capital areas: Chang'an and Luoyang. The most frequently painted motifs and stone engravings, where necessary, are examined to trace the development of certain motifs and their depictions on different materials.[401] Tombs in areas within the metropolitan scene, such

[400] Hatt and Klonk 2006: 1–2.

[401] The two capital areas are also the main centres of stone-relief tombs. For the distribution of these tombs and decorated tombs in other parts of China during the Han dynasty, see Section 3.2 and He Xilin 2001: 69–70.

as Hunan Province, will also be mentioned, as some influences from these areas can be observed in the regions surrounding the capitals. Though the concept of auspiciousness has its origin in beliefs and thoughts that developed before the Zhou dynasty, as shown in Chapter Two, archaeological discoveries suggest that it was not until the Western Han dynasty that certain motifs were commonly depicted in tombs for the benefit of tomb owners and their families. The developmental trends in painted and carved auspicious ornament in tombs are explored in this chapter, and their meanings and potential auspiciousness will be interpreted through the lens of cosmological and religious ideas that dominated beliefs at the time. The following two chapters discuss ornament on tomb objects, which exhibit stronger western influences.[402] The tombs examined in this chapter reflect a synthesis of different regional traditions and beliefs, including western influences and adaptations. It is, however, important to remember that the motifs, and the beliefs they reference, were produced as the result of a strictly conforming social order but were not necessarily embraced by all people of the Han Empire.[403]

Through a series of observations on 30 decorated tombs from the two capital areas (Appendices 4.1 and 4.2), I categorise auspicious motifs into three main categories: cosmological motifs, narrative motifs, and homophonic motifs. The first two types are examined in detail, while the third usually appears together with the first two and more

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[402] See Chapters Five and Six. Rawson 2016: 371–80, and pers. comm.
[403] *Ibid*: 364.

often in Eastern Han dynasty stone or brick tombs, so is discussed only briefly.[404] Every ornamental motif has, firstly, its own physicality, inherited from its design, and, secondly, a set of changing ideas behind its physicality, which were influenced by the ideology and beliefs of society within the wider historical and political context. I analyse how the physical manifestations of these motifs (form and composition) were implemented to be auspicious, as well as how their role as auspicious motifs was constructed and transformed during the Han dynasty, since it is not possible to treat the four centuries of the Han dynasty as a single block.[405] This chapter cannot cover every potentially auspicious motif that appears in the decorated tombs; instead, it focuses on some most typical or common motifs that most clearly reflect developments in ideology and the relevant social context.[406]

4.1.1 Distribution of decorated tombs and the focus on the capital areas

Since early in the previous century, scholars have agreed that much can be learned about material culture, early artistic styles, and burial concepts from decorated tombs, but far more attention has been paid to stone and brick tombs rather than mural tombs. The reasons for this are that, first, during the Eastern Han dynasty, stone reliefs and carved

[404] Appendices 4.1 and 4.2 include sources on each decorated tomb and related collections outside China, such as the mural bricks in the British Museum.

[405] For a general introduction to the history of the Han dynasty, see Twitchett and Loewe 1986 vol. 1.

[406] The selection of the motifs was influenced by the frequency of depictions in decorated tombs and previous scholarship mentioned in this chapter.

bricks with auspicious motifs were ubiquitous, as a result of which the quantity of well-preserved archaeological remains for this period is much greater than for the Western Han.[407] Second, the number of Western Han textual records on auspicious motifs is far less abundant.[408] This chapter thus makes a concerted effort to utilise mural tombs dated to periods throughout the Han dynasty, of which up to 61 have been excavated since the 1950s.

All the tombs unearthed so far are located north of the Yangtze River. Though the earliest appear near Chang'an in Shaanxi Province,[409] most others are situated in or near the city of Luoyang in Henan Province. The tombs in Chang'an are relatively well-preserved; however, the number of mural tombs in Luoyang is the highest (Maps 4.1 and 4.2).[410] A sparser distribution of mural tombs and painted stone-relief tombs, mostly from the Eastern Han dynasty, is found in the east, north, and parts of western China,[411] but these will not be studied in detail due to space limitations.[412] It is important to be aware, however, that, although a regulated view of the cosmos formed

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[407] Shenzhen Bowuguan 1995; Li Falin 2000: 68–71.

[408] The most typical texts were the *Weft Prophecy Texts*, counterpart texts of the Confucian Classics for establishing prophesies. They were very popular during the Eastern Han dynasty, and they record more than one thousand auspicious motifs. For details, see Section 2.3 in Chapter Two; Van Ess 1999; Sun Yinggang 2014.

[409] Few tombs dating to before the Western Han dynasty have remains of paintings, and, among those that do, most are too small, scattered, or poorly preserved to be of use to interpreting mature burial concepts or ideas. Some scholars have argued that auspicious ornament emerged in the Central Plain area from the mid to late Western Han dynasty, after which they appeared in other areas. See Chen Qian 2014: 61.

[410] He Xilin 2001: 69–70; Wang Xiaoyang 2010: 4; Chuang Hui-chih 2013: 149.

[411] Huang Peixian 2008: 30–2.

[412] A comprehensive understanding of mural tombs in the Han dynasty cannot be achieved without knowing the overall development of Han dynasty tombs, which are outlined in Chapter Three of this thesis. See also Wang Xiaoyang 2010: 5.

in the Han dynasty,[413] local traditions and beliefs survived in different parts of China, and some were imported to the capital areas, such as the southern Chu motif of constellations (Map 3.1).[414]

The numbers and varieties of tombs in the two capital areas are remarkable compared to other areas. They comprise all three ranks of tombs documented for the Han dynasty: royal tombs for kings of the feudal kingdoms; elite tombs for high-ranking individuals like marquises; and ordinary tombs.[415] The following discussion examines how different motifs were organised within the different tomb contexts and how tomb structures affected the display of the ornament.[416] This is used to explore the senses in which various motifs were considered auspicious, in addition to how the motifs' meanings developed alongside the concept of auspiciousness.

4.2. Orientation in space and time: illustrations of the cosmos

This section examines one of the most important types of motifs that were believed to be closely correlated with earthly events, cosmic motifs (*tiantu* 天圖).[417]

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[413] See Section 2.2 of this thesis.

[414] The motif of constellations that appear in most mural tombs in both the Chang'an and Luoyang areas originated from the mythologies and stories about the universe and various deities from the Chu area, i.e. the Changsha Kingdom, along the Yangtze River (Map 3.1). Pre-Han bamboo strips and silk texts detailing star charts, almanacs, omens, charms, and incantations etc. have been excavated here, as well as early Han textual and pictorial depictions of constellations from Mawangdui—the illustrated silk text of *Divination by Astrological and Meteorological Phenomena* (Figure 2.7)—have been excavated. See Sections 1.1.3 and 2.3 of this thesis. See also *Jianghan kaogu* 2008; Rawson 1984: 233; Rawson 1999a: 14; Powers and Tsiang 2016: 161–200.

[415] The three tomb ranks do not include imperial tombs also located in the capital areas, none of which has been excavated. See Li Hong 2006; Potts 2012: 5. For a more detailed discussion, see Section 3.2.

[416] *Ibid*; Qi Dongfang 2015: 31.

[417] *Tiantu* can also be translated as 'heavenly charts' or 'celestial charts'. Tseng 2011: 166–70.

In the Han dynasty, natural phenomena were observed meticulously. Major human affairs were thought to parallel the appearance of these phenomena, and the view that Heaven caused them was widespread in society; they were the manifestation of a correlation between heavenly and earthly events.[418] This section explores the meanings of cosmic motifs and their agency in realising cosmic order within tombs, arguing that, in combination with the tomb structures, the motifs served to form auspicious underground spaces. What 'auspiciousness' entailed exactly—immortality, longevity, or peace and prosperity for the family—is also investigated with reference to both textual and archaeological evidence.

The Han dynasty unified separate artistic and ornamental motifs into an integrated system of visual signs based on the concept of a correlative, unified cosmological system.[419] The homogenising effects of the Qin dynasty's unifying policies lasted so long that both the motifs and cosmological theories underpinning them were inherited by the subsequent Han dynasty.[420] The Han further developed this visual system, which they regarded as one of the most effective ways to interact with and gain benefits from

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[418] Auspiciousness and harmony were believed to be attainable when the cosmos operated on a normal cycle, whilst inauspiciousness or disaster occurred if the cycle was disrupted. See Rawson 2003: 20, and Section 2.2.2 in Chapter Two of the thesis.

[419] For detailed discussion on the unification and the ideological background of the Qin and Han dynasties, see Section 2.2.2 and Rawson 2000: 134. However, as mentioned in Section 4.1, there was no absolute consistency. Such a system was formulated gradually. See more discussion below in Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

[420] Rawson 1999a: 8. The first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, was the first to build an underground cosmos in his mausoleum as recorded: '… Palaces and scenic towers for a hundred officials were constructed, and the tomb was filled with rare artefacts and wonderful treasures… Mercury was used to simulate the hundred rivers, the Yangtze and Yellow River, and the great sea, and set to flow mechanically. Above were representations of the heavenly constellations; below, the features of the land…' 宮觀、百官、奇器、珍怪，徙臧滿之。……以水銀為百川江河大海，機相灌輸，上具天文，下具地理。…… *Shi ji*, 6.134; Watson 1971 vol. 2: 63.

the cosmos.[421] I argue that the system acted as a complete miniature cosmos, within which the principal features were: cosmological beings, including the Four Deities (*Sishen* 四神), which were animals that each symbolised one of the cardinal directions;[422] the sun, the moon, and the creatures associated with them (birds, crows, toads, and hares); constellations;[423] and cloud swirls. The movement of the cosmos was depicted visually using both observable celestial phenomena and mythical creatures, which each represented an equivalent unknown power or rule in the universe.[424]

Cosmic motifs were used frequently on mural paintings in the Western Han dynasty, often on those in the main tomb chambers. However, they were more simplified in the Eastern Han, when narrative motifs, such as human-like deities, grew more popular. This section begins with an examination of the Tombs of the Kings of Liang State (*Han Liang wang muqun* 漢梁王墓群) in Central China (Maps 3.1 and 4.3), as the earliest and one of the finest mural paintings in China is located here. An introduction to the tombs and their murals is followed by a discussion of the significance of the motifs of mythical creatures and cloud swirls.

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421 Wang Yanshou 王延壽 (c. AD 140–165), *Rhapsody on the Hall of Numinous Brilliance* (*Lu Lingguang dian fu* 魯靈光殿賦), see Fei Zhengang *et al.* 2005: 850; also see Poo Mu-chou 1998: 84–92; Rawson 2000: 134–43.

422 The Four Deities usually refer to the dragon, the phoenix, the tiger, and the tortoise. But their representations were not consistent throughout the Han dynasty. See Ni Run'an 1999: 83–91; Section 4.2.1.

423 Major 1993: 47; Loewe 1994b: 127–33; Rawson 1999a: 13.

424 Wu 2010: 149–51. All the above-mentioned features are not exclusive, but it is clearer to explain them in independent sections. The inter-relations are also analysed. See Sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.3.

Other common cosmological motifs, such as the sun, moon, and constellations, are missing from the Tombs of the Kings of Liang State,[425] so mural tombs in Chang'an and Luoyang are also examined and their possible relationship to the Liang State tombs discussed. Archaeological reports are available for all sites discussed here, so there is no need to describe them in detail. A gazetteer of these sites, the auspicious motifs, and the locations of the motifs in the tombs are provided in Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.[426]

4.2.1 **Origins of cosmological motifs and their first appearance in tomb murals**

The feudal kingdom of Liang was one of the largest fiefs governed by members of the imperial Liu clan in Western Han China.[427] The kingdom not only had geographical and political importance,[428] but also historical significance.[429] The Tombs of the Kings of Liang State is the biggest and earliest complex of all Han royal tomb groups, covering approximately 10 km² in the area of Mangdang 芒碭 Mountain in Yongcheng, Henan Province.[430] Most tombs are comparatively well-preserved, with

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[425] Some scholars argue that the missing of the cosmological motifs like the sun and the moon that commonly seen after mid-Western Han tombs may have been due to the date of the Shiyuan Mural tomb back to early Han, and that was when the Chu influences including favouring mythical creatures was rather strong. The origin of the establisher of Han dynasty, emperor Gaozu, was from Pengcheng in Jiangsu Province, which was a place within the territory of Chu in the Zhou dynasty. See Section 3.2; *Shi ji*, 8.195; Zheng Shubin 2016: 429. Furthermore, although the preserved parts of the Shiyuan mural appear to be rather complete and in good status, the Shiyuan mural tomb has been looted, and thus the original full picture of the murals are unclear. Beijing 2001: 84 and 115; Section 4.2.1 below.

[426] Wang Xiaoyang 2010: 42–51.

[427] For the role of kings, see Section 3.2 of this thesis and *Han shu*, 14.393–4; Liu Yan 2017: 1592–3.

[428] *Shi ji*, 58.1563–76.

[429] For details, see Zheng Qingsen 2001: 64–70.

[430] Twenty-two tombs have been excavated. See Mangdang Shan 2015–16.

more than 20,000 tomb objects discovered.[431] The earliest horizontal and multi-chambered rock-cut tombs, which greatly influenced Chinese burial practice and decorations, are also found here.[432]

The earliest tomb in China with mural paintings known to date is located in the south-east part of the area, the Shiyuan tomb of King Gong of Liang (Map 4.3).[433] A total of 24.92 m² of murals decorate the ceiling, the south wall, and the west wall near the entrance (Figure 4.1).[434] The mural looked at in detail in this section is on the ceiling, which is well-preserved, depicting a dragon flanked by a tiger, a phoenix, and a 'monster' (*guaishou* 怪獸),[435] with other auspicious motifs, including cloud swirls, fungi,[436] and *bi*-discs (Figure 4.2). These motifs were painted in white, black, green, and reddish colours on a base layer of red.[437] This section focuses on the mythical creatures and cloud swirl motifs, whereas the *bi*-discs on the tomb mural's borders are also discussed in Chapter Five, together with the tomb objects.[438]

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[431] Wang Liangtian 1996: 103–6; Beijing 2001: 58.

[432] Many tombs in the group represent the earliest large-scale rock-cut tombs from the Han dynasty. From the mid to late Western Han dynasty, horizontal-structured tombs were the most widely used in China. See Section 3.2; Wu 1995: 127–42; Rawson 1999a: 8. There are two kinds of rock-cut tombs in the mausoleum: seven stone-chambered rock-cut tombs, including the tomb of King Xiao 孝 of Liang, and ten rock-cut horizontal tombs, including the Shiyuan mural tomb, one of the main cases studied in this chapter. Others are smaller pit tombs. Wang Liangtian 2006: 27.

[433] The tomb was excavated in 1987 and 1988. *Zhongyuan wenwu* 1990: 32. Also see Section 3.3.3.

[434] The original murals might have covered 30 m². The coloured mural paintings on the south and west walls are very fragmented and badly preserved. All the murals are now in the Henan Provincial Museum. Beijing 2001: 115 and 117–20.

[435] Scholars' views on the identity of the creature on the left side of the mural differ. The word *guaishou* used in the report is an objective term. The report does not name the whole painting, only describing it as a 'mural painting' (*bihua* 壁畫). *Ibid*: 115.

[436] Welch 2008: 50.

[437] For the materiality and style of the mural painting, see Li Falin 2000: 119–32; *Ibid*: 115 and 120.

[438] Beijing 2001: 117–9. The *bi*-discs later became a popular motif on pictorial stones and bricks

Mythical creatures and their functions

The curved dragon in the centre of the Shiyuan tomb painting brings together all the essential features of a dragon as defined in ancient Chinese texts: horns, wings, legs and scales (Figure 4.2).[439] Considered to be one of the most important 'auspicious creatures' (*ruishou* 瑞獸) in China, the motif of the dragon can be traced back to 6,000 years ago.[440] Apart from its use as an ornamental motif representing power and dignity in imperial architecture and tombs since the Han dynasty,[441] the dragon was auspicious, as it was believed to help guide the soul up to the immortal land.[442] In tombs such as the Shaogou Mural Tomb no. 61 in Luoyang, and the Xi'an Jiaotong University (Xi'an Jiaotong Daxue 西安交通大學) Mural Tomb, the image of a figure riding on a dragon through the skies was depicted (Figure 4.3),[443] which seems to refer to the legend of the Yellow Emperor's ascent to Heaven on a dragon, as recorded in the 'Treatise of the Offerings for Heaven and Earth' (*feng shan shu* 封禪書) chapter of *Records of the*

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in Henan and western Shandong Province. Yan Genqi *et al.* 1991; Beijing 2001: 117. This is also a motif that is believed by some scholars to represent the reach of the soul to the immortal lands in the Han dynasty. See Wu 2015: 228–36. A detailed discussion is presented in Chapter Five of this thesis.

[439] For a detailed study of the dragon in ancient China, see Xu Naixiang *et al.* 1988; Wen Yiduo 2006: 25–6.

[440] The dragon was an imaginary and mysterious being using the characteristics of tigers, snakes, fish, and birds. The earliest archaeological evidence for a dragon is the design inlaid with shells found in Puyang 濮陽 City in Henan Province, dating to the Neolithic Yangshao 仰韶 culture (c. 5000–3000 BC). Li Jian *et al.* 1998: 100.

[441] *San fu huang tu*, vol. 3; 'The Basic Annals of Emperor Gaozu' (*Gaozu benji* 高祖本紀) in *Records of the Grand Historian* records that the first emperor of the Han dynasty, Gaozu, was born after his mother Liu Yun 劉媪 met a dragon. See *Shi ji*, 8.195; Li Jian *et al.* 1998: 100–1. For more discussion and a review of previous scholarship, see Tseng 2011: 152–65.

[442] Xu Naixiang *et al.* 1988: 16; Li Falin 2000: 227; Wei Na 2004: 12–4; Yan Genqi and Ou Shaojuan 2006: 51; Liu Lele 2017: 42–54.

[443] *Kaogu* 1991: 713–21; Rawson 1999a: 13–4. The tomb owner rode on a phoenix in Bu Qianqiu 卜千秋 tomb. See *Wenwu* 1977a: 9.

Grand Historian.[444]

However, this may not be the only interpretation for the dragon, as the dragon in the tomb at Shiyuan has no rider. This shows that the whole mural needs to be considered to understand the meanings and social context of the dragon motif, as well as motifs of other mythical creatures. The auspicious quality of ornamental motifs developed gradually, as opposed to forming overnight. The dragon in the Shiyuan mural is surrounded by a tiger and a phoenix, and the dragon's tongue is tied to another creature with a duck's mouth and fish's tail (Figure 4.2). There has been ongoing debate regarding the identification of the last creature.[445] In the Western Han texts, the *Huainanzi* and *Records of the Grand Historian*, the Four Deities were described as protectors associated with the four directions—the azure dragon (*qinglong* 青龙) was east, the white tiger (*baihu* 白虎) was west, the vermillion bird (*zhuque* 朱雀) was south, and the black tortoise (*xuanwu* 玄武) was north[446]—but the creatures in the Shiyuan mural do not match all four directional creatures, nor are they positioned in the right directions as the texts describe. The four mythical creatures in the mural are thus more likely to be an early artistic form of the Four Deities, potentially from when their significance as good omens had just been established, as the tomb's construction

[444] *Shi ji*, 28. 996–7 and 1002; Beijing 2001: 116; Wu 2015: 232; Section 3.3.2.

[445] It does not seem to be the tortoise, which is one of the Four Deities, i.e. one of the four directional animals. For an overview of scholarship and discussions on the identification of this creature, see Chen Qian 2014: 60–73.

[446] *Huainanzi*, 15; *Shi ji*, 27.934–8. For the dates and relevance of these texts to the ideology of auspiciousness, see Sections 1.2.2 and 2.2.2. Although motifs of the dragon, tiger, phoenix, tortoise, or similar images are seen in mural tombs throughout the Western Han dynasty, none of the tombs has the complete Four Deities set until the Xin dynasty tomb of Jinguyuan 金谷園 (Appendix 4.2).

occurred around the time when the above-mentioned texts detailing the Four Deities' roles were written.[447]

Support for the idea that the creatures at Shiyuan were early forms of the Four Deities comes from other aspects of the mural. The exact origin of the content needs further study, but there is scholarly consensus that the painting's colours, artistic styles and motifs were potentially derived from ornament on pre-Han artefacts such as lacquerware, including the ornament seen on a Warring States period lacquer clothing box decorated with a dragon, a tiger, cloud motifs and stars etc. from the tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng (Figure 4.4).[448] Therefore, the mural may have had a similar function to motifs on other tomb objects and coffins, which represented an ideal cosmos, with the mythical creatures scaring away bad spirits and guarding the tomb. Within this interpretation, the exact appearance of the creatures does not seem to have been a priority.[449]

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[447] The Four Deities, also called *siling* 四靈, mentioned in the *Book of Rites* are a group of auspicious deities with independent mythological origins. Their appearances are reported in ancient narratives quite often, where they were interpreted as good omens bringing fortune and fulfilling wishes. *Li ji*, 3.81. For the list of related records, see Xu Tianlin's 徐天麟 (fl. c. AD 1127–1279)'s record of Western Han history, regulations, and rituals finished c. AD 1211, *Official Records of the Western Han* (*Xi Han huiyao* 西漢會要), *Xi Han huiyao*, 29–30.261–85; Wong Pui Yin 2006: 142 and 443. For more detailed research, see Ni Run'an 1999: 86; Zheng Yan 2005: 56–74.

[448] There has also been discussion on the scientific astronomical meanings of the Four Deities, which is another big topic and not investigated in the thesis. See Feng Shi 2015a and 2015b: 347–458; Cullen 2018. Coffins and objects decorated with similar cosmic motifs have been discovered in other Han dynasty tombs. See He Xilin 2002: 32; Wei Na 2004: 63–4. Among the areas outside the Yellow River centres, as discussed in Section 3.2, the states of Chu and Changsha along the Yangtze River were especially rich in culture, from which the Han tombs borrowed many distinctive features. Rawson 1999a: 7; Section 3.2. For the tombs of Shazitang 砂子塘 and Mawangdui from these areas, see *Wenwu* 1963; Beijing 1989 vol. 2: pls. 121 and 123; He Xilin 2001: 14–5.

[449] This is similar to motifs in the early Han tomb of Mawangdui, mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis. For more details, see Beijing 1973 vol. 1: 38. For textual evidence of such cosmic motifs guarding the tombs, see Qu Yuan, 'Nine Songs' (*Jiu ge* 九歌) and 'Far-off Journey' in *Songs of Chu*. *Chu ci*, 34–72 and 160–75; Hawkes 1985: 95–121 and 191–202.

It was not until the Xin and Eastern Han dynasties that the directional roles of the dragon, phoenix, tiger, and tortoise, in addition to their auspicious significance of peace and prosperity, are considered to have been finally established and widely adopted.[450] But it was also from the Xin dynasty onwards that the complete Four Deities no longer appeared as a common motif on tomb murals in the capital areas (Appendices 4.1 and 4.2); the dieties were more frequently depicted separately and more often seen on objects like bronze mirrors found outside the capital areas (Figure 4.5). This was probably due to the political turmoil at the end of the Western Han dynasty. Whilst the Four Deities were well-established throughout the Empire as auspicious symbols that predicted peace and good governance by this time, this led to a desire among the people to acquire objects decorated with these motifs, which, however, did not necessarily require all four creatures to be represented.[451] At the same time, the use of the Four Deities as auspicious political omens potentially seemed to have become more limited in the capital, the Empire's political and military centre, in order to prevent those against the government from using the motifs to support a change in government and cause instability.[452]

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[450] Ni Ru'an 1999: 87–8. As Schuyler Cammann argues 'If these symbols [of the four cardinal directions] were not deliberately chosen to express Yin-Yang ideas, they were at least eminently suited to do so.' Cammann 1987: 108. See also Feng Shi 2005a; Wong Pui Yin 2006: 157.

[451] A large number of bronze mirrors carved with inscriptions about the Four Deities bringing order and general auspiciousness (*xiang* 祥) produced from the Eastern Han dynasty onwards have been discovered. Kalinowski 1998–99: 125–202; Tseng 2004: 205–6; Ciarla 2011: 79.

[452] For a detailed account on the increasing depictions on tomb murals of the Four Deities in separate as well as a relatively small number in full forms outside the capital area and the decrease in capital Luoyang after the Xin Dynasty, see Huang Minglan and Guo Yinqiang 1996; Ni Run'an 1999: 86–7.

Cloud swirls and the affirmation of auspicious space

Encircling the dragon in the Shiyuan mural are clouds (Figure 4.2), which can be seen very often in Han dynasty works, either as a major motif or as decoration in the background or on the border of a painting or object (Appendices 4.1 and 4.2).[453] However, not much scholarly attention has been paid to this almost ubiquitous motif.[454] There appears to be an assumption that little can be understood from it, and scholars seem to presume *a priori* that it is generally auspicious.[455] However, I propose here that the clouds, or the cloud swirls,[456] were important in two aspects: first, the motif may have had a sophisticated origin from regions to the west in the pre-Han period; second, it was integral to the ornamental system as both a long-lasting decorative motif and a widely-recognised symbol for good fortune and repelling bad spirits.[457]

As discussed in previous chapters, there was the widespread philosophical concept

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[453] Pan Pan 2016: 283–4. For detailed discussion, see Section 5.3.2 of the thesis.

[454] For a list of different forms of cloud motif, see Qu Jianwen *et al.* 2008: 915. Lothar Ledderose discusses the production and possible origin of interlaced motifs on bronzes, which had an impact on later ornament, in Ledderose 2000: 41–3; Wu Hung has studied the motif of clouds and its development in the Han dynasty. See Wu 1984: 46–54.

[455] People generally consider the motif to be a continuation of the geometric cloud motifs that appear on bronze vessels, or a product of the prevalence of the Qin–Han idea of immortality. See Sections 1.1.3, 1.2, and 2.3; Wu 1984: 46–54. Chinese scholars have done typological studies on the Qin- and Han-dynasty cloud motifs depicted on materials such as tiles and bricks, but deeper analysis remains lacking. For example, see Chen Xiaoqiang 2010: 416–26.

[456] Some scholars, notably Jessica Rawson, have referred to the cloud motifs as ‘cloud scrolls’ to link the Chinese motif with the leaf scrolls of European ornament. However, the cloud motif in Han China may have been related to the notion of *qi* or vital energy, and the artistic style is not necessarily scrolling but more fluid, as is mentioned in Section 1.1.3. Therefore, ‘swirl’ is used to describe the clouds here to acknowledge a possible western origin as well as the local Han ideological influence on the motif’s design. Rawson 2016: 380; Dr Frances Wood, sinologue and former curator to the British Library's Chinese collections, pers. comm.

[457] This has been suggested but not necessarily sufficiently developed by scholars including Jessica Rawson and Wu Hung. See Wu 1984: 46–8; Rawson 2016: 380–1.

of *qi* in the pre-Qin period, which symbolised the vitality inherent in the cosmos and was gradually visualised as cloud swirls in the Qin–Han period. This development seems to have coincided with the increasingly popular pursuit of immortality among the Qin and Han emperors.[458] Depictions of clouds were recorded in the *Records of the Grand Historian* as having helped the Han emperor Wudi to communicate with immortals and deities, as well as protecting people from devils and helping them to reach the deities.[459] This motif is also seen on the mural fragments in the late second-century BC tomb of the King of Nanyue in Guangzhou,[460] which corresponds to the record in the *Book of the Later Han*:

> The feudal lords, princesses, and royals all use camphor coffins, [and the coffins are put in] caves decorated with vermilion and painted with the cloud swirls.[461]

This shows that the Han dynasty cloud swirls were most likely first painted on murals in the tombs of high-ranking individuals.[462] How, then, did the concept of cosmic vitality in the form of *qi* come to be illustrated? Few Chinese scholars have researched

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[458] See *Shi ji*, 12.296 and 43.1307; Section 2.2 of the thesis; Wu 1984: 47.

[459] Ban Gu recorded in the *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu of Han* (*Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳) dozens of Wudi's visits to the place of the Queen Mother of the West, and the cloud, or more specifically purple cloud (*zi yun* 紫雲), was used as the vehicle; Wu 1984: 47–8.

[460] Beijing 1991a vol. 1: 28 and vol. 2: pl. I; Rawson 1999a: 13–4; Lin 2012a.

[461] 諸侯王、公主、貴人皆樟棺，洞朱，雲氣畫。 'Etiquette (lower)' (*Yi li* (*xia*) 儀禮(下)), *Hou han shu*, 3152.

[462] This is also proposed by the excavator of the Shiyuan tomb. See the report, Beijing 2001: 117. For more similar records and a detailed history, see Loewe 1988b: 505. But more archaeological evidence is needed to reach an assured conclusion as no imperial tomb in the Han dynasty has been excavated.

the pictorial origin of cloud swirls, and most consider them to have developed from geometrical curves in the background or borders of pre-Han bronzes, pottery, and jades, with their primary function being to set off other motifs (Figure 4.6).[463] However, it is difficult to find enough evidence to show that it has anything to do with the cloud motif prevalent in the Han dynasty, and the encircling scheme may only be understood as having foreshadowed the Han cloud swirls. A more acceptable explanation, as first pointed out by Esther Jacobson-Tepfer, is that the cloud motif very much resemble the Hellenistic Western Asian palmette designs, which were possibly adopted by the people of the Han from groups in Siberia.[464] This is feasible, particularly as communication between China and Western Asia started long before the Han dynasty, and other western-style motifs can be seen on many tomb objects.[465] The Han then imitated aspects of the palmette scrolls and adapted them for their own purposes, breaking off the stems of the foliage and adding calligraphic curls, hooks, mythical creatures instead of the palmette's leaves.[466] With no historical records that describe why the clouds were visualised the way they were, it can only be assumed that Chinese concepts of auspiciousness were combined with a transplanted western ornamental design.

The cloud swirls were also highly significant in the way that they are not separable from the whole picture (Figure 4.2) and are an essential component of the painting;

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[463] Qu Jianwen *et al.* 2008: 915–6.
[464] Jacobson-Tepfer 1985: 133–80.
[465] Rawson 2016. See also the discussions in Sections 5.3.2, 5.4.1 and 6.2.2 of this thesis.
[466] Ledderose 2000: 41–3; Lin 2012a: 30–4; Rawson 2016: 380.

without them, the auspiciousness of the painting would be attenuated.[467] The cloud swirls serve to enhance the main motifs, like the mythical creatures in the Shiyuan mural, which become fully visible when combined with the highly decorative cloud. At the same time, the mythical creatures are also intensely intermingled with the cloud swirls, and each motif in this picture is recognisable only when viewed from up close.[468] This means that the cloud swirls can be regarded as one of the composition's main motifs,[469] i.e. apart from providing a background for other motifs, they serve the important function of affirming a certain space to be auspicious.[470] The cloud swirls not only represent the cloud itself, but also the *qi* of the cosmos, which emphasised the tomb to be an auspicious space.[471]

The Shiyuan mural is just one of many depictions favoured in the Han dynasty that shows the manifestation of an auspicious motif combining both cosmological beings and cloud swirls. Though there is nearly a half-century gap between this very first mural and other mural tombs from the Western Han dynasty based upon current archaeological discoveries,[472] the importance and popularity of cloud swirls as one of the main auspicious motifs, in addition to their strong decorative character, throughout

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[467] See also Figures 1.11 and 1.14; Sections 5.4.1 and 6.3.2.
[468] Koerner 1985: 32; Huang Nengfu and Chen Juanjuan 1995: 23; Wu 2015: 230.
[469] Sun Ji 1982: 63–9; Rawson 2016: 380.
[470] Koerner 1985: 32 and 35; He Xilin 2001: 14–5.
[471] As outlined in Section 1.1.2 in Chapter One, the Han believed that depicted motifs had the same efficacy as the phenomena they represented. Also see Ge Zhaoguang 1998: 87.
[472] Other tombs that feature some of the earliest murals in the Western Han were built around 48–47 BC, such as the Shaogou Mural Tomb no. 61, Bu Qianqiu, and Qianjingtou 淺井頭. See Appendix 4.2. For more possible relationship between the tomb at Shiyuan and later mural tombs in ancient China, see Zheng Yan 2005: 60–70; more research may be conducted with the increase in new discoveries.

the Han dynasty will be further demonstrated in the next two chapters based on the many excavated objects that feature it.

4.2.2 The sun, the moon, and the constellations: auspiciousness in spatial design

From the mid to late Western Han dynasty, a richer variety of more concrete cosmic motifs, with depictions of the sun, the moon, and the constellations[473] appeared in tombs such as Xi'an Jiaotong University Mural Tomb and Shaogou Mural Tomb no. 61 in Luoyang, though historical texts suggest earlier appearances dated to the third century BC.[474] Why were cosmological motifs of the sun, the moon, and constellations depicted? What were the meanings behind them?[475]

Shaogou Tomb no. 61 is one of very few tombs to have been preserved completely, thus its murals facilitate answering the above questions. Cosmic motifs are represented on the ceiling (Figure 4.7),[476] and they have been recognised since the last century by scholars such as Xia Nai and Li Falin.[477] On the eastern side—on the right in Figure

[473] See Appendices 4.1 and 4.2; Zheng Yan 2005: 65; Chuang Hui-chih 2014: 5–8.

[474] Sima Qian wrote about the models of palaces that the first emperor Qin Shi Huang built at Xianyang 咸陽 (now Xi'an), the capital of the Qin dynasty, and similar ones in his mausoleum. *Shi ji*, 6.125, 134; Watson 1971 vol. 1: 45 and 63; Rawson 1999a: 13.

[475] More detailed celestial charts that are more scientific in nature and include ancient studies on astronomy are not discussed in this thesis as mentioned in Section 4.2.1. For details, see Feng Shi 2005b; Tseng 2011.

[476] *Kaogu xuebao* 1964: 112–3.

[477] Xia Nai proposed that these patterns were only partially scientific and more mythological or symbolically cosmic. For details, see Xia Nai 1965: 80–90; Li Falin suggests that the cosmic motif actually embodies the individual lodges of the 28 lunar lodges and other constellations, see Li Falin 1986: 153–62; and some propose that the constellations were first visualised in the form of the Four Deities. For an outline of previous scholarship on this topic, see Wang Xiaoyang 2010: 9.

4.7—at the beginning of the painting is a red sun with a black bird flying across it,[478] and a moon with a green toad and a hare is on the western side. Although degradation of the mural has made these two animals difficult to observe in photographs, they are positioned on the image of the moon according to the excavators.[479] The entire tomb ceiling was painted to depict a realm full of cosmological beings. One or another of the Four Deities is seen depicted along with the sun, the moon and constellations on top of the trapezoidal beam right under the ceiling as part of the whole cosmic realm or Heaven (Figure 4.3 and Appendix 4.2).[480] As discussed in the previous chapter, people in the Han period were intensively preoccupied with the idea of immortality,[481] and many researchers propose that these cosmological beings collectively represented the immortal land, the place to which the tomb owner expected to ascend.[482] However, the concept of immortality *xian* was more closely associated with distant mountains, where the immortals were thought to reside.[483] This does not necessarily match the realm depicted on the tomb mural, but is visualised using other motifs, as is discussed in the

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[478] For the related textual reference, see 'The Classic of the Great Wilderness: The South' (*Dahuang nan jing* 大荒南經) chapter in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*. The Chinese text is available in *Shanhaijing*, 15.213–20, whilst an English translation is available in Birrell 1999: 167–70.

[479] *Kaogu xuebao* 1964: 113.

[480] Tseng 2011: 188–92.

[481] Wu 1984: 47; Section 3.3.2 of this thesis.

[482] He Xilin 2000: 70–8; Pan Pan 2016: 267.

[483] See Section 3.3.2. The character *xian* 仙, translated here as 'immortality', is also defined as to be 'old and never-die, and move to live in the mountains' by Liu Xi 刘熙 (fl. c. AD 200) in his *Explanation of Names* (*Shi ming* 释名). The *Explanation of Names* is one of the earliest Chinese dictionaries, and it records old Chinese language and the meanings of characters as understood in the Han dynasty. See *Shi ming*, 3.61. For the importance of the *Explanation of Names*, see Miller 1993: 424–8. The contemporary definition of *xian* is similar, which defines the term as referring to those with special abilities, who can live forever and not die. See *Xinhua zidian* 2020.

next section.[484]

In the case of the ceiling mural in Shaogou Mural Tomb no. 61, it is more certain that, based on the textual evidence outlined in Chapters One and Two, the sun and the moon were very likely representations of yin and yang—the forces of the cosmos—and painting them in the tomb was believed to articulate their essence, which served to achieve cosmic balance.[485] Yin and yang were believed to end primordial chaos and bring the world into a dualistic order, as prominently mentioned in the *Huainanzi*.[486]

Depicting accurate celestial bodies or scientific maps was not a priority during the Han period,[487] a trend exemplified by the number of Eastern Han representations of constellations that are particularly difficult to identify.[488] The Han priority was to visualise a balanced cosmos wherein the two polar forces of yin and yang were spatial intertwined and the constellations were also present.[489]

Another feature of the cosmos that Tomb no. 61 alludes to is the calendrical cycle, indicated by the number 12. The stellar scene on the painting is composed of 12 bricks, which corresponds to the 12 months, called 'monthly ordinances' (*yueling* 月令), described in contemporary almanacs. The almanacs describe the natural seasonal

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[484] Xin Lixiang 2000: 59–63; Yang Xiaohong 2006: 41–6; Section 4.3.2.

[485] Section 2.2.1; *Huainanzi*, 3.49–53; *Han shu*, vol. 30; Wu 2010: 153. Japanese scholar Hayashi Minao also argues that the depictions of the sun and moon were not just imitations of the sun and moon that people saw daily. See Hayashi Minao 1999.

[486] See *Huainanzi*, 1.2–3; Wang Zhongshu 1981: 449–58; Li Zehou 1999 vol. 1: 146, 151 and 165–6.

[487] Chuang argues this in detail in her 2014 article. See Chuang Hui-chih 2014: 1 and 39–42.

[488] Some depicted constellations were quite accurate according to people's knowledge by then as seen in some tombs in mid-late Western Han dynasty. Xi'an 1991: 24–47. For the development and changes in form of the cosmic motifs throughout the Han dynasty, see Chuang Hui-chih2014.

[489] Fei Zhengang *et al.* 2005: 850. Feng Shi 2005a; Section 2.2 of this thesis.

changes and prescribes appropriate human activities for each of the 12 months.[490] This, once again, emphasises the popularity of correlative cosmology in the Han dynasty, as even small details of the tomb's structure express some aspect of the cyclic nature of time and the cosmos.[491]

But what made the depictions of cosmological beings actively auspicious? I argue that the dualistic forces of yin and yang, as well as time, were considered to be in balance once the motifs were allocated to certain locations within the tomb, i.e. the motifs' positions within the tomb activated their cosmological symbolism, at which point they were perceived as active agents that concentrated and thus emanated auspiciousness.

Support for this idea comes from broader developments in mid-Western Han tomb construction. This period represents an important shift in the development of Han tomb structure, with horizontal and chambered tombs generally replacing the vertical pit tombs common in the early Han period.[492] Tombs were built to imitate the architecture of above-ground buildings, and more space was made available for interior tomb furnishings, which provided greater room for the tomb owners and their families to express their hopes and beliefs.[493] An increasingly popular rule in tomb construction

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[490] See *Li ji*, 16.498–531 and 17.532–65; Section 2.2.2 of this thesis.

[491] During the Han period, the creation of a new calendrical system became closely tied to political legitimacy, i.e. it was important for the emperor to demonstrate that he had received the Mandate of Heaven by correctly aligning his rule with movements in the heavens. *Ibid*.

[492] Huang Peixian 2008: 174–84; Section 3.2 of the thesis.

[493] Qi Dongfang 2015: 30–1.

was that tombs should reflect the real world as understood at the time.[494] As a result, the appropriate position for cosmological motifs in mural tombs was on the ceilings, lintels or upper parts of the chamber walls, so the tomb owners were positioned looking up at them (Figures 4.3 and 4.8). Tomb chambers in decorated tombs typically have domed ceilings[495] and square walls, which accorded with the structure of the world as per the theory of a canopy-shaped Heaven (*gaitian shuo* 蓋天說) in ancient cosmological writings.[496] Even though there were differences in each tomb's structure, the widespread concept of a domed heaven covering a square earth appears consistently throughout the Han dynasty.[497] Thus, the upper parts of the tomb chamber became the focal area where cosmological motifs were positioned to replicate and invoke a cosmos within which the forces of yin, yang, and time were balanced (Figure 4.8).

Further evidence that certain motifs were rendered auspicious by their position in the tomb is found in the form of a ram carved in relief on a brick above of the door of the Shaogou Mural Tomb no. 61. The character for ram is *yang* 羊, which sounds similar to *xiang* 祥 (auspicious) and sometimes appears written in texts instead of *xiang*.[498] Dual linguistic and pictorial references to auspiciousness became popular in

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[494] Zheng Yan 2015: 68. The whole structure of some tombs was also like a house or apartment for the living. See Section 3.3.3.

[495] There were different forms of domed ceilings. See Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

[496] Texts that mention this theory are best represented by the chapter 'Treatise of Celestial Officials' (*Tianguan shu* 天官書) in *Records of the Grand Historian*, *Shi ji*, 27.933–74.

[497] More depictions of cosmic motifs on horizontal surfaces rather than domed ones appear from the late Western Han, which further demonstrates that depicting accurate celestial bodies scientifically was not a priority for Han people. Xi Qifeng 2009: 16–25.

[498] In some ancient Chinese texts, the character *yang* 羊 is substituted for *xiang* 祥 and means to be auspicious. *Shi ming*, chp. 24; *Kaogu xuebao* 1964: 114.

the late Western Han dynasty, and they probably mark the beginning of a concept of auspiciousness that was more closely linked to secular literature that arose in the Xin and Eastern Han dynasties.[499] The ram's position in the upper part of the tomb at Shaogou, together with the cosmological motifs, reinforces the idea that the upper part of the tomb embodied a principal or 'advanced'[500] auspicious context, with auspiciousness expressed through a combination of language, images, and ideas, all of which were complemented and reinforced by the tomb's structure.

Apart from their role in expressing cosmic balance and harmony, did the cosmological and linguistic motifs on tomb murals serve any other auspicious purpose? The following discussion shows the development of these motifs and their role in the tomb owner's ultimate purpose: achieving deathlessness or immortality.

4.3. Narrative Motifs

Tomb ornament in the Han dynasty was not all concerned with cosmic motifs. There are many lively depictions of daily life, historical stories, and deities with human features.[501] Archaeological reports and scholarly research often use the words 'plot' (*qingjie* 情節) or 'narrative' (*xushi* 叙事) to describe sets of motifs frequently seen on murals, such as the combination of the sun, moon, and associated creatures together. To be specific, the 'narrative motifs' here refer to creatures or figures usually with a

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[499] See the bronze mirrors mentioned in Section 4.2.1. This is also discussed in Section 4.3 on narrative sources. Figures of animals and various immortals began to dominate cosmic motifs in the Eastern Han dynasty. See Chuang Hui-chih 2014: 1–2.

[500] Meaning having an advantage or being more effective. Wu 2010: 153.

[501] Zhu Qingsheng 2010.

mythical or legendary background, and whose stories can be found in pre-Han and Han texts. This section focuses on some human-like deities who were widely worshipped by people of the Han, with the aim of exploring what the changes in their iconographic depictions meant.

4.3.1 **Fuxi and Nüwa: the embodiment of yin and yang**

The symbolic polarity of yin and yang was also embodied in the motifs of two legendary deities, Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧, who were sometimes depicted together with the sun and moon. These two deities had a mythical-literary origin. Later on, in the Eastern Han dynasty, they came to symbolise fertility, especially in the tombs of people of lower rank, with the wider spread of their stories in the society.[502]

The narrative of the two deities appeared first during the Warring States period. According to mythology, Fuxi was one of the five legendary ancestors and leaders of the human world, the god in the east.[503] He used the carpenter's square (*ju* 矩) to define the four ends of the cosmos and establish social order.[504] The deity Nüwa used stones to mend holes in the sky, contributed to the final formation of the cosmos.[505] In the Han dynasty, the first complete narrative of Nüwa's contribution to the cosmos'

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[502] In the Eastern Han dynasty, the legend of Nüwa using mud to create the human race was widely promulgated, and she was depicted, together with Fuxi, on numerous stones and bricks to symbolise fertility. For the later development of this motif and the account of related texts, see *Fengsu tongyi*, 601; Wen Yiduo 2006: 5–79; Wang Xiaoyang 2008: 9–12.

[503] Wang Xiaoyang 2008: 10. There have been different opinions on the names and numbers of gods and legendary ancestors in ancient China. For details, see Yuan Ke 1981: 24–8; Li Zehou 2012: 2–3.

[504] Wen Yiduo 2006: 3–12.

[505] Birrell 1999: 171–80; Major 2012: chps. 2 and 13.

creation and her role as creator of humanity was established in texts including the *Book of Origins* (*Shiben* 世本) and the *Book of Rites*.[506] In these texts, both Nüwa and Fuxi are described as having human faces with snake bodies. Fuxi is typically depicted with a carpenter's square and Nüwa a compass (*gui* 規).[507] The textual abundance of references to the two deities may explain why, from late Western Han dynasty onwards, Fuxi and Nüwa were frequently represented in tomb murals and stone reliefs. They are found both separately or together (Figure 4.10), with the sun and moon sometimes enveloped by their tails or held above their heads (Figure 4.9).

However, the legends of Fuxi and Nüwa do not provide sufficient explanation for why they were depicted in tombs. As discussed above, people intended to create an underground cosmos reflecting the natural order and balanced forces in mural tombs by depicting the sun and moon, as well as creatures connected with them.[508] Why then, were these cosmological motifs frequently accompanied by depictions of the legendary Fuxi and Nüwa, two figures not observable in the natural world? It is again important to consider the broader context instead of the individual motifs alone.[509]

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[506] The *Book of Origins* is the earliest Chinese encyclopaedia on the birthplaces of legendary and historical inventors, as well as imperial genealogies from the mythical Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors (*sanhuang wudi* 三皇五帝) to the late Spring and Autumn period. The original version is lost, but the text is thought to date to the pre-Qin period and is found in 'Treatise on Literature' (*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志) in the *Book of Han*. See *Han shu*, 30.1701–74. Also, see *Li ji*, 31.949; Wang Xiaoyang 2008: 10; Major 2012: chps. 6 and 17.

[507] Major 2012: chps. 3 and 7.

[508] See Section 4.2.2.

[509] There is, furthermore, a big difference between the compositions of pictures in mural tombs and those in stone or brick tombs. In stone or brick tombs, an increasing number had the motif of Fuxi and Nüwa, especially in the Eastern Han dynasty. I use 'motif' in the singular, because the two figures are often depicted as a couple next to one another. The entangled tails were a sign for fertility, and the motif became widespread in secular society. This was probably due to a stronger belief in yin, yang, and the five phases acknowledged by scholars. See Wang Xiaoyang 2008: 7 and 9; Section 2.3 of this

At the beginning of Section 4.2, the cosmic motif was highlighted as one of the most important motifs in the Han dynasty, and that people's interest in the cosmos cannot be overstressed. From the mid-Western Han onwards, ideological interest in the cosmos grew with the increasing prevalence of theories focused on yin, yang, and the Five Phases.[510] According to texts written by the mid-Western Han, after Fuxi and Nüwa united, yin and yang separated and began to operate, Heaven and Earth were born, and the deities of the four seasons were born.[511] Consequently, Fuxi and Nüwa were equated with the two cosmologic forces of yin and yang, and they appear to even predate the use of the sun and moon as symbols of a balanced cosmos.[512] The abstract philosophical idea of binary forces running the cosmos was made more concrete by visualising these forces as figures described in legends.

The motif of Fuxi and Nüwa together is commonly referred to as having a plot or narrative behind it in the archaeological literature. Other such narrative motifs include the winged creature ascending to the immortal realm.[513] It is noteworthy that some scholars have argued that this latter scene represents the 'ideal plot where the tomb owner rises to the immortal land'.[514] It is therefore possible that such narratives or scenes involving cosmological beings and legendary figures alluded to the immortal

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thesis.

[510] Feng Youlan 1952: 7–20 and 337–78; Gu Jiegang 2008; Wang Xiaoyang 2008: 7 and 9; Rawson 2016: 372; Sections 2.2.2 and 2.3.

[511] Suhadolnik 2011: 36; Major 2012: 7.

[512] *Huainanzi*, 6.97–8; Feng Shi 2005b: 343.

[513] He Xilin 2010; Section 6.3.3.

[514] Sun Zuoyun 1977; Huang Minglan and Guo Yinqiang 1996: 20; Wei Na 2004: 11–5.

land. Consequently, it is significant that a second look at Western Han and Xin dynasty murals reveals that Nüwa was depicted next to other creatures that represented immortality, like the hare,[515] as seen at Qianjingtou and Luoyang Beijiao Shiyouzhan 洛陽北郊石油站 (Appendix 4.2). To explain the significance of depicting Nüwa in such combinations in these murals, her relationship to another legendary Han dynasty figure needs to be considered: the Queen Mother of the West.

4.3.2 Queen Mother of the West: a late auspicious deity

The Queen Mother of the West is another motif that represented the force of yin,[516] but she was more widely depicted on stones and bricks in the Eastern Han dynasty,[517] as opposed to Nüwa, who was likely to have became popular since the mid-Western Han. The attributes of the Queen Mother of the West include a toad, a hare with a mortar and pestle, a nine-tailed fox, and flying devotees, which were all regarded as auspicious.[518] The only two mural depictions of the Queen Mother of the West are found in Luoyang, namely the late Western Han tomb at Bu Qianqiu and the Xin dynasty tomb at Xincun

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[515] The symbolic role of the hare and other creatures, such as the toad, to denote immortality was most likely established during the mid-Western Han period, as records such as Han folk songs show. See Yu Guanying 2012: 33; Chen Binbin 2018: 52. Some even suggest an earlier origin, back in the third century BC. See *Chu ci*, 73–99; Liu Yao 2016: 84–5.

[516] Wu 1989: 108–12. The moon, the toad, and the hare were symbols of the force yin, see Yu Guanying 2012; Chen Binbin 2018: 52. The Queen Mother of the West's abode was also believed to be located in the western mountains, hence the name 'Queen Mother of the West', which the texts considered to be in the domain of prevailing yin. Collectively, this strongly suggests her connection with yin. Suhadolnik 2011: 38–9; Zhao Debo 2013: 91. *Yi jing*, vol. 9.

[517] The Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East (*Dongwanggong* 東王公) were a popular paired motif in stone or brick tombs in the Eastern Han dynasty. See Xin Lixiang 2000: 143–60.

[518] James 1995: 22–3. For a detailed discussion on her attributes, see Loewe 1994b: 106–8.

辛村, Yanshi 偃師 (Figure 4.11).[519] The rarity of depictions of the Queen Mother of the West in mural tombs and scarcity of her depictions before the Eastern Han dynasty make her popularity seem rather sudden. This section thus examines her origins and functions in relation to the earlier motif of Nüwa, as well as the sense in which she was considered auspicious.

It appears from texts that the Queen Mother of the West was a deity believed to protect people and be blessed with immortality.[520] However, the Western Han poet Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–117 BC) wrote that the long-lived Queen Mother of the West was so hideous and her dwelling so uncomfortable that her immortality was not that desirable.[521] Scholars believe that these texts, together with a lack of archaeological finds depicting the image of Queen Mother of the West in burials including mural tombs,[522] show that the Queen Mother of the West was not yet popular among the people.[523] This changed in year 3 BC, however, when at least half of the

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[519] Regarding the Bu Qianqiu mural, Sun Zuoyun has questioned the identity of the female depicted sitting on the cloud, arguing that she may not be the Queen Mother of the West, as the woman does not wear her diagnostic jade headdress (*sheng* 胜). But most scholars agree that she is the Queen Mother of the West according to the attributes and the moon etc. See Sun Zuoyun 1977: 19; Loewe 1994b: 106–8; Wang Xiaoyang 2008: 5–8 and 12.

[520] In the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, the oldest written source for descriptions of the Queen Mother of the West, she dwells in the imaginative geography of China far away to the west, either west of the Jade Mountain as described in 'The Classic of the Western Mountains' (*Xishan jing* 西山經), or north of the Kunlun Mountains in 'The Classic of the Great Wilderness: The West' (*Dahuang xi jing* 大荒西經). She was described as partly human, with a leopard's tail and a tiger's teeth, and a jade headdress in her untidy hair. See *Shanhaijing*, 6 and 12; Birrell 1999: 24 and 171–80. She was also recorded in 'Surveying Obscurities' (*Lanming xun* 览冥训) in the *Huainanzi*. See *Huainanzi*, 6; Major 2012: chp. 6.

[521] *Han shu*, 57.2596.

[522] For the ranks of tombs in the Han dynasty, see Section 3.2 of the thesis.

[523] Xin Lixiang divides the development of the Queen Mother of the West motif in the Han dynasty into three chronological phases: 1) before 3 BC was the nascent phase when the Queen Mother of the West symbolised immortality; 2) the third century BC to the mid-Eastern Han dynasty saw a mature concept of an immortal land where the Queen Mother of the West resided, but there was

empire was involved in worshipping or praying to the Queen Mother of the West to counteract the various natural disasters and the declining society at the end of the Western Han.[524] This ignited the popularisation of the Queen Mother of the West throughout all levels of society: not only did the populace explicitly acknowledge her as a benefactress and auspicious deity who could protect people and probably realise their wish for a better court and thus a better life,[525] but the motif of her image also made its way into the cosmological scheme popular among the upper classes, as demonstrated by her appearance on a gable at the late second century AD offering shrines of the Wu Liang Family in Shandong Province (Figure 4.12).[526] Although the worship of the increasingly popular Queen Mother of the West usually took place in shrines according to both textual records and archaeological finds,[527] there were also rituals to honour her that have left no material remains and are only recorded in texts, such as dancing, playing music, and wearing talismans.[528]

Similar to the aspects of the Queen Mother of the West, the earlier motif of individual Nüwa on Western Han and Xin dynasty murals typically appears next to the

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yet no sign of the King Father of the East; 3) The mid to late Eastern Han dynasty was marked by the emergence of the King Father of the East. For details, see Xin Lixiang 2000: 141–56.

[524] *Han shu*, 26.1131–2; Ma Yi 2017: note 54.

[525] The worship and pray to the Queen Mother of the West initiated from the populace and finally rose attention in the court as recorded in the official history, *Ibid*.

[526] James 1995: 22.

[527] *Old Rites of the Han* written by Eastern Han scholar Wei Hong 衛宏 (fl. c. AD 25–57) on imperial routines, court regulations, rituals, and social history. It was recorded in the *Book of thed Later Han*. *Hou han shu*, 34.1170–4 and 3152–6. For the edited and annotated version of the original scattered passages, see See *Han jiuyi buyi*, 100. For more archaeological evidence, see James 1995: 24–39; Wang Xiaoyang 2008: 8–12.

[528] *Han shu*, 26.1476; Chen Xuan 2014: 180.

moon and creatures associated with it, though her face is usually shown in profile instead of *en face*. As Nüwa was officially recorded before the Queen Mother of the West received widespread acknowledgement and respect, it seems probable that Nüwa functioned to combine the auspicious symbols of the moon, the hare, and other creatures relating to immortality, collectively indicating a desire for long life within the balanced cosmos.[529] The murals and shrine carvings of the Queen Mother of the West do not explicitly depict people worshipping her, but they do serve as material evidence for the early emergence of images of the Queen Mother of the West for auspicious purposes.

A later textual source that attests to the association between the Queen Mother of the West and auspiciousness is the legend titled *Biography of King Mu, Son of Heaven* (*Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳), which is dated by the early third century BC and rediscovered in third century AD. The text describes how King Mu of the Zhou dynasty travelled west to meet the Queen Mother of the West, who promised him that he would receive pleasure without end.[530] By the time this text was unearthed, the Queen Mother of the West had become an important deity in religious Daoism, and some scholars think that 'pleasure without end' refers to a life of eternal joy in Daoist Heaven.[531]

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[529] Recent research has highlighted the fact that the function of Fuxi and Nüwa was to combine all the creatures and cosmological motifs into a whole, expressing a strong desire for staying alive (not necessarily the body but the spirit), no-death or immortality. Even though there is no textual evidence and little archaeological evidence at the moment, this opinion may be worth further study. Liu Huiping 2003 and 2008: 293–310.

[530] The author is unknown, but the tale probably dates to the Zhou dynasty. The written originals of the *Mu tianzi zhuan* were found along with the Bamboo Annals in the tomb of Wei Xiang-zi (d. 296 BCE); Guo Pu 郭璞 (AD 276–324) wrote the earliest commentary to the text, see *Mu tianzi zhuan*; *Shi ji*, 43.1307.

[531] Cahill 1986: 66; Knauer 2006: 102.

However, from the *Records of the Grand Historian*, we know that the Han emperor Wudi knew the story of King Mu's meeting with the Queen Mother of the West,[532] and the phrase 'pleasure without end' (*changle weiyang* 長樂未央) occurs frequently on objects such as bronze mirrors from at least the late Western Han dynasty.[533] This expression matches the definition of 'immortality' discussed in Chapter Three.[534] In Han period, instead of ascending to Heaven and becoming an immortal, people seemed to have longed for an afterlife where they could endlessly enjoy earthly pleasures.

Close analysis of the tomb murals at Bu Qianqiu and Yanshi shows that the hare, the attendant of Queen Mother of the West, was pounding magical elixir for immortality with the mortar in front of it; and the Queen Mother of the West held a bundle of grain stalks in it, which the later stone carvings in tombs from Nanyang 南陽 in Henan Province also show similar scenes.[535] It has been agreed that such stalks represent the Queen Mother of the West's edicts,[536] thus in the narratives of the two murals, the Queen Mother of the West was probably a deity worshipped by the tomb owners, by whom they were expected to be guided westward to the ideal realm,[537] where they achieved the ability to never die.[538] So, even though a common way to represent the

[532] *Shi ji*, 43.1307.

[533] Tseng 2004: 205–6. The inscriptions also mention the Queen Mother of the West and allude to the happy life of transcendence in an ideal realm or paradise. See Cahill 1986: 62–7.

[534] See Section 3.3.2.

[535] The belief of the hare making elixir and the stalks carried by the Queen Mother of the West or her devotees are also reflected on pictorial stones from offering shrines in Shandong Province, and coffins from Sichuan Province etc. For details, see James 1995: 21–2.

[536] We do not know what the edicts were, but they probably contained auspicious words. See *Han shu*, 3432 and 4033–4; Dubs 1942: 235; Ma Yi 2017: note 54.

[537] Or vice cersa, the ideal realm was brought to the tomb owner and became accessible for them in the tomb space. Rawson 1999a: 13 and 24; Section 3.3.3.

[538] James 1995: 21–2.

most important subject in Han art was to make them larger than other figures and the Queen Mother of the West was not depicted as such,[539] neither was she a nation-wide belief yet; she was already believed to have the power to help people attain immortality. The expansion of the Queen Mother of the West's auspicious role in the Eastern Han for invoking marriage and wealth marks the growth of qualities that were established in the Western Han.[540] Her auspicious potential in the Western Han is pursued further in Section 6.3.2 in Chapter Six, as related tomb objects, such as the incense burners closely connected with her, are explored.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been shown that auspicious tomb decorations and their meanings did not all appear simultaneously but developed over time and were inevitably influenced by the social backgrounds they inhabited. Each motif has its own origin, developmental trajectory, and meanings, yet none can be approached in isolation, as this risks missing important historical and artistic information. Such information includes the inter-relationship between different motifs, the changes and related effects of tomb structures, ideological trends within a certain period, and the auspicious meanings reflected in tomb paintings or engravings.

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[539] The tomb owner depicted on the Mawangdui silk banner was much bigger than the depictions of servants around her. See Figure 1.12. For more introduction on depicting figures in Han art, see Tong Xun and Wang Yunsong 2018: 59–60.

[540] For more discussion on the increasing importance of the Queen Mother of the West as a deity and her symbols, for not only immortality, but also other auspicious things like prosperity after the late Western Han period, see Kominami Ichirō 1991: 116 and 254; Yu Fangjie 2016: 123–8; Liu Lele 2017: 45–54.

Since no Han dynasty buildings have been preserved, the tombs, which were called the 'yin-residence' or 'underworld residence' (*yin zhai* 陰宅), are the best evidence for the ornament that may have been used in such buildings during the Han dynasty.[541] People in the Han dynasty paid increasing attention to tomb construction, due to the increasing prominence of correlative cosmology in people's understanding of the world. Additionally, the larger and more residential-looking structure of the tombs allowed people to better create an underground space that corresponded to the real world.[542] A period of transition and communication involving the deceased, the living, and the cosmos was believed to occur during the burial process.[543] People believed that certain tomb decorations would help the dead to overcome their fear after death and smoothly pass through the unknown world before reaching a peaceful, ideal, auspicious realm that the spirit or the refined bodily substance could gain immortality.[544]

In order to reach this immortal realm, it was important to first remove all barriers that might impede travelling there.[545] The observations made in this chapter on the tomb murals indicate that there was a developing ornamental system in the Han dynasty, within which a balanced cosmos that facilitated the deceased's trip was visualised.

Mythical cosmological creatures were some of the earliest motifs seen in the early

[541] The use of burial goods to infer object use among the living has to be studied with care, as scholars often make assumptions with almost no material evidence available. Wu 2010: 87–8; Qi Dongfang 2015: 29–30.
[542] *Ibid*; Lai 2015: chp. 1.
[543] Huntington and Metcalf 1979: 117.
[544] Li Qingquan 2016: 28–30.
[545] Sun Zuoyun 2003: 258.

Western Han dynasty. Though the reason for the lack of mythical creatures between the late-second-century-BC Shiyuan mural of King Gong of Liang and those that appear in the abundant decorated tombs of the late Western Han is still unclear, the two periods and tombs are at least linked by a continuing thread of belief that auspiciousness could be guaranteed by depicting various cosmological beings to defend the tombs. As is observable from the late Western Han period onwards, more creatures were added to murals to join the team of auspicious tomb agents, such as the bear and fungi (Appendices 4.1 and 4.2), which have not been examined in detail here due to space limitations.[546]

Meanwhile, the Four Deities were seen less often on interior tomb decorations in the two capital areas, probably because their auspicious symbolism was closely associated with political authority, so they were controlled during the rather unstable period from the late Western to Eastern Han dynasty. The Four Deities were more frequently depicted separately, sometimes together with natural cosmological beings, such as the sun, the moon, and the constellations, to form the cosmic motifs popular in the Han dynasty. The cosmic systems of yin and yang, as well as the calendrical movement of time,[547] were expressed and realised by positioning the relevant cosmic motif on the tomb ceiling or dome. This motif seems to have been treated as equivalent

[546] Due to space limitations, not every related motif can be examined in this thesis. For more information on other mythological and cosmological creatures, plants or motifs, see Huang Minglan and Guo Yinqiang 1996: 20; Bushell 2008: chps. V–VII.

[547] Feng Shi 2005a: 70–5; Section 2.2 of the thesis.

to the real cosmos,[548] and the attitude that representations were perceived as equivalent to the original was noted by Gombrich in his book *Art and Illusion*.[549]

Another cosmological manifestation, clouds, are almost ubiquitous in Han art, but they have received little scholarly attention. Clouds most typically appear as stylised cloud swirls, and, on the basis of rather limited previous research, it is argued that the pattern in itself had significant cosmological value and efficacy. Though it was very often wrapped around other creatures or motifs, it was not merely decoration, but functioned as a major motif when used in a composition.[550]

In many instances, the cosmic motif seems to have generally been an isolated motif without a contextual plot or narrative. A tendency for motifs that represented narratives began to appear around the end of the Western Han dynasty.[551] The legendary deities Fuxi and Nüwa, who were believed to have created the universe and represent the two polar cosmic forces of yin and yang, were painted in tombs. The motif of the two deities and their legendary narrative were well-known in the Han period and would have been recognised by most people. Since visual representations of certain motifs were considered to be equivalent to the real object or cosmic figure, images of the two deities in a tomb was considered to mean that yin and yang were actively circulating throughout the tomb.[552] A more enriched, dynamic, complete microcosmos was thus produced in the tomb using these deities.

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548 Rawson 1999a: 10–1.

549 Gombrich 1960: 300–30.

550 Beningson 2005: 1–2.

551 Huang Peixian 2008: 237. One thing needs to be stressed is that the ‘narrative motif’ here is mainly recognized and associated with textual records, but it is not unlikely that relevant narrative or contextual plot used to exist for other motifs such as the cosmic ones disappeared due to the missing of according textual records. The categorization in this chapter is based upon the materials known to us today, and could be amended or improved accordingly with the increasing availability of more textual and archaeological materials.

552 Qi Dongfang 2015: 29.

In the Eastern Han dynasty, the images of Fuxi and Nüwa became more human-like as people pursued a more vivid representation of the real world and belief in correlative cosmology intensified. If the dead were eternally satisfied in the underworld, their family and offspring would also be blessed.[553] The agency of the auspicious motifs on the tombs' murals or carvings was not inherent, but rather was realised through their impact on the dead and the living.[554] The iconographic and textual study conducted on the narrative motifs of Fuxi, Nüwa, and the Queen Mother of the West in this chapter demonstrate that, instead of wanting to become immortals like the deities, people during the Han dynasty probably wanted to achieve an immortality that reflected the life they had lived or were familiar with. The various pictorial narrations involving deities in the tomb thus probably reflect the process of transition where the deceased acquired immortality in the depicted realm of deathlessness, and the deities' physical depictions led to the realisation of the symbolic affinities within a correlative cosmology.[555]

In summary, the auspicious motifs discussed in this chapter seem to have been treated as equivalents of their real counterparts, and they functioned to drive away evil spirits, keep the order and harmony of the cosmos, help the tomb owner achieve immortality, and bring blessings to the family and offspring of the dead. All the good

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[553] Chang Renxia *et al.* 1998: 95–6.

[554] Tythacott argues that agency is not inherent to objects, but is realised through their impact on people's lives, as they have affinities and relations with others. Tythacott 2011: 228; Section 1.3.1 in the thesis.

[555] Section 3.3.3.

things that people wanted to happen were considered in the course of the tomb's construction. The processes of planning and design, as well as the intentions of the tomb builders and mourners, are revealed through the application of agency theory to the archaeological material, which envisages objects in terms of their relation to people and underlying ideologies prevalent in society (Chapter Two). The impetus for adopting the theory is to show that 'auspiciousness' can be regarded as a process, specifically one that was: designed, developed, and created on tomb interiors in the forms of the various motifs in murals and engravings; arranged and animated at certain positions in the tomb by the locations of auspicious motifs, usually on the upper part of the burial chamber to symbolise the immortal realm or Heaven; and, most importantly, a process that was expected to function by the deceased and living people. This means that the proper production and positioning of auspicious motifs were part of the actualisation of beneficial results. Furthermore, it was ancient people's belief and expectation in the efficacy of the motifs that made them fully functional, active features in the material world. The motifs selected for detailed examination in this chapter reflect developments in ideology and social context over time, and parallel developments in society and the motifs reflect the active process.

The general picture presented in this chapter is of different ornamental motifs from within and without the Han Empire being synthesised, transformed, and used. However, this in no way means that all people of the Han Empire held a common, uniform understanding of the significance and role of every single tomb ornament throughout

the four centuries of the Han dynasty.[556] This issue is explored in more detail in the following chapters, which more comprehensively examine relevant archaeological and material culture pertaining to auspiciousness, the expression of auspiciousness by people of different ranks, connections between Han China and groups inhabiting the Eurasian Steppe, and main trends in auspicious ornament from the Western Han to the Eastern Han dynasty.[557] However, a key theme highlighted here that arises in the following chapters is that the designs and physicality of ornament did not appear all at once, and that the ideas and meanings behind them were always being transformed and manipulated.

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556 Tythacott 2011: 364.
557 Huang Peixian 2008: 39; Xi'an 2004: 745–7.

CHAPTER 5

Bodily engagement and continuing life: changes in jade use in the Han dynasty

5.1. Introduction

Like gold or gemstones in Western cultures, jade has been considered innately precious and valuable in China. Throughout all periods of Chinese history, including the Han dynasty, jade was valued for its toughness, durability, translucence, and tactility.[558] Many Confucian or Daoist texts refer to jade's qualities to argue for its magical potential to confer longevity to their wearers or users.[559] This chapter explores the meanings and functions of jade by examining jade objects discovered in Han tombs. In contrast to earlier periods, new uses of jade, such as for suits, coffins and vessels, appeared in the Han dynasty. This chapter explores why changes in the forms and types of jade objects occurred, as well as how such objects were used. This is done with the aim of highlighting the symbolism and beliefs behind the Han's unprecedented scale and manner of using jade, represented by burial jades, such as the Han-specific jade suits composed of thousands of jade plaques.[560] In particular, this allows the claims

[558] Rawson 1995a: 13; Lin 2009: 7–8.

[559] *Li ji*, 63.1669–72; Wu 1997: 147; Section 5.4 of this thesis.

[560] Jade suits were only used in the Han dynasty. See Appendix 5.1; Lin 2003; Wang Jing 2008; detailed discussion in Sections 5.3 and 5.4.

made in some Han texts about contemporary attitudes to jade to be tested and explained.[561]

It is pertinent to our understanding of jade's use in the Han dynasty that the second and first centuries BC represent a key moment in Chinese history, as stone became widely used for the construction of tombs. This was most probably due to the durability of stone, which people viewed as symbolic of eternity.[562] It is thus significant that Han writers classified jade as a kind of stone, referring to it as 'jade stone' (*yu shi* 玉石). Jade was also considered to be extraordinary and called 'the finest among all stones' (*shi zhi mei zhe* 石之美者), 'the toughest among all stones' (*shi zhi jian zhe* 石之坚者), and even 'the essence of stone' (*shi zhi jing* 石之精).[563] If the use of stone for tomb construction was caused by an association between stone and the idea of an immortal afterlife, as discussed in Chapter Three,[564] jade, as 'the essence of stone' could have been considered even more effective in assisting the tomb owner to attain

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[561] Some jade objects described to be ritual-functioning in texts like *Rites of Zhou* were used to cover the body of the deceased in Han tombs. For detailed discussion, see Section 5.4.2. The *Rites of Zhou*, the book on the ideal bureaucracy and its organisations composed in the late Zhou or early Han period, lists: 'six ceremonial jades' (*liu rui* 六瑞), which can literally be translated as 'auspicious jades' or more suitably as 'ceremonial jades', as in the texts these are described as being used to differentiate the ranks of the nobility; and 'six ritual jades' (*liu qi* 六器) intended to be used when making offerings to spirits. *Zhou li*, 35.1380; Biot 1975 vol.1: 431–40.

[562] Tombs were cut into mountains or built with stone bricks. Section 3.2; Rawson 1999a: 24–5; Rawson 2010b and 2012; Wu 2005 vol.1: 132–6.

[563] *Shuowen jiezi*, 10. That jade was the essence of stone can be understood metaphorically and literally. The ancient Chinese believed that jade conceals itself inside a stone-like boulder in its natural state. Gu Fang 1996: 6–7; Wu 1997: 158–9. Regarding the '*shi zhi mei zhe*', i.e. the fine physical quality and beauty (*mei* 美) of jade, although not the main focus of this chapter, this may still worth mentioning. The Chinese aesthetic appreciation of jade lays the foundation for the discussion in this thesis entitles 'ornament', as such view towards jade actually expands the range of meaning of 'ornament' from merely referring to patterns or embellishments on objects. Rather, things made of jade or even just a piece of jade itself have been considered beautiful as defined, and thus could be included in the realm of adornment or ornament in a more general sense. This also matches with the materiality theory (Sections 1.3.1, 3.1, 5.1, 6.3.2 and 7.2.3).

[564] See Sections 3.2 and 3.3.1.

immortality.[565] Therefore, the discussion of the auspiciousness of jade in this chapter is informed by the overall study of burial practices, concepts of the afterlife, the materiality of objects, and the broader Han dynasty social context examined in this thesis.

In the following sections, the historical background of jade use in China is traced from the Neolithic (c. 5000–1600 BC) onwards. Archaeological evidence and textual accounts from pre-Han times are presented to show the foundation for the development in jade use in the Han dynasty. This also leads us to question the assumption that jade was universally perceived as 'virtuous' or 'auspicious' throughout the territory of the Han Empire, something that some academics have almost taken for granted.[566] Consequently, the sense in which jade can be considered to be auspicious is examined more thoroughly. It is important to note that written texts provide useful information on the contemporary social, ideological, and cosmological background to some extent; however, other records, such as the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhou li* 周禮), *Book of Rites*, and *Writings of Master Xun* (*Xunzi* 荀子), define the metaphorical associations, regulations, and hierarchical ritual systems for jade use, demonstrating that seemingly prescriptive rules governing its use were flexible rather than incontrovertible, which has also been shown by the results of archaeological excavations as shown in Section 5.3 below.[567]

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[565] Wu 1997: 158–9. See also Section 3.3.3.

[566] Some scholars conclude that jade has historically been viewed as auspicious without substantial argument, e.g. Huang Cuimei and Li Jianwei 2007: 42–3; Xiao Ying 2011: 4–5.

[567] *Zhou li*, 35.1380–420; *Li ji*, 30.899–929. The *Writings of Master Xun*, attributed to Xun Kuang 荀況 (313–238 BC), is on Confucian philosophy and thoughts. See *Xunzi*, 157–94. Also see Rawson 1995a: 56; Miller 2016: 114.

To define the distinctive features of Han dynasty jades, the discoveries from two high-ranking tombs dated to the Eastern Zhou and the Western Han are compared. The types and number of jades in the Shizishan tomb of the King of Chu in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, are representative of the tombs of a royal family in the Han dynasty. The jades are different from those of the earlier Eastern Zhou, which is shown through a comparative investigation of the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng in Suizhou, Hubei Province. The most obvious change in the use of jade during the Han dynasty was its new types of objects and uses for burial goods. For royal and elite members of the society, as well as some members of the lower-ranks, there was also an increase in burial jades that interacted with the bodies of the deceased, including plugs (*sai* 塞), discs, and suits (Appendices 4.1, 4.2 and 5.1).[568] The increase in burial jades, especially jade suits, and the emergence of multiple layers of jade around the body are argued here to indicate the significance of close contact between jade and the human body. This argument is made with particular reference to theories of material agency, outlined in Chapter One,[569] which can illuminate the ideas and thought processes of the ancient people who made, used, and buried the jades.[570]

5.2. Definition and historical background

[568] Lu Zhaoyin 1989: 60–2 and 66–7; Lin 2012a: 50. Altogether 79 elite tombs (45 from the Western Han, 32 from the Eastern Han and two from the interregnum Xin dynasty) have been found with jade suits, and these suits have only been found in Han tombs. A thorough list of all jade suits excavated within China has previously been published by Wang Jing. See Wang Jing 2008: 8–14.

[569] See Section 1.3.1.

[570] Dobres and Robb 2000: 12–3.

5.2.1 **Definition**

In this thesis, jade refers to the gem-like mineral nephrite.[571] Nephrite is a silicate mineral in the tremolite–actinolite series of amphiboles. Its ranks as 6–6.5 on the Mohs scale of mineral hardness, meaning that the material is tough but not necessarily hard. Durability is a distinguishing quality of jade objects.[572] Another quality is its translucence, which is caused by its crystalline structure, formed by pressure and heat over geological time.[573] These features meant that jade came to be culturally highly prized in China, being considered extremely beautiful and as embodying the quality of permanence.[574] This contributed to jade further accruing metaphorical qualities, as discussed in this chapter. Probable sources of nephrite available to the Han Empire include the Lake Tai 太 area in south-east China, Nanyang in Central China, the Lake Baikal area in Siberia, and Khotan or Hetian 和田 in modern Xinjiang Province, north-west China (Map 1.1).[575] Archaeological and textual evidence suggests that there was heavy use of nephrite from Central Asia, i.e. Khotan, in the Han dynasty.[576] While

[571] The other mineral that is also called jade is jadeite, which was only used from the Ming (AD 1368–1644) and Qing (AD 1644–1911) dynasties in China. Xia Nai 1983: 126; Rawson 1995a: 414.

[572] Xia Nai 1983: 126; Rawson 1995a: 14 and 413; Gu Fang 1996: 5–6; Lin 2009: 8.

[573] For a detailed account of the minerals and features of different jades, including sources of nephrite in China and the chemical compositions of different nephrites and other stones used in ancient times, see the appendix in Rawson 1995a: 420.

[574] The luminous, translucent jade most likely attracted people, as it stood out among many other coloured stones. Rawson 1995a: 20. The question of why and how jade was aesthetically appreciated is not the focus of the chapter. For related philosophical and art historical discussions, see Hatt and Klonk 2006; Nelson 2011; Li Huixin 2007.

[575] Watson W. 1972: 59–60; Xia Nai 1983: 126; Huang Cuimei 1992: 81.

[576] See 'Memoir on Dawan' (*Dawan zhuan* 大宛傳) in *Records of the Grand Historian*, *Shi ji*, 123.2591–614; 'The History of Western Regions' (*Xiyu zhuan* 西域傳) in the *Book of Han*, *Han shu*, 96 (upper).3871–900. For archaeological evidence from royal tombs in the Han dynasty, such as Mancheng and Shizishan, see Zhang Peishan 1981: 79–83; Wang Kai and Ge Mingyu 2005.

the most prized nephrite was often white, other colours like pale green and yellow are also frequently found in Han tombs.[577]

5.2.2 **Historical background**

There has been a long cultural tradition of jade usage in China, and the appearance of jades in burials is a major feature of Chinese archaeology.[578] A brief discussion of pre-Han jade objects shows why and how jade came to be prized, as well as the sources for some Han dynasty jade designs and the techniques used to create them. The main types of jades found in Han era tombs include suits and plugs, which had their prototypes in the Western Zhou dynasty.

By contrast with the Shang and Western Zhou periods, when very few texts were composed, there are many philosophical, historical and anecdotal records from the Warring States and Han periods. These texts detail rules and regulations regarding jade use in rituals and burial practices, as well as the beliefs and ideologies behind its use.[579] Because changes in jade use in Han tombs seem to have coincided with changes in burial practices and conceptions of the afterlife in general, literary sources need to be critically examined.

Rarity and ritual use: the Neolithic and the Shang dynasty

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[577] The various colours of jade are caused by elements such as chromium and iron. See Xia Nai 1983: 126; Rawson 1995a: 20; Huang Cuimei and Li Jianwei 2007: 35–8.

[578] Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 133.

[579] Chinese scholars usually rely on these texts heavily to interpret the meanings, functions, and moral attributes of ancient jades. However, there are some issues with this overreliance, which are discussed below in this Section 5.2.2. See also Rawson 1995a: 54.

Evidence for jade use in China first appears at Neolithic sites, although these are not evenly spread across China.[580] Major cultures that used jade include the Hongshan 紅山 culture (c. 5000–2500 BC) in the north-east, the Liangzhu 良渚 culture (c. 5000–2000 BC) in the south-east, and the Qijia 齊家 culture (c. 2100–1600 BC) in the north-west (Map 5.1). The physical qualities of jade caused the development of complicated carving techniques and large workforces. Jade was abraded using sandstone or slate, together with quartz sand and water. It was then shaped with sandstone rubbers. If needed, bamboo drills, bone, or wood were used to make holes.[581] The rarity of the material, as well as the complex processing techniques required, caused jade to be treated as a valuable, precious material.[582] Some early jade objects were probably associated with funerary rituals such as *cong* 琮 (tube with a circular hole).[583]

The Shang dynasty saw mature jade-making techniques develop, with the introduction of metal tools being used to process jade objects.[584] There is also evidence for diverse uses of jade, most typically represented by the tomb of Fuhao 婦好 (c. 1200 BC), consort of the king Wu Ding 武丁, which was discovered at Anyang 安陽,

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[580] Huang Cuimei 1992: 75–7; Sun Zhixin 1993: 17–22; Rawson 1995a: 28.

[581] From the Bronze Age, metal tools had been used in ancient Chinese jade making. Hansford 1969: 17; Lin 2009: 10.

[582] The value of jade can be established from legends and stories such as the story of 'The Jade Disc of He' (*Heshi bi* 和氏璧) recorded in *Master Han Fei* (*Han Fei zi* 韓非子) by Han Fei 韓非 (d. 233 BC) on a piece of jade discovered by Mr He made into a *bi*-disc and became a treasure of contention in the Warring States period, see *Han Fei zi*, 330–1; Lin 2009: 10.

[583] Huang Cuimei 1992: 82; Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 133. Jade objects like *cong* have been acknowledged by scholars to have been used as ritual objects in Neolithic China, but the exact use, function or meaning are still unclear. British Museum, http://britishmuseum.org.cn/exhibition.aspx?id=182, accessed 14th April 2020.

[584] Hansford 1969: 17; Lin 2009: 10

Henan Province, in 1976.[585] At least three features of jade use can be noticed in Fuhao's tomb assemblage. First, there was a stronger interest in personal ornament, as around 500 out of the 755 jades were ornamental pieces, many of which were pendants shaped like animals (fish, birds, tigers, deer, and cicadas). Such pendants have also been found in other Shang burials, and they were continuously produced throughout the following dynasties.[586] Second, many of Fuhao's jades were reused objects from earlier periods, most likely due to the lack of jade sources relative to the demand from the Shang elite.[587] Third, Fuhao's tomb assemblage exhibits an increase in exotic jades, i.e. jades from southern and northern China, compared to earlier periods.[588]

One of the main functions of Fuhao's jade pieces was probably to reflect the high status of their owner.[589] This was because, similar to the Zhou political situation with its many competing states,[590] the Shang royal court needed to express its strength and power through hosting ceremonies and banquets, as well as lavishly furnishing their tombs. This was considered to be important in reflecting the power of the ruler, the royal family, and the state.[591]

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585 Beijing 1980b vol. 1: 114–95; Xia Nai 1983: 125

586 This was not the case for people from areas outside Shang territory. At the major site of a contemporary group associated with ancient Shu 蜀 State, Sanxingdui 三星堆 (c. 1700–1200 BC) in Guanghan 廣漢, Sichuan Province, the majority of jades were blades, one of the traditional jade objects in ancient China. Rawson 1995a: 41. For the report, see Chengdu 2004.

587 Lin 2009: 23.

588 Beijing 1980b vol. 1: 155–62 and 232.

589 *Ibid*: 221 and 226.

590 Rawson 1995a: 53; Section 2.2.1.

591 Many jade objects were also produced by Guo 虢 State near Sanmenxia in Henan Province, the western state of Qin, the powerful Jin 晉 state in Shanxi Province, and the states of Lu and Qi in Shandong Province. Rawson 1995a: 52–3. For the second half of the Warring States period, see Rawson 1995a: 106; Huang Cuimei and Li Jianwei 2007: 42–58.

A general pattern in many Shang burials is that other artefacts, such as bronze ritual vessels, occupied specific positions in the tomb outside the coffins, but jade was mostly placed inside the coffins and close to the deceased.[592] By contrast with bronze vessels which have been acknowledged as the most important ritual and burial objects in the Shang dynasty, the jades in some Shang elite tombs seem more personal to the tomb owners.[593]

Development and the foundation of Han jades: the Zhou dynasty and the Warring States

The Western Zhou period witnessed a major change in ritual practice, reflected in the new design schemes, decorations, and usage patterns for bronze and jade ritual objects.[594] According to texts composed during the second century BC about Zhou ritual jades, such as the *Rites of Zhou*, there were clear regulations that dictated when different jade objects were to be used and who could use them:

1. The blue *bi* (disc) for the offering ritual to Heaven;
2. The yellow *cong* (tube with a circular hole) for the offering ritual to the Earth;
3. The green-blue *gui* 圭 (tablet) for the offering ritual to the East;
4. The red *zhang* 璋 (sceptre) for the offering ritual to the South;
5. The white *hu* 琥 (tiger-shaped pendant) for the offering ritual to the West;

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[592] Gump 1962: 89; Lin 2009: 11; Miller 2016: 104–5.
[593] Bagley 1991: 231; Rawson 1995a: 40–3; Lin 2009: 22 and 145; Sections 2.2 and 3.3.
[594] For details on ritual reform in the Zhou dynasty, see Rawson 2002a and 2010a; Cao Bin and Chen Beichen 2018.

6. The black *huang* 璜 (arc) for the offering ritual to the North.[595]

However, there is no archaeological evidence for absolute links between the jade objects, the directions and the colours as we see from tombs. These regulations were most probably formulated in the Han dynasty according to the popular theory of the yin, yang and the five phases within a correlative cosmos.[596]

One of the most important developments in the use of jade was the appearance of jade face covers used in burials (*yu fumian* 玉覆面) from the mid-Western Zhou period at the latest. Since the 1980s, face covers or component parts—eyes, eyebrows, noses, or ears—have been discovered in tombs in different parts of China. Slanted perforations have been discovered on the back of some such pieces, which suggests that they were sewn onto a piece of textile that covered the face of the deceased.[597]

Jade face covers have been excavated from multiple sites, including five face-cover pieces decorated with simple dragon and cloud motifs in tomb no. 157 at Zhangjiapo 張家坡 (mid-Western Zhou dynasty), Chang'an, Shaanxi Province; a complete jade face cover from the Guo 虢 State Cemetery (c. eighth century BC) in Sanmenxia 三門峽, Henan Province; and seven jade veils (covering the eyes, brows, and nose) and

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[595] 以蒼璧禮天，以黃琮禮地，以青圭禮東方，以赤璋禮南方，以白琥禮西方，以玄璜禮北方。*Zhou li*, 35.1380; Biot 1975: 431–5. For more information on the regulations on what objects to be used by peoples of different ranks, see Sun Ji 2014: 251–2.

[596] As most of these Zhou dynasty texts are acknowledged to be first seen in Han dynasty texts. See Section 2.2 in Chapter Two.

[597] Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 134.

face covers at the royal cemetery of the Jin 晉 State at Tianma Qucun 天馬曲村 (c. ninth century BC), Shanxi Province (Figure 5.1).[598]

Ritual jades, ceremonial blades, and large quantities of jade that adorned the body as ornament have been found at sites such as Hancheng 韓城 and Rujiazhuang 茹家莊 (c. 1027–922 BC) in Shaanxi Province.[599] More jades were shaped to form sophisticated decorations: jades depicting humans, animals, and mythical creatures like dragons were paired with other pendants and beads.[600] But these were not specifically made for burials, however, which is different from the situation in the Han dynasty, as discussed in the following sections.

Overall, the archaeological evidence shows that, although ritual and ornamental jades appear in Shang and Zhou tombs, they were probably still less significant than bronzes, as the latter dominates burial assemblages in both numbers and craft complexity.[601] The ritual and moral significance of wearing and using jades in life is, however, more frequently mentioned in texts.[602] Jade was often used as a metaphor to describe the highest levels of virtue, and it was considered to bear qualities that paralleled the physical attributes that made it desirable in Western Zhou society. In a widely-quoted passage from the *Book of Rites*, jade is attributed with the 'five virtues'

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[598] For Zhangjiapo, see Beijing 1999b; for Sanmenxia, see Beijing 1999a; for Guo state cemetery, see Beijing 1959c; for Tianma Qucun, see *Wenwu* 1994.

[599] For Hancheng, see Shaanxi Sheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo and Shanghai Bowuguan 2012; for Rujiazhuang, see *Wenwu* 1976a. Rawson proposes that there were three principal jade categories in ancient China: personal ornaments, ceremonial blades, and ritual objects. Rawson 1995a: 28.

[600] Xia Nai 1983: 1378; Rawson 1995a: 46 and 50.

[601] Rawson 1990: 35–58; Li Xueqin 2008: 228.

[602] Sun Ji 2014: 252–3; *Li ji*, 63.1662–71.

(*wude* 五德)—benevolence, justice, wisdom, courage, and purity—which were considered to match its five properties—its external soft sheen, internal and external uniformity, its ability to produce a sharp sound when struck, its hard texture, and strength.[603] The early anthologies of poetry, *Book of Odes* and *Songs of Chu*, also refer to jade as a metaphor frequently. They describe using jade sceptres, pendants, and other objects as symbols of high rank, good rule, and important social gifts; in all instances, the use of jade as a representation of morality, beauty, excellence, and importance was explicit.[604]

What is also noticeable in the poetic anthologies is that they contain many ideas prevalent in southern China, including the need to protect the deceased from evil spirits in the afterlife, that eventually spread to the metropolitan culture of the Yellow River.[605] A poem in *Songs of Chu* mentions the possibility of 'living as long as Heaven and Earth' by eating the 'essence of jade' (*yu ying* 玉英).[606] The jade veils and covers may become popular out of the desire to protect the deceased and ensure a long afterlife. In archaeological contexts, cinnabar powder has been found to have been placed around

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[603] See 'Meaning of Gift Exchange' (*Pinyi* 聘義) in *Book of Rites*, *Li ji*, 63.1669–72. The English translation is available in Legge 1967 vol. 2: 464.

[604] There are around 133 poems in the *Book of Odes* mentioning jades, see *Shi jing* and Rawson 1995a: 54.

[605] Rawson 1995a: 128; Lai 2015: 55–79. For the relationship between Chu and Han cultures, see Chapters Three and Four of this thesis; Huang Bingyi 2005: 2–6 and 310–3.

[606] See the poem 'Crossing the River' (*She jiang* 涉江) in *Songs of Chu*, see *Chu ci*, 109: '[I] climbed up Kunlun and ate of the flower of jade, And won long life, lasting as heaven and earth; And the sun and moon were not more bright than I.' (登崑崙兮食玉英，與天地兮同壽，與日月兮同光). The English translation is available in Hawkes 1985: 160.

the head and chest of the deceased, presumably for protection.[607] The cinnabar powder, alongside the jade, may also indicate attempts to protect the deceased from evil spirits.

Jade face covers continued to be used in burials and developed after the Western Zhou dynasty. More decorations were incised and carved on jade pieces, represented by a face cover of unknown provenance but probably dated to the Spring and Autumn period. The cover is decorated with motifs of dragons, cicadas, clouds, and other mythical creatures.[608] In the Warring States period, face covers were probably used together with other jade plaques on the neck and chest of the deceased, as suggested by findings from the tomb at Zhongzhoulu 中州路, Luoyang, Henan Province.[609] Despite regional variations,[610] there is a general increase for this period in the use of jades for personal adornment and artefacts such as slit rings (*jue* 玦), archer's rings (*she* 韘), tubes (*guan* 管), tubular and round beads (*zhu* 珠), sword fittings, belt hooks, and pendants.[611] More than 600 covenant tablets made from both jade and stone were excavated at Houma 侯馬 in Shanxi Province.[612] Influence from the Eurasian Steppe and Western Asia can also be detected on the forms and decorations of jade, such as

[607] The application of cinnabar to the areas around the deceased's head and chest is evident at the tombs of Yu 虞 State (c. 1000–655 BC) in Baoji, Shaanxi Province. Beijing 1988: 424; for more discussion see Rawson 2009.

[608] The face cover was bought privately outside of China by a Chinese citizen and donated to the National Museum of Chinese History in Beijing in 1994. See Yi Suhao 1994: 48–9; Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 137.

[609] Beijing 1959b: 116–23.

[610] For detailed regional variations of the jades in the Warring States period, see Yu Meixia 2005; Wang Wenhao and Li Hong 2007.

[611] Lin 2009: 30–2; Sun Ji 2014: 253.

[612] *Wenwu* 1972a. Similar tablets were excavated in Wenxian 溫縣, Henan Province. *Wenwu* 1983. For more details, see Allan 2005: 204; Lin 2009: 10.

belt buckles and animal motifs.[613] All these developments in jade objects during the Eastern Zhou period may have been caused by the conflict between the states,[614] as the many kings and elites used such luxurious items to show their political achievements and social statuses, both in life and the afterlife.[615]

By this time, many scholars had become more concerned with jade's social function.[616] Discussions of jade use that suggest symbolic interpretations of particular jade types appear from at least the Warring States period.[617] Funerary rites involving the use of cloth face covers (*bujin* 布巾) and eye covers (*mingmu* 瞑目) to dress the corpse are described in the *Book of Rites*, *Ceremonies and Rites* (*Yi li* 儀禮), and *Writings of Master Xun*.[618] The increasing contact with peoples from the borders and further north or west in the steppe also introduced the states of Central China to new military objects, most likely including iron armour.[619] This development in protecting the bodies of soldiers on the battlefield may have been adopted as a strategy to also protect the dead in the afterlife.[620] This may be the origin of the jade suits that appeared in the Han dynasty, as to be discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.2 below.

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[613] For more steppe and Western Asian influence on Zhou and Han jades, as well as ornament on different objects, see Lawton 1982; Rawson and Bunker 1990: note 217; Rawson 1995a: 67–70; Liu Yan 2017: 1588–602; Section 6.3.3 in Chapter Six of this thesis.

[614] There were around 140 states in the Spring and Autumn period and seven main powerful states in the Warring States period. See Section 2.2.1; Zhu Shaohou et al. 2000: 116–59.

[615] Rawson 1995a: 53; Gu Fang 1996: 87–8; Lin 2009: 30–2.

[616] Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 141.

[617] Normative texts in which the supposed uses and functions of jades are described, such as the *Rites of Zhou*, have to a certain extent simplified our understanding of the development and variation within China over a long period from the Neolithic Age. Rawson 1995a: 54.

[618] *Li ji*, 45. *Ceremonies and Rites* was probably written during the fifth to fourth centuries BC by Confucius' students. *Yi li*, 12.355–86; Shen Wenzhuo 1982 vol. 15: 27–41 and vol. 16: 1–19. *Xunzi*, 157–94; Knoblock 1994: 67.

[619] For more contact with regions further west in the Zhou dynasty, see Sections 6.1 and 6.2.

[620] Just like Fuhao's jade blades which may have symbolically protected her. See report, Beijing

5.3. Characterising Han jades: a comparison of Marquis Yi of Zeng's tomb and Shizishan

The previous section has outlined how jade was assimilated into rituals, burials, and art. Being regarded from an early point as a metaphor for virtue, longevity, wisdom, and purity, people even believed that it possessed mystical powers to ward off evil.[621] The use and development of jade represents a continuous tradition rather than an innovative one, which is the case for gold, discussed in Chapter Six. Earlier uses of jade continued in the Han dynasty, such as for jade face covers in burials and ritual objects in sacrifices to gods and various spirits. Despite this, the forms and types of jades were no longer the same as those chosen by people in earlier periods.[622]

To better illustrate the features of Han jades, this section compares the jades from an early Warring States tomb with those from a Western Han one. The two tombs contain some of the best jade objects from the Warring States and Han periods respectively, Warring States tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng in Suizhou, Hubei Province, and the Western Han tomb of the King of Chu at Shizishan, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province. Both are high-ranking elite tombs located in mid-southern China (Map 1.1).[623] The jade objects and the contexts in which they were discovered are

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1980b vol. 1: 130–41.

[621] Lin 2009: 11–2. Section 5.4.1.

[622] Xia Nai 1983: 125–35; Sun Ji 2014: 253–4.

[623] The locations of the two tombs lie within the cultural realm of the pre-imperial state of Chu, which was the largest and one of the strongest political powers in the Warring States period. The first emperor of the Han dynasty also came from Chu territory. From the Han dynasty onwards, the material culture of China was formed from a combination of the hierarchical and genealogical systems of the Yellow River and varied beliefs of the south, among which Chu's culture influence was probably the greatest. See Sections 3.2 and 4.2.1; Rawson 1999a: 128; Lin 2009: 79; Loewe 2012: 19.

investigated in this section. As is demonstrated, the most important development in the Han dynasty was a growing interest in burial jades, represented by the jade suits, and their use on the bodies of the deceased for protection and immortality.

The tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng is in south China, where the great political power of Chu State was located during the Warring States period. The influence of Chu is particularly evident in this tomb.[624] It is a rock pit tomb with a house-like structure, including four rooms with different functions:[625] a coffin chamber containing a double-layered lacquer coffin painted with geometric patterns and supernatural figures, within which most of the jades were found; a public ceremonial room; and two side rooms for those who were buried to accompany the marquis (Figure 1.4). Around 300 pieces of jade in total were discovered.[626]

The Han dynasty tomb with the finest and the widest range of jades of high craftsmanship is the King of Chu's tomb at Shizishan. Although the tomb was unfinished and robbed during the Xin dynasty, the jades remains represent some of the most impressive examples among all Han dynasty royal funeral complexes.[627] The tomb was first discovered in 1984 and fully excavated in 1994. It is a rock-cut multi-chambered tomb, and on excavation it was found to contain thousands of objects buried

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[624] Rawson 1995a: 106; Beijing 1989. For the relationship between Chu and Zeng during the Warring States period, see He Hao 1989.

[625] Similar structures have also been found in other Chu tombs from the Warring State period. Beijing 1986; Beijing 1991c. For other important discoveries, such as the bronzes and lacquers, see Zhang Guangzhi 1982.

[626] Beijing 1989 vol. 2: 401–30.

[627] *Wenwu* 1998: 30; Lin 2009: 323.

within.[628] Over 200 jade objects and a jade suit composed of more than 4,000 pieces were discovered, mostly from the back chambers W5 and E6, where the tomb owner was laid, and from in between the outer and inner pathways where a male with the title of the 'Inspector of Food Officer' (*Shijianguan* 食監官) was buried (Figure 5.2).[629] Jade objects are divided into four categories by the archaeological report: ritual jades, burial jades, ornamental jades, and miscellaneous objects.[630] The following discussion suggests that new developments in jade use appeared during the Han dynasty; however, the discussion also highlights a need to critically reflect upon the categorisation of jade objects in archaeological reports.

5.3.1 Multiple layers of jade

The most distinctive change in Han dynasty use of jade is the appearance of the jade suits. Even though burial jades, including plugs, hand grips (*wo* 握) (Figure 5.3), and face covers, have been found in Warring States tomb of Marquis Yi and other tombs,[631] the complete casing of the body with such a large amount of jade was unprecedented. The jade suit from Shizishan is composed of 4,248 jade plaques in the shape of squares, rectangles, triangles, and half-moons (Figure 5.4).[632] These were sewn together with

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[628] Whether the tomb belongs to the second king of Chu, Liu Yingke 劉郢客 (r. 179–175 BC), or his son, the third king of Chu, Liu Wu 劉戊 (r. 175–154 BC) remains under debate. But the date was probably closer to the time of Liu Wu at around 154 BC. See *Wenwu* 1998: 30.

[629] The outer and inner pathways have been disturbed. *Ibid*: 5.

[630] The placement of some objects could be random, as the tomb was unfinished and sealed in a hurry. Traces of the tomb's swift completion were especially obvious in the tomb passage and side chambers. *Ibid*: 4.

[631] Twenty-one mouth pieces (*han* 琀), one plug, and two hand grips were found in the tomb. Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 426–7 and vol. 2: colour pl. XX: 5.

[632] Wang Kai and Ge Mingyu 2005: 123.

gold thread. This is the most delicate jade suit that has been discovered in China to date. It was made from the highest-quality Khotan white jade, which was cut into a large number of very small pieces.[633] The complete jade suit was composed of 12 parts, including the helmet, a face cover, a torso piece, a back piece, two arms pieces, two gloves, two leg pieces, and two boots (Figure 5.5).[634] Altogether, 79 complete or partially-preserved jade suits have been discovered to date and only in Han tombs.[635]

In the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng and other Zhou tombs, the burial jades of face covers and plugs were often accompanied by jade pendants, necklaces, discs, and other items,[636] which were probably worn in one's lifetime for ceremonial as well as decorative purposes.[637] In the Shizishan tomb, however, more jades, including the suit, were probably made specifically for burial.[638] The body of the deceased was probably enclosed naked in the jade suit,[639] which means that the jade plugs for the nine bodily orifices (Figure 5.6), *bi*-discs (Figure 5.7), and the suit were right next to the deceased's flesh. *Bi*-discs, arranged in rows or attached to each other by silk thread, have long been described as auspicious ritual objects,[640] thus their inclusion was probably intended to increase the benefits such as protection granted the deceased as discussed below and in the next section.

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[633] Some of the gold thread had been robbed. *Wenwu* 1998: 21; Lin 2009: 46.
[634] Lin 2014: 27.
[635] See note 560 above; Gu Fang 1996: 137; Liu Zunzhi 2011: 39–44.
[636] Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 401–30; *Wenwu* 1994: figs 3 and 7.
[637] Rawson 1995a: 52 and 315.
[638] Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 133; *Wenwu* 1998: 20–1.
[639] See Beijing 1991a vol. 1: 155.
[640] Rawson 1995a: 26.

Prototypes of these suits have already been outlined in the previous section. From the Western Zhou dynasty onwards, jade face covers were used in burials.[641] In early Han tombs, such as Zifangshan 子房山 in Xuzhou, face covers in the earlier Zhou dynasty style have also been found.[642] Additionally, developed forms of these face covers, such as one made of plaques joined by threads from Houloushan 後婁山, Xuzhou, have also been found (Figure 5.8).[643] The jades of Shizishan and other royal tombs, however, were unprecedented. The King of Chu was buried with jade plugs in the nine bodily orifices (Figure 5.6), *bi*-discs were used to cover his entire body (Figure 5.7), and he was then encased in a jade suit. Jade hand grips were then placed in his hands, before he was placed in a coffin with jade inlay and red lacquer (Figure 5.9). Such a close relationship between multiple layers of jade and the body has been noticed, but scholars have not elaborated on its significance to understanding Han era attitudes to the body and the afterlife,[644] which is the topic of the next section of this chapter.

Another difference between the Warring States tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng and the Western Han tomb at Shizishan is the strategy used to protect the coffin from malicious spirits. Evidence that people believed in deities, as well as good and bad

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[641] Gu Fang 1996: 79–81. One example is the tomb of marquis of Jin at Qucun, Shanxi Province. A face cover made of 52 pieces connected together is found. There were ornamental jades covering from the neck to the belly of the corpse discovered from the tomb. *Wenwu* 1995; Gu Fang 1996: 81.

[642] *Wenwu ziliao congkan* 1981a.

[643] Li Yinde 1993; Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 139.

[644] Most scholars interpret that the jade suits were for preservation and protection of the deceased. Xia Nai 1983; Rawson 1995b; Chuang Hui-chich 2018: 4–12. Some mentioned that they were aids to achieving immortality of the body as well as to reflecting the status, represented by Gu Fang 1996: 135–40; Lin 2012b: 503; some argued that the deceased were to transform into a jade person in the jade suit, see Wu 2005: 136–9. See discussions in Section 5.4.1.

spirits within the cosmos, exists from the Western Zhou period.[645] The decorations on Marquis Yi of Zeng's coffin is one of the most prominent examples for such a belief. The coffin was painted with creatures holding weapons, which look very much like guards for doors (Figure 1.6).[646] These protective guardians seem to have been replaced by jade in the Western Han. Textual records that support this argument include the late third-century BC *Daybook* (*Rishu* 日書) discovered at Shuihudi in Hubei Province, which was written on bamboo slips and describes how 'white stones' (*bai shi* 白石) could ward off evil.[647] This fear of demons seems to have continued into the Han dynasty,[648] with Liu An's *Ten Thousand Infallible Arts of the Prince of Huainan* (*Huainan wanbishu* 淮南萬畢書) mentioning that, to prevent ghosts, people should bury stones at the four corners of their houses.[649] Thus, stone was considered to have a protective function, and jade as, 'the essence of stone', even more so. People of the Han therefore believed in the protective character of jade, and the Shizishan jade suit was likely a new form of expression of previous tenets and beliefs.[650] Equivalent to the armed figures on the coffin of Marquis Yi of Zeng,[651] the jade suits and coffins reflect the hope that the deceased would enjoy an afterlife not bothered by evil spirits.

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[645] Lin 2009: 78; Section 3.3.3.

[646] Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 30–6.

[647] Liu Lexian 1994: 257; Yu Ming 2011: 19.

[648] Han burial ideas and practices were influenced by those from the southern state of Chu in modern Hubei Province, where people believed that, if not properly protected in tombs, the deceased would be attacked by demons and evil spirits. See the above section; Sections 3.3.3 and 4.2.1.

[649] The *Ten Thousand Infallible Arts of the Prince of Huainan* is a book on humans and nature. For the edited and annotated version of the original scattered passages, see the 1983 version printed in Taipei, *Huainan wanbishu*; Lin 2009: 11–2.

[650] Lu Zhaoyin 1981: 517; Rawson 1999b: 122.

[651] Beijing 1989 vol. 1: fig. 21; Rawson 1999a: 24.

5.3.2 Some new uses, objects, and designs

As briefly mentioned in the sections above, many ornamental pieces of jade designed to be worn, as well as other implements like tubes, combs, and simple fragments, were discovered in the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng. In Shizishan, however, different objects were discovered and the multi-chambered horizontal tomb space allows for a clearer division of the underground residence, as well as categorisation of the King of Chu's possessions.[652] At Shizishan, there were more large ornamental jades, mainly carved with dragon and cloud motifs, placed in one of the side rooms (W1). This suggests that these jade ornamental pieces were more likely to have been used for display than worn as daily personal adornment, unlike the much smaller jades in the tomb of Marquis Yi.[653] Jade vessels, rarely seen before the Han dynasty, were also discovered, mostly around the officer in charge of food.[654] These vessels are similar in shape and form to objects from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, where they were originally made from other materials, like lacquer.[655] The combination of jade's material symbolism of durability, in addition to the objects' positions within a tomb structure that resembles a real residence,[656] suggests that these jade vessels were probably intended to serve the tomb owner long into the afterlife.

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[652] The number of jades discovered at Shizishan was overall much greater, mainly due to the thousands of jade plaques used for making the jade suit and coffin. Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 399–431; Wang Kai and Ge Mingyu 2005: 90–101.

[653] *Wenwu* 1998: 5–6; Tian Zhimei 2008: 69. For the exact kind of display and its functions, see the discussion in Section 5.4.

[654] *Wenwu 1998:* 31.

[655] See Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 352–73 and 387–90.

[656] For this conception, see Section 3.3.3.

The declining number of ritual bronze vessels in burials was paralleled by an increase in gold artefacts and the use of gold-carving techniques to make jades. It is very likely that kings and courtiers in the Eastern Zhou took some of the delicacy and intricacy of goldwork as a new source for jade designs.[657] Although the physical properties of jade determined earlier working methods and decorative styles, such as jade *bi*-discs, tubes (both circular and square cross-sections), and animals in silhouette, by the seventh to sixth centuries BC, goldwork had been introduced into China, together with the various techniques for shaping and decorating it, including openwork and relief.[658] As pointed out by some scholars, jades may have borrowed designs and decorations from goldwork, such as the openwork jade ornament from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Figure 5.10), and this influence of the exotic continued to develop more in the Han dynasty, when conflict and trade between the Han Empire and the nomadic Xiongnu people north of China intensified.[659] Many gold objects, such as gold belt plaques, were found at Shizishan,[660] and both the motifs and carving techniques appear to have been used in jade making (Figure 5.11). In the early Han period, gold increasingly came to be considered important and fashionable in its own right, as is discussed in the next chapter.[661]

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[657] Rawson 1995a: 66; Lin Meicun 2014: 70–9; Liu Yan 2017.
[658] Rawson 1995a: 27 and 252–6.
[659] *Ibid*: 40 and 43; Lin 2009: 23–4.
[660] Liu Yan 2017. For more discussion of these common finds, see Sun *et al.* 2017: 64–5 and 192–3; Section 6.3.3.
[661] Bunker and White 1994: 47–8.

We should, therefore, view all these changes in Han jades as a means to ensure the security and prosperity of the deceased in the afterlife by providing them with objects found in daily life made of the most precious and durable material, as well as the most popular design available.[662] However, one question still requires an answer: what was the dominant driving force for the appearance of the material-consuming, expensive, technically-demanding jade vessels and ornaments?

5.4. Discussion

The outline and comparison of the Warring States and Han dynasty tombs above demonstrates that developments in Han jade use can be characterised by its widespread use for suits, body plugs, coffins, vessels, and weapons. These developments cannot simply be explained, however, as the inevitable continuation of the local, precedent traditions examined in the previous section. What, then, were the main reasons for the appearance of these items? What kinds of beliefs and meanings did these jades illustrate? This section argues that the jade suits and multiple layers of jades in Han tombs were more than just protection whilst other jade objects ensured the continuity of enjoyable aspects of life for the deceased. The jade's contact with the body of the deceased, i.e. the contact between object and peson, was an integral part of transferring the qualities of the jade. The existing scholarship mentioned above tends to merely draw parallels between jade's physical qualities and symbolic ones, as if the underlying associative

[662] Rawson 1995a: 73.

framework is obvious without needing explanation. The following discussion assumes that this is not the case and, instead, explains the placing of jade next to the body in terms of material agency, so as to make clear the process whereby the physical characteristics of jade were transmuted into protection and immortality, as understood within the worldview of Han people. This is demonstrated against the background of ideologies and burial trends in the Han period.

5.4.1 Bodily engagement: jade suits

The jade suit is one of the more well-known features of Han dynasty burial goods. As described by Meng Qiang, 'If one can use only one jade object to define the Han dynasty, it would be the jade suit.'[663] Prior to the Han dynasty, jade covers were already used in wealthy Zhou dynasty tombs, and, even at this early stage, it seems that jade was potentially being used to protect the deceased in the afterlife.[664] For the Han dynasty jade suits, it has been substantially argued by scholars that they were modelled on contemporary iron armour.[665] Just as the iron armour defended a soldier from harm by their enemies, jade, symbolising longevity and purity, was regarded as offering defence against bad spirits and demons in the afterlife.[666] The parallel between iron armour and the jade burial suits has not been discussed in sufficient detail to elucidate

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[663] Jinyangwang-xinkuaiwang 2016, available at http://collection.sina.com.cn/jczs/2016-04-24/doc-ifxrpvea1144138.shtml, accessed 25th July 2020.
[664] See Section 5.2.2; Pernat 1992: 102; Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 142.
[665] Rawson 1999a: 50; Lin 2003: 20–43.
[666] *Ibid*; Lin 2012b: 80.

why and how jade suits functioned similar to armour; a gap in the current literature that this section aims to fill.

In Chapter Three, changes in Han burial practice, especially the development of rock-cut and stone tombs are discussed. Such changes came about as a result of people's desire to achieve deathlessness and live permanently in an afterlife. It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why jade was chosen to make the burial suits, as it was considered a type of stone and was specifically linked to the concept of eternity.[667] Jade was also believed to be protective. The late third-century BC *Daybook* from Shuihudi suggests that white stones offered defence against evil as mentioned above.[668] This sentiment is echoed later by the fourth-century AD Daoist work *The Master Embracing Simplicity* (*Baopuzi* 抱樸子) of Ge Hong 葛洪 (AD 283–343), which also records throwing a white stone as a defence strategy against ghosts, as well as the common Han era practice of burying white stone and jades in tombs.[669] The magical power of protection offered by jade, together with the material symbolism of mountain stones and the analogy of iron armours as mentioned above, all show that the jade suits were intended to be protective and preservative.

In addition to the jade suits that enclosed the body completely, jade's efficacy as an aid to protect the deceased's body both from evil and decay was bolstered by placing

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[667] Rawson 1995a: 126; Lin 2003: 36–7.

[668] Liu Lexian 1994; Lin 2003: 29; Yu Ming 2011: 19.

[669] *Baopuzi*, 17.304. Although this is a post-Han text, it has been considered one of the most important sources for understanding Han practices and society. Also see Ware 1966: 288; Wu 2005: 137; Lin 2009: 12.

more jade within, upon, underneath, and next to the body.[670] As the tombs of Marquis Yi of Zeng and Shizishan shows, burial jades, including plugs, hand grips, and face covers were already in use in the Zhou dynasty; but there was an obvious increase in the number of layers of jade in the Han dynasty, as well as the variety of shapes and forms these came in.[671] Represented by the burial practices evident at Shizishan and other royal Han tombs, like Mancheng, the bodies of the deceased were gradually surrounded and encased with jade. From the innermost to outermost layers, these were: 1) plugs; 2) *bi*-discs; 3) suits; 4) hand grips, weapons, and pillows; and 5) coffins.[672]

In addition to the huge number of jades consumed in such burial practices (hundreds of thousands of plaques for the suits and coffins), there is another process worth noticing here: engagement between the jade and the body. The jade plugs were directly inserted into the deceased's orifices, the *bi*-discs inside the jade suit were placed directly on or underneath the deceased's body, and the suits were perfectly made to fit the human form—the suits' plaques were cut into different shapes and sizes to fit different parts of the body, and some suits even have facial features represented.[673] Wu Hung has noticed and discussed such jade 'layering' practices, and he interprets it as a

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[670] Rawson 1995a: 73. Similar practice is seen earlier in Chu State as mentioned in the previous section, and later in the tomb of Liu Sheng in Mancheng, Hebei Province. See *Kaoguxue jikan* 1982; Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 36–7 and 294.

[671] Beijing 1959c; Beijing 1980a vol. 2: 296.

[672] About 20 jade pillows ranging in date from the early to mid-Western Han dynasty have been found across China. *Kaogu* 1980c; Hong Shi 2010: 321–55. '… jade suits include the head, clothes, trousers, gloves and shoes which originated from the face covers, shrouds, and ways of making armour from the pre-Han period…' see Gu Fang 1996: 138. In some cases, not all five layers of jade have been found. See Appendix 5.1.

[673] Wu 2005 vol. 1: 138; Lin 2009: 24.

practice wherein the deceased was transformed into a 'jade body'.[674] He argues that, as opposed to the rather well-preserved bodies wrapped in layers of cloth from Mawangdui, no traces of bodies have been found in jade suits, thus the intention of Han society's upper strata was to transform the organic body into a jade body. However, there is no written or archaeological evidence to suggest that a jade body was desired; nor does Wu's opinion of substituting the body of the deceased into a jade body match the popular Han period concept of preserving the body, as discussed in Chapter Three.[675] It thus seems far more probable that the use of large quantities of jade around the body was related to a concurrent preoccupation with immortality in Han society, and a greater amount of jade close to the deceased was thought to give them better protection, so that they could enjoy the afterlife. The jade plugs and face covers which were used before the Han dynasty have been demonstrated to have served a preservative role by stopping the vital energy of *qi* leaving the body.[676] The preservation of the physical body was important to pre-Han people, and this very likely continued to be an important aspect of Han burial, as mentioned in Chapter Three. The *Book of the Later Han* records that the corpses enclosed in jade suits in the royal Han tombs were 'all like living people' (*shuai jie ru sheng* 率皆如生).[677] This seems to describe an ideal state of body preservation as opposed to the actual state, as no human body has yet been

[674] Wu 1997: 160–4.
[675] *Ibid*. Wu did not refer to texts and basically made the argument on the sole basis of archaeological remains. For the concept of preserving the body in Han China, see Section 3.3.1.
[676] Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997: 134–7; Section 5.2.2.
[677] *Hou han shu*, 41.487–90.

found preserved completely in the jade suits to date.[678] However, it seems clear from the written records that Han era people believed jade could prevent a body from ever decaying, instead of deliberately breaking down the organic body vanish so that the deceased was transformed into a jade body. Additionally, the jade suits are also called *yuxia* 玉匣 in Chinese historical sources,[679] which literally means 'jade case', which suggests that they were designed to contain rather than replace the organic body of the deceased. This further supports the idea that those who buried the deceased wanted to preserve the body inside the 'case' or suit.

The conviction that life continued in the tomb was first supplemented and then modified by the concept of an afterlife in paradise during the early phase of religious Daoism in the late Eastern Zhou to late Han periods, approximately fourth century BC to second century AD.[680] Historical texts show that a cult of jade developed around the idea that it could grant immortality,[681] with some attesting to the idea that jade was considered particularly effective in close proximity to the body. For example, the *Records of the Grand Historian* records that the Han emperor Wudi built a device to collect dewdrops in the Jianzhang 建章 Palace. Wudi then combined the morning dew with jade powder in a jade cup, which he then drank, believing it would grant him

[678] Gu Fang 1996: 140.

[679] *Hou han shu*, 41; Shi Wei 1972: 48; Sun Ji 2014: 253–4.

[680] The *fangshi* emerged in Warring States period and later kept existing and even became popular in the court in Western Han period may be considered as the earliest origin of religious Daoist. See Sections 2.2.1 and 3.3.1. For more history on early Daoism, see Tang Yijie 2006. Later on, religious Daoism flowered in the Tang dynasty. See Wu 1984; Seidel 1987a; Rawson 1995a: 75, 107, and 187.

[681] *Baopuzi*, 3.50–1; Xia Nai 1983: 136–7.

immortality.[682]

The story of Wudi physically ingesting jade to achieve immortality shows that bodily engagement with jade was considered important. For those who passed away, inserting jade plugs into their bodily orifices, placing *bi*-discs underneath and on them, dressing them in jade suits, placing jade grips in their hands, and resting their heads on jade pillows was a means to increase the number of points of interaction between the physical body and immortal jade.[683] This follows the theory of Brian Massumi, who suggests that a person's skin functions, not as a boundary, but as an interface through which certain energies and substances are projected and absorbed.[684] In the case of the jade suits, the exchange of substances—i.e. the intangible qualities—between jade and the body was believed to facilitate the deceased's progression to an immortal afterlife, and the objects became active or animate through their engagement with the human body.[685]

Jade's symbolic properties—durability, protection, immortality—were thus realised by its use within and without the body of the deceased. The engagement between body and jade provided a channel through which the positive attributes of jade

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[682] *Shi ji*, 12.297. Searching for immortality was a major preoccupation among both kings and nobles during the late Warring States period, as well as after the Qin unification. The first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, was said to have sent Xu Fu 徐福, his court physician, with thousands of young boys and girls to search for a remote, mythical island believed to be the location of the elixir of life. *Shi ji*, 6.127 and 131; Liu Qingzhu 1996: 5 and 10.

[683] Objects provide a range of sensory experiences and place obligations on human in the ways human relate to objects. By providing channels of interaction, things may actively shape human. See Gosden 2005: 196; Malafouris 2017: 295.

[684] Massumi further elaborates on human's mesoperceptual (body perception) apparatus. Massumi 2002.

[685] Similar engagement in the appreciation and use of decorative arts and objects in late imperial China has been analysed in detail by Jonathan Hay. See Hay 2010: 78–82.

were conveyed to the deceased.[686] In this way, jade was an active agent facilitating the deceased's path to immortality, as it was through the body's engagement with the jade that the deceased obtained the beneficial qualities it embodied. At the same time, the jades acted as focal points of interaction with the body that helped the deceased to reach the ideal afterlife.[687] This relational perspective disentangles the significance of jade's visual attributes, which have been appreciated and valued aesthetically[688] but almost never properly investigated in funerary contexts. Though these fundamental features of jade are almost taken for granted by many scholars and general audiences the importance of jade's materiality has been neglected to date. Instead of placing many jades indiscriminately around the tombs, the plugs, *bi*-discs, and labour-intensive tailor-made jade suits[689] strongly suggest that contact between the jades and the body were of paramount importance in the transfer of auspicious qualities to the deceased. From this perspective, it is impossible to ignore that auspiciousness was produced through mutually informative entanglement of objects and people: it was neither exclusively the jade nor the body that activated the auspicious functions of the multiple layers of jade objects surrounding the deceased but the contact and interaction between the two.

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[686] Although the quality of the jade for each suit varied according to the status of different elites, the basic features of the material jade including smooth and hard were similar. Wang Jing 2008: 39–40.

[687] Gosden 2005: 195–6.

[688] Gu Fang 1996: 7.

[689] For instance, the jade suit for Liu Sheng was probably re-tailored once because Liu Sheng gained weight and had a bigger belly when he died, which made it impossible for him to fit into the commissioned jade suit before. Information from the display in the original archaeological site of the Mancheng tombs, Mancheng, Hebei Province, China, accessed 24th August 2017.

Some jade suits or plaques were decorated with auspicious patterns that emphasised the status of the deceased, such as dragons, persimmons, and cloud swirls (Figure 5.12).[690] According to the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* (*Xijing zaji* 西京雜記), Wudi's jade suit was decorated with motifs of dragons, phoenixes, tortoises, and unicorns (or *qilin* 麒麟), and was named the 'dragon jade suit' (*jiaolong yuxia* 蛟龍玉匣).[691] This not only reflected the emperor's high status, but the carved mythical creatures were also supposed to aid him in his pursuit of immortality. As auspicious motifs, they were expected to bring the same benefits as an actual dragon or tortoises etc.[692] The writings of Sima Qian also show that people believed that depicting something in an image could bring it to life.[693] Thus, not only was Wudi protected from evil spirits and decay by the jade surrounding him, but also the jade suit's power was amplified by the motifs of auspicious creatures; all of this would ensure the emperor achieved immortality.

Excavations show that jade suits were adopted in imperial burials, and texts show that there were regulations on the use of jades for people of different status. The *Old Rites of the Han* (*Han jiuyi* 漢舊儀), composed c. AD 25–27, records detailed

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[690] Examples of such motifs are found at Xingtai Nanjiao 邢臺南郊 in Hebei Province, for which the report is *Kaogu* 1980b, and Wulian Zhangjia Zhonggu 五蓮張家仲崮 in Shandong Province, which is detailed in *Wenwu* 1987. See also Gu Fang 1996: 139.

[691] *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* is a collection of historiographical and semi-historical stories on the Western Han dynasty written by Ge Hong. See *Xijing zaji*, 1.5.

[692] Section 4.2.1. For the concept of *xiang*, or image, in ancient China, see Sections 1.1.2 and 1.3.1. For the auspiciousness of mythical creatures, see Section 4.2.1; for unicorns, see Wei Zheng 2017: 106–7 and Section 6.3.3; For the auspicious meaning of the plant persimmon, most scholars agree that it represents prosperity. Li Ling 2012: 35–8.

[693] *Shi ji*, 1.1–12 and 6.134; Watson 1971 vol. 2: 42; Rawson 1999a: 127.

regulations on the use of jade suits and thread for the plaques according to social status.[694] Despite this, there are quite a few cases in Han tombs where such rules were clearly violated. For instance, the King of Nanyue ruled a semi-sinicised independent kingdom at the edge of the Han Empire and thus was not supposed to be buried in a full jade suit.[695] People outside of the imperial Liu family who were granted permission to be buried in full jade suits are recorded in orthodox texts, like the *Book of Han* and *Book of the Later Han*. Such individuals include: meritorious officials, like Huo Guang 霍光 (d. 68 BC) and Dong Xian 董賢 (d. 22–1 BC); vassals of the Han Empire, like the kings of Buyeo (*Fuyu* 夫馀) (second century BC–494 BC) in the northeast; and imperial relatives by marriage, like Empress Dowager Fu 傅 (c. first century BC–2 BC) and the mother of Emperor Ai 哀 (r. 6–1 BC).[696] The desire to enjoy the protection of jade in the afterlife seems to have been widespread, however, and those who could not afford much jade also included the material in burial assemblages, though to lesser extents. For instance, the numbers of jades in decorated tombs in the two capital areas are few, but small jades, such as plugs and face covers, were almost always found close to the bodies.[697]

Objects, like people, can have an effect. The layering of burial jades was an

[694] *Han jiuyi buyi*; Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 36–7, 244–5, and 344–57; Section 6.3.1, note 820 below.

[695] *Han shu*, 68 and 93; *Hou han shu*, 41.487–90; Liu Zunzhi 2011. There are scholars who argue that the standardisation of jade suit use was not fully established until the Eastern Han dynasty. See Lu Zhaoyin 2004: 4–14. See no. 35 in Appendix 5.1 for more information on the tomb of King of Nanyue.

[696] *Han shu*, 68.2948, 93.3734 and 98.4004; *Hou han shu*, 10.442, 34.1174 and 83.2810; Lin 2014: 30–1.

[697] See Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

expression of people's desire to improve jade's efficacy by ensuring that it engaged with the deceased's body.[698] The desired effect was that the jades protect and preserve the deceased from decay, and thus make them immortal. The labour and resources consumed for such burials were not, however just intended to simply preserve the physical body, but also to ensure that the refined bodily substance of the deceased endured forever.[699] As outlined in Chapter Three, the Daoist concept of immortality was a part of Han period ideology, in addition to Confucianism and correlative cosmology. Immortality was not necessarily understood as the deceased going to live with the immortals in their realm that they rose to Heaven.[700] Instead, prevalent beliefs indicate that the refined bodily substance was conceived of as going to an eternal afterlife, whilst the body was safely preserved underground.[701] Evidence for this is expounded upon in the next section, as, in addition to burial jades that engaged directly with the deceased, other jades in Han tombs also contributed to a safe and comfortable afterlife.

5.4.2 Bringing life into the afterlife: jade decorations, utensils, and luxuries

[698] Also see Lewis 2006: 13.

[699] *Ibid*: 36–60. The preservation of the physical body was believed to be important for an eternal afterlife as discussed in Sections 3.3.1 and 4.4.

[700] Sun Ji 2014: 257.

[701] Loewe 1994b: vii. As to whether the refined bodily substance was supposed to live eternally in an ideal realm outside or within the tomb, scholars opinions vary; see Section 3.3.3. But there are reasons to believe that the eternal ideal realm was brought to the tomb space, as suggested by the microcosm and immortal realm depicted on murals or carvings within the tomb (Chapter Four), the agency of images or *xiang* (Section 1.1.2), and other objects facilitating immortality, like the incense burners explored in Section 6.3.2.

A wide variety of jades have been found in the storeroom areas—a side room to the main chamber—of Han tombs. Jade objects common in pre-Han periods, like *bi*-discs and *huang*-pendants, have been found.[702] Dragon-shaped ornaments, common finds in the Han dynasty, have also been discovered in these side chambers, but their craftsmanship is unparalleled by that of previous eras (Figure 5.13).[703] Such jade objects differ from the jade suits explored in the previous section, and their location in the tombs indicate that their functions were also different.

Since most jade objects found in the side chambers of tombs have holes, this indicates that they were either used as pendants or secured to other objects, more likely sets of ornament than ritual objects to be offered to the gods.[704] From texts, we know that wearing jade was considered moral and auspicious for the living.[705] Although the strict regulation and ritual use of jade evident in the Zhou dynasty[706] gradually disappeared after the fall of Zhou,[707] wearing of jade was revived and once more prudently regulated by the early Han court according to descriptions of Zhou customs:

[702] Rawson 1995a: 286; Gu Fang and Li Hongjuan 2009: 122–56. Tian Zhimei 2008: 69.
[703] Miller 2016: 103–10.
[704] Beijing 1991a vol. 2: 179.
[705] '… A man of rank was never without this (jade-stone) pendant, excepting for some sufficient reason; he regarded the pieces of jade as emblematic of virtues (which he should cultivate).' 君子無故玉不去身，君子于玉比德焉。*Li ji*, 4.120; Legge 1967 vol. 2: 19.
[706] Ornamental jade sets were worn by officials to ensure their moral behaviour and also indicate their rank. *Li ji*, 29.885.
[707] Sun Ji 2014: 254; Cao Bin and Chen Beichen 2018: 4.

> Ancient sage kings … [wore] paired *heng*-pendants at the top, a set of paired *huang*-pendants at the bottom, and tusks and pearls in between, with various other jade ornaments.[708]

In the Han dynasty, jades were clearly no longer restricted to ceremonial or display purposes as they had been previously, especially during the Western Zhou, but they had become significant items of dress for the living to bolster their authority, as well as more frequently used to distinguish social ranks between people.[709] It thus seems that the high density of various ornamental dress jades, including belt hooks, earrings, headdresses, and others, in Han tombs were also intended for adornment and indication of rank.[710] When used by the living, jades indicated an individual's social status, political position, and the distances that people of other ranks should maintain from him or her.[711] Consequently, as jade can be conceived of as having protected an individual's rank in life, it is probable that the jades buried in the storehouses of Han dynasty tombs also conveyed the message that the deceased was of a certain rank and a certain distance should be maintained, thus further protecting them from unexpected and bad spirits[712] not necessarily merely in the main coffin chamber in the tomb.

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[708] 古者聖王……上有雙珩，下有雙璜，衝牙蠙珠，以納其間，琚瑀以雜之。*Xin shu*, 6.229. The *New Writings* (*Xin shu* 新書) is an important theoretical work of political and educational treaties by Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–168 BC), a politician and poet of the Western Han dynasty.

[709] This differed from the Zhou practice of stressing the use of jade to restrain inappropriate behaviour. See *Xin shu*, 6.229 and 1.53; Sun Ji 2014: 254.

[710] Jade acted as protection in life to keep people of lower ranks at a proper distance to remain social order and etiquette, and this function may have translated into burial contexts as keeping away evil spirits and keeping order. For reference see Rawson 1995a: 17 and 315; Sun Ji 2014: 257.

[711] Rawson 1995a: 50; Sun Ji 2014: 251.

[712] Rawson 1995a: 52.

In addition to the smaller ornamental jades, however, some large, heavy jade objects also appear in Han tombs. Some highly decorative *bi*-discs, for instance, are too large to have been intended for wear, which contrasts with their use in earlier periods, as, for example, the 16 *bi*-discs in the ornamental set of Marquis Yi of Zeng were connected together and could have been worn.[713] In the Han dynasty, many *bi*-discs were interred with the deceased in the coffin, under the pillow, and even under the head or body in the jade suit, as seen at the tombs in Shizishan, Beidongshan 北洞山, and Mancheng.[714] In addition, the coffin of Dou Wan, consort of Liu Sheng, King Jing of Zhongshan, at Mancheng was decorated with 26 jade *bi*-discs, suggesting that such use of jade was dictated by status rather than gender.[715] Such large numbers of *bi*-discs are surprising, considering they were used as ritual objects in offerings to spirits during the Han dynasty, such as the *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices[716] or the sacrifice to the Sun God (*yang zhu shen* 陽主神).[717] This thus suggests that people during the Han dynasty had

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[713] *Bi*-discs started to have ornamental functions in the early Zhou dynasty at the latest. See Gu Fang 1996: 93; Sun Ji 2014: 254.

[714] Beijing 1980 vol. 1: 134 and 294; Beijing 1993b; *Wenwu* 1998: 19 and 21; Lin 2012b: 321–37.

[715] Lin 2012b: 213.

[716] The *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices included ceremonial sacrifices that guaranteed the legitimacy of the emperor and the court, which were conducted on Mount Tai in east China during the Han dynasty. During the sacrifices, *bi*-discs, *gui*-tablets and *huang*-pendants were used. For an overview of sacrifices during the Han dynasty and their locations, see *Shi ji*, 28; Watson 1971 vol. 2: 3–52; see also Rawson 1995a: 55–6; Tian Tian 2014a.

[717] Both Qin Shi Huang, and the Han emperor Wudi probably used jade sets comprising a jade *bi*-disc at the centre, a *gui*-tablet positioned in the disc's perforation, and two *xi* 觿 (pointed jade pendants) at both sides, in sacrifices to the Sun God. See *Shi ji*, 28.982; *Wenwu* 1976b; Wang Yongbo 1993: 62–8; Lu Zhaoyin 1998: 44; Lin 2009: 11. However, later Han texts composed on the basis of earlier texts, like *Comprehensive Discussions at White Tiger Hall*, often display misunderstandings of earlier texts. For instance, the shapes of ritual jades and their uses in the Han were almost completely different from those recorded in the *Rites of Zhou*. For example, the *bi*-disc was described as having square holes rather than round ones. See *Baihu tongyi*, 7.183–91; Rawson 1995a: 60.

no issue with utilising ceremonial and ritual objects as luxury, even auspicious, decorations, a trend also recorded in the *Book of Rites* and *Plan of the Three Capital Regions*.[718]

Furthermore, some scholars have pointed out that older jades were believed to have granted the deceased more protection.[719] As a result, some ancient jade *bi*-discs were reused or deliberately broken to be made into new ones. The jade pillows of Liu Sheng and Dou Wan at Mancheng were both made from fragments of Eastern Zhou discs.[720] Judging by the thousands of pieces of jades that formed the plaques of their burial suits, it does not seem probable that access to jade sources was an issue for them. It thus seems that using old *bi*-discs was considered more auspicious. This is supported by the fact that the *bi*-discs often have auspicious creatures depicted on the outer or inner border.[721] As discussed, in the Han dynasty, mythical creatures, like dragons, were auspicious and would help the tomb owner to reach immortality and the ideal afterlife.[722] The combination of social and cosmological roles played by *bi*-discs meant that visual depictions, such as the *bi*-disc motif seen on the silk banner from the tomb of Xin Zhui, Lady Dai, at Mawangdui and on carvings in Yinan 沂南 in Henan Province, were believed to embody luxurious, decorative, and auspicious qualities.[723]

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[718] The *bi*-discs were considered as auspicious interior ornament in the sense of warding of evil in architecture for the living. See *Li ji*, 31.937; *San fu huang tu*, 2.107–48; Sun Ji 2014: 254.

[719] Li Yinde 1993.

[720] Beijing 1980a vol. 2: 13; Rawson 1995a: 58.

[721] This may be traced back to the discs discovered in Qufu 曲阜, Shandong Province, in the Eastern Zhou. Jinan 1982; Rawson 1995a: 253–6;

[722] Seidel 1983: 312; Wu 1989: 104; Section 4.2.1.

[723] For more discussions of *bi*-discs, see Wu 2015: 228–38. For the Yinan carvings, see Beijing 1956.

Bi-discs were in no way the only jade object to have been used differently in the Han dynasty as compared to earlier periods. Another evident jade object was the *huang*-pendant, an arc-shaped jade, recorded as one of the Zhou dynasty's six core ritual objects.[724] In burial practices, they were frequently used as pendants, employed with other jades to form a set. In the Han dynasty, however, many *huang*-pendants were also discovered right next to the deceased's body or in the position that suggests they were held in the hands (Figure 5.14),[725] suggesting that they were used as hand grips held to increase the amount of jade the deceased's body was in contact with. This type of jade became popular for both high- and mid-ranking tombs. They were made with more refined techniques,[726] and many of them were decorated with mythical creatures.[727] By literally 'holding' the jade *huang*-pendants, the deceased was metaphorically enacting the meaning to hold wealth.[728] Through such particular displays or usage, jade objects came to be auspicious, or at least reflect secular as opposed to ceremonial and ritual desires.

Alongside the increase in more secular items in Han tombs, the number of other ritual jades for nature worship also decreased. The *cong* is an example of this, as it was even used as a genital case in Liu Sheng's tomb at Mancheng.[729] Meanwhile, in the

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[724] See Section 5.2.2.

[725] Ayers and Rawson 1975: 48–9. For more details and numbers of different jade hand grips in the Han dynasty, see Wang Jing 2008: 23–7.

[726] Huang Peixian 2008: 1–17.

[727] Some of these *huang*-pendant pieces were adapted from *bi*-discs, see Gu Fang 1996: 99.

[728] *Ibid*: 158–9.

[729] Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 140; Tian Zhimei 2008: 66.

Han tomb of Sanlidun 三里墩, Lianshui 漣水, Jiangsu Province, another *cong* was placed on four gilded silver animal stands, which were most likely intended to display the object in a decorative manner.[730] The broader trend of combining gold with jade, as well as applying goldwork styles and carving techniques to jades,[731] reflects people's desire to bring fashions from life into the afterlife, as gold was increasingly prevalent during the Han dynasty, and became a fashionable way to demonstrate one's high social status.[732] Although it is possible that gold was also linked to the Han interest in immortality, it never completely replaced jade as the primary symbol of immortality and social prestige.[733]

Everyday objects made from jade that were placed in Han tombs were most likely intended to serve the deceased long into the afterlife. Jade utensils, weapons, and implements have been found in the tomb at Shizishan, and such complex jade assemblages are common among royal tombs from the Han dynasty.[734] The jade objects in Shizishan were placed in different chambers with clear divisions, with the tomb layout itself resembling that of a palace. These jades were shaped like objects originally made of other materials, like iron or lacquer, so even supposedly practical items emphasised the concepts of durability and eternity. Jade weapons, either held by

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[730] *Kaogu* 1973; Sun Ji 2014: 253.

[731] Jade plaques cast in high relief with sinuous entwined dragons which reflected the influence of goldwork were found in Warring States tombs such as Changtaiguan 長檯關, Xinyang County, Henan Province. Beijing 1986: 52–3. Similar high relief craft techniques were applied on jade in Han dynasty tombs. Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 135; Lin 2009: 41 and 49–56; Section 5.3.2.

[732] This is explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

[733] *Ibid*; Bunker 1993: 27 and 46.

[734] Yang Shuda 2000: 47–53; Appendix 5.1.

the tomb owner or placed next to them, were not necessarily used on the battlefield, as they were too heavy, too valuable, and too fragile to be of use in combat. Similarly, jade cups are common finds at both settlement and burial sites of the Qin and Han dynasties.[735] Including these impractical or everyday items in burial assemblages thus may relate to the newly-emerged interest in immortality.[736] In this way, the objects were made, buried, and materially eternalized for more spiritual and symbolic purposes to serve the tomb owner's immortal spirit long into his or her afterlife.[737] These jades simultaneously indicated the deceased's high status—they were able to afford such highly crafted, valuable objects—but, at the same time, the jades protected them from evil spirits and ensured the deceased would enjoy a decent afterlife with all the luxuries, objects, and ornament they had possessed in life.[738]

Finally, the observation that jades in Han dynasty burial assemblages could simultaneously embody various ideas relating to social status, secular desires, and cosmological worldview demonstrates that descriptive words used for classifying these jades in archaeological reports and by scholars, including 'ritual', 'burial', 'ornamental', and 'implement', may require assessment. These descriptions imply object functions mostly inherited from pre-Han traditions of jade use, whilst the uses and functions of

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[735] Jade cups have been discovered more from Han tombs. A few have been found in Qin dynasty palace sites such as the Epang 阿房 palace in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. See Jian Bozan 2003: 373.

[736] Written texts attest to Han emperors and nobles drinking morning dew mixed with jade powder in a jade cup to attain longevity as mentioned in Section 5.4.1. They thought that eternal life could be achieved by using the valuable, technically-complex jade vessels, but this did not necessarily mean they were transformed into an immortal.

[737] Rawson 1995a: 73; 1999.

[738] Yates 1994: 56–80; Rawson 1995a: 17; Lin 2012b: 101–6.

similar jade objects in the Han dynasty were different. In addition, there were regional differences in jade use for rituals, ceremonies, gift-giving, and burials in both pre-Han and Han times,[739] as demonstrated by contradictions between prescriptive texts and jade use attested archaeologically.[740] As a result, it is important for researchers to approach jade objects as complex objects in which various contemporary ideas pertaining to different aspects of Han life were manifested.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter focuses on jade objects in Han tombs, not only because they are more numerous and of much higher quality than in previous periods, but also because major changes occurred in jade use during the Han dynasty. In life, jade was used to make objects for offerings in sacrificial ceremonies, for gifts between states or people, and for personal adornment, which was governed by rules of decoration, etiquette, and status.[741] In death, jade was used for orifice plugs, suits, pillows, and coffins, as well as other utensils, weapons, and implements, a majority of which were placed close to the deceased in the tomb.

Although these new uses of jade in early imperial China have been studied by many scholars,[742] the relationship between jade and the deceased within the whole burial

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[739] Xu Zhuoyun 1965: chp. 2; Yang Jianfang 2012 vol. 1: 223–43.

[740] These Zhou dynasty 'regulations' were most possibly formulated in the Han dynasty according to popular theories of yin, yang, and the five phases within a correlative cosmos, as most of these texts were first systematically compiled in Han dynasty texts. Haddon 1913: 226; Rawson 1995a: 57–60; Gu Fang 1996: 91–2; Section 2.2.2.

[741] Biot 1975 vol. 1: 431–40; Rawson 1995a: 78–9.

[742] Gump 1962; Xia Nai 1983; Yang 1992; Rawson 1995a; Gu Fang 1996; Scott 1997; Lu

context has not previously been examined in detail. Therefore, this chapter carefully traced the pre-Han history of jade use and compared two typical tombs of the Zhou and Han dynasties to define Han jades, before examining the new uses of Han jades and exploring the reasons for these.

The most prominent change in jade use between the Han dynasty and earlier periods is the emergence of jade suits, which have only been found in Han dynasty burials. This chapter argues that these suits, together with the unprecedented layering of other jade objects—including orifice plugs, *bi*-discs covering or under the body, hand grips, pillows, and coffins—were designed to protect the deceased from attacks by demons and to preserve the body. Jade was considered particularly suitable for these tasks because it was popularly associated with qualities such as durability and immortality. More importantly, it was through bodily engagement with jade that the qualities symbolised by jade were realised as actual. That is to say, it was only through close proximity to and interaction with the tomb owner's body that burial jades gained material agency to protect, preserve, and immortalise the deceased. This argument is different from previous theories, such as the analogy of jade suits as iron amour, which simply juxtaposes two different objects. By contrast, this chapter elucidates the intermediate process of how and why jade suits could function as protective armour. It was through the process whereby the tomb owner's body was in physical contact with the jade objects that jade protected the dead and improved their afterlife.

Zhaoyin 1998; Lin 2009 and 2012.

This chapter argues that, although practices of plugging bodily orifices and covering the faces or the bodies of the deceased are evident in the Zhou dynasty, the intentions behind such practices were different from the Han-period practice of creating multiple layers of jades. The layers of jade emphasised a strong desire for the physical body's preservation, which was believed to be essential to guarantee that one's refined bodily substance achieved immortality. This was most likely influenced by ideological developments and changing attitudes towards the afterlife.[743] Sources compiled in the Han dynasty give accounts of the contemporary interest in deathlessness, immortal lands, and the cosmos.[744]

Following on from the theory that the tomb space acted as an eternal residence or palace,[745] the many jade objects may have been buried to ensure the continuation of enjoyable aspects of daily life for the deceased. The various new uses of old object types, such as *bi*-discs being used to decorate coffins and *cong* used to cover certain parts of the deceased, suggest that their ritual or ceremonial importance had declined. By contrast, this paralleled an increase in their use for more practical purposes, namely decorating the tomb space and assisting the deceased to attain a better afterlife. The influence of goldwork on the techniques used for jade also shows that these were modelled on luxuries from the living realm that the deceased wanted to take them into

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[743] See Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

[744] Even if there was a systematic cosmology, including certain rules for burial practices, drawn up in the Han dynasty, regional differences and social climbing through improper use of status-indicating jades are evident. Jade suits incorporate objects and beliefs from different regions of the Han Empire. Section 5.4.1; Rawson 1998: 125.

[745] See Section 3.3.3.

death.[746] New fashions, however, also threatened the established social order, as wealthy individuals bought articles of higher status than their own,[747] and individuals of lower status purchased what jade they could afford.[748]

China can be described as having a culture of jade.[749] The long tradition of jade use witnessed various developments in object types, decorations, and functions. In the Han dynasty, jade was used to protect the body of the deceased, defend them against demons and ghosts, secure them a long-lasting afterlife, and ensure the durability of essential items buried with them. In addition, jade objects could serve as the vehicle for representations of auspicious motifs, like dragons, unicorns and cloud swirls.[750] In all senses explored in this chapter, jade can be considered to have been an auspicious material: It not only brought indicated social success and ensured morality during one's lifetime, but, through bodily engagement and visual representation, jade also brought beneficial outcomes in the afterlife.

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[746] Liu Yunhui 2009: 3.

[747] Yang Boda 1992: 120; Rawson 1995a: 307; Section 5.4.1, note 684.

[748] Jade objects, though fewer in number, have been discovered in middle- or low-ranking Han tombs. No more than ten jades have been discovered in over 200 tombs at Shaogou, Luoyang, Henan Province. Beijing 1959a; Gu Fang 1996: 89.

[749] Rawson 1995a: 28.

[750] For the auspicious mythical creatures, see Section 4.2 of this thesis; Rawson 1995a: 127; Pan Pan 2016.

CHAPTER 6
Fashion, exotica, and adaptation: new uses of gold in the Han dynasty

6.1. Introduction

In many ancient cultures, like Greece, Rome, and Egypt, gold was highly prized due to its incorruptible nature, and gold objects were regarded as symbols of high status.[751] In China, by contrast, there was a long cultural tradition of jade as a high–status material, as discussed in the previous chapter. Unlike other cultures, gold was incorporated into Han society and mortuary practice as a new fashion originating from regions to the west.[752] The fashion for gold as an exotic, foreign material can be traced back to at least the eighth century BC, the Spring and Autumn period.[753] During this period, the competing feudal states of the Zhou dynasty had contact with mobile herders to the west and north, who used gold as a symbol of prestige and power. These interactions stimulated an increasing interest in gold in China.[754]

This chapter argues that, in the Han dynasty, gold objects and decorations became an integral part of the burial system for the first time. Gold deposited in burial assemblages, together with jade and tomb murals and carvings, indicates that the people

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[751] Clark 1986: 50–7; Bunker 1993: 27.
[752] Bunker 1993: 27; Rawson 1995a: 60.
[753] Rawson 1995a: 64; Qi Dongfang 2006: 71–2; Rawson 2017: 378 and 381.
[754] Rawson and Bunker 1990: 293–5; Bunker 1993: 32–3.

of Han China pursued an immortal afterlife within a properly structured and decorated tomb that acted as an eternal residence. What is special about gold in Han tombs is that the objects made of or decorated with gold (e.g. incense burners and belt buckles) and related ornamental motifs (e.g. zoomorphic patterns and winged creatures) all seem to have originated in the border areas of the Han Empire and beyond. This complex of gold objects was combined with local auspicious motifs, such as the Four Deities and the Queen Mother of the West, to form an auspicious ornamental system in Han mortuary art and practice. The historical background and reasons behind such a development are explored here.

Firstly, the meaning of 'gold' is defined by reference to relevant textual materials. In the Han dynasty, the numbers of written sources that refer to gold and the amount of gold recorded increase hugely, though some of these records should be treated with caution with regard to their reliability.[755] Secondly, the western origin of the tradition of gold use is traced. Important sites in north, west, and south China dating to around the eighth century BC are mentioned specifically, because they represent distinct regional styles of gold design and use, which laid the foundation for gold working in the following period.

New shared practices in gold use can be seen in the Han dynasty, such as using gold thread to make jade suits and decorating incense burners with gold. These major

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[755] The current amount of gold found in archaeological contexts does not match the thousands of kilograms of gold recorded in historical texts as having been used in the Han dynasty (Section 6.2.1). However, there are increasingly numerous new categories of gold objects discovered in Han tombs, as discussed throughout this chapter. For more discussion of this issue, see Liu Rui 2016.

changes in gold use have, to date, not been sufficiently studied in relation to auspicious ornament. Indeed, not much scholarly attention has been paid to gold before the Tang dynasty.[756] There are only a few general studies on gold in early China,[757] and some research on techniques of goldwork and the influence of these on other materials, like jade, has been done.[758] This chapter discusses major changes in gold use in Han dynasty burial practices in detail, mainly making reference to the finds from royal tombs, where most gold has been discovered. With a focus on the development of a shared belief system throughout the Han Empire and a stronger degree of contact with the west, the questions of how and why gold became important in the Han dynasty can be answered. This chapter also examines local adaptation of foreign techniques and motifs, demonstrating how materials and motifs from one place may not be entirely adopted when they arrive in another, but they are often adapted and certain aspects transplanted. These processes are illuminated using theories of agency and materiality, which emphasise the mutually informative relationship between materials, technologies, and styles, as well as broader contextual trends in art, society, and history.

6.2. Definition and historical background

6.2.1 **Definition**

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[756] The Tang dynasty has been acknowledged as a golden age for goldwork in China. Qi Dongfang 1999 and 2006: 73; Shigeshi Katō 2006. There is also little archaeological evidence for the mining of gold before the Tang dynasty. See Golas 1999; Ran Wanli 2008: 102.

[757] Rawson and Bunker 1990; Bunker 1993; Qi Dongfang 2006; Lin Meicun has also researched the influence of western metal and goldwork on China. See Lin Meicun 2006: 98–109.

[758] Rawson 1995a: 60–74; Qi Dongfang 1999 and 2006; He Yun'ao 2008; Liu Yan 2017: 1590–5.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'gold' refers to a yellow precious metal which is resistant to tarnishing and corrosion, relatively malleable and ductile, and is used in finance, as well as to make jewellery and ornament.[759] This definition indicates the key qualities of gold that probably made it appealing to early people, namely that it is incorruptible and relative easy to work.

The Chinese character for gold used today is *jin* 金, but it was originally used to denote 'metal' in general.[760] Inscriptions on Shang dynasty oracle bones and Western Zhou bronzes represent the earliest forms of writing in ancient China, and *jin* is mostly used to refer to bronze or copper (Figure 6.1).[761] It was not until the Eastern Zhou dynasty that gold was differentiated from copper, evident in the Warring States period *Writings of Master Guan*, 'under [the mountain] there is gold … under [the mountain] there is copper'.[762] Later, the third–century BC dictionary, *Erya*, refers to gold as 'yellow metal' (*huangjin* 黃金), whilst silver is defined as 'white metal' (*baijin* 白金).[763]

That the concept of gold was specified in the Eastern Zhou reflects that more specific attention was being paid to gold.[764] Later, the Han dynasty witnessed an

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759 *Oxford English Dictionary* 2017.

760 Bunker 1993: 28.

761 *Ibid*; Li Xueqin 1985: 330–6; Qi Dongfang 1999: 68.

762 See 'Methods for Exploiting the Earth' (*Dishu* 地數), in the *Writings of Master Guan*: If cinnabar lies near the surface, gold may be found below. If magnetite lies near the surface, copper may be found below (上有丹沙者，下有黃金。上有慈石者，下有銅金). *Guanzi*, 23.1355; Rickett 1985: 423. The earliest records were dated to Eastern Zhou, but distinction might be made earlier, of which there is not yet related evidence known to today.

763 'Explaining Utensils, Tools, Weapons, Clothing, and their Uses' (*Shiqi* 釋器), in *Erya* 6.371. For more information on *Erya*, see note 235 above.

764 More discussion is conducted in Section 6.2.2 on archaeological excavation of gold dating to

unprecedented abundance of texts on gold, especially on mining and goldwork techniques.[765] There was also an increase in records of gold used for trade, impirical benediction, and imperial stockpiles, and the overall amount of gold mentioned in Western Han records totals around 2,000,000 jin 斤 (445,201 kg).[766] Such numbers attest to exploitation of the many natural gold sources, often alloyed with silver, within China. Although these texts may not provide a complete picture of gold circulation during the Han dynasty, and archaeological evidence suggests that it does not, it was likely that gold became an important part of life and afterlife for the Han imperial family, as well as others of high rank.[767]

6.2.2 Historical background

Over the third to first millennium BC, the societies of Central China were constantly influenced by the metallurgical traditions of mobile pastoralists from across the steppe.[768] In the Shang and the Western Zhou dynasty, the Central Plain polities were continually pressured by the peoples on their borders.[769] Trade and contact between

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different periods.

[765] *Han shu*, 99.4039–98; *Shi ji*, 8.214 and 218, 10.256 and 264, 12.285 and 288–9; *The Discussion on Salt and Iron* (*Yan tie lun* 鹽鐵論) by Huan Kuan 桓寬 (fl. c. 1st century B.C.) is an important text on the economy and politics of the Western Han dynasty, which also briefly mentions the mining and use of gold. *Yan tie lun*, vol. 1; Gale 1931; Bunker 1993: 29; Qi Dongfang 1999: 80–1.

[766] The jin is a Han dynasty unit of weight, and 1 jin was equal to approximately 222.6 g. The estimate of gold provided here may include reused gold. See *Wenwu* 1980d. Even though the quantity decreased to 700,000 jin (179,200 kg) in the Xin dynasty, this still approximately totalled the amount of gold stored by the Roman Empire (27 BC–AD 476). *Han shu*, 99.4039–98; Qi Dongfang 1999: 82.

[767] Qi Dongfang proposes that the Han dynasty was a period when the status of gold became high; however, he does not sufficiently provide further discussion. See Qi Dongfang 2006: 71–2.

[768] Bunker 1993: 27; Linduff 1998: 619–43 and 2015: 8–14; Di Cosmo 2002: 56–87; Anthony 2007: 371–457; Frachetti 2012; Rawson 2017.

[769] Rawson 2017: 375.

the dynasties and these groups have also been acknowledged.[770] Since these groups on the borders were also in contact with people on the Eurasian Steppe, the dynasties were also introduced to various object and technologies through them, including chariots for warfare, metallurgy, and gold foil.[771] As is shown below, although gold was not used in the same way in the Shang and Zhou polities as in the borderlands,[772] early use of gold in China was entirely connected with outsiders.

The Eastern Zhou dynasty was a time when goldwork developed quickly in China. Major types of gold objects or items decorated with gold include sword handles, vessels, vehicle decorations, belt buckles, and belt hooks. Gold was also used as currency in the form of both gold coins and bronze shell money (*bei* 貝) that was covered with gold.[773] These various uses and techniques at this time were still only intended to reflect the status and wealth of the individual, not necessarily cosmological beliefs.[774] However, many gold–making techniques, object types, and motifs seen in the Han dynasty may have been inherited from ones apparent during the Eastern Zhou dynasty. Such intensified contacts with outsiders and improved techniques in gold working led exotic gold items to become highly prized in the Han dynasty.

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[770] Bunker 1993: 30; Li Feng 2006: 141–92; Keightley 2012: 174–93.

[771] The gold foil discovered in Central China has not yet been discovered archaeologically at contemporary sites in Liaoning, Hebei, or Shanxi provinces. Bunker 1993: 32; Li Jianwei 2011: 22–3.

[772] But artefacts enriched by gold did reflect status, as mentioned above. So and Bunker 1995: 62; Li Jianwei 2011: 19 and 27.

[773] Huang Shengzhang 1996: 145; Qi Dongfang 1999: 73–7. For more discussions of the Eastern Zhou period, see So 1980: 241–322; Lawton 1982; Li Xueqin 1985; Li Xiaoxuan 2017.

[774] Gold among the groups on the periphery of Zhou territory was believed to have been used to give visual form to the supernatural world that governed their lives, as well as indicating the owner's individual clan, rank, and status. Bunker 1993: 35 and 46; Lin Meicun 2006: 43–53.

Gold from outsiders: the Shang and Western Zhou dynasties

The earliest finds of gold within the territory of modern China were discovered in northern and western China at the sites of Huoshaogou 火燒溝 (c. 1900–1700 BC) in Yumen 玉門, Gansu Province,[775] and Dadianzi 大甸子 (c. 1700–1450 BC) in Aohan 敖漢 Banner, Inner Mongolia.[776] Small finds of gold and silver, including rings and earrings, were discovered. However, these few, small discoveries are not considered evidence for the start of gold production and use in China.[777]

The earliest archaeologically attested production and use of gold can be dated to the late second millennium BC.[778] Gold objects have been found in several regions of China occupied by minority nationalities (Figure 6.2): 1) gold jewellery and ornaments of Siberian styles in the Hebei–Liaoning region (c. 2000–1500 BC) in the northeast;[779] 2) gold ornaments of southern Siberian style in Shanxi and Gansu provinces (c. 1600–1046 BC) in the northwest;[780] 3) gold human masks with hollow eyes and raised noses from pits at the peculiar site of Sanxingdui 三星堆 (c. 1200 BC)[781] in Sichuan Province in the southwest (Figure 6.3). It is noteworthy that, in the tombs of the Shang

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[775] Gansu Sheng Bowuguan 1979.

[776] Beijing 1996b: 189.

[777] Ogden 1982; Bunker 1993: 28; Qi Dongfang 1999: 69.

[778] *Ibid*; Gong Guoqiang 1997: 353–60.

[779] The specific geographic location of the minority tribes in northern Hebei Province gave them access to Inner Asia via the ancient ‘Fur Route’, a complex trading network that crossed Eurasia long before the more southerly Silk Road. The Fur Route ran eastward, north of the fiftieth parallel, from the Caspian Sea to southern Siberia, and southward to ancient China and its border regions via the Amur Valley. The existence of this route explains the presence in Hebei of an Andronovo type of trumpet-shaped earring, and indicates one of the routes by which foreign technology, such as the chariot, could have been introduced to the ancient Chinese world from cultural centres to the west. Bunker 1993: 30–1. For more discussion of Bunker’s view, see Renn 2012: 112–6.

[780] Lin Yun 1986: 241 and 248: Bunker 1993: 31; Wong 2019: 84–123.

[781] Sage 1992; Chengdu 2004.

dynasty of the Central Plains, bronze and jade were of the utmost ritual and social importance, and gold was limited to serving as enhancement or decoration for artefacts made of other materials, in most cases in the form of gold foil and sheet.[782] For instance, in the tomb of Fuhao, consort of the Shang king Wuding, there were overall over 1,000 bronze and jade objects, among which very few were decorated with gold, but no object made solely of gold was discovered.[783]

In the following Western Zhou period, many bronzes have been discovered in the Zhou heartland in the Wei 渭 River Valley near Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, but almost no gold has been found.[784] Instead, most examples of gold have been excavated from parts of Zhou territory formerly under Shang rule and in peripheral areas.[785] These peripheral areas extend northwest into the Ordos and Liaoning as well as south into Sichuan, where pastoralist groups were prevalent.[786] Gold was widely used among such groups as decoration on weapons and utensils, as well as adornments for people and horses; such uses clearly reflect contacts with south Siberia and the Central Asian steppes.[787] Gold in these cases was the main object to reflect status, and it was also made into personal adornments and artefacts for the dead, practices that are in no way evident in the Shang and Zhou. Bronze and jade were the most highly-valued materials

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[782] *Ibid*; Rawson 2017: 378–83.

[783] Only one single piece of natural gold and traces of possible gold inlay on a decorative piece were discovered in Fuhao's tomb. See Beijing 1980b vol. 1: 111; Guo Baojun 1963; Franklin 1983: 290; Qi Dongfang 1999: 69; Rawson 2017.

[784] Huang Shengzhang 1996: 143–4.

[785] *Ibid*: 144; Bunker 1993: 29.

[786] Bunker 1993: 27.

[787] Zhu Huo 1984: 14; Gao Yingmin 1985: 36–7; 1996: 143 and 156; Ma Jian 2009: 50–4; Honeychurch 2015: 157–8.

to make ritual and sacrificial objects for people, the ancestors and spirits in the Central Plain, although artefacts gradually came to be enhanced with gold to reflect status.[788]

The list of ways in which gold was used shows that there was limited local gold use in the Shang and Western Zhou dynasties, although a number of artefacts suggesting gold production and use have been discovered in neighbouring areas.[789]

Intensified contacts: gold in the Eastern Zhou dynasty

Besides gold decorations, more objects made entirely of gold appeared during the Eastern Zhou dynasty. The earliest cast gold and metallurgical technologies, including gold and silver inlay, also developed in this period.[790] This was a time when the former constituent states of the Zhou dynasty were no longer united by a central authority, and the competition between them, as well as cultural contacts with other outside groups, resulted in various styles of goldwork. States with sites from this period where major gold discoveries have been made are outlined briefly here.

The pre–dynastic Qin State (770–221 BC), located around the earlier Zhou heartland in Shaanxi, eastern Gansu, and southern Ningxia provinces, partially laid the foundation for the increase in gold use after its unification of the Warring States.

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[788] The exact origin of techniques of gold decoration on bronzes discovered in the Central Plain area remains unclear. Bunker 1993: 30; So and Bunker 1995: 62; Li Jianwei 2011: 19 and 27; Section 5.2.2.

[789] Available records on the sources of gold, i.e. where the raw material was mined in the Shang and Western Zhou, are limited to the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, composed in the Han dynasty. This text, to some extent mythological, mentions that the sources of gold were found at places with rivers and mountains (*Shanhaijing*, 1.1–15; 2.19–46; 3.62–76; 4.77–89; 5.97–142), which suggests the possibility that the ancient Chinese practised placer mining. For more discussion, see *Dangdai Zhongguo de huangjin gongye* Bianweihui 1989: 6–8; Li Jianwei 2011: 10.

[790] Lawton 1982: 21; Li Xueqin 1985: 167 and 357–8; Bunker 1993: 31–2.

Extensive discoveries of cast gold, a technique similar to granulation,[791] openwork, zoomorphic designs, gold buckles and belt hooks, and weapon fittings have been made in Qin.[792] Other tomb objects, such as chariots, weapons, and personal adornment, also show strong similarities to examples on the steppe.[793] Contacts with people on Qin's northwestern borders and Scytho-Siberian groups in southern Siberian are evident in the tombs at Fengxiang 鳳翔 and Baoji in Shaanxi Province.[794]

Key sources of gold have been discovered in the large territory of another powerful state, Chu, in southern China as well as a smaller allied state, Zeng (1046–256 BC). Chu was famous for gold resources, according to the *Annals of the Warring States* (*Zhanguo ce* 戰國策) and *Classic of Mountains and Seas*.[795] The largest number of

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[791] Scholars tend to agree that this technique was not used in China until the first century AD. Despite the presence of granulation on many Eastern Zhou metal artefacts, there is no evidence that this technique was used in China until the first century AD. Granulation can be traced back to ancient Western Asia, where it was used as early as the third millennium BC. It probably entered China via the booming sea trade during the first and second centuries AD. Many multi-faceted gold beads with granulation in the interstices have been discovered at Eastern Han sites. These beads, called polyhedra, were developed in the Mediterranean world no later than Mycenaean times (1600–1100 BC) and introduced into China through trade. See Keightley and Barnard 1983: 250; Xiong and Laing 1991: 163–73; Liu Yan 2017: 1593–4.

[792] *Kaogu* 1988: 416.

[793] Wong 2019: 82–3.

[794] For sites of the Spring and Autumn period, see the tomb of Prince Jing 景 (577–537 BC) of Qin at Xicun 西村, and Yimen 益門. *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1988; *Wenwu* 1993b; Qi Dongfang 1999: 71. For sites of the Warring States period, see Gaozhuang 高莊 in Fengxiang, Shaanxi Province, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1981; Majiazhuang 馬家莊 tombs in Gansu Province, *Wenwu* 1985; Rolle 1989 and Jacobson-Tepfer 1995; Di Cosmo 2002: 32. In the eighth and seventh centuries BC, sets of bronze vessels were interred in accordance with Zhou tradition. But at the same time, some bronzes, especially those from Yuandingshan 圆顶山, Gansu Province, were embellished with small three-dimensional animals typical of the steppe. Gold ornaments, also typical of the steppe, have been found there, as well as in the western Wei Valley. See Michaelson 1999: notes 1, 2, and 8; So 2014: fig. 2; Rawson 2017: 385.

[795] *Annals of the Warring States*, composed in the Western Han dynasty, is one of the fundamental sources for studying the politics, history, and society of the Warring States period. See the chapter on Chu State in *Annals of the Warring States*, *Zhanguo ce*, 16.555–6; *Shanhaijing*, 1.1–15. In the ancient Chu area, which covers parts of present-day Hunan, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Chongqing, and Shandong provinces, much gold has been discovered. For instance, 8,183.3 g of gold artefacts has been discovered in Fugou 扶溝 in Henan Province, see *Wenwu* 1980b;

gold objects (totalling approximately 8,430 g) among all Warring States tombs and the earliest gold vessel known in China were discovered in the tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng (Figure 6.4).[796] In this burial, however, the gold objects were mostly separated from the bronze ritual vessels, possibly suggesting that gold was more secular in nature at that time.[797] Chu also used the biggest amount of gold for its currency.[798] This, in combination with finds of gold vessels and traces of incense—used in Central and Western Asia—all indicate Chu's contact with groups to the north and west of the Warring States.[799]

Guo State (c. 1000–655 BC) in Sanmenxia, Henan Province, was located further west prior to the Warring States but moved eastward in concert with the Zhou court in 771 BC.[800] In a tomb at the Guo State Cemetery, the earliest metal belt ornaments found on the Central Plain were excavated, a fashion that can be traced back to the second millennium BC in Western Asia.[801] The earliest cast gold objects were also found here, which was most likely the result of contact with the eastern Eurasian Steppe and the Altai mountains in southern Siberia.[802] The finds from Guo State reflect a

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and 5,187.25 g in Shouxian 壽縣, Anhui Province, see *Wenwu* 1980c; Bunker 1993: 29; Qi Dongfang 1999: 77.

[796] Meanwhile bronze also became secular to certain degree in many ways. Bronzes enhanced with gold inlay were also discovered. Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 245–51; Qi Dongfang 1999: 77.

[797] Li Xueqin 1985: 131–2; Beijing 1989 vol. 2: pls. XVII–XVIII: i-3.55; Bunker 1993: 34.

[798] *Wenwu* 1982b; Bunker 1993: 34; Qi Dongfang 1999: 73–4.

[799] Rawson 2006b: 75.

[800] Beijing 1959c: 23.

[801] Moorey 1967.

[802] Such practices can be traced back to fashions in Western Asia around the second millennium BC. See Beijing 1959c: 23, figs 16–7 and pl. XXIII: 8–9; Moorey 1967: 83–99; Lawton 1982: 93; Liu Yan 2017: 1596. Similar pieces have been found at contemporary sites, such as Zhoujiadi 周家地 and others in Aohan Banner, Inner Mongolia, *Kaogu* 1984b.

closely integrated network of interaction with the borderland in the eighth and seventh centuries BC.

The origin of the gold-use culture adopted by the Warring States is most clearly seen in the material assemblages of northern China, a centre for metalworking during the Spring and Autumn period.[803] Gold objects found in this area are similar to ones from the steppe.[804] The tomb of a Rui 芮 State (c. eleventh–mid seventh century BC) lord of the eighth century BC at Liangdaicun 梁代村, near Hancheng 韓城 on the Yellow River, contained the largest assemblage of gold ornaments found on the edge of the Central Plain.[805] These gold ornaments, together with other iron, bronze, and gold weapons, replicate tomb objects from contemporary sites, such as Arzhan (c. ninth–sixth centuries BC) in the Tuva Republic and sites in the Minusinsk Basin.[806] Influence from these areas can be detected even later in the Western Han dynasty, represented by the decorated gold dagger from a tomb at Mancheng (Figure 6.5).[807]

In the state of Zhongshan 中山 (414–296 BC), which was founded by the Xianyu 鮮虞, a branch of the Baidi 白狄,[808] furniture fittings from high-ranking tombs at Pingshan 平山, Hebei Province, were shaped into three-dimensional motifs, such as

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[803] The earliest examples are the bronze *hu*-jars inlaid with pre-cast copper animals that were produced at metalworking centres in northern China, such as Houma in Shanxi Province, see *Kaogu* 1963. On the other hand, the earliest examples of gold inlay occurred in southern China in the form of gold inscriptions on bronze weapons. Rawson 1988: 17–8; Loewe and Shaughnessy 1999: 352–449; Gao Zhixi 2012: chp. 4.

[804] *Wenwu* 1979a.

[805] Chen Xiejun and Wang Weilin 2012: 29–31; Rawson 2017: 380 and fig. 7.

[806] *Ibid.*

[807] Rawson 2017: 383.

[808] So 1980: 309–11; Bunker 1993: 34.

tiger biting deer, a typical theme in steppe art.[809] In the Houma 侯馬 Foundries of the Jin State (1033–349 BC) in Qucun 曲村, Shanxi Province, moulds for making gold sword handles and bronzes with Central or Western Asian-style motifs were found.[810] It is possible that the foundries at Houma served as a market that extended to Qin territory, as similar gold weapon ornaments have been excavated at various sites in northern China.

The outline above shows contact between the different Eastern Zhou period states and pastoralists to their north and west, as well as peoples further west in Central Asia and north in the Altai Mountains and southern Siberia. However, with no centralised political or social power, the statuses, identities, and even supernatural beliefs[811] represented by the new material could not develop into a mainstream cultural trend.

6.3. New uses of gold in the Han dynasty

There were vast quantities of gold in circulation during the Han dynasty according to the written texts, though what has been discovered archaeologically does not match the record as mentioned above.[812] Despite this, it is probable at the moment that this

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[809] *Ibid*; Ma Jian 2009: 59.

[810] *Wenwu* 1994; *Wenwu* 1995; Rawson 1995a: 64–6. A handle in the Eumorfopoulos Collection is similar in design to the openwork gold handles adorning iron swords excavated from Tomb no. 2, a late Spring and Autumn period Qin tomb at Yimen, Baoji, Shaanxi Province. *Wenwu* 1993b: 4; Bunker 1993: 34.

[811] Gold among the pastoralist groups on the periphery of the Zhou realm was not just for conspicuous 'barbarian' display. The designs on their belt plaques and bridle fittings etc. gave visual form to the supernatural world believed to have had controlling power on their lives. Bunker 1993: 46.

[812] Sections 6.1 and 6.2.1; also see Qi Dongfang 1999: 79; Liu Rui 2016: 5–7.

situation reflects the state of publication and excavation of archaeological remains, as well as the reuse of Han gold in later periods.

The foundation of the Han Empire and its expansion into Central Asia probably prompted the influx of foreign goldwork.[813] The use of objects, motifs, and metalworking techniques from distant regions and cultures has been a common way for society's upper echelons to express social and military power across history,[814] for such rare objects demonstrate that elite groups had the time, financial ability and privilege to have access to exotic objects, or even the power granted by the sovereign and the court to be in contact with other peoples. In Han society, there was an unprecedented increase in the use of gold and related foreign designs.[815] New uses of gold in Han tombs, mostly the royal tombs, include:

1. Gold thread used to sew together the jade plaques of the jade suits;
2. Incense burners, or hill censers, usually made of bronze and decorated with gold; other metal vessels and medical equipment, like acupuncture needles decorated with gold;
3. Gold ornamental pieces, plaques, and gilded animal statues; other goldwork, including belt buckles and hooks, weapon and harness fittings, of which both the number and quality increased compared to the Zhou dynasty.

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[813] Liu Qingzhu 2013: 81–6; Pan 2015: 95–106; Liu Yan 2017: 1589.
[814] Helms 1988; Liu Yan 2017: 1589.
[815] Qi Dongfang 1999: 79.

This section examines these new uses of gold in Han China and proposes that the increased frequency of gold use and the new types of objects and ornamentation indicate that gold was not merely a status symbol. More specifically, this section argues that during this period, gold—like jade—became a symbol of intangible immortality and well-being within the Han dynasty belief system.

6.3.1 Gold thread in jade suits

The most extraordinary artefacts that were specific to the Han dynasty are the jade suits.[816] Among all suits found to date, 12 were sewn with gold thread, and the rest were sewn with silver and bronze thread.[817] Emma Bunker has proposed that the merging of the two incorruptible materials, jade and gold, most likely served to preserve the physical body of the deceased.[818] She is one of very few scholars who have paid attention to the gold used in the jade suits, but has not developed this idea further. This section examines the gold thread of the jade suits in detail and explores the questions of why gold or gilded thread was used in the jade suits, and in what sense its use related to auspiciousness. This is conducted with the specific aim to highlight the techniques used for producing the gold thread and their origin.

One of the best-preserved jade suits belongs to Liu Sheng, King Jing of Zhongshan, which was excavated from Mancheng, Hebei Province. The suit was sewn with gold

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[816] See Sections 5.3.1 and 5.4.1.
[817] See the list in Wang Jing 2008: 8–14; Liu Zunzhi 2011.
[818] Bunker 1993: 46; also see Needham 1976 vol. 5: part 2: 45–50 and 284.

threads measuring 4–5 cm long each, and the thicknesses varied from 0.08 to 0.5 mm.[819] There were overall four ways of sewing and knotting the thread for plaques of different shapes in different parts of the suit (Figure 6.6).[820] As discussed in Chapter Five, the jade suits were most likely to imitate iron armour for protecting the body.[821] The plaques were made into various shapes to avoid any gaps or spaces in the suit, which shows that the deceased's whole body was supposed to be entirely enclosed.[822] On this basis, it can be assumed that all jade plaques were intended to be tied to one another firmly, just like the iron plaques of armour tied firmly with rough linen rope (Figure 6.7).[823] The delicately-made gold thread and various ways of sewing further demonstrate that ensuring the body was encased completely was considered to be important. Encasing the body completely was a means of increasing its contact with jade, which would ensure better preservation. This was important, because the preservation of a physical body was considered a precondition for the deceased to attain an immortal afterlife.

The Western Han dynasty saw gold used in similar ways to jade, being used for prized amulets or to symbolise purity and even eternity.[824] This was probably related to the Han emperor Wudi's pursuit of immortality. Li Shaojun, one of Wudi's alchemists, proposed:

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[819] For details, see Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 98 and 354–6.
[820] *Ibid*: 355.
[821] Shi Wei 1972: 49–50; Lu Zhaoyin 1989: 65; Lin 2003.
[822] See Section 5.4.1.
[823] Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 366–9.
[824] Keightley 1990: 22–8; Bunker 1993: 27.

> Offering sacrifices to the stove [god] allows one to transform cinnabar into gold. Making the gold into vessels for drinking and eating then increases the length of one's life. With long life, one can meet the immortals of Penglai. On seeing them, one makes the *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices to achieve deathlessness, just as the Yellow Emperor did.[825]

The manufacturing method for the gold thread was to cut gold sheet (0.1–0.2 mm thick) into strips (1–2 mm wide), some of the strips were then twisted into wires.[826] Such techniques using gold or silver wire to make ornamental designs can be traced to the filigree technique of Mesopotamia and Egypt around 2700 BC, which appears in Asia from around 2000 BC.[827] The earliest example found in China dates to the fourth century BC at Xinzhuangtou 辛莊頭, Yi 易 County, Hebei Province,[828] though the fifth-century BC tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng contained 426 springs shaped from gold wire.[829] The overall lack of technical precedents for gold wire work prior to the fourth century BC suggests that the technique was introduced to the Zhou states by outsiders, though manufacture in the Han dynasty became highly technical and delicate.

However, not all the jade suits discovered to date were made using gold thread. Silver, bronze, and silk thread were also used, yet no record has been found that

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825 祠灶則致物，致物而丹沙可化為黃金，黃金成以為飲食器則益壽，益壽而海中蓬萊僊者可見，見之以封禪則不死，黃帝是也。*Shi ji*, 12.285. On hearing this, the Emperor made offerings to the stove thus worshipped the gods and sent *fangshi* to the sea to search for Penglai.

826 For details see Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 389.

827 Ogden 1982: 11–5; Liu Yan 2017: 1594.

828 *Huaxia kaogu* 2004; see also *Wenwu* 2016: 15–31.

829 The exact function is still unclear. Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 451.

suggests these materials were considered incorruptible or associated with eternity like gold or jade.[830] Why then, did those tomb owners, who were most likely to have longed for immortality and could afford the expensive jade suits, not use gold thread?

According to the *Book of Later the Han*, regulations of burial practice in the Western Han dynasty dictated:

> When an emperor died, … jade was used to make clothes in the shape of armour, the jade was sewn together with gold as the thread … [to make] a [jade] suit … when feudal vassals, nobles, newly-appointed consort, and princesses died, … jade suits with silver thread [were made]; sister-princesses and grand consorts [used] bronze thread.[831]

It is noteworthy, however, that this text on Western Han practice was written in the Eastern Han dynasty, and no Western Han records have been found, nor have any imperial tombs been excavated to confirm this description. Among the Western Han jade suits from royal tombs that were discovered with thread still preserved, most used gold thread.[832] The five suits that did not—three used silver thread, one bronze, and one silk—were mostly produced in the early Western Han. This dates to the period

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[830] Silver, together with gold, is mentioned as having been used for constructing palaces for the immortals in the *Records of the Grand Historian*, but no further comment appears in the text. See *Shi ji*, 28.383. It is not until the Song dynasty text *The Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* that both gold and silver vessels are recorded to have been thought to bring deathlessness in the Han dynasty. This single piece of later evidence cannot be used to prove that Han dynasty people held similar views about silver as they did gold. *Taiping yulan*, 812.

[831] 帝崩 … 以玉為襦，如鎧狀，連縫之，以黃金為縷 … … 諸侯王、列侯、始封貴人、公主薨 … 玉柙銀縷；大貴人、長公主銅縷。*Hou han shu*, 3152–6.

[832] Wang Jing 2008: 8–14; Liu Zunzhi 2011: 41.

when gold was not widely recognised as facilitating immortality[833] and far predates the Eastern Han description of regulations on the use of thread for jade suits among people of different social ranks.[834]

Only after the early years of the Western Han were auspicious associations attributed to gold, including eternity and incorruptibility, accepted broadly across society. Gold itself was also considered auspicious for the emperor specifically from the reign of Wudi at the latest, being included among other auspicious omens—like flying horses and *qilin*—in one of Wudi's imperial edicts.[835] The promulgation of such auspicious connotations may have caused the prevalence of gold in royal tombs from Wudi (Appendix 5.1). On the basis of the archaeological evidence and written texts, therefore, scholars' assumptions that Han emperors were most likely buried with jade suits sewn with gold thread[836] seems to be reasonable, particularly as many high-ranking members of the nobility had jade suits made with gold thread: the emperor was the most highly-ranked individual within the Empire, so he must have been buried in a suit of equal or better quality than those of royal families.

The use of gold thread for jade burial suits was not an invariable rule in the Western Han. The tomb of Qiemoshu 妾莫書 (48–6 BC) in Yangzhou 揚州, Jiangsu Province,

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[833] *Ibid*. The earliest Han-dynasty record on gold's use for immortality is in *Records of the Grand Historian*, which records Li Shaojun as saying that gold vessels could help people to achieve deathlessness, as mentioned in note 814.

[834] *Hou han shu*, 3152–6; Lu Zhaoyin 1989: 65; Wang Yu 2017.

[835] *Han shu*, 12.206; Liu Huizhong *et al.* 2017: 112–24.

[836] Lu Zhaoyin 1981 and 1989.

was discovered in 1977 and contained a jade suit secured with bronze thread.[837] Gold at this point was recognised as auspicious in the sense of bringing immortality, whilst the late Western Han also lacked the strict written hierarchical burial regulations of the Eastern Han. Why, then, was bronze rather than gold used at Qiemoshu? The so-called 'jade suit' at Qiemoshu is actually made of over 600 pieces of glass (*liuli* 琉璃), rather than jade. Overall, five glass suits dating from the late Western Han to the Xin dynasty have been discovered, and the tomb owners all ranked below marquis, except for the individual interred at Qiemoshu, who was probably a sister-princess (*zhang gongzhu* 長公主) or grand consort (*da guiren* 大貴人), similar in status to a marquis.[838] It is possible that Qiemoshu's tomb owner was not rich enough to use gold thread or real jade for the suit, in addition to the female gender of the tomb owner. This does not, however, mean that gold was not desired for her burial. Traces of gold has been discovered on the glass plaques used to make the Qiemoshu tomb owner's burial suit, and a similar trend is evident on some of the hundreds of jade plaques used to make face covers for people of lower rank.[839] This demonstrates that gold was considered important enough that it should be present on the burial suit. Additionally, gilt metal or fake gold was considered preferable to silver, as shown by a jade suit with gilded bronze

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837 *Wenwu* 1980d.

838 Shi Rongchuan 2003: 62–72; Chuang Hui-chih 2018: 6.

839 *Kaogu* 2016. Some scholars have also used these glass suits as evidence for arguing the possibility that from the mid-Western Han (c. 128–87 BC), regulations on the uses of jade suits, including the kinds of jade and metals to be used, became gradually stricter, though contemporary textual evidence has not been found yet as mentioned above. It has also been pointed out that it was not until the late Eastern Han that these rules were discarded, probably due to the chaotic political and social situation. See Chuang Hui-chih 2018: 9 and 38.

thread from the tomb of Liu Yan 劉焉 (d. AD 90), King Jian 簡 of Zhongshan, dated c. AD 106 in Beizhuang 北莊, Ding 定 County, Hebei Province.[840] The Eastern Han saw the use of thread for burial suits being strictly regulated, and Liu Yan therefore should have used silver thread.[841] However, historical texts describe that the reigning emperor, Hedi 和帝 (r. AD 88–106), granted him the privilege of using gilded bronze thread to honour his contributions to the Empire.[842] With pure gold only available to very few individuals, gilt metal or even fake gold was probably thought of as effective as real gold in bringing auspiciousness and helping the tomb owner to achieve immortality.[843]

6.3.2 Gold-decorated incense burners

The practice of decorating objects with gold foil and gold inlay, like bronze vessels, first became common in the Eastern Zhou dynasty.[844] By the late Warring States and early Han period, a new technique of mercury gilding (*liujin* 鎏金) became the dominant method for decorating objects with gold.[845] The technique is most evident on incense burners, a style of object transmitted to the Han Empire from Western and Central Asia via the Eurasian Steppe, similar to gold. The incense burners were,

[840] *Wenwu* 1964.

[841] For the regulations claiming the uses of jade suits according to status, see note 831 in this section.

[842] Xia Nai 1983: 133; Lu Zhaoyin 1989: 66–7.

[843] In historical texts, such as the *Book of Han*, there are also records of people searching for replacements for gold or alloys that looked similar. See *Han shu*, 36.1928; Qi Dongfang 2006: 72.

[844] See Section 6.2.2.

[845] Gilding was a chemical processing technique that involved the application of a thin layer of gold on another metal, usually bronze, to create the visual effect of gold. The prevalence of this technique in ancient China was believed to have resulted from alchemical discoveries made whilst alchemists searched for ways to make drugs for immortality. Gonda 1991; Bunker 1993: 35; Qi Dongfang 2006: 72.

however, assimilated and integrated with local Han concepts, such as beliefs in the sacred status of mountains, which were the locations of the immortal realm and deities including the Queen Mother of the West.[846] This section demonstrates that the incense burners were adapted from people outside the Han Empire, but they were remodelled by Han people in material, ornamental, and ideological ways to suit their needs. Specifically, gold was used to strengthen tomb owners' chances of attaining immortality, and the use of gold on incense burners reflected both this belief in gold as well as the fashion for localising exotic luxury items to showcase prestige. This section takes a particular focus on some typical gilded bronze examples from several sites and one gold-inlaid censer from Mancheng (Figure 6.9),[847] out of over one hundred incense burners discovered up till now.[848]

Incense burners, or hill censers, with lids often shaped like mountain peaks, are Han dynasty objects that have potentially received the most scholarly attention,[849] though the gold decoration has not been the focus of any systematic studies. Such objects are almost not seen before the Western Han dynasty.[850] A hill censer usually has a stand connected to the body by a thin stem, and a lid designed to look like mountains. They were often decorated with popular Han period motifs, including

[846] Rawson 2006b: 76; Shao Xiaolong 2016: 56.

[847] Erickson 1989: 26–7; Rawson 2006b: 72.

[848] Over half were bronze, the others were mainly ceramic, some of them glazed. A thorough list of all incense burners excavated within China has previously been published by Erickson, see Erickson 1989: 125–34; for the updated full list, see Yang Jindong 2014: 89–93.

[849] Also called mountain censers. Laufer 1962: 174–211; Erickson 1992; Yang Zhishui 2004: 46–68; Rawson 2006b; Shao Xiaolong 2016: 52–61.

[850] Erickson 1992: 6; Rawson 1989: 84–99 and 2006b: 75.

clouds, mountains, and creatures like dragons and birds.[851] It has generally been agreed that such incense burners originated from Western Asian examples, transmitted through Siberia or Central Asia to China, where they were adopted by people in the Han Empire for burning incense.[852]

If we compare the form of incense burners during the reign of Wudi to earlier ones with conical or step-shaped lids (Figures 6.8 and 6.9), an increasing number of domed covers shaped like mountains can be detected.[853] This demonstrates a steady process occurred, wherein the original exotic forms of Western and Central Asia incense burner lids were appropriated as hills in the Han Empire.[854] As outlined in Chapter Three,[855] people during the Han dynasty also believed that the immortals inhabited islands in the sea to the east—Penglai, Yingzhou 瀛州, and Fangzhang 方丈[856]—and scholars have therefore suggested that the hill-shaped lids may represent these mountainous islands, with the swirl decorations on the censer bodies indicating the sea or cloud vapour surrounding them.[857]

The mercury gilding evident on Liu Sheng's hill censer (Figure 6.8) was developed in the Eastern Zhou dynasty thanks to scientific developments in alchemy and metallurgy.[858] Mercury gilding is a chemical process involving the application of a thin

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851 Erickson 1989 and 1992; Rawson 2006b: 75–9.
852 Rawson 2006b: 75.
853 Munakata 1991: 78–81; Rawson 2006b: 78.
854 *Ibid*; Invernizzi 1997: 241–61 and fig. 11.
855 See Section 3.3.1.
856 *Shanhaijing*, 12.200; Rawson 2006b: 77.
857 Rawson 2006b: 87; Shao Xiaolong 2016: 52–6.
858 Needham 1976 vol. 5: part 3: 1–19 and 33; Wang Haiwen 1984: 50–8; Davies 1990: 211.

layer of amalgamated mercury and gold to another metal to create the visual effect of pure gold.[859] The use of this technology to decorate hill censers in the Han dynasty is significant, however, because textual evidence suggests that mercury may also have been associated with eternal life even before the Han. The biography of the first Qin emperor, Qin Shi Huang, in the *Records of the Grand Historian* describes that his tomb was constructed as a microcosm of the world, and materials like jade, gold, and mercury were used heavily.[860] Mercury was reportedly used to represent the rivers of the Qin Empire. Although the tomb has not been excavated and the reliability of this record has been questioned,[861] Qin Shi Huang is also recorded as having strongly desired to become immortal.[862] Though deceased, his burial space was therefore probably designed to facilitate this goal in the afterlife by furnishing him with a cosmos in miniature.[863] By using materials associated with immortality to furnish this cosmos, it was believed that the tomb owner could live for eternity, due to beliefs that auspicious materials or symbols (e.g. jade) were equivalent to the intangible quality they represented (e.g. immortality).[864] Thus, mercury in Qin Shi Huang's tomb was also an auspicious material. Mercury's associations with immortality are further confirmed by

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[859] See note 845 above.

[860] *Shi ji*, 6.134. For details of Qin Shi Huang's mausoleum, see note 420 in Section 4.2.

[861] Wu 2010: 19–20.

[862] This is reflected by Qin Shi Huang's conducting *Feng* and *Shan* rituals at Mount Tai, in addition to seeking drugs of immortality. See note 716 in Section 5.4.2 of this thesis.

[863] Rawson 1999a: 8; the use of mountains in tomb construction to assure a secure, eternal afterlife is outlined for the Han dynasty in Section 3.2, and it is possible that the construction of Qin Shi Huang's mausoleum was based on similar principles.

[864] People believed that motifs functioned in the same way as what they depicted. See Ge Zhaoguang 1998: 87; Chapters One and Four of this thesis.

its later use in the Han and post-Han periods to make, along with lead, the 'golden elixir' (*jindan* 金丹) of deathlessness sought by Daoist practitioners.[865] If the previous section on gold thread mainly showed that gold in itself had cosmological and auspicious significance, then this section further demonstrates that technologies, related materials, and the artistic designs all acted together to create the artefact, which also chanelled the intentions, beliefs, and ideologies of the period.[866]

Artificial gold were also sought, due to popular ideas traceable to India, that ingesting gold in every conceivable form could prevent death and bring immortality.[867] Another hill censer from Weiyang 未央 Palace near Wudi's tomb (c. 137 BC) in Shaanxi was also gilded. This is the only hill censer that has been positively identified as belonging to the imperial family (Figure 6.10).[868] The delicate openwork and the body that has been gilded to look like pure gold suggest that the very best techniques available in the Western Han were most likely used for this hill censer. The bowl of the hill censer is shaped like a sacred mountain, which rises from the Eastern Sea. Three dragons support the bowl. All these features symbolise the immortal realm, thus the mercury gilding was probably not just decorative. The materials used in the gilding

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[865] The impetus behind Daoist use of mercury to make gold was the cosmological philosophy built around yin, yang, and the five phases. Within this system, lead was thought of as embodying yin, whereas mercury was yang. Mercury thus embodied yang energy and corresponded to fire, the east, and the dragon of the Four Deities. Kohn 1993: 316; Wu 2010: 124.

[866] Rawson 2007a: 108

[867] The artificial gold, or fake gold, refers to alloys that looked like gold; the belief that ingesting gold could bring immortality resulted in countless Han aristocrats swallowing gold. Bunker 1993: 35; Qi Dongfang 1999: 78–80.

[868] *Wenwu* 1982a; Rawson 2006b: 77.

technique, combined with the several auspicious motifs formed an auspicious complex of decorations.

Later documents also point to an association between the hill censer and imperial patronage. Sacred mountains were incredibly important in Han dynasty cosmology, and Wudi commissioned models of the mountainous isles of the immortals for his microcosmic pleasure park, Shanglin 上林 Garden.[869] By contrast with these large models accessible to anyone who entered the gardens, the hill censers, gilded with gold and emitting wafts of incense, provided more intimate visions of the immortal realm. They were portable, and, whether housed in the imperial residence or deposited in a tomb, they served to generate a cosmic link to the immortals and intangible concepts of eternity and immortality. People not associated with the imperial house probably also desired to connect themselves with such concepts, as a late Western Han ceramic hill censer from a small brick tomb in Huanglong 黄龍, Shaanxi Province, is covered with a yellow glaze,[870] which was most likely a way for people of lower social rank to represent gold. This is tangential evidence that people of lower rank had a similar desire for immortality, even though they could only afford cheaper materials as substitutes.[871]

In the Eastern Han dynasty, a specific material made from gold, the 'golden elixir' of deathlessness, became widely desired throughout the Han Empire,[872] and gold was

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[869] *Shi ji*, 117.2472; Erickson 1992: 20.

[870] *Kaogu* 1989: 278; Erickson 1992: 20.

[871] There was only one piece of jade in the shape of a cicada in the tomb, *Kaogu* 1989: 278. Also see the finds in lower-ranking mural tombs listed in Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

[872] See 'The Golden Elixir' (*Jin dan* 金丹) in *The Master Embracing Simplicity Inner Chapters*. *Baopuzi*, 4.70–109.

thus applied to more ritual vessels used for sacrifices. According to the *Old Rites of the Han*, the imperial temple in Luoyang dedicated to the first emperor of the Han dynasty, Gaozu, housed an empty seat at its centre called *lingzuo* 靈座, literally meaning spirit seat, which represented Gaozu's presence. This seat was supplied with a *ji*-table (*ji* 几) on which rested vessels with gold inlay for holding the food and wine at seasonal sacrifices.[873] These offering vessels had been associated with rituals that mediated the relationship between humanity and cosmological forces since the Bronze Age,[874] so decorating them with gold was not simply the result of changes in tastes and fashions. As rituals conducted seasonally and during burials were a key part of culture on the Central Plain from very early on, the choice to augment them with a precious metal that was newly associated with immortality in the Han period reinforces the idea that gold had auspicious and cosmological associations.

6.3.3 Zoomorphic motifs with western origins

Zoomorphic motifs on gold objects from regions to the west of Han China were introduced and used on various objects, including large numbers of tiny gold ornament, belt buckles, weapon fittings, weights, and figurines. There was a dominant social trend for adopting and adapting foreign motifs on foreign luxuries in the Han dynasty. This section argues that these motifs, usually in three-dimensional renderings and usually represented dynamically in motion, were regarded as powerful and protective spiritual

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873 *Hou han shu*, 3195; Wu 2010: 64–7.
874 See Section 2.2.1.

creatures that could concentrate power and benefits, as well as guard the deceased, in the afterlife. These zoomorphic motifs of animals and mythical creatures, in addition to the ways of combining them, had a western origin and were not commonly seen in the mainstream art and culture of pre-Han China.[875] Therefore, gold can be considered a catalyst that engendered new forms of imagery and new object types,[876] and the visual and material cultural variety were both influenced and partially constructed by the relevant social and ideological approach towards auspiciousness.

The earliest examples of animals, both real and imaginary, depicted in conflict with each other or with humans appear during the Eastern Zhou on objects such as weapon fittings and belt ornaments. Most of these came from north or western China, where the inhabitants had very different identities to those in Central China.[877] These zoomorphic motifs are acknowledged as having been taken from Western and Central Asian examples (Figure 6.11).[878] In the Han dynasty, exotic motifs and objects were popular among the elite, as the overall number of such works uncovered from archaeological sites in central and eastern China, and recorded in textual sources, increases exponentially during this period.[879] This means the exotic motif was accepted into mainstream Han society.

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[875] Kost 2014; Li Yinde 2014: 74.

[876] Rawson 1995: 30.

[877] It is thought that many more were depicted on buildings and tomb decorations that have not survived. Thote 1998: 62–9; Rawson 2002c: 24–6.

[878] For goldwork excavated within China in Iranian styles, see *Wenwu* 1981a. For Bactrian-type gold ornament in Inner Mongolia, see *Wenwu* 1984a; Li Ling 2001: 62–3; Rawson 2002c: 27; Wong 2019: chp. 4.

[879] *Han shu*, 3871–932; Qi Dongfang 1999: 81–2. For instance, more than 50 kg worth of gold ingots in total has been discovered in Han tombs, which is many times more than the thousands of

Zoomorphic motifs are seen in the forms of relief and openwork on weapon fittings, belt ornament, and numerous tiny gold ornaments in Han royal tombs (Appendix 5.1). Representative examples are gold plaques from the tomb of the King of Chu at Shizishan (Figure 6.12), the tomb of the King of Jiangdu at Xuyi 盱眙, Jiangsu Province, and the tomb of the King Jing of Zhongshan at Mancheng etc.[880] The plaques display creatures such as wolves or felines attacking other animals, a theme popular in southern Siberian metal ornament.[881] From Han rhapsodies (*fu* 賦) and historical records, it is known that these beasts were associated with good omens.[882] During the Han dynasty, many of these motifs on plaques or belt ornaments were also replaced with traditional local motifs, like dragons and tortoises, as demonstrated on gold belt plaques excavated from Tomb no. 9 at Dayunshan, Xuyi County, Jiangsu Province and from the tomb of King of Nanyue in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province (Figure 6.13).[883] This new phenomenon reflects not only interactions between the Han Empire and their neighbours, mainly the Xiongnu,[884] but also a cultural trend for adopting, adapting, and

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grams of gold discovered in Warring States tombs. See a detailed account in Yang Jun 2018. Also, see Li Yinde 2014: 87, and Appendix 5.1 of this thesis.

[880] *Wenwu* 1998: 17 and 29; So and Bunker 1995: 144; Lin 2012b: 188–9 and 294–5; for a list of around 20 Han gold buckles with zoomorphic motifs, see Li Yinde 2014: 87.

[881] Feline motifs were probably introduced to China from Iran, as suggested by materials from the burials at Pazyryk (fifth to third centuries BC). See Rudenko 1970; Rawson 2002c: 28; Liu Yan 2017: 1596. For animals in combat, see Rawson 1995a: 74 and 374; Rawson 2017.

[882] See, for instance, *Rhapsody on the Imperial Park* (*Shanglin fu* 上林賦) by Sima Xiangru, English translation available in Knechtges 1987: 73–113. Also, see *Shi ji*, 123.2594 and 2603; *Han shu*, 12.206; Wu 1989: 73–107; Paludan 1991: 15–27; Rawson 2000: 26.

[883] Li Zebin 2012: 88–9; *Dongnan wenhua* 2013: pl. 12; Beijing 1991a vol. 1: 65–6 and fig. 104; Liu Yan 2017: 1599.

[884] For interactions between the Xiongnu and other Han neighbours, see Rawson 2012: 35.

including a wide variety of artefacts, materials, and motifs in the auspicious ornament repertoire.

Tiny gold ornamental pieces are also common finds in the Han dynasty. One of the most typical examples is from the tomb of Liu Fei 劉非 (169–127 BC), King Yi 易 of Jiangdu 江都, which is located on the hilltop of Dayunshan, 30 km west of Xuyi County.[885] The burial assemblages included: gold appliqué (thin gold sheets) embossed with pairs of confronting rams' heads; gold buttons (hammered hemispherical shapes) decorated with filigree, granules, and enamel; and gold roundels (round bases with tubular sockets) (Figure 6.14).[886] The appliqué with rams' heads each has four sets of double pinholes along their edge, suggesting they were originally attached to fabric. Six similar pieces were found on the head of the King of Nanyue's jade suit, and other buttons and roundels were also found attached to the remains of a red fabric.[887] It has been argued that such gold ornaments may have been worn in life as adornment, sometimes on important ritual and ceremonial occasions, and such functions were taken into the afterlife.[888] If so, these gold ornaments were probably buried in tombs to continue the ornamental, ritual, and ceremonial tradition, as well as to show the status, power, and wealth of the deceased in the afterlife.[889]

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[885] The tomb of Liu Fei was excavated by Nanjing Museum from 2009–2012. See *Kaogu* 2012; Li Zebin 2012.
[886] Liu Yan 2017: 1592.
[887] Beijing 1991a vol. 1: 207–8.
[888] Liu Yan 2017: 1591 and 1597–8.
[889] Another 40 gold roundels were found together with bronze coins in a lacquer box in Liu Sheng's tomb. See Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 115 and 211.

A new form of gold object known to researchers as hoof-shaped gold (*ti jin* 蹄金) appeared during Wudi's reign.[890] In 2015 and 2016, 73 pieces of gold ornament in the shapes of horse and *qilin* hooves were discovered in the tomb of Marquis Haihun 海昏 (92–59 BC) in Nanchang 南昌, Jiangxi Province. Most pieces were found right next to the tomb owner (Figure 6.15).[891] Similar finds have been discovered in the last century, and most Chinese scholars identify them as currency, but the exact function of these pieces remains questionable. Wei Zheng recently argued that hoof-shaped gold was intended to help the tomb owner rise to Heaven, because hooves represented 'heavenly horses'. The appearance of 'heavenly horses' were considered a sign of prosperity, and the creatures were believed to facilitate smooth communication between human beings and deities in Heaven.[892] However, as discussed in Chapter Three, not all the people of the Han seem to have wanted to rise to Heaven and live there after death, rather the strategies utilised to preserve the body and the various material supplies provided suggest that an eternal, happy afterlife within the tomb was the goal. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to regard hoof-shaped gold as miniatures of the auspicious 'heavenly horses', just like the hill censers were 'a reduction of the macrocosm that emphasized the vital link to the heavens'.[893] Added to this was the concept that gold was associated with immortality, so hoof-shaped gold were not only

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[890] Exotic animals were also brought as sacrifices to Mount Tai in the reign of Wudi. *Shi ji*, 28.990; Watson 1971: 59.

[891] *Kaogu* 2016: 51 and 58.

[892] Liu Huizhong *et al.* 2017: 112–24; Wei Zheng 2017: 105–8. For heavenly horses and the relation to prosperity, see *Han shu*, 12.206.

[893] Erickson 1992: 20.

auspicious signs,[894] but they also guaranteed their auspicious presence would be eternal.

More explicit expressions of the association between horses and the immortal realm are found in elite Han tombs. A complete gilded bronze horse statue was discovered in 1981 in the tomb of Princess Yangxin 陽信, a subordinate tomb to Wudi's burial at Maoling 茂陵 (Figure 6.16).[895] The breed has been identified as the Ferghana horse from what is today Uzbekistan; these horses could run very fast over long distances.[896] Favoured by Wudi,[897] similar bronze statues are recorded to have been made and put at the north gate of Weiyang Palace, thus called the 'gate of the gold horse' (*jinma men* 金馬門).[898] This exotic animal was soon used to decorate other materials, and its popularity meant that it quickly became a motif recognised as auspicious. Another representation of such a horse made from the auspicious material jade was discovered near the mausoleum of Zhaodi 昭帝 (r. 87–74 BC) in Xianyang, Shaanxi Province (Figure 6.17). An immortal is depicted as riding this jade horse, identified as a Ferghana horse, and the scene matches a description in *Records of the Grand Historian* of 'heavenly horses'.[899] Their origin from regions to the west of the Han Empire meant that the horses were closely associated with the immortals, which

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[894] *Han shu*, 12.206; Liu Huizhong *et al.* 2017: 112–24.

[895] *Nongye kaogu* 1985.

[896] *Ibid*; Maoling Bowuguan 茂陵博物馆 (Maoling Mausoleum Museum) 2019, available at http://www.maoling.com/product_display.asp?keyno=57, accessed 23rd December 2019.

[897] In the year 102 BC, after defeating the Dayuan 大宛 of the Ferghana Valley, Wudi acquired more horses from there. *Shi ji*, 123.2600–3.

[898] Lin Meicun 2014: 75.

[899] *Shi ji*, 24.865–6 and 123.2600–3; Lin Meicun 2014: 79.

led to their becoming popular auspicious motifs in Han art (Figure 6.18). The growing fascination with gold as an auspicious material and the motifs depicted on foreign gold objects also influenced Han designs on jade, bronze, and lacquer ornament.[900]

6.4. Conclusion

A Western Han folk song laments that 'No one is made of gold or stone, [so] how can one escape death?'[901] Gold, according to Han period beliefs, was everlasting. The Han dynasty witnessed new uses of gold not seen before, new techniques in gold working, and adoption of new foreign motifs. All these developments were motivated by both the need to display the power of the Han Empire and the pursuit of immortality within a correlative cosmology. Gold was first used to enhance objects in the Shang and Zhou dynasties in the forms of foil and inlay. As argued here, therefore, gold was regarded only as another symbol of status and wealth. In the Qin and Han dynasties, however, emperors became interested in achieving deathlessness and immortality, as represented by the emperor Qin Shi Huang and the Han emperor Wudi.

Alchemists employed by the emperors suggested that gold, with its incorruptible properties, could facilitate immortality if made into special medicines to be ingested or vessels to be used for similar medicines. Similarly, mercury was increasingly related to immortality by the Qin dynasty, which may have prompted the emergence and

900 Rawson 1995a: 61.

901 人壽非金石，年命安可期待？Lines from the Han folk song 'Strolling out the Western Gate' (*Bu chu Ximen xing* 步出西門行). Guo Maoqian 1979: 547; Birrell 1988: 75; Wu 2010: 138.

prevalence of mercury gilding. By examining the Han royal tombs where most gold objects have been found, it is proposed in this chapter that there were at least three significant new uses of gold in the Han period, mainly for objects that were not prevalent before: 1) gold or gilded thread was used for jade suits; 2) incense burners were inlaid or gilded with gold; and 3) ornamental pieces and statues with zoomorphic motifs from the west and motifs of Chinese origins were gilded or made from gold.

The jade suits are specific artefacts of the Han dynasty, and only society's highest ranks could afford them. Textual records show that only in the Eastern Han dynasty did a more regulated system governing the use of jade suits in burials appear, and gold thread was restricted to the imperial family. Before that, no evident regulations restricted the manufacture or use of jade suits, and gold thread has been discovered in various royal tombs, such as the tomb of Liu Sheng at Mancheng.

It has been argued in the previous chapter that the jade suits were protective and auspicious, and that bodily engagement between the deceased and the jade was incredibly important. This chapter further shows that Han elites used the thread to secure the many jade plaques firmly, in order to create an auspicious layer around the body of the deceased. The durable jade and gold were symbolic of eternity, and the composite jade suits were thus believed to secure a safe and immortal afterlife for the deceased. This assumption, however, is based on current excavations, but no imperial tombs have yet been explored and many royal tombs have been looted.

Incense burners, or hill censers, were another kind of object that appeared in the Western Han dynasty. These objects had their origins in the incense burners of Western

and Central Asia, but they were adapted in Han China to reflect auspicious cosmological concepts by shaping the lids as mountains and adding auspicious motifs, such as the Four Deities and clouds. Scholars tend to agree that hill censers symbolised the sacred mountains believed to have been inhabited by the immortals.

Just like the motifs of mythical creatures frequently depicted on these hill censers, the gilded or inlaid gold decorations may not have been purely ornamental. The gold reinforced the auspicious symbolic meaning of the hill censers as a representation of the immortal realm. As recorded in the *Records of the Grand Historian*, vessels made of gold were believed to bring immortality to their users. The hill censer discovered within the mausoleum of Wudi was even gilded to look as if it were made of pure gold. Even though the exact function of hill censers remains debated in some circles, the shape and ornamental motifs on them are incontrovertible references to an ideal microcosm of the space inhabited by immortals. Other commonly found vessels decorated with inlaid and gilded gold include eating and drinking vessels and medicinal objects used to achieve immortality.[902]

Gold, from the very beginning of its known use in pre-Han tombs, was considered ornamental and imbued with exotic characteristics, as it was an influence from places west of the Central Plain and the Eurasian Steppe.[903] In the Han dynasty, more western motifs, especially zoomorphic motifs were adopted and combined with local ideas to

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[902] Due to space limitations, these objects are not fully discussed in the thesis. For details, see Qi Dongfang 1999; He Yun'ao 2008

[903] Qi Dongfang 2006: 71.

form new ornamental designs. One of the most typical examples is the motif of a horse. The Han Empire imported horses from the steppe for military uses, but, gradually, the horse became an auspicious sign, as people believed that these swift horses were able to take their riders to the faraway land of the immortals. Large numbers of miniature horse hooves made of gold have been found in high-ranking tombs. Such finds match descriptions in historical texts that Wudi officially announced the appearance of such horses to be an auspicious sign. The motif was depicted on objects of other materials, including jade, which is just one of the examples of the influence of gold design on other materials. The exotic motif was taken into the afterlife for continuous enjoyment, whilst other symbols, like the gold hooves, served to reinforce immortality. An eternal, happy, luxurious and trendy afterlife was evidently the aim, as suggested by the gold ornament, fittings, and vessels.

Gold was highly prized and ideologically important to the people of the Han. Though initially a material popular among outside groups, gold was eventually adopted, adapted, and integrated into the existing complex of auspicious motifs and objects, which collectively served to emphasise an immortal and happy afterlife. By contrast with preceding periods, the Han dynasty represents the first time that such a large number of foreign materials, motifs, and objects were included in the Central Plain-centred ideological system of auspiciousness. Focusing on the material agency of gold provides a markedly different perspective of changes in archaeology and history: not only did human beings shape material culture, but material culture also shapes humans.

In the case of gold in Han society, this was done by compounding materials, forms and technologies, tastes and styles, and the value system that emphasised auspiciousness.

CHAPTER 7
Discussions and conclusions

7.1. Thesis summary

This thesis presents a new interpretation of ornament and objects in Han dynasty tombs. This argues that such items were auspicious in the sense that they protected the deceased, created a smaller, ordered version of the cosmos, and facilitated the deceased's attainment of a happy and eternal afterlife. The interpretation of the significance and functions of these items is strongly grounded in the cosmological and religious ideas that dominated at the time, which are explored through an examination of the historical records and material remains. At the core of this research is an examination of finds from decorated tombs located near the two imperial capital cities, Chang'an (Western Han) and Luoyang (Eastern Han), as well as royal tombs in central and eastern China.

The differences between Chinese and Western ornament[904] and the Chinese preoccupation with auspiciousness[905] have been noted by scholars and even general audiences, but the historical, social, and ideological causes for this had not previously been explored in detail. Additionally, the meanings of auspiciousness, intricately interwoven with various facets of culture and history in China, also needed to be investigated more explicitly and theoretically. Starting by illustrating the major changes

[904] Section 1.1.1.
[905] Section 1.1.2.

in ornament from around the third century BC,[906] this thesis examines the formation of an auspicious ornamental system in Han China in the social and historical contexts of the pre-Han to Han periods.[907]

The first conclusion that thus can be drawn, which is that understanding of the world's structure during the Han dynasty was dominated by a correlative cosmology, underpinned by a series of philosophical, cosmological, cultural, and political mechanisms of early imperial Chinese society, i.e. society during the Qin and Han dynasties. A highly organised ideological system was established by the scholar statesman Dong Zhongshu, consisting of Confucianist, Daoist, and theories of yin, yang, and the five phases, to support and bless the emperor's enthronement, set rules and rituals to ensure the prosperity of the country, and facilitate the immortality of the emperor. The will of Heaven, gods, and spirits was believed to be expressed through certain natural phenomena (e.g. good weather was auspicious and natural disasters were inauspicious), as well as omens (e.g. the appearance of dragons or purple clouds).[908] Certain motifs, such as auspicious omens, were believed to have an 'affecting presence' or 'the power of images'[909], i.e. their depictions functioned in the same way as the real entity. This ideological background was the foundation for the development of auspicious ornament in material culture witnessed throughout the Han dynasty. Han art and tomb practices cannot be fully understood outside of this correlative cosmology,

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[906] Section 1.1.3.
[907] Chapter Two.
[908] See Chapter Two and Appendix 2.1.
[909] Freedberg 1989: 1–26; Lai 2015: 99; Armstrong 2015: xi–xii.

which is a major focus throughout this thesis. In addition, much of the evidence for auspicious ornament that is dated to the Eastern Han, such as the Wuliang Shrine omen slabs, demonstrably had much earlier precedents.

Since the material remains of the Han dynasty mainly constitute tombs, the study of auspicious ornament in this thesis is mainly confined to the tomb context. Tombs were socially constructed and thus reflect the cosmological beliefs and social changes that occurred during the Han Empire.[910] Instead of merely focusing on the tomb objects, this thesis looks at the development of overall burial practices, including the tomb structures, construction materials, social ranks, as well as burial concepts. The analyses presented in Chapter Three, as well as in the following chapters, applies the concept of auspicious ornament to the afterlife, going beyond the realms of art in life to construct a more holistic understanding of ornament.[911] Through a materiality-informed approach, the thesis moves the focus from the agency of forms and motifs to that of the material (stone, jade, and gold) itself to better understand the role of auspiciousness in burials, which has not been done for auspicious ornament in either archaeology or art history. By taking this approach, the thesis demonstrates that there were obvious changes in Han burial practices, which suggest changing ideas regarding death and the afterlife. These provided new possibilities for tomb furnishings and arrangements that ensured the deceased was well supplied in the afterlife. Previous scholarship has

[910] Section 3.2.
[911] See more discussions in Section 7.2.2.

identified at least three pertinent changes in Han burials that are the foundation for this thesis' exploration of auspicious ornament: firstly, vertical pit burials were replaced with horizontal chamber tombs in the Western Han dynasty; secondly, Han tombs contained a larger number of objects used in daily life compared to earlier periods; thirdly, there was an increase in the use of stone and mountain settings in tomb constructions. This last development probably resulted from a belief in the durability of stone, which was thus associated with eternity and could impart this quality to the deceased for the afterlife. There has been discussion as to whether a Han tomb functioned as a cosmos, a residence, or a replica of the ideal immortal realm/paradise. It is not easy to decide which interpretation is most suitable, but it can be concluded from the changes in burial practice that the people of the Han tried to prepare optimal conditions for an eternal afterlife in the microcosmic realm of the tomb. Inconsistencies of inscriptions, texts, and material evidence show that previous scholarly opinion that people believed in a dualistic soul during the Han dynasty is problematic. Generally, people understood a human being to be composed of a body and a refined spiritual substance. As a result, it was not only the deceased's physical body but also their spirit that people sought to protect and bless in the afterlife.

Chapters Two and Three provide a substantial basis for further investigation of auspicious ornament, mapping changes in social and burial contexts from the Warring States period to the Han dynasty. This naturally led to the need to select an appropriate sample from among tens of thousands of tombs, not only to make the project manageable, but also to highlight features of Han material culture and attitudes towards

auspiciousness without missing key information. The highly decorated tombs in the two capital areas in Chapter Four were obvious choices, since the evidence is largely in-situ, well dated, and different motifs abound in the forms of murals and engravings. The richness of the evidence for ornament, however, lies far more than in the visual depictions on surfaces, in addition to tomb objects more generally. The wealthy kingly tombs in Chapters Five and Six exemplify a complex picture wherein expressions of wishes for a good, comfortable afterlife were represented in all possible media, namely the construction of the tomb space, the physical forms of objects and ornament, and the positions and relationship of objects to the deceased. It is through the combined methods of a contextual archaeological approach, agency and material culture theories, and the theory of decorative art that it is possible to elucidate the nature of auspicious ornament, its meanings in specific times and contexts, and its relation to its creators or users, as well as the social and religious background.[912]

Based on a detailed investigation of the main concentrations of mural tombs and stone relief tombs around Chang'an and Luoyang, therefore, this thesis identifies three main categories of auspicious motif. First among these are the cosmic motifs, reflections of cosmic transformation, earthly events, and human affairs. These motifs include the Four Deities, auspicious deities associated with the four directions, in addition to the sun, moon, stars, and cloud decoration. Previously, such motifs have mostly only been considered as background or border ornamentation. The second type

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[912] For more discussions, see Section 7.2.

includes the narrative motifs showing major immortals and gods popular in the Han dynasty, such as the Queen Mother of the West, her male counterpart King Father of the East, and the legendary deities Fuxi and Nüwa. The third type of motif includes homophonic inscriptions on tiles, stones, or bricks, which express auspicious meanings linguistically. These motifs, found on murals, reliefs, and carvings, embody a multitude of designs, meanings, and functions. These were gradually accumulated, transformed, and manipulated within the social and ideological context of the Han dynasty, utilising a variety of the local mythologies, beliefs, and traditions of the Empire's many regions. More broadly, auspicious ornament in the tomb was intended to create a harmonious and balanced cosmic order, protect the tomb occupants by driving away bad spirits, and ensure a happy and eternal afterlife.

The fourth and fifth main conclusions of this thesis are based on the analysis of two of the major materials used to make precious objects in royal and decorated tombs in Han China, jade and gold. People tried not only to visualise concepts, ideas, and good wishes for the afterlife in the forms of paintings and carvings, but they also materialised them in the forms of objects and ornament. Tomb objects made of jade and gold represent two forms of auspicious material: jade as a continuation of earlier traditions, and gold as a relatively new material popularised due to its prestigious association with outsiders and the exotic.

The use of jade changed in the Han dynasty as compared to earlier periods. The

most distinctive jade object to appear during the Han dynasty was the jade suit.[913] Further to the Western Zhou practice of using jade face coverings for the deceased, the Han developed the jade suit to completely envelope them. This level of bodily engagement between the deceased and jade was unprecedented, as were the multiple layers of jade objects that surrounded the deceased, including jade plugs, *bi*-discs sealed in the suits, the jade suits, jade grips, and in some cases jade pillows and coffins. In contrast to previous scholarly views that these new uses of jade were intended to transform the body of the deceased into an immortal, this thesis argues that the multiple layers of jade and close bodily-engagement with it were intended to prevent bad spirits attacking the physical body, the body's decay, and thus ensure that the deceased enjoyed an eternal, secure afterlife. This means that jade had material agency to provide the deceased with protection, as well as imparting its intangible qualities of durability and eternity. This thesis additionally demonstrates that classical Chinese texts are of questionable use to understanding jade, as the six ritual objects recorded as having directional and sacrificial significance rarely function in Han rituals in the same way as recorded. In some tombs, pre-Han ritual jades, like *bi*-discs, *huang*-pendants, or *cong*, were appropriated as decorations, parts of the jade suits, or utensils. The functioning of the tomb space as an eternal residence for an immortal afterlife further suggests that the Han dynasty focus was on ensuring the continuation of the deceased's earthly pleasures.

The use of gold, on the other hand, was not a part of ancient Chinese tradition.

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[913] Jinyangwang-xinkuaiwang 2016.

Chapter Six traces the foreign origin of gold from the eighth century BC from Western and Central Asia via peoples in the Eurasian Steppe and on the borders of the Zhou realm. Changes in gold use took place in the Han dynasty, first reflected in improved crafting techniques, like granulation, which were probably the result of increased contact with outsiders. Adopting the technologies and styles of outsiders allowed people to both indicate the power of the Han Empire and negotiate their relationships with these outsiders. Significant changes in gold use in the context of Han society were dominated by Confucian and Daoist deities, as well as concepts of immortality. These include: gold or gilded thread for sewing jade suits to harness immortality; gold inlay or gilding on incense burners, of which the object itself referenced the isles of the immortals; and gold or gilded ornamental pieces and statues with zoomorphic motifs from the west that were incorporated into the Han system of auspicious ornament, like the horse. Historical and literary texts show that an increasingly popular belief in the Han period associated gold with immortality, which may help to explain the development in gold uses. This western material and related western motifs were adopted and adapted by the Han, integrated into an auspicious system of ornament, and applied to designs on other objects made from other materials like jade. Gold was even made into utensils, tools, and ornamental pieces, most likely as both a fashion in life and a means to impart its associated qualities to the deceased, guaranteeing them an immortal and luxurious afterlife that could be regarded as a continuation of earthly life.

Overall, this thesis demonstrates different ways of soliciting auspiciousness in the context of the afterlife. Typical changes in elite Han burial practices reflect prevalent

philosophical concepts of the Han period: the new tomb type, cosmic motifs used to decorate them, and new uses of jade and gold all clearly indicate beliefs in a correlated cosmos in which auspiciousness—the state of enjoying a balanced universe, prosperity, immortality, happiness, and blessings for one's offspring—was achievable by depicting images of good omens, protecting the deceased's physical body, and providing sets of utensils, objects, and ornament made from auspicious materials to adequately supply and bless the deceased in the afterlife.

7.2. Wider implications

The conclusions above advance current understanding of ornament used to decorate elite tombs and tomb objects in the Han dynasty, as well as expanding on the Han concept of auspiciousness. The thesis has sought to clarify four main aspects of China's past that have been overlooked by previous scholarship: first, the concept of auspiciousness in early imperial China; second, the significant role of ornament in visual and material culture, and in understanding the art and history of China; third, the importance of using proper theories in the study of art and archaeology to better understand the ancient people and society; four, the Han period preoccupation with a better life and afterlife and people's solutions as reflected in burial practices.

7.2.1 **Understanding auspiciousness**

This thesis has highlighted the need for a wider understanding and better definition of the term 'auspicious'. It has been argued that auspiciousness is one of the most

prominent features of Chinese art, ornament, and material culture.[914] However, in most cases, academic narratives have been limited to the following:

1. Lists of patterns, motifs, and objects that express good wishes and blessings. Such lists typically take the form of a dictionary or a catalogue,[915] with little to no analysis or discussion of the social, ideological, or historical background;
2. Studies of patterns and objects after the third century AD, when the introduction of Buddhism brought with it auspicious notions of paradise, the 'eight treasures' (*babao* 八寶), and so on,[916] with limited attention paid to the origins of many auspicious motifs that originated locally prior to Buddhism;
3. Research limited to a single aspect of auspiciousness, such as the auspicious omens used by the imperial family or a certain kind of object with auspicious meanings.[917]

There was an urgent need to explore the concept and early development of 'auspiciousness' more holistically. This thesis thus presents archaeological, visual, and textual materials, which have previously not been systematically studied alongside with one another.

With a foundation in previous scholarship, this thesis notes and explores the

914 Rawson 2000: 134–5; Bartholomew 2006: 13–40. See also Section 1.1.1.
915 Bartholomew 2006; Pan Pan 2016: chps. 2–3, 23–299. See also Section 1.2.3.
916 Bush 1975; Tythacott 2011.
917 Lippiello 2001; Tseng 2004. See also Section 1.1.3.

importance of the Han dynasty in Chinese archaeology, as major changes in art, ornament, and material culture took place during this period.[918] Political unification, court-led textual and ideological standardisation, synthetisation of local traditions within the Empire, and increased contact, as well as conflict, with different cultures all promoted the formation of a repertoire of auspicious ornament and motifs in early imperial China. The pre-imperial practice of divination and later use of certain signs and patterns to justify political succession or improve social order in early imperial China also laid the foundation for what became widespread practices of depicting certain motifs to ensure good results. Through a detailed analysis of material remains from Han dynasty tombs, this thesis has significantly expanded current understanding of 'auspiciousness' by:

1. Tracing the origin of imperial China's widespread, systematic auspicious repertoire to the Han dynasty;
2. Examining the concept of auspiciousness in tomb contexts, i.e. cosmic balance and harmony, protection and preservation, immortality and eternal earthly enjoyment and happiness, and showing how it related to death and the afterlife;
3. Demonstrating that, apart from linguistic and literary links as well as representations of natural mythical beings, the expression of

[918] A large number of scholars have all noted the important cultural transformations that occurred in early imperial China, without paying attention to auspiciousness, as outlined in Chapters One and Two.

‘auspiciousness’ also relied on the materials and spatial arrangement used to present the ornament.[919]

7.2.2 The importance of ornament

This thesis demonstrates the important role of ornament in Han dynasty art, culture, and history. Rather than merely serving as enhancement or superficial decoration of objects or surfaces, ornament provides a wealth of historical, conceptual, and social information through the materials and techniques used to make it, as well as its forms, motifs, and placement. There have previously been a small number of studies on Chinese ornament, mainly focusing on artistic development, textual descriptions, ornament on artwork and archaeological objects,[920] but what has been overlooked is the intellectual, religious, and social-historical context for the ornament’s formation and developments in its artistic and aesthetic expression. This thesis puts the ornament centre stage, revealing its close relationship to changes in society in early imperial China. At this time, good events were desperately solicited through a variety of auspicious spatial arrangements, motifs, and materials. Historical texts record that palaces and ritual buildings were furnished with cosmic and mythical motifs to bring peace, prosperity, and longevity to the living.[921] Simultaneously, tomb murals comprising auspicious images and designs, like the Four Deities and clouds, were used

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[919] Also see Section 7.2.3 below.
[920] Section 1.2.3.
[921] *Shi ji*, 12.286, 296–7 and 127.2660. Also, see Sections 2.2.2, 3.2, and 4.2.

to ensure similar good outcomes for the dead. The materialisation of auspiciousness in the form of durable jade expressed a desire for protection and permanence in the afterlife. Meanwhile, the popularisation of materials associated with foreign groups, namely gold, saw the rapid adaptation of related metallurgical techniques and motifs, which the people of the Han dynasty transplanted into their own belief system and used to pursue auspiciousness in the senses of earthly pleasure, fashion, status, and an immortal afterlife. Consequently, this thesis answers the question of how ornament could be actively auspicious, more specifically, how it acted as an agent of auspiciousness in the tomb space.

The various categories and materials used for auspicious ornament, ways of combining the motifs, as well as the development in techniques, tastes, and physical forms discussed in this thesis all suggest that auspicious ornament can be understood as an integrated system, which comprised recognised traditions, new exotica, adaptations, and changes. This ornamental system was a mechanism driven by political power and popular social beliefs to further the personal interests of all people, no matter their social rank. Crucial to this mechanism was also the availability of materials and skills, in addition to a bureaucratic system that supervised the production of ornament within the Han Empire.[922]

7.2.3 The importance of agentic and material-focused theory

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[922] Ledderose 2000: 5 and 75.

Instead of only studying the usefulness of objects in practical terms, this thesis takes the methodological approach of agency and materiality theory to explore a whole new dimension of the ideological, sensuous, and social constructs embodied in Han dynasty tombs, i.e. the manner in which objects or ornament were meant to produce, extend or constrain bodily capacity in terms of auspicious, [923] and how Han people conceptualised this. More specifically, in the context of the correlative cosmology widespread in Han China, the belief that certain ornaments and objects had the power to ensure some benefical outcomes illustrates the potency of object agency.[924] This belief in itself was the cause of changes in Han period burial practices, and the theory of agency can be considered a modern expression that has helped to understand ancient beliefs in modern terms and elucidate them more precisely. Belief and ideology of the Han period had a theoretical basis of its own,[925] and the lack of previous attempts to explain exactly how this served to construct contemporary understanding of beneficial outcomes has resulted in Han people's intentions and thought process being neglected in favour of established cultural assumptions that presume auspiciousness does not require explanation. This thesis takes an alternative approach, depicting auspicious ornament in terms of its agency, which allows us to see that the auspicious meanings and efficacies (e.g. cosmic balance, protection, and immortality) of the motifs in murals or engravings was a consequence of their specifc positioning in the funerary context

[923] Tilley *et al.* 2006: 4 and 10.
[924] Rawson 2007a: 103.
[925] Section 2.2.

rather than merely an innate characteristic of the motifs themselves. This thesis also explores the established assumption that jade was used frequently near the body due to various auspicious meanings. Although previous studies do not really explain such assumptions, emphasising the agency of the material demonstrated that people cannot be understood apart from things, and conversely material culture cannot be understood apart from people.[926] The theoretical approach used here was, in effect, a tool to fully explore and expound upon the relationship between the material of jade and the physicality of people. It was only through the process whereby jade engaged with the body that its physical qualities, specifically durability for eternity, were metaphorically transferred to the deceased. This has allowed the almost unknown process of causing good fortune to be revealed. An object's surface was not only the part where motifs were depicted but also the point that people touched or interacted with. So, it is unlikely that the layering of multiple jades next to or very close to the body was structured with little or no meaning.

The physical characters of the objects or ornamental motifs *per se* were also important, as discussed in detail in Sections 3.2, 4.2, 4.3, 5.3, and 6.3. The theory of agency is not merely concerned with material culture's relations within society or to conscious ideas and underlying structures of thoughts, but also the materiality of the object.[927] The benefits of considering object materiality and multiple materials can be

[926] Tilley *et al.* 2006: 4.

[927] People constantly seek information from the world around them. Zeki 1999: 76–96; Rawson 2007a: 101.

summarised in three points. First, it raises awareness of the importance of materials, as not only did images have power to act in the human world but materials did too. Second, the complexity of materials stimulates us to approach objects and ornament from a variety of angles, such as the production techniques and related materials, which themselves very likely had auspicious significance and reflect social trends. Third, it is interesting to discover the diversity, changing nature, and connections between different materials that would not have been identified if they had not been studied together, such as gold and jade. Only in this way do the unique features of a culture or society become explicit, as these include, not only artistic styles, customs, and languages, but also preferences for materials (e.g. jade in China). Such cultural uniqueness was not unchangeable, but could be constructed and reformed in the same way as a language system.[928] Within the remit of this thesis, this is most evident in the way that new materials were introduced and adapted (gold) for the conceptual system of the target society (auspiciousness), which generally remained unchanged.[929]

7.2.4 **Auspicious ornament in tombs**

This thesis enriches current understanding of archaeological remains and burial practices in Han China, a main source of information when it comes to the study of Han art, culture and society. Tombs from ancient China generally express a concern for the

[928] Hall 2003: 4 and 7.
[929] *Ibid*; Section 6.4.

otherworld, and also to a certain extent mirror the expectations in this world.[930] Previous research has not clearly linked the solutions people used to address these concerns with auspicious ornament in tombs. This thesis outlines that changes in tomb structure, burial objects, and ornament in the Han dynasty were solutions to deal with the concerns. Crucial to achieving auspiciousness in the tomb space were: 1) the replication of a balanced cosmos and ideal realm inhabited by deities and immortals; 2) the preservation of the deceased's physical body and its protection from evils, demons, ghosts, or other supernatural enemies; 3) the use of jade and gold to make objects and motifs that simultaneously represented contemporary fashion and the intangible concepts of abundance and eternity.

This thesis firmly establishes a combined methodology for studying and interpreting the relationship between remains in Han tombs and ideas of auspiciousness. Fundamentally, this relies on agency and material culture mentioned in the previous section, as well as on Western theories of decorative art and a contextual approach for the overarching interpretive framework to clarify the following points. It is demonstrated that people during the Han dynasty believed the images to be equivalent to the actual entities they represented. These images and motifs were dynamic in nature, as their artistic styles, symbolic and auspicious meanings never appeared simultaneously but gradually evolved as human beliefs, goals, social ideologies, and

[930] Studies on how people dealt with concerns, especially about the afterlife, are varied. See Yü Ying-shih 1981; Lai 2015: 28–9 and 50; Rawson 2002b: 130 and 151; Section 3.3.3.

practices changed. Crucially, it is shown that information embodied by the materials of jade and of stone etc. more generally were important not only in the living world, but also in the tomb context, namely the qualities of protection, durability, and immortality. Furthermore, developments in the physical presentation and techniques used to design decorations are shown to be the outcomes of social, diplomatic, and religious changes of, but not limited to, this world. Growing interest in goldwork from Western and Central Asia led to a fashion for exoticism in the Han society and its being transplanted into local culture as reflected in tomb objects, which had the effect of expanding the decorative repertoire of auspicious ornament for both the living and the dead.

Therefore, this thesis emphasises the need to examine ornament and motifs within their original material, archaeological, as well as social contexts, i.e. their locations within the broader tomb structure and their relationship to the tomb's architectural decoration, the burial assemblage, contemporary tombs, and the social background. The material culture in tombs contributed much to the pursuit of auspiciousness in early imperial Chinese culture, and this was closely related to broader social and political trends of reliance on auspicious signs to ensure success, such as the mandate of Heaven, blessings from deities, protection, immortality, and a harmonious life and afterlife. The impact of the Han system of auspicious ornament was not confined to the Han dynasty, but also influenced successive dynasties.[931]

[931] For auspicious ornament in later dynasties, see Rawson 1984; Huang Nengfu and Chen Juanjuan 1995; Shen Yuhua and Qian Yulian 2005; Bartholomew 2006; Hay 2010. Also see Section 7.3.3.

7.3. Issues and suggestions for future research

This thesis presents a detailed exploration of auspicious ornament in Han dynasty tombs and expands current understanding of auspiciousness, ornament, and burial practices. However, there are still a number of important questions that cannot be fully answered due to constraints of time and space, as well as a dearth of published archaeological information.

7.3.1 **Data biases**

A major issue encountered in this study concerns the quality of the data. Whilst tens of thousands of low-ranking Han tombs have been excavated, many tombs have been looted, and the imperial tombs are yet to be excavated. In this way, there is simultaneously a lack of data in certain areas but an overabundance of data in others.

Quite a few tombs, especially royal and aristocratic ones, have been looted (Appendices 4.1, 4.2 and 5.1). For instance, many royal tombs, such as those of the imperial Liu family at Shizishan and Guishan 龜山, Jiangsu Province, have been looted or disturbed. Thus, the completeness of the burial assemblages and some of the objects' original locations within the tombs are unclear. Although general interpretations can be made using finds common to multiple tombs, like the jade suits—even if partly looted, the suits can be reconstructed from remaining jade plaques—or coffins, important messages can be lost or missed in individual cases.[932] Therefore, a

[932] Only three jade coffins have been excavated from Han tombs to date, two of which are from the looted tombs at Shizishan and Dayunshan in Jiangsu Province, and the other one is from the intact

critical attitude towards the available data should be maintained, and researchers should be open to new interpretations as archaeological discoveries are made.

Secondly, organic materials, including mural paint, lacquer, and silk, are usually poorly preserved, and, in many cases, are already in critical conditions when excavated.[933] When studying concepts of auspiciousness depicted on such materials, it becomes tempting to interpret well-preserved examples as representative of the situation throughout the Han Empire. For example, silk in the northwestern regions, where the climate is dry, is preserved much better than in other regions of the Han Empire; lacquer is similarly preserved better in southern China.[934] 'Over-generalising' based on uneven data distributions means that areas with high concentrations of certain finds may be considered the 'main centre' for production or use. Remains of murals are, in some cases, still detectable using the naked eye, such as in the tomb of the King of Liang at Shiyuan, Henan Province,[935] but there are also cases where little to no traces are left.[936] In such cases, either more careful observational analyses or scientific techniques, such as scanning electron microscopy of remains on the interior walls, ceiling, or floor of a tomb, can provide better quality data, which can be used to

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tomb of Mancheng in Hebei Province. See Chapter Five. The reconstruction of the jade coffins in Jiangsu Province took years, after which the arrangement of other jade pieces, such as the *bi*-discs, was hotly debated. For details, see Xuzhou Bowuguan 2016, http://www.kaogu.cn/cn/kaoguyuandi/kaogusuibi/2016/1028/55916.html, accessed 15th March 2020; Wang Yu 2018.

[933] Guo Hong 2001: 13, 24 and chp. 8.

[934] Hubei Sheng Bowuguan 2007: 12–3; Zhang Wen *et al.* 2013.

[935] Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

[936] This includes the tomb of the King of Nanyue. Beijing 1991a vol. 1: 28 and vol. 2: pl. I; Rawson 1999a: 13–4; Lin 2012a.

understand the spread, use, and production methods of tomb paintings.

Thirdly, a more systematic archaeological survey of the unexcavated imperial tombs is required to determine whether the practice of depicting various auspicious and mythical motifs on murals and different burial objects was conducted on a greater scale for the imperial family, as suggested by written texts, like the *Book of Later the Han*.[937]

As for the overabundance of data in certain areas, this primarily concerns the large numbers of tombs contemporary with the Han dynasty that have been discovered (c. 30,000) all over modern China proper. It has been essential to narrow down the material to a manageable amount for this thesis, but limiting the dataset in this way also runs the risk of missing ornament that spanned a wide range of regions and different social ranks. For this thesis, the study area focuses on the regions around the capital areas, as well as central and eastern China, where most decorated and royal tombs with rich finds are located. The wealth of data contained in these tombs made this area an obvious choice for a study examining potentially varied uses of ornament, and the reasoning is expounded upon further in Chapters One, Four, and Five.[938] However, it is hoped that the sample of tombs can be increased in future studies to both broaden our knowledge of regional socio-economic structures within the Han Empire and provide a systematic comparison of burial assemblages and auspicious concepts in the tombs of people of different social ranks. This will also allow the social tier(s) and cultural influences (local,

[937] *Hou han shu*, 3152.
[938] Sections 1.2.1, 4.1.1, and 5.1.

exotic, or imperial) that led to or initiated the trends in auspicious ornament in tombs during different phases of the Han dynasty to be determined. Even though no single piece of research has yet covered all tombs from the Han period, advances in information technology and software development mean that comparing such huge numbers of tombs and assemblages may eventually become possible.

Secondly, there are many kinds of objects with ornament that may be considered auspicious. Our understanding of auspicious ornament or auspicious objects needs to be expanded to include not only the most obvious items, such as the use of a ram as a phonetic equivalent for auspiciousness,[939] but also mythical and cosmic motifs, as well as decorated jades and goldwork, which in various ways were all designed to maintain a correct cosmic balance, protect the deceased, showcase their status, and bring them closer to immortality.[940]

The present study selects a few representative tomb objects to illustrate its points, but there is evidently insufficient space to talk about every tomb object that may have embodied an auspicious meaning. The rationale of the selection, as discussed throughout the thesis, is that the paintings and carvings are direct visual sources for the Han dynasty mindset, whilst jade and gold respectively represent traditional local and exotic foreign materials. These examples were thus assessed to be most useful in exploring how auspiciousness was expressed. It should not be assumed, however, that

[939] See Section 4.2.2.
[940] Lai 2015: 186

other objects from Han tombs, such as the bronze mirrors, lamps, diviner boards, lacquerware, pottery, and figurines, were not also used to reflect ideologies of correlative cosmology or auspiciousness. Systematic archaeological and art historical research and publication of these objects will allow future research to understand the place of all such objects within the system of auspicious ornament. [941]

7.3.2 **The afterlife**

It is unclear from the available data whether it was believed that the soul or spirit of the deceased stayed in the tomb or travelled somewhere else (a paradise or ideal immortal realm). The vision of the afterlife in the Han period includes two key aspects: the composition of the deceased (the physical body and the refined bodily substance) and their final destination. The philosophical and historical written records discussed in Chapters Two and Three indicate that understandings of these two aspects changed over time, observations that are generally corroborated by archaeological discoveries from different regions and periods of the Han.

For the first aspect, it is not easy to decide whether the people of the Han dynasty believed that a human being was composed of a physical body, a soul(s), a spirit, a shadow, or even variations of several or only a few of these aspects.[942] At the very least, belief in a physical body and some form of refined bodily substance is suggested by tomb objects designed to protect the physical body (e.g. the jade suit) and those

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[941] *Ibid*.
[942] Lewis 2006: chp. 1.

designed to facilitate the tomb owner's attainment of an immortal afterlife in an ideal immortal realm (e.g. the incense burner). It is also unlikely that the notions explained in texts such as the *Book of Rites* were universally understood and accepted by everyone throughout the Han Empire, many of whom will have been illiterate. This is particularly the case, as even one line of text typically has dozens of potential interpretations. The only solution is to investigate more tombs, develop a system to assess possible ideas, and allow changes over time and between regions to be discussed.

It is a similar situation for the second aspect, as there is no consistency among scholars' opinions. Whilst some argue that the well-furnished tombs were intended to be eternal 'happy homes' for the deceased, others claim that the furnishings were only meant to ensure the deceased was well prepared before they embarked on a journey to paradise or the immortal land. Though there are some written materials from tombs that suggest people believed in the existence of an otherworldly bureaucracy, such as 'announcements to the world below' (*gao di shu* 告地書) from tombs in the Jiangling area, Hubei Province,[943] these sources do not provide enough information to decide the deceased's final abode. The development of a methodology combining archaeological evidence and written texts on funerary rites, in addition to improvements in chronology and appreciation of spatial variations, will advance our understanding of ideas about the post-mortem destination.

Resolving these two aspects will further contribute to understanding of the

[943] For instance, see Hu Pingsheng and Li Tianhong 2004: 312 and 372.

functions of specific items and ornament in the tombs. But it should be constantly born in mind that tombs are multidimensional entities, and no single line of reasoning will do full justice to every feature.[944] Just like concepts of the afterlife vary all over China today, similar levels of ideological sophistication existed in the Han dynasty. This does not mean that there is no way to answer the questions of how auspicious ornament functioned. On the contrary, such complexity is the driver for future exploration, reminding researchers to always be cautious, objective, detailed, and open to new possibilities.

7.3.3 **Auspiciousness in life and its continuation**

What the people of the Han dynasty used to decorate their tombs prompts us to consider how they used auspicious ornament in their lifetimes. Unfortunately, the buildings of the Han dynasty do not survive today. We may only speculate using available texts, archaeological sites, and objects in burial assemblages that may have been used during the deceased's lifetime, sometimes called *shengqi* 生器, e.g. textiles, lacquerware, and personal adornment.[945] The opposite of *shengqi* is called *mingqi* 明器, meaning objects produced to be deposited in tombs that retain the form, shape, material, colour, and decorations of their counterparts used in life, like pottery models of granaries and wooden human figurines.[946]

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[944] Lai 2015: 186

[945] Xunzi for example, uses the terms *mingqi* and *shengqi* to designate two types of burial goods. *Xunzi*, 181–2; Wu 2010: 87–8.

[946] Wu 2010: 89.

The implications of this thesis' main questions of why and how auspiciousness was important in the Han dynasty ornamental system are in no way limited to Han period archaeology. It has almost been taken for granted that secular ornament in later dynastic China and even today can be described generally as auspicious and aiming to evoke longevity, prosperity, happiness, fertility, and other positive concepts.[947] Many religious images had symbolic meanings that suited their religious or ritual contexts, such as Buddhist textiles that employed lotus motifs in reference to the *Lotus Sutra* or the pure land, and these were often included in secular decorations in residential, practical, ritual, or everyday contexts.[948] Studying the material culture of the post-Han dynasties may provide us with new knowledge on the legacy and influence of the Han dynasty, as well as changes in the Chinese ornamental system over time went on. This is particularly important, because, as mentioned throughout this thesis, there was no immutable constant idea or belief informing artistic practices. Although one concept or belief became particularly popular from time to time, there has always been diversity within unity, and vice versa. The one stable principle, however, as presented in this thesis, is the Chinese desire for auspiciousness.

In conclusion, this thesis provides a new reading of burial practices in the Han dynasty, especially as regards the use of auspicious ornament and concepts of auspiciousness in

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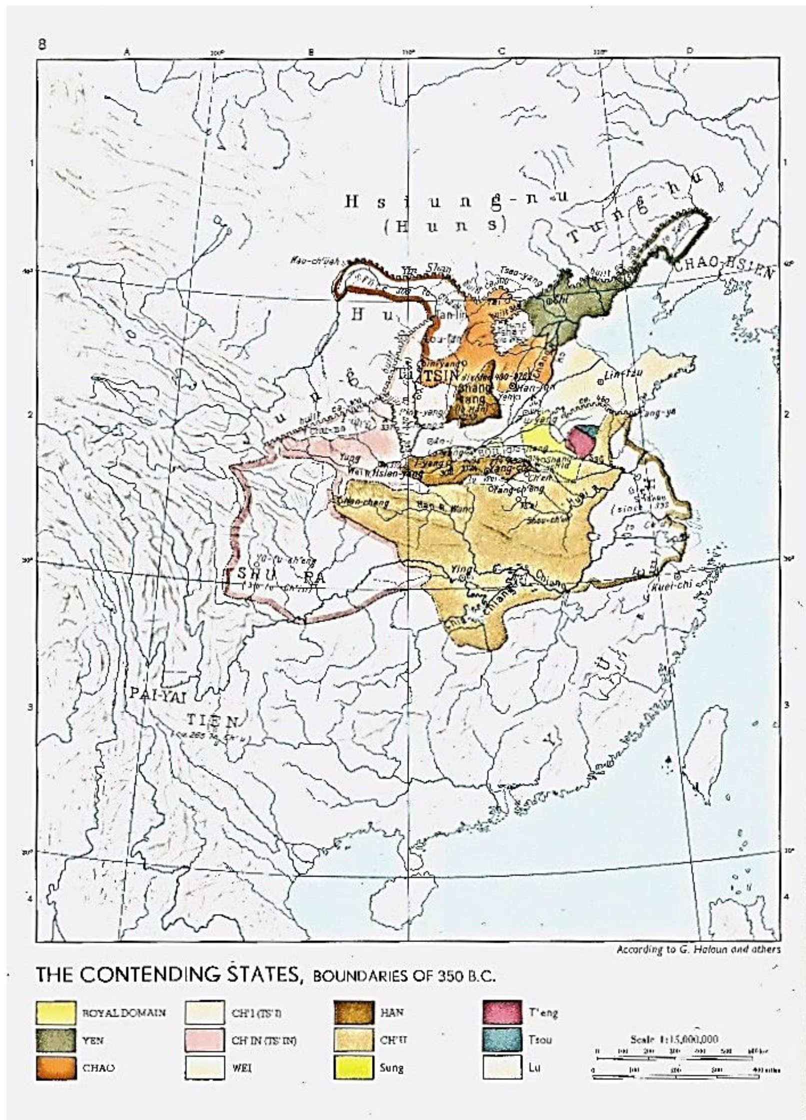
[947] Hay 2010: 143–69 and 195.

[948] Rawson 1984: chp. 2 and 4; Huang Nengfu and Chen Juanjuan 1995; Hay 2010.

relation to the afterlife. The significance of early imperial China goes beyond the political and philosophical developments that are often used to characterise the Han dynasty; it also lies in the development of an auspicious ornamental system specific to China, which drew on a correlative cosmology, a synthetised ideology combining Confucian, Daoist, and local beliefs, as well as increased contact between a large empire and different peoples that prompted the introduction of new materials and artisanal techniques. It is hoped that the value of the contextual approach in studying auspicious ornament and the materialisation of auspicious ideas as reflected in the archaeological remains of the Han dynasty will invite more attention and serve as a basis for future research on the history of ornament, material culture, and the quality of 'being auspicious' in China.

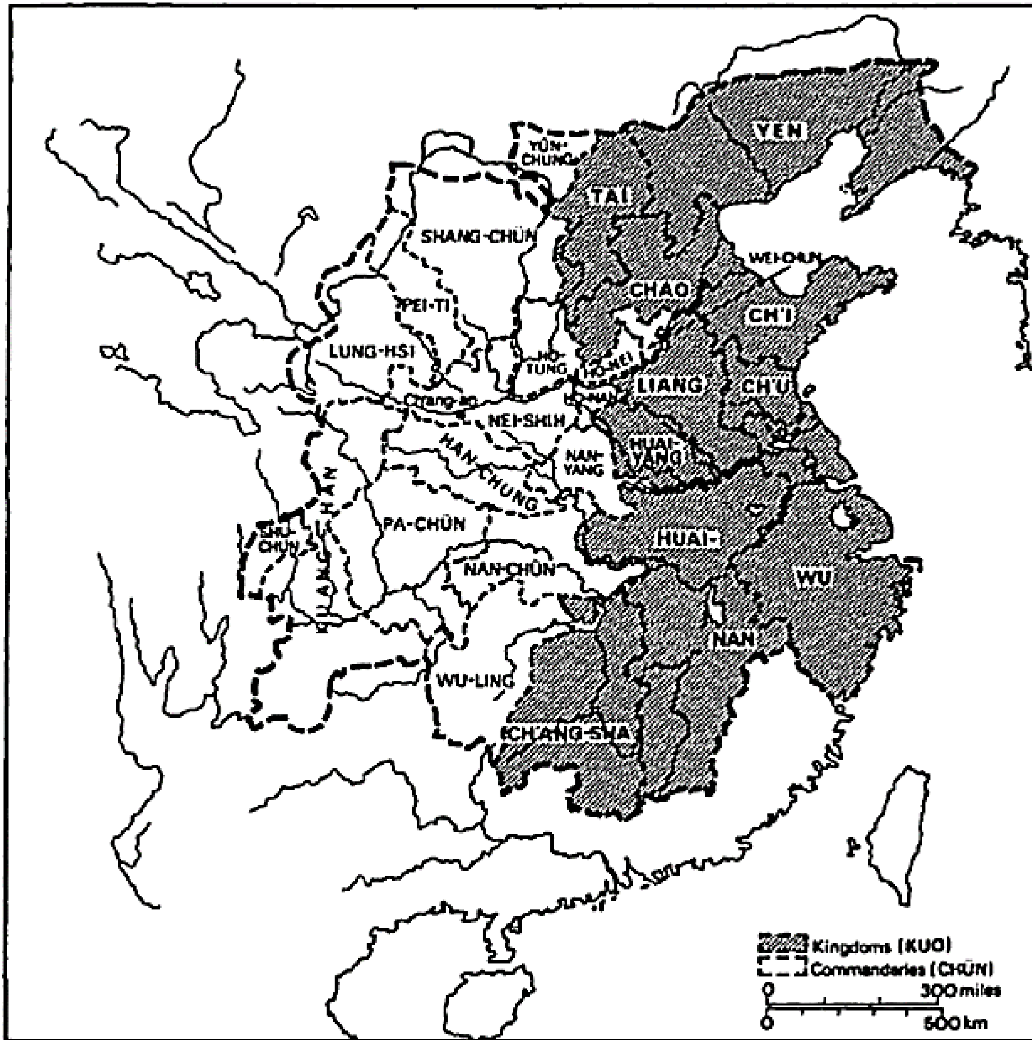
MAPS

Map 1.1. China in the Qin and Han dynasties. The locations of the capital of Western Han, Chang’an, now Xi’an, Shaanxi Province; the capital of Eastern Han, Luoyang, Henan Province; Khotan (Hetian), Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The locations of the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (Zeng hou yi), Mawangdui and Shizishan. After Sun *et al.* 2017: XV.

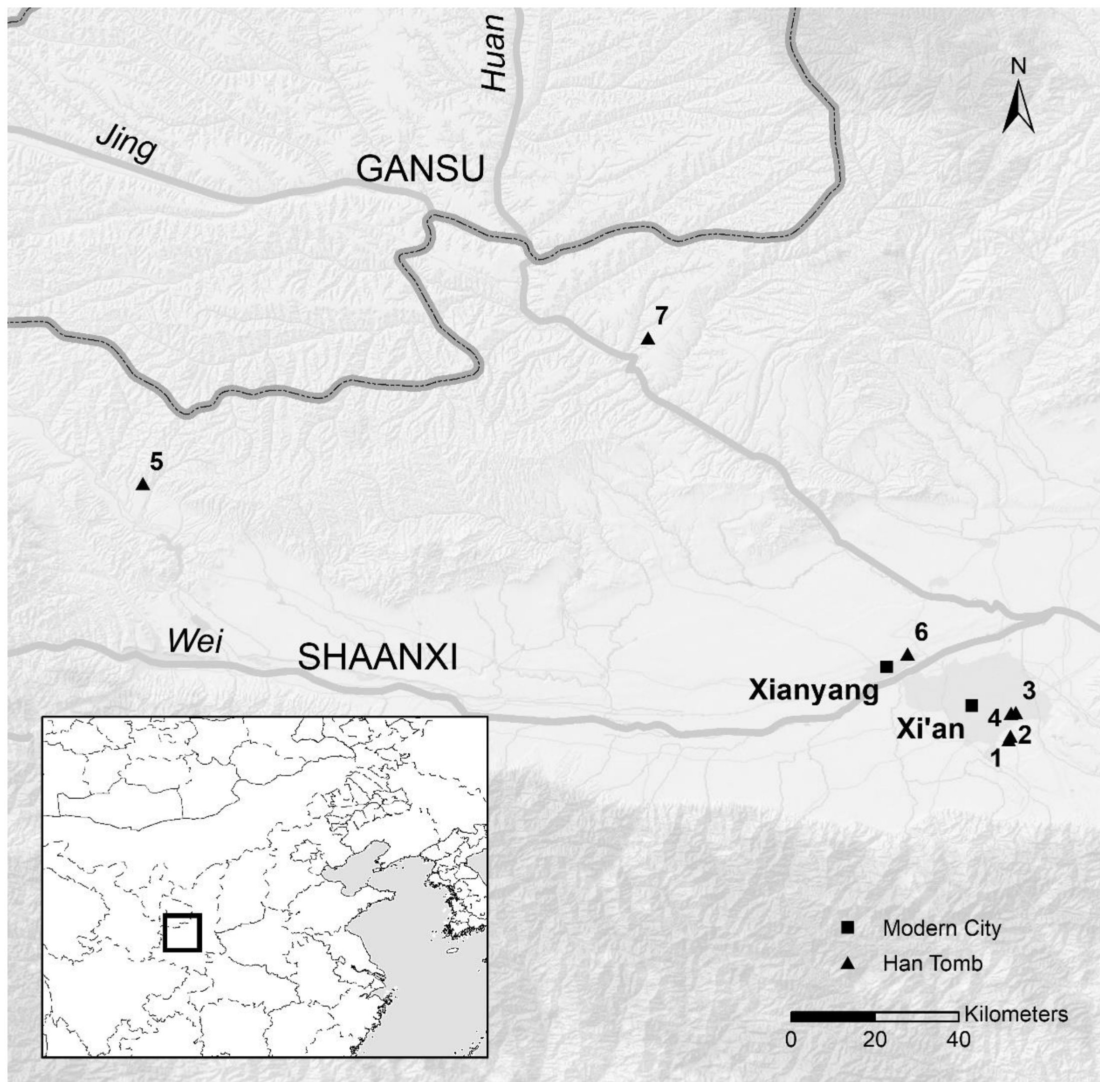


Map 1.2. Late Warring States period. After Herrmann 1966: 8.

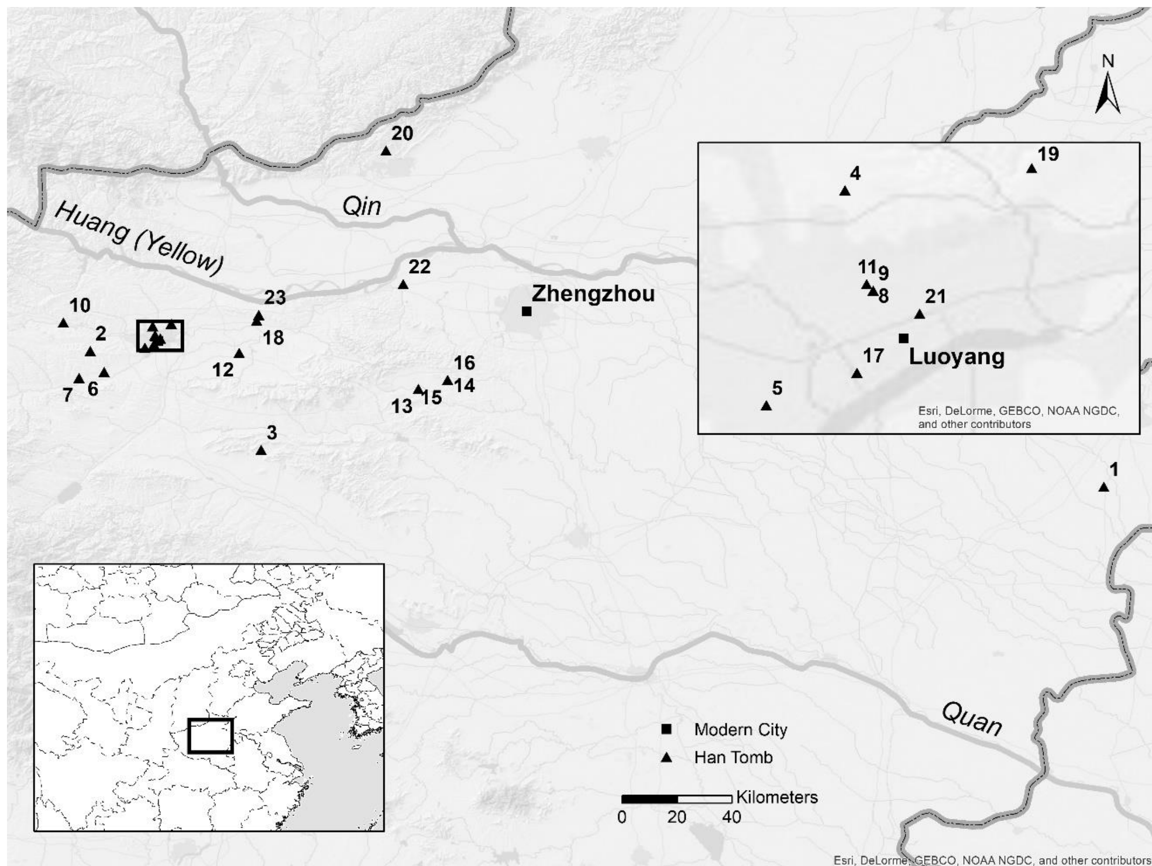
Map 2.1. The location of Wu Liang Shrine. Liu 2005: 18.



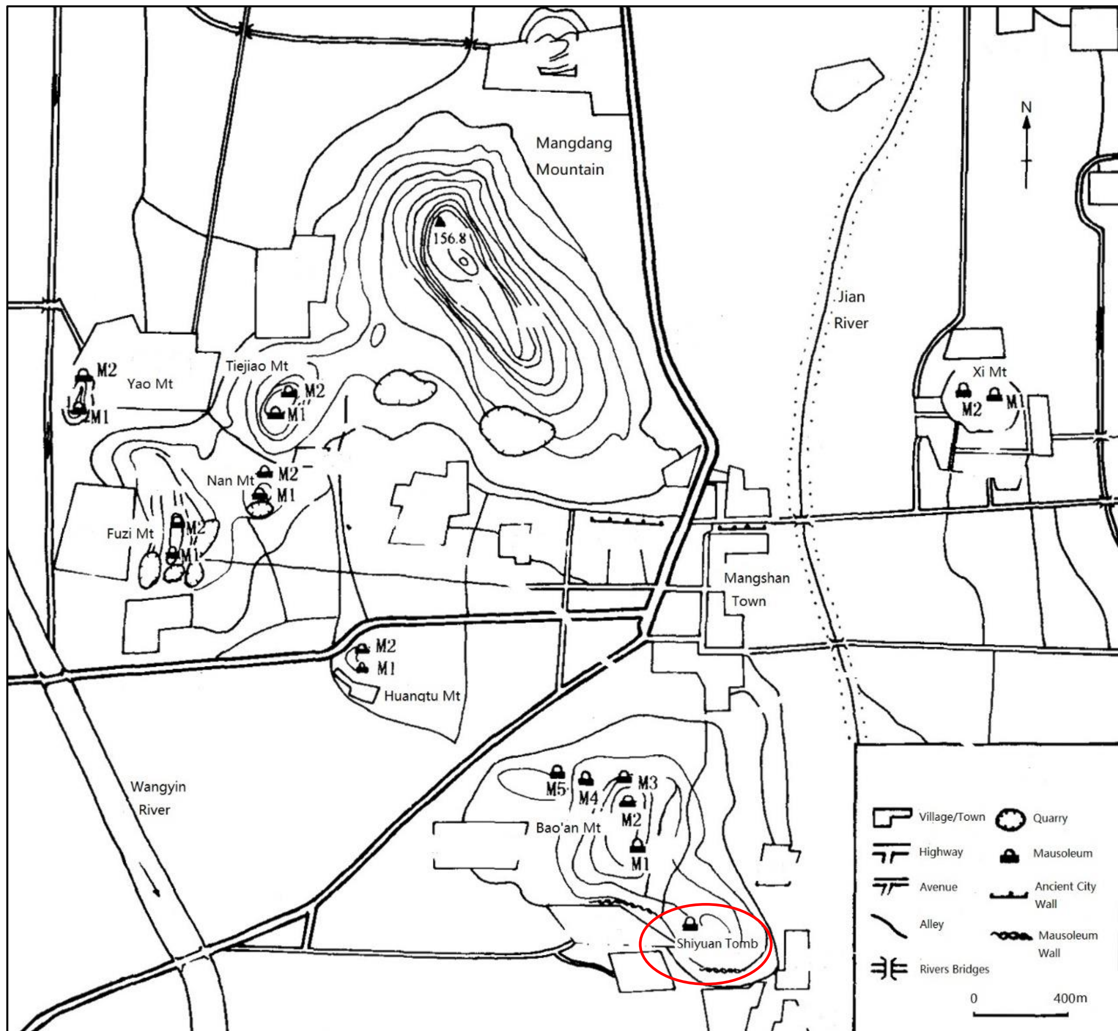
Map 3.1. Map of commanderies and regional kingdoms of the Han Empire in the early second century BC. After Twitchett and Loewe 1986: 125.



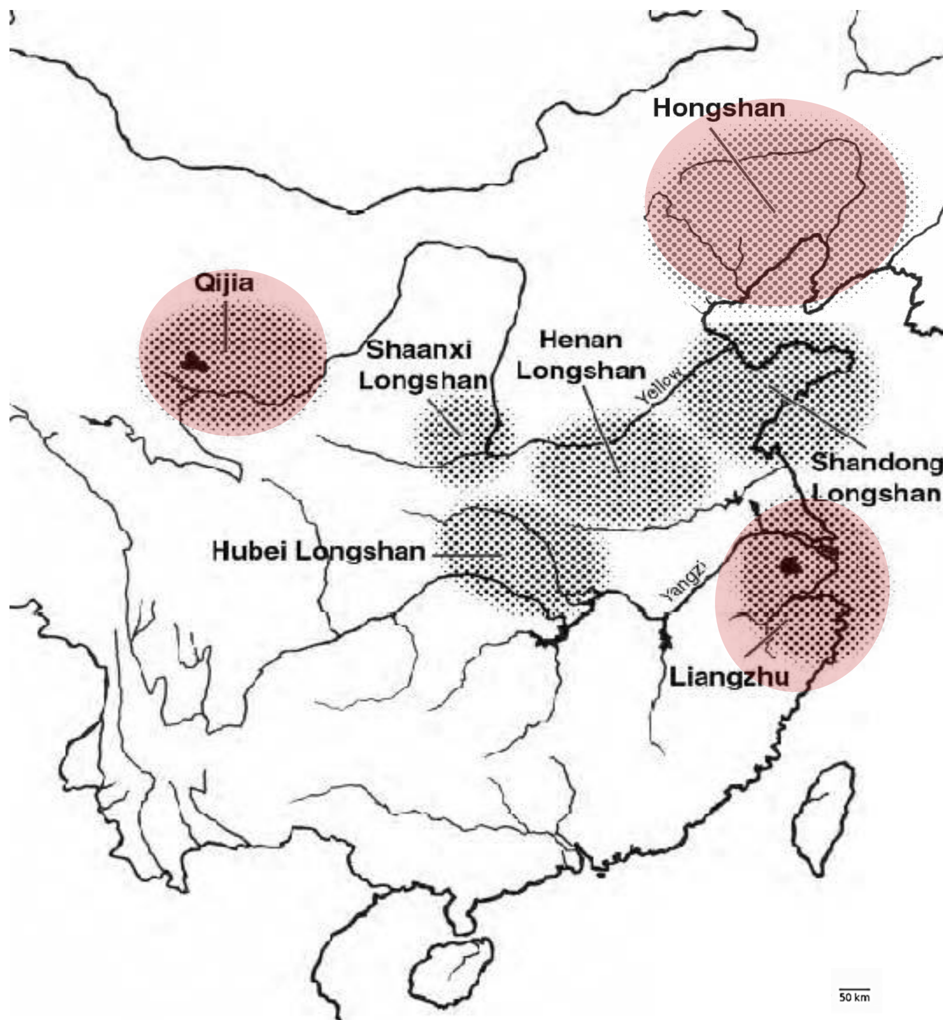
Map 4.1. Distribution of Han dynasty decorated tombs in or near Chang'an (Xi'an) in Shaanxi Province, China. Detailed information on the sites is included in Appendix 4.1. (1) Qujiangchi Mural Tomb no.1. (2) Primary School attached to Xi'an Jiaotong University Mural Tomb. (3) Xi'an Science and Technology University Tomb no. 1. (4) Xi'an Qujiang Cuizhu Garden Mural Tomb. (5) Qianyang Mural Tomb. (6) Xianyang Gongjiawan Mural Tomb. (7) Xunyi County Baizi Village Mural Tomb. Map made by the author.



Map 4.2. Distribution of Han dynasty decorated tombs in or near Luoyang in Henan Province, China. Detailed information on the sites is available in Appendix 4.2. (1) Mural Tomb of King of State Liang. (2) Balitai Mural Tomb. (3) Shaogou Mural Tomb no. 61. (4) Bu Qianqiu Mural Tomb. (5) Qianjingtou Mural Tomb. (6) Yiyang County Paiyou Village Hollow-bricked Western Han Tomb. (7) Yiyang Yintun Mural Tomb. (8) Jinguyuan Xin dynasty Mural Tomb. (9) Jinguyuan Eastern Han dynasty Mural Tomb. (10) Xin'an Tietashan Mural Tomb. (11) Luoyang North Suburb Shiyouzhan Mural Tomb. (12) Yanshi Xincun Mural Tomb. (13) Mixian County Dahuting Carved-stone and Mural Tombs. (14) Mixian Houshiguo Carved Stone and Mural Tomb no. 1. (15) Mixian Houshiguo Carved Stone and Mural Tomb no. 2. (16) Mixian Houshiguo Carved Stone and Mural Tomb no. 3. (17) Xigong Mural Tomb. (18) Yanshi Xingyuancun Mural Tomb. (19) Jigongchang Mural Tomb. (20) Zhucun Mural Tomb. (21) Luoyang Mural Tomb no. 3850. (22) Xingyang Chang Village Mural Tomb. (23) Yanshi Mangshan Tomb. Map made by the author.



Map 4.3. The Mausoleum of the Kings of Liang and the location of the Shiyuan mural tomb. After Zheng Qingsen 2001: 66.



Map 5.1. The distributions of the Hongshan, Liangzhu, and Qijia cultures (red) in Neolithic China. After Asian Art Museum 1999: maps 1 and 2.

FIGURES

Figures for Chapter 1

Figure 1.1. Cabinet (Fassadenschrank), German, Nuremberg. Early seventeenth century. Height: 264.2 cm; width: 213.4 cm; depth: 76.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA. 1905, 05.22.1. After The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2020, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/188937?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=gothic+furniture&offset=20&rpp=20&pos=27, accessed 26th February 2020.

Figure 1.2. The interior of the Radcliffe Camera, Oxford. Available through The Bodleian Libraries of the University of Oxford, http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/visit/plan-your-visit/panoramas/radcliffe-camera, accessed 12th October 2017.

Figure 1.3. Black and red lacquer box with mother-of-pearl inlay, China. Sixteenth century. Length: 42.5 cm; width: 30.5 cm; diameter: 11.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 1977, 0721.1.a-b. After The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2017, http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2006/mother-of-pearl/photo-gallery, accessed 30th January 2017.

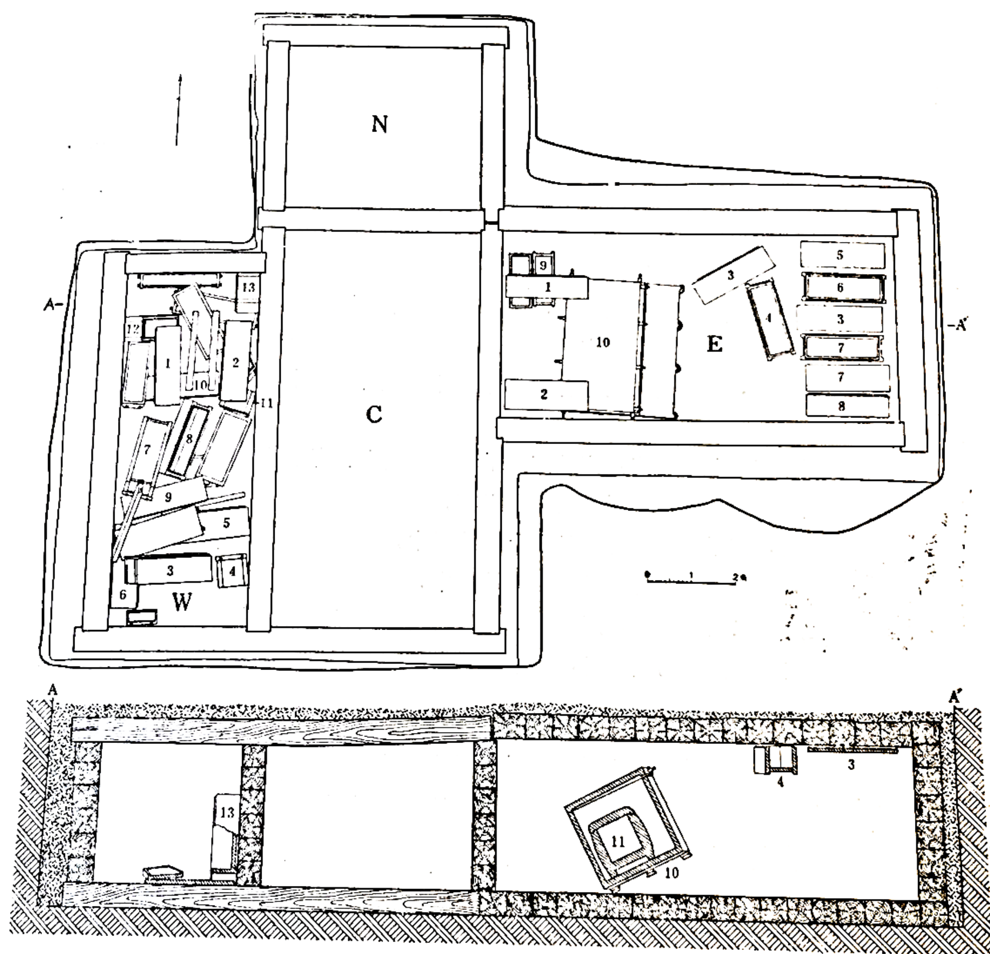


Figure 1.4. The tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, Suizhou, Hubei Province (10. The outer coffin; 11. The inner coffin). After Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 9.

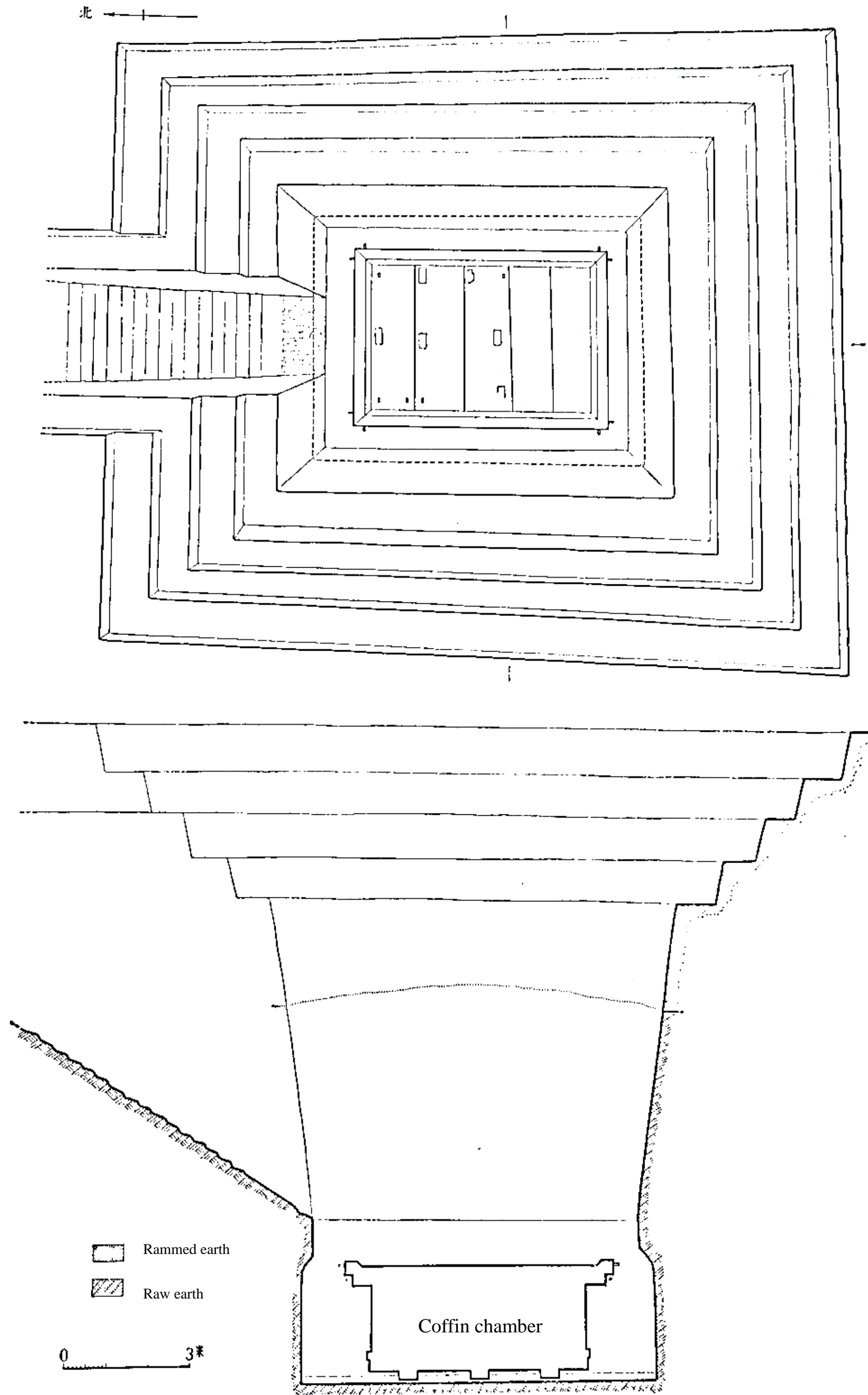


Figure 1.5. Tomb no. 1 of Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan Province. After Beijing 1973 vol. 1: 4.

Figure 1.6. The inner coffin of Marquis Yi of Zeng. After Beijing 1989 vol. 2: colour pl. I (4).

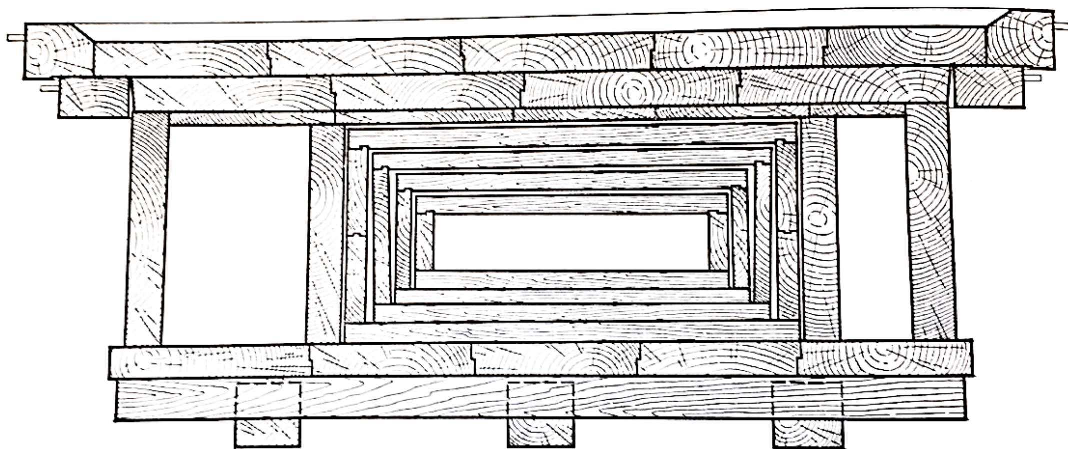


Figure 1.7. The layered coffins in Tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui. After Beijing 1973 vol. 1: 6.

Figure 1.8. The inner coffin with a red background from Tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui. After Beijing 1973 vol. 2: colour pl. 32.

Figure 1.9. Side view of one end of the inner coffin of Marquis Yi of Zeng. After Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 30.

Figure 1.10. Panel at the foot of the inner coffin in Tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui. After Beijing 1973 vol. 2: colour pl. 36.

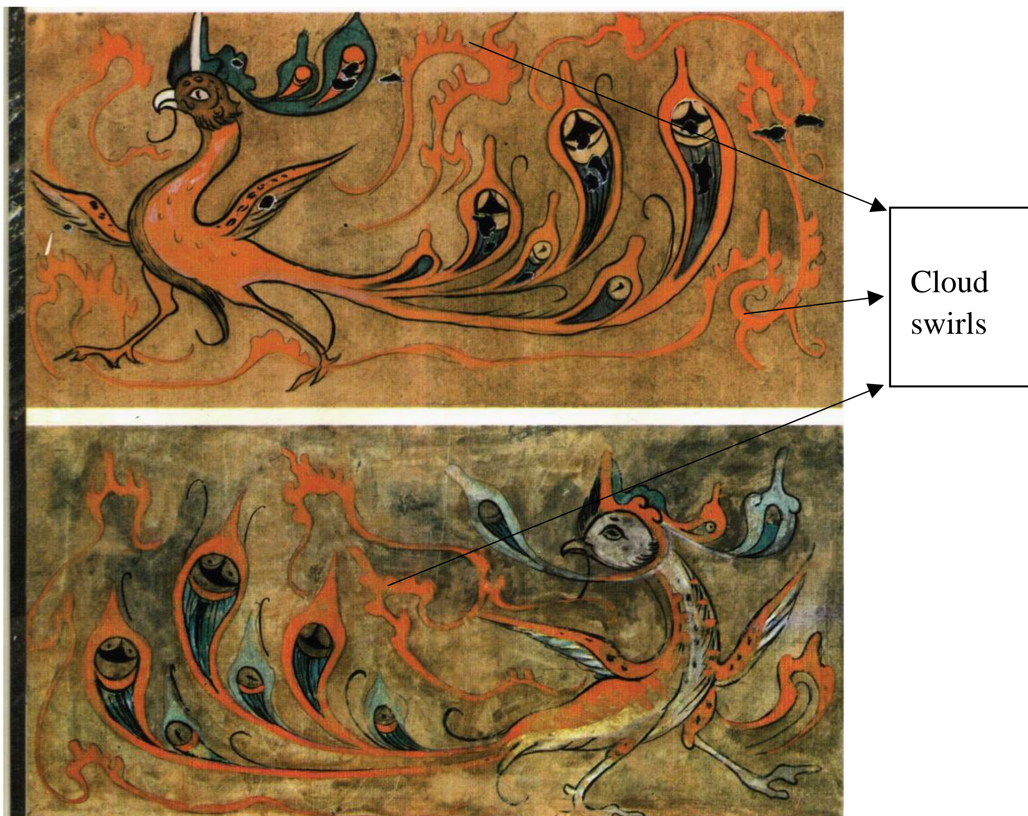


Figure 1.11. Phoenixes surrounded by swirling clouds in mural paintings at Jinguyuan Tomb, Luoyang, Henan Province. Xin dynasty. After Luoyang Bowuguan 1986: 50.

Figure 1.12. Silk banner from Tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui. After Yang Xin *et al.* 1997: 26.

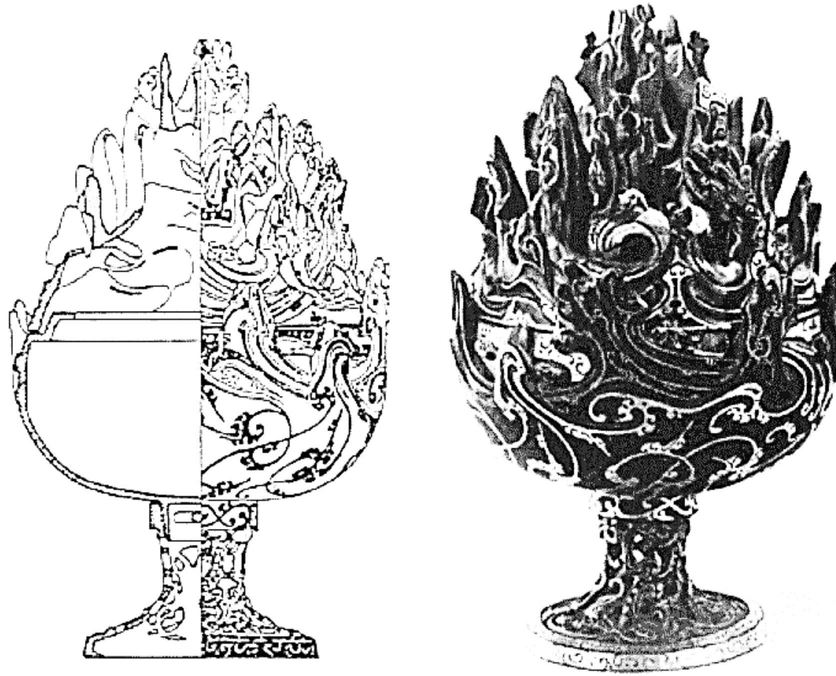


Figure 1.13. Bronze hill censer with gold inlay. Tomb of Liu Sheng, Mancheng County, Hebei Province. Western Han dynasty. After Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 64, fig. 44; Erickson 1992: 10, fig. 3.

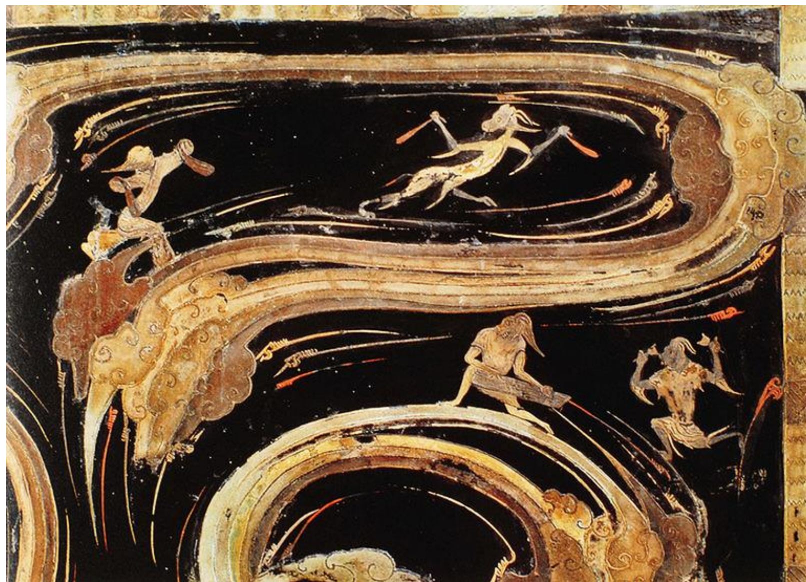


Figure 1.14. The horned creatures with a dragon-like body on the second innermost coffin in Tomb no. 1, Mawangdui. After Beijing 1973 vol. 2: pl. 32.

Figure 1.15. The bronze cauldron known as the Si Mu Xin *fang ding* 司母辛方鼎. Tomb of Fu Hao, Anyang, Henan Province. Anyang period of the Shang Dynasty (c. 1300–1030 BC). Fong *et al.* 1980: 161.

Figures for Chapter 2

Figure 2.1. Shang–Western Zhou ritual altar set, bronze, Shaanxi Province, China. Shang–Western Zhou dynasty. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1931, 24.72.1–.14 After The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2018, https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/76974, accessed 6th March 2018.

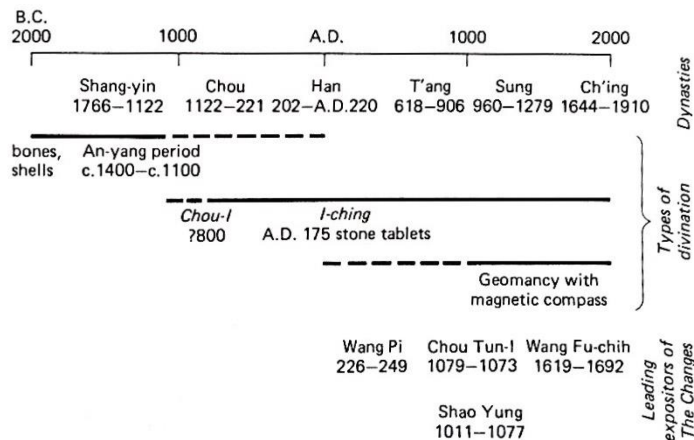


Figure 2.2. Materials and methods for divination in the Shang, Zhou, Han, Tang, Song, and Qing dynasties. The lowermost two rows show major figures who provided explanations of the content of the Zhou divinatory text, the *Book of Changes*. After Loewe 1981: 41.

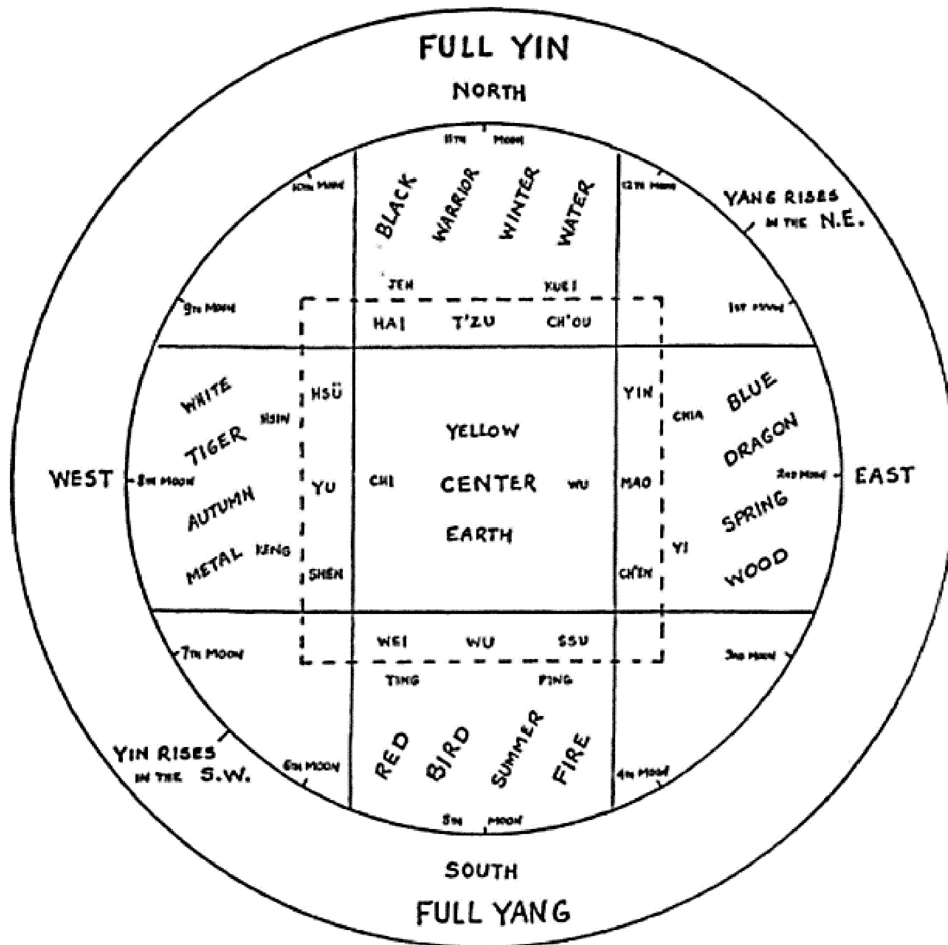


Figure 2.3. A diagram of the correlative cosmology (yin, yang and the five phases) in the Han dynasty. After Cheng Te-k'un 1957: 176.

Figure 2.4. Huang-Lao Silk Manuscript, Tomb no. 3, Mawangdui. Size: mount length: 27 cm, mount width: 28.3 cm; manuscript length: 27 cm, manuscript width: 17 cm. After Hunan Bowuguan 湖南博物館 (Hunan Provincial Museum) 2018, http://61.187.53.122/Collection.aspx?id=1344&lang=zh-CN, accessed 6th March 2018.

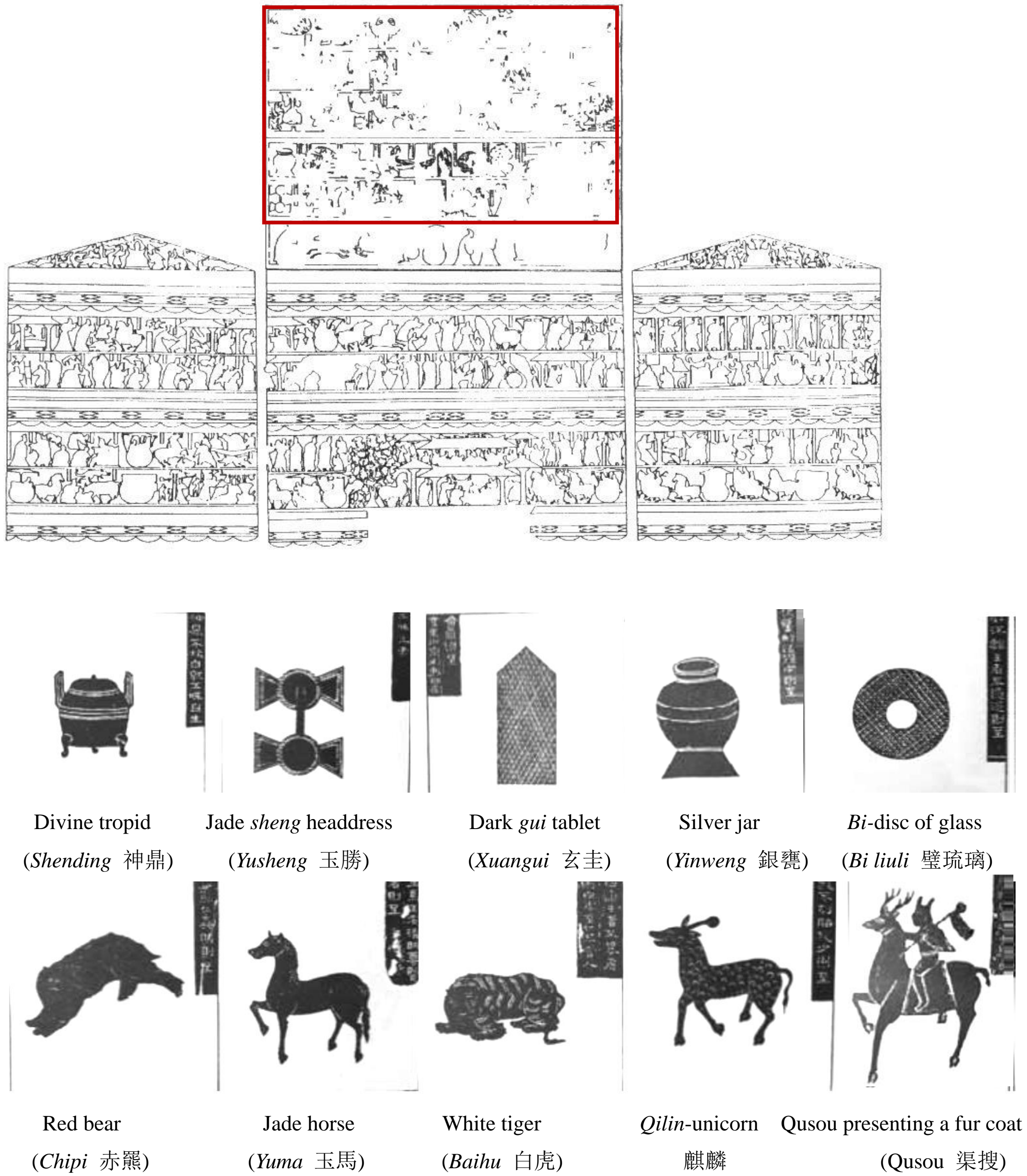


Figure 2.5. The roof auspicious omen slabs in Wu Liang Shrine (damaged) and some recognizable slabs. After Wu 2006: 162; Xun Jingyuan 2017: 51.

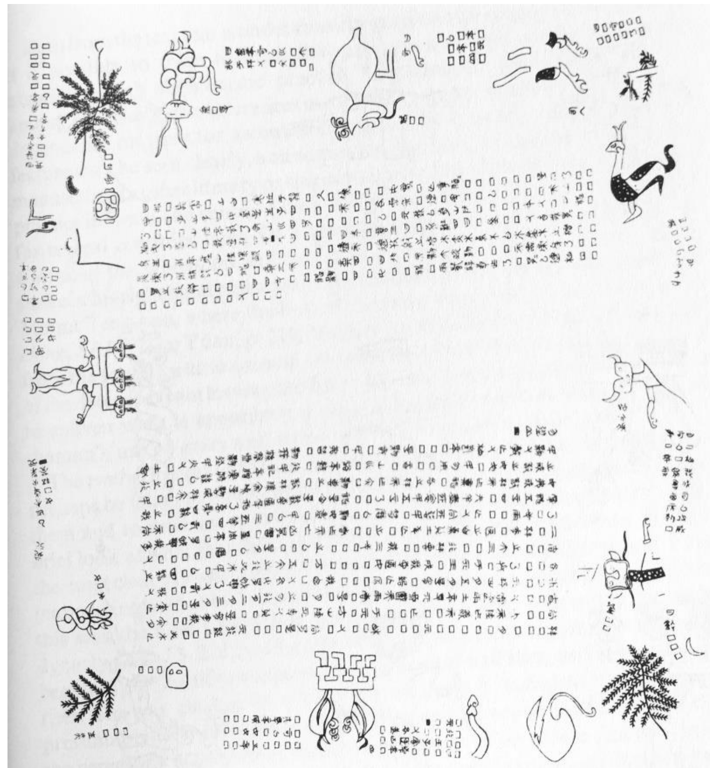


Figure 2.6. The silk manuscript from Chu State, Hunan Province. Warring States period. After Loewe 1994a: 43.

Figure 2.7. Chart of clouds for divination, *Divination by Astrological and Meteorological Phenomena* (*tianwen qixiang zazhan* 天文氣象雜占), c. 168 BC, Tomb no. 3, Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan Province. Ink and colour on silk. Height: 48 cm. Image available through The Ten Thousand Rooms Project of Yale University, https://tenthousandrooms.yale.edu/node/109016/mirador?canvas=68031, accessed 20th February 2020.

Figures for Chapter 3

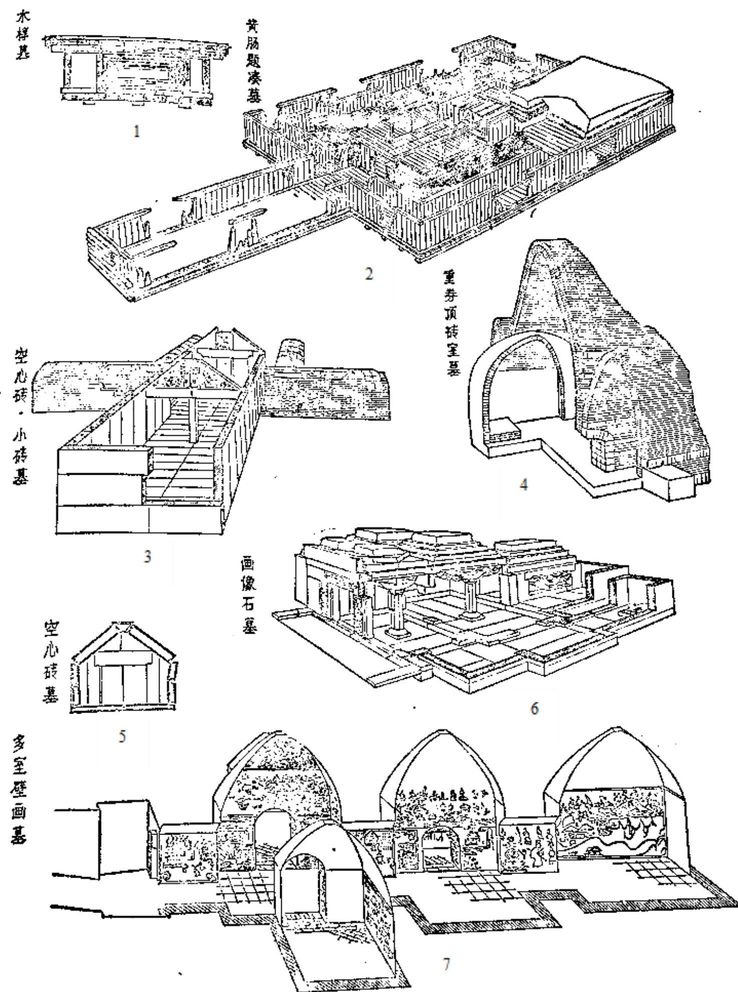


Figure 3.1. Han dynasty tomb structures. (1) Vertical pit wood tomb. (2) Timber *huangchang ticou* tomb. (3) Hollow and solid-brick tomb. (4) Vaulted roof brick tomb. (5) Hollow-brick tomb. (6) Carved-stone tomb. (7) Decorated multi-chamber tomb. After Wang Zhongshu 1984: pl. 104.

Figures for Chapter 4

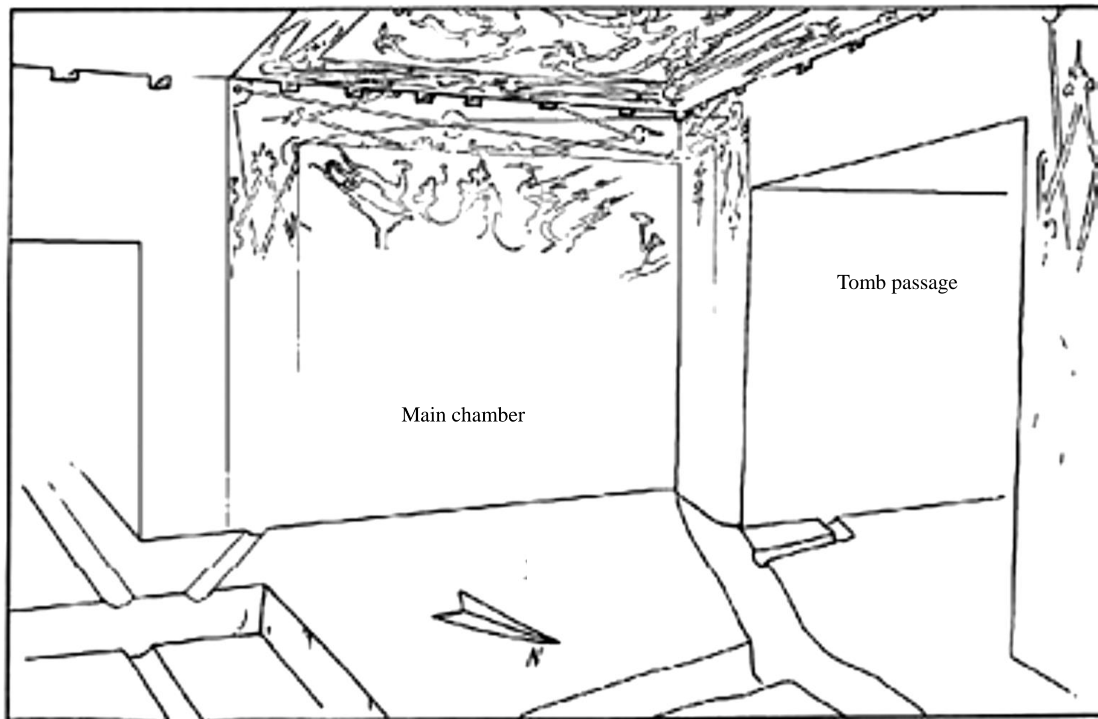


Figure 4.1. Location of the mural paintings in the tomb at Shiyuan, Yongcheng, Henan Province. Western Han dynasty. After Zheng Yan 2005: 61.

Figure 4.2. The wall painting on the ceiling of the main chamber in the tomb at Shiyuan. Height: 3.27 m; width: 5.14 m; area: 16.8 m². After Beijing 2001: colour pl. I.

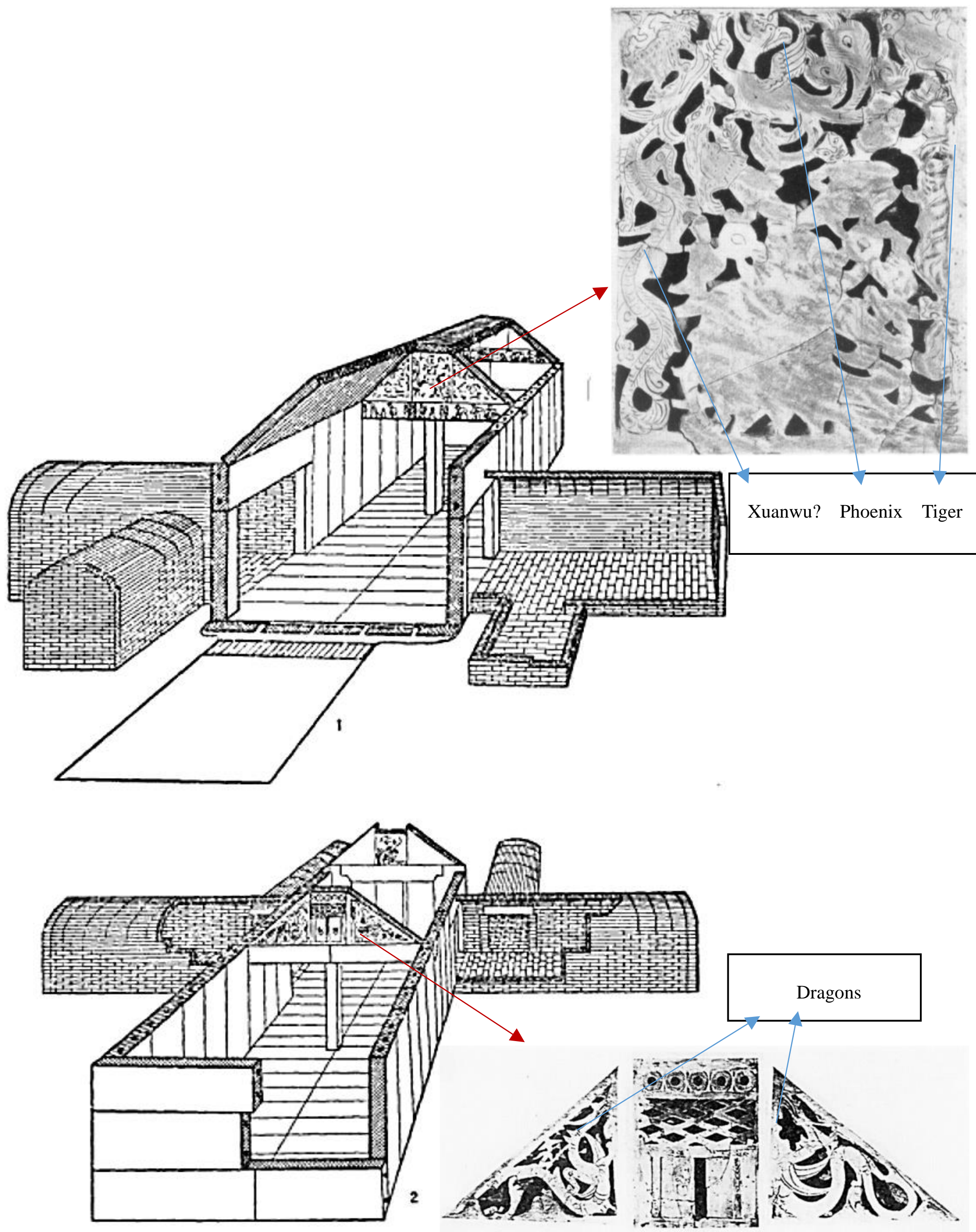


Figure 4.3. Three-dimensional plan of Tomb no. 61 at Shaogou. (1) View from the east. (2) View from the west. Upper right: the facade of the trapezoidal beam; lower right: back (south) side of the lintel. Late Western Han dynasty. After *Kaogu xuebao* 1964: 110, pls. IV3 and VI1.

Figure 4.4. A lacquer clothing box from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng. Early Warring States period. After Hubei Sheng Bowuguan 湖北省博物館 (Hubei Provincial Museum) 2018, http://www.hbww.org/home/Index.aspx, accessed 6th July 2018.

Figure 4.5. A bronze mirror from the Eastern Han dynasty, with the inscription highlighted in red. The inscription reads ‘the phoenix and tortoise bring yin and yang in order, and the dragon on the left and tiger on the right prevent inauspiciousness’ (朱雀玄武順陰陽，左龍右虎辟不祥). After *Kaogu* 1978: 161.

Figure 4.6. *Da Ke Ding* 大克鼎, a bronze food vessel decorated with two types of interlaced cloud motifs on the body. Reign of King Xiao 孝 of Zhou (r. 960–896 BC). After Shanghai Bowuguan 上海博物館 (Shanghai Museum) 2018, https://www.shanghaimuseum.net/museum/frontend/articles/CI00000656.html, accessed 1st August 2018.

Figure 4.7. Ceiling painting in Tomb no. 61, Shaogou, Luoyang. Late Western Han dynasty. After Luoyang Bowuguan 1986: 33–4.

Figure 4.8. The main chamber of the Xi'an Jiaotong University tomb, Xi'an. Western Han dynasty. After Xi'an 1991: pl. 1.

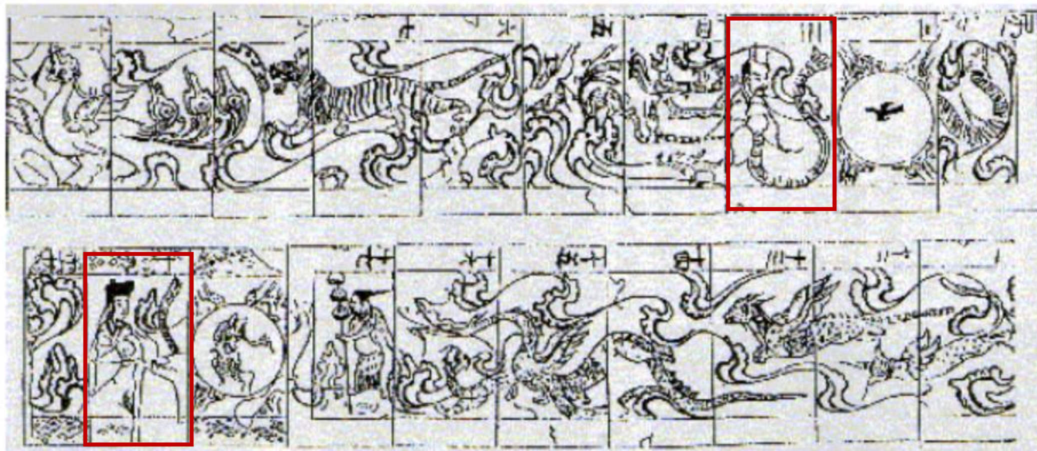


Figure 4.9. A mural painting depicting Fuxi (highlighted in the upper row) and Nüwa (highlighted in the lower row) in the tomb at Bu Qianqiu, Luoyang. Western Han dynasty. After *Wenwu* 1977a: pls. 2 and 3.

Figure 4.10. Fuxi and Nüwa depicted in the Wu Liang Shrine, Jiaxiang, Shandong Province. Eastern Han dynasty. After Wu 2006: 264, fig. 109.2.

Figure 4.11. The Queen Mother of the West (the stalk highlighted in the red circle) in the mural painting from Xincun tomb, Yanshi, Luoyang. Xin dynasty. After *Wenwu* 1992b: 3.

Figure 4.12. The carving of the Queen Mother of the West from the west gable in the Wu Liang Shrine. (1) Rubbing of the carving. (2) Line drawing of the carving. After Wu 2006: 127, fig. 41.

Figures for Chapter 5

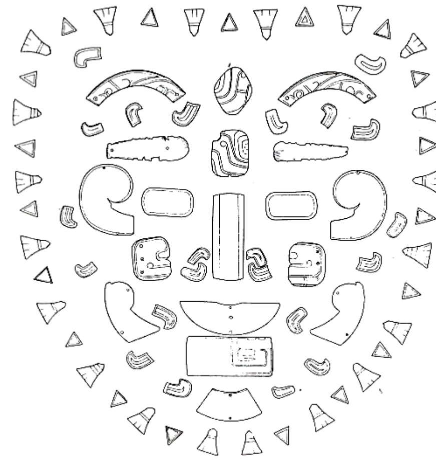


Figure 5.1. Drawing of jades used to cover the face of the deceased from Tianma Qucun, Shanxi Province. Western Zhou period, ninth century BC. After Rawson 1995a: fig. 39.

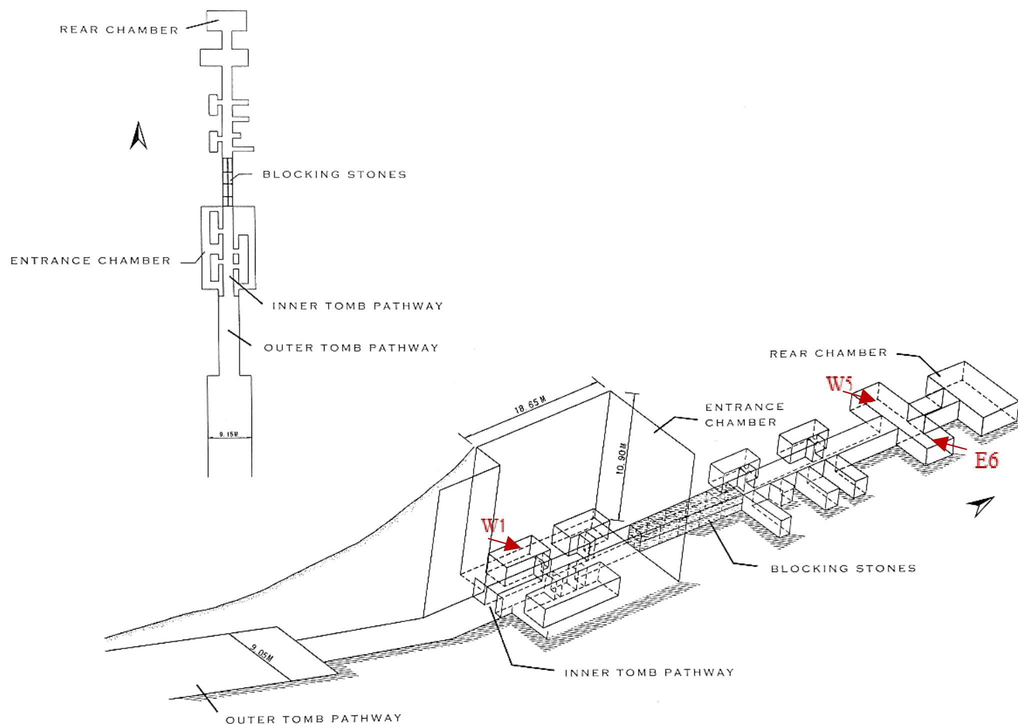


Figure 5.2. Aerial and three-dimensional plan from the south-east of the King of Chu's tomb at Shizishan, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province. Western Han dynasty. After Lin 2012b: 322.

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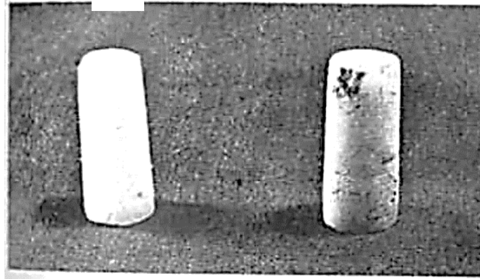


玉握E．C．11：183、189

Figure 5.3. Jade burial items from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng. Upper: Jade mouth plug. Lower: Jade hand grips. After Beijing 1989 vol. 2: pl. 161.

Figure 5.4. The jade suit from the tomb of Shizishan. After Xuzhou Han Bingmayong Bowuguan 徐州漢兵馬俑博物館 (Xuzhou Han Dynasty Terracotta Army Museum) 2019, http://www.xzhbmy.com/content/?181.html, accessed 5th March 2019.

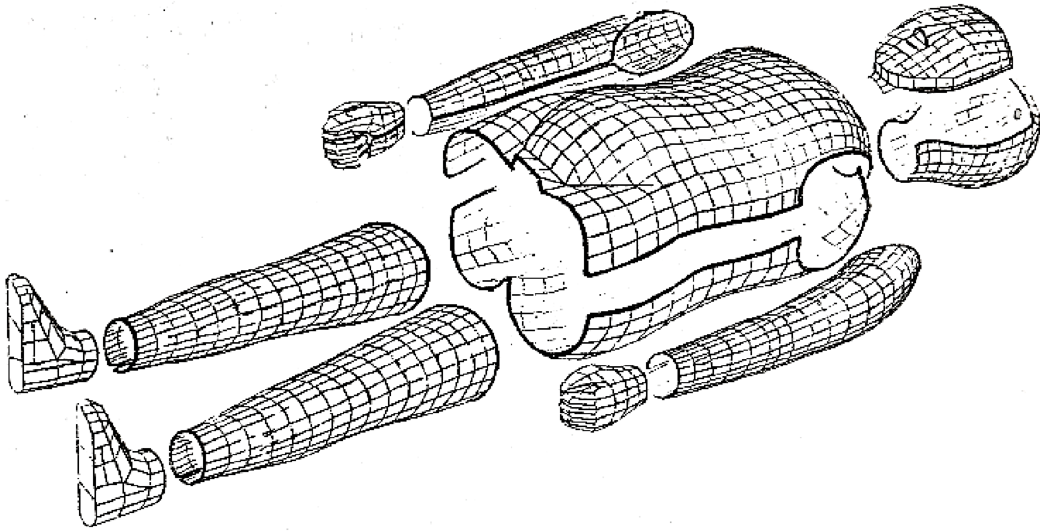


Figure 5.5. Diagram of the 12 parts of the Shizishan jade suit. After Lin 2009: 12.

Figure 5.6. Jade plugs for the nine orifices from the tomb of Shizishan. After Lin 2012b: fig. 11.

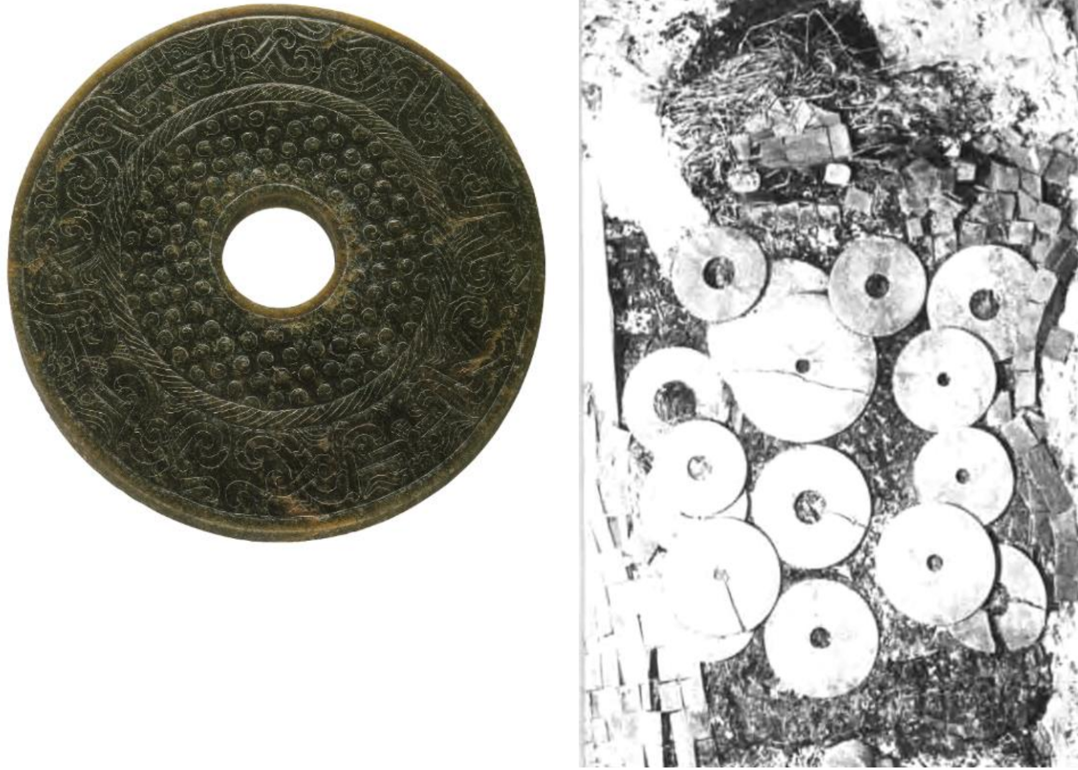


Figure 5.7. Left: Jade *bi*-disc with the *kui*-dragon motif from the tomb of Shizishan. After Xuzhou Han Bingmayong Bowuguan 徐州漢兵馬俑博物館 (Xuzhou Han Dynasty Terracotta Army Museum) 2019, http://www.xzhbmy.com/content/?181.html, accessed 5th March 2019. Right: Jade *bi*-discs inside Liu Sheng's jade suit, Mancheng. After Beijing 1980a vol. 2: pl. 14.1.

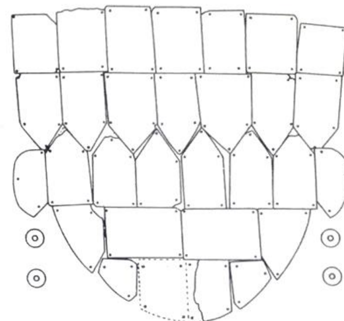


Figure 5.8. Reconstructed jade face cover from Houloushan, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province. Western Han dynasty. After Wang Tao and Liu Yu 1997:139, fig. 13.

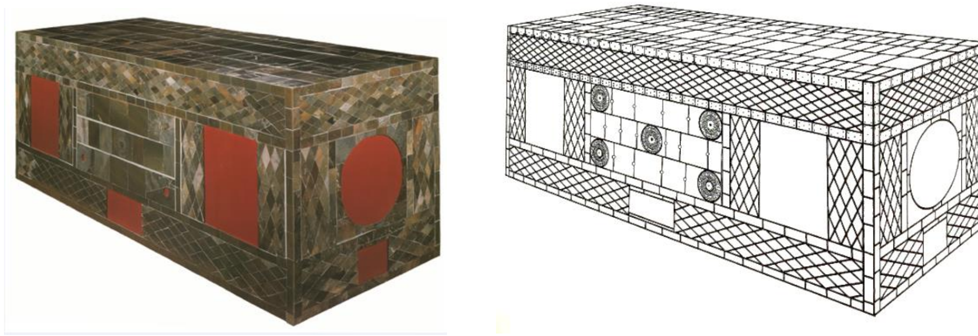


Figure 5.9. Coffin with jade inlay and red lacquer from Shizishan. The drawing on the right shows that *bi*-discs were represented on the front panel of the coffin. After Xuzhou Han Bingmayong Bowuguan 徐州漢兵馬俑博物館 (Xuzhou Han Dynasty Terracotta Army Museum) 2019, http://www.xzhbmy.com/content/?189.html, accessed 5th March 2019.

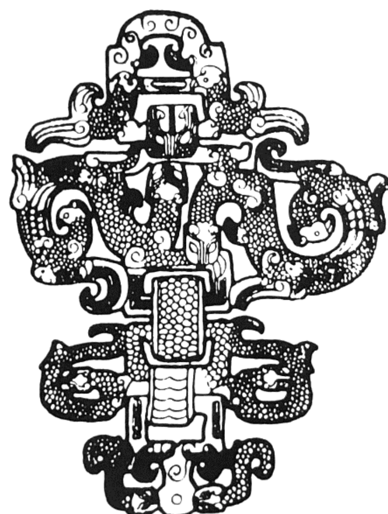
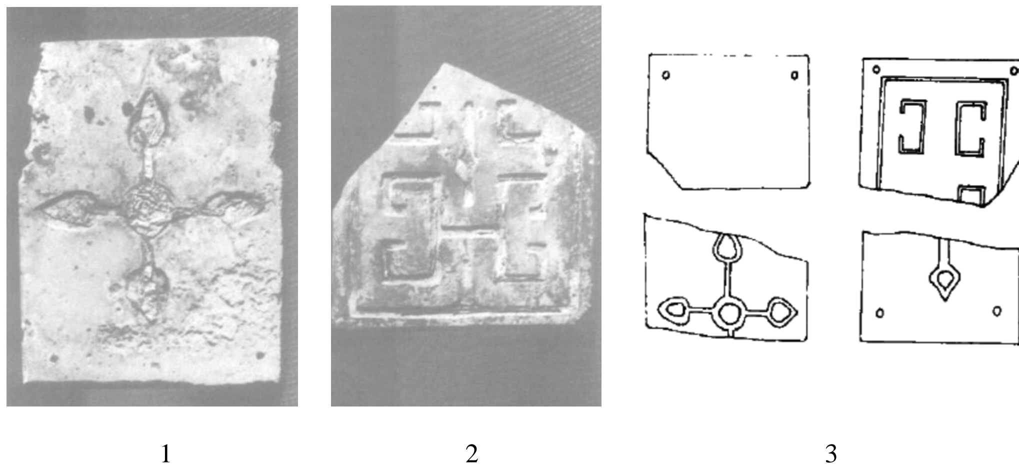


Figure 5.10. An openwork jade ornament, potentially based on openwork gold designs, from the tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng. After Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 250.

Figure 5.11. Jade openwork disc with a dragon and a phoenix from the tomb of the King of Nanyue. After Guangzhou Nanyuewang Bowuguan 廣州南越王博物館 (Guangzhou's Museum of the Nanyue King) 2019, http://www.gznywmuseum.org/yq/153.jhtml, accessed 5th March 2019.



1 2 3

Figure 5.12. Decorated jade suit plaques. 1. Plaque decorated with a persimmon motif from Xingtai, Hebei Province; 2. Plaque decorated with a cloud swirl pattern from Xingtai, Hebei Province; 3. Plaques decorated with persimmon motifs from Wulian Zhangjia Zhonggu, Shandong Province. After *Kaogu* 1980b: pls. 6:1 and 4; *Wenwu* 1987: fig. 22.

Figure 5.13. A dragon jade plaque from Shizishan. After Xuzhou Han Bingmayong Bowuguan 徐州漢兵馬俑博物館 (Xuzhou Han Dynasty Terracotta Army Museum) 2019, http://www.xzhbmy.com/content/?179.html, accessed 5th March 2019.

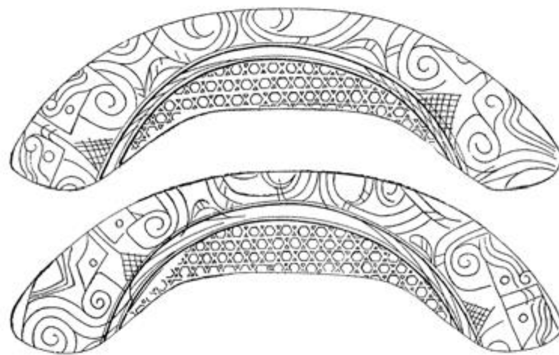
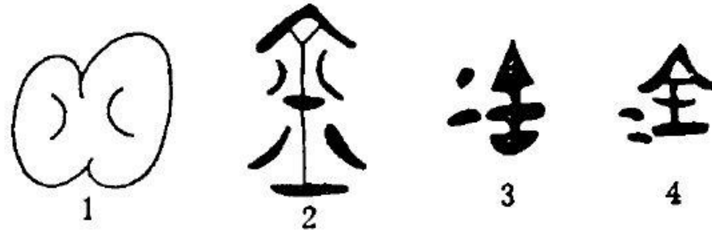


Figure 5.14. Jade *huang*-pendants used as hand grips in the tomb of Liu Sheng, King Jing of Zhongshan, Mancheng, Hebei Province. Western Han dynasty. After Deng Cong 1998 vol. 2: 161.

Figures for Chapter 6



Figures 6.1. The character for gold (*jin* 金) in early forms of Chinese writing. (1) Oracle bones, Shang dynasty. (2)–(4) Bronze inscriptions. Western Zhou dynasty. After Qi Dongfang 1999: 68.

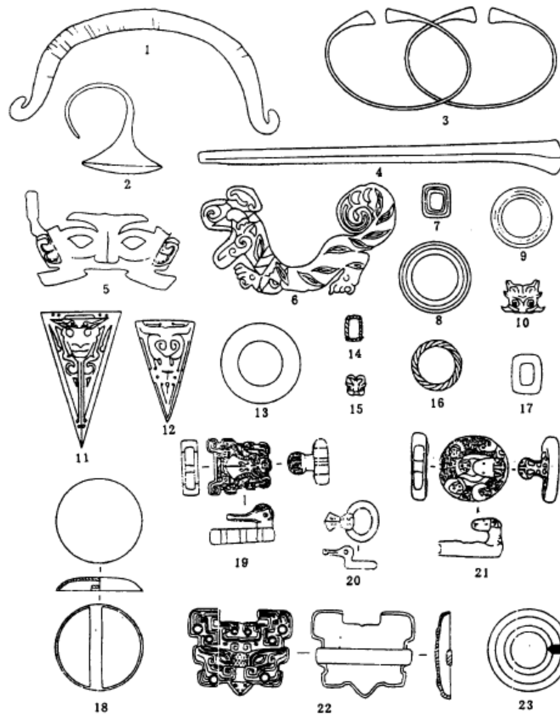


Figure 6.2. Gold objects dated to the Shang and Zhou dynasties. (1) Gold ornament from Baodelin Zheyu 保德林遮峪, Shanxi Province, Shang dynasty. (2)–(4) Gold ornament from Pinggu Liujiahe 平谷劉家河, Beijing, Shang dynasty. (5) and (6) Gold human-head and tiger ornament from Sanxingdui, Sichuan Province, Shang dynasty. (7)–(11) Gold belt ornament from the Guo State tombs at Sanmenxia, Henan Province, Western Zhou dynasty. (12)–(17) Gold belt ornament from the Marquise Jin tomb in Quwo 曲沃, Shanxi Province. (18)–(23) Gold objects from Yimen, Baoji, Shaanxi Province, Spring and Autumn period. After Qi Dongfang 1999: 70.

Figure 6.3. Gold repousse mask from Sanxingdui, Guanghan, Sichuan Province. After Sanxingdui Bowuguan 三星堆博物館 (Sanxingdui Museum) 2019, http://www.sxd.cn/list_2.asp?lmtype=&Page=3&bigclass=29&smallclass=4&tj=&Skey=, accessed 15th July 2019.

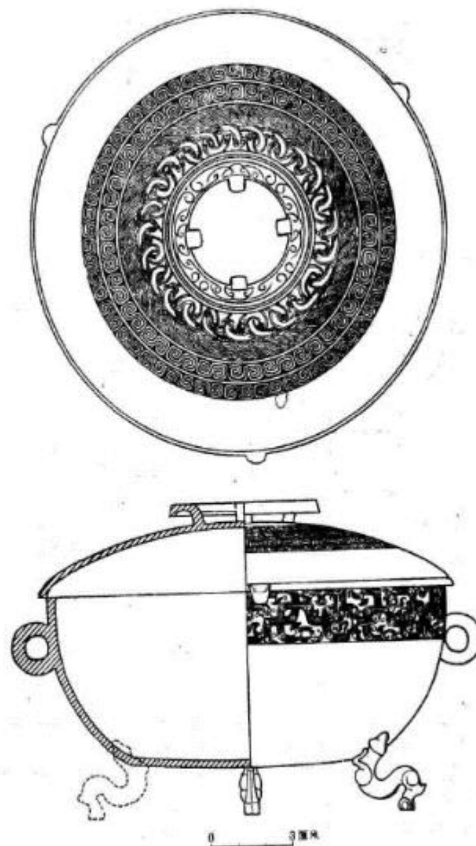


Figure 6.4. Gold vessel with lid from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng. Weight: 2,150 g. After Beijing 1989 vol. 1: 391.

Figure 6.5. Decorated gold daggers from Mancheng in Hebei Province, China, as well as the steppe and Central Asia. Map and drawings by Peter Hommel. Image from Rawson 2017: fig. 6.

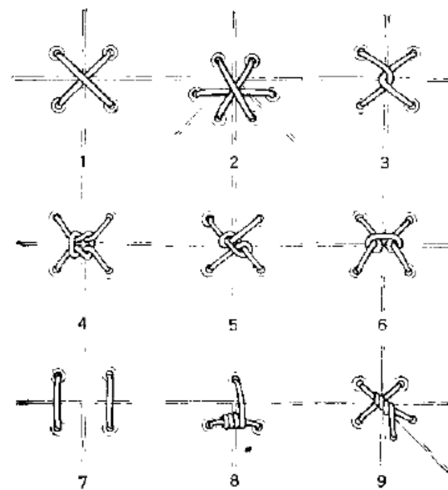


Figure 6.6. Different knots used for the gold thread on the jade suit of Liu Sheng, King Jing of Zhongshan, Mancheng. (1) and (2) Cross. (3)–(6) Hitch. (7) Circuit. (8) and (9) Wrapped knots. After Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 356, fig. 233.

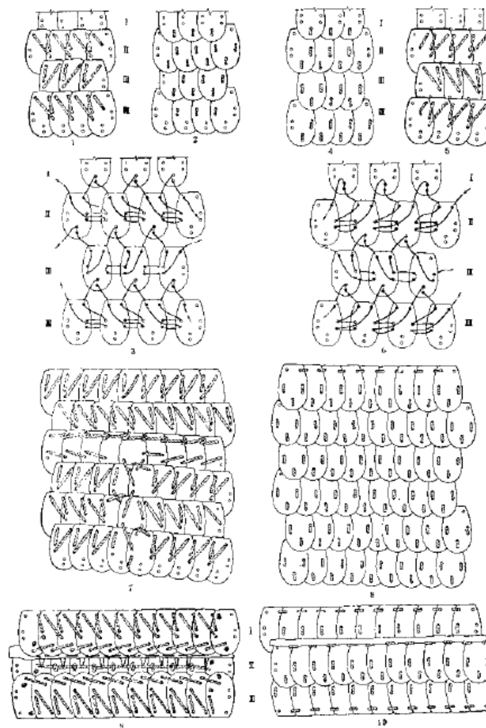


Figure 6.7. Different ways of securing the plaques on the iron armour from the tomb of Liu Sheng, Mancheng. (1) and (2) Back and front side of the right half of the suit. (3) Thread on the right half. (4) and (5) Front and back side of the left half of the suit. (6) Thread on the left half. (7) and (8) Back and front side of the middle of the shoulder and back part. (9) and (10) Back and front side of the left shoulder part. After Beijing 1980a vol. 1: 361, fig. 235.

Figure 6.8. Bronze incense burner known as a hill censer inlaid with gold. Tomb of Liu Sheng, Mancheng. 2nd century BC. Item held by Hebei Provincial Museum. Photograph by the author.

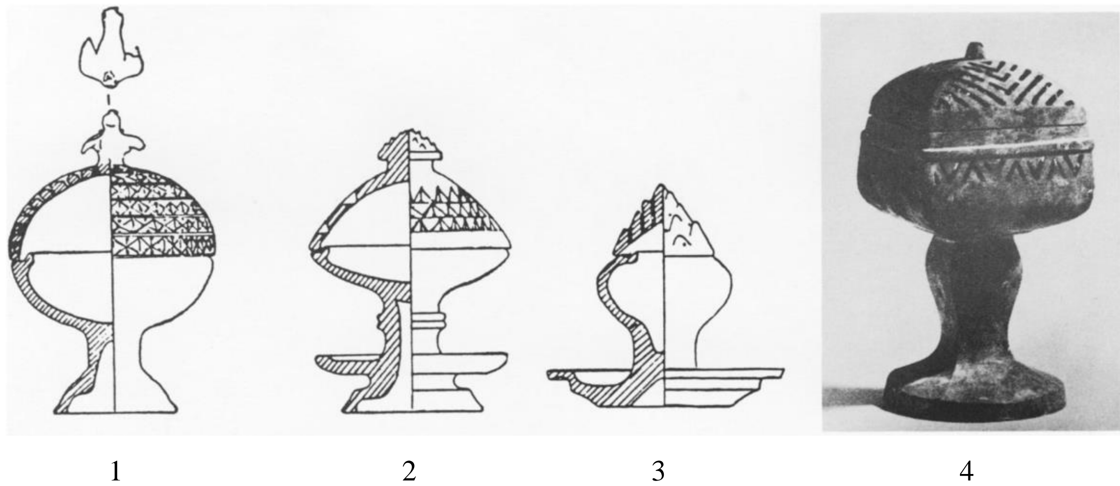


Figure 6.9. Early hill censers from the early Western Han dynasty. (1)–(3) Ceramic censers, Pingyin 平阴 county, Shandong Province. (4) Bronze censer, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. After Erickson 1992: 8, fig. 2.

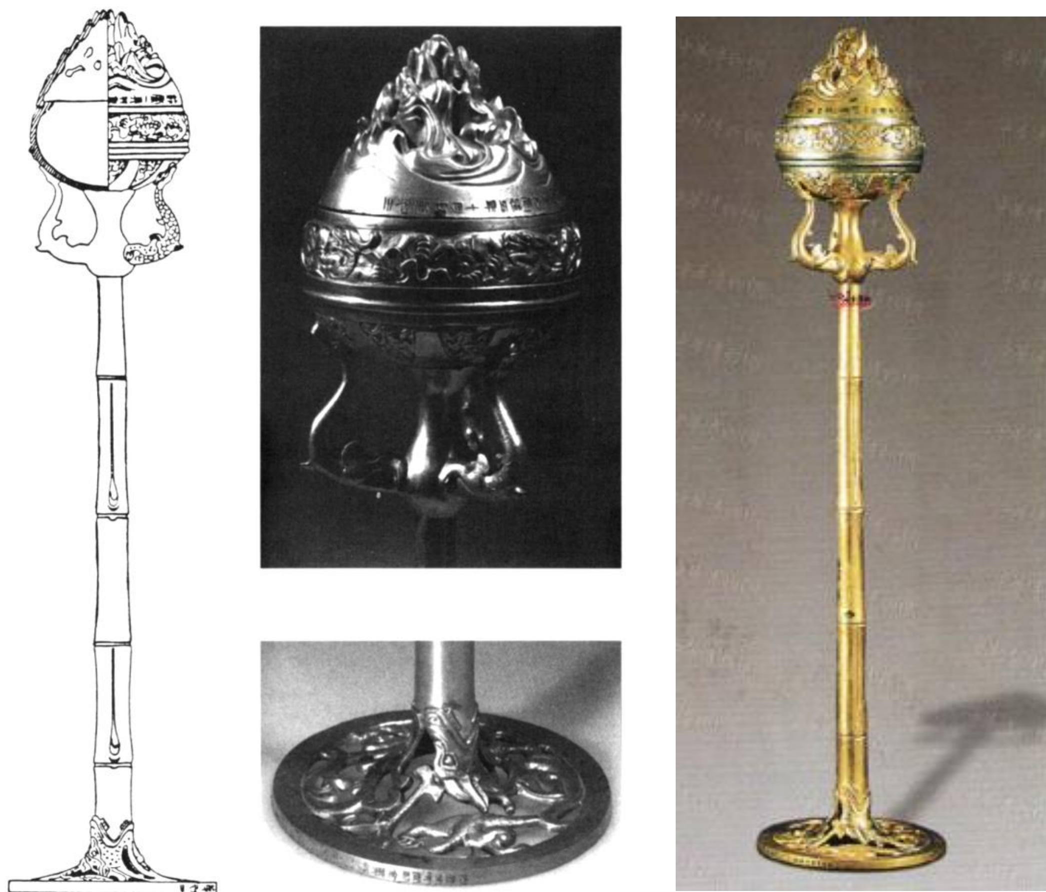
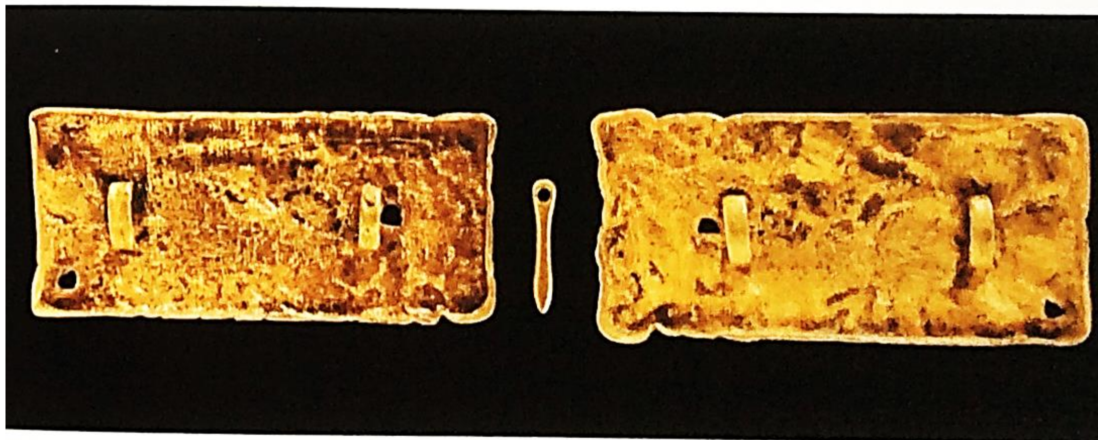


Figure 6.10. Gilded bronze incense burner on a tall stand thought to have belonged to Wudi. Weiyang Palace, Xianyang, Shaanxi Province. Second century BC, Western Han dynasty. Height: 58 cm. After *Wenwu* 1982a: 13 and Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Bianwei 1986 vol. 2: pls. 210 and 211.

Figure 6.11. Left: One of a set of gold belt plaques with a combat scene between an ungulate and a feline from Liuping 劉坪, Gansu Province, China. Fourth to third centuries BC. Right: Belt plaque with a combat scene between a yak, a tiger, and a raptor from south Siberia. Gold inlaid with turquoise. After Simpson and Pankova 2017: 60; Wong 2019: 276.



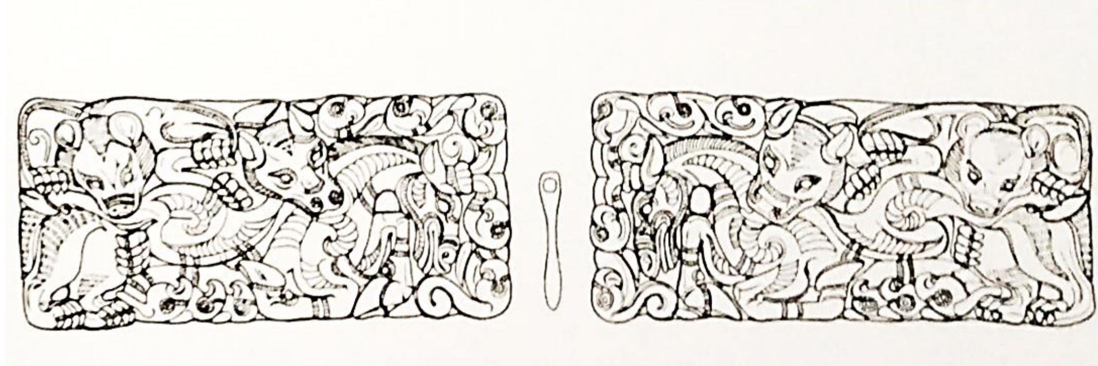


Figure 6.12. A pair of gold belt plaques, each depicting a wolf and a bear attacking a horse-like animal. The tomb of the King of Chu at Shizishan. After Lin 2014: 189.

Figure 6.13. Gilded bronze belt plaque with the decoration of two tortoises and a dragon from the tomb of King of Nanyue. The Museum of the King of Nanyue, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. After Beijing 1991a vol. 1: 166; Lin 2014: 295.

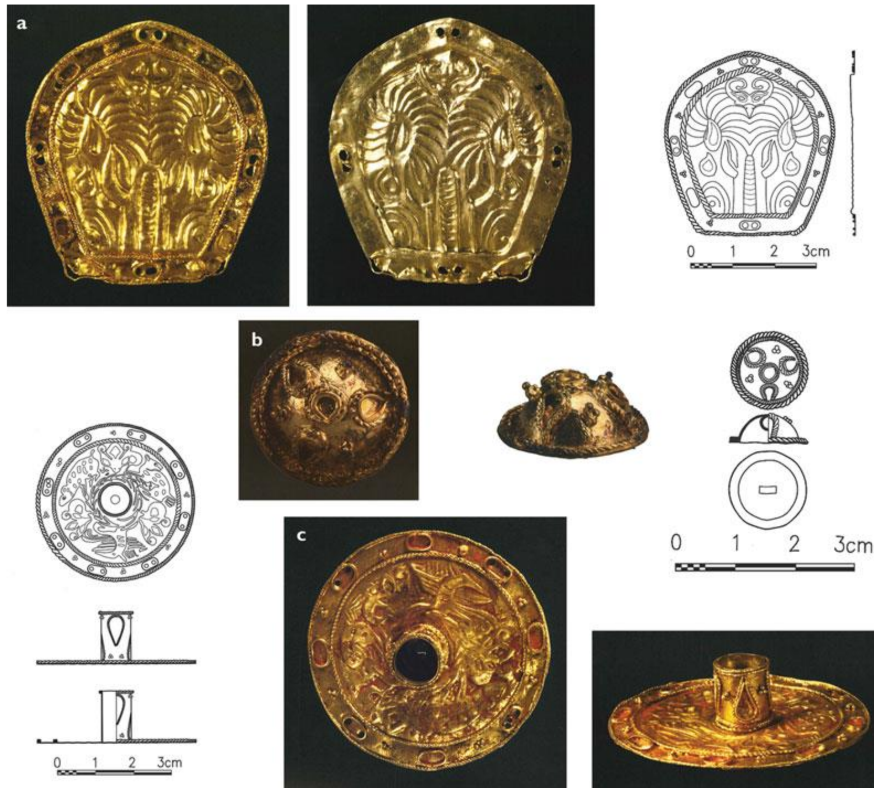


Figure 6.14. Gold ornaments. (A) Gold appliqué with rams' heads, front and reverse sides, height: 44 mm. (B) Buttons, diameter: 13 mm. (C) Roundels, diameter: 43 mm. Dayunshan, Xuyi County, Jiangsu Province. Western Han dynasty. After Liu Yan 2017: 1591, fig. 3.

Figure 6.15. Gold roundels, rings, and hoof-shaped ornament from the tomb of Marquis Haihun, Nanchang, Jiangxi Province. After Nanchang handai haihunhou bowuguan 南昌漢代海昏侯博物館 (Nanchang Han Dynasty Marquis Haihun Museum) 2019, http://www.hhhmuseum.com/colunm3/col1/265.html, accessed 5th July 2019.

Figure 6.16. Gilded bronze horse from the tomb of Princess Yangxin, Maoling Mausoleum Complex, Xianyang, Shaanxi Province. Height: 62 cm, weight: 25.5 kg. Western Han dynasty. Maoling Bowuguan 茂陵博物館 (Mao Mausoleum Museum), Shaanxi Province. Photograph by the author.

Figure 6.17. Jade sculpture depicting an immortal riding a Ferghana horse. Shaanxi Province. Western Han dynasty. After *Kaogu* 1973: 169.

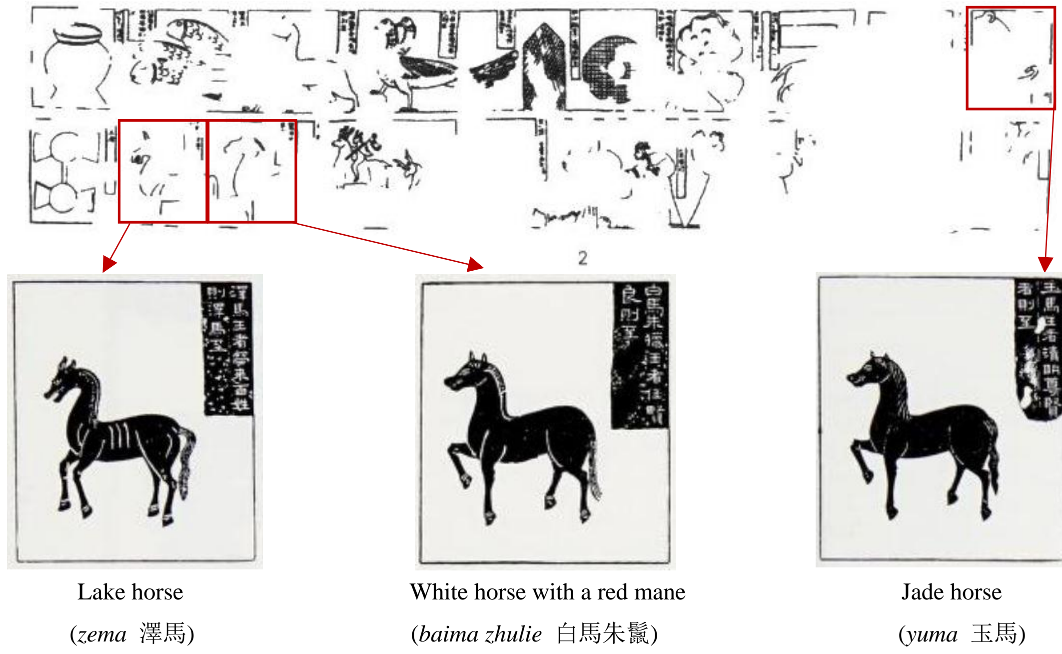


Figure 6.18. Horses depicted on omen slabs, Wu Liang Shrine, Jiaxiang, Shandong Province. Eastern Han dynasty. After Wu 2006: 256–60.

APPENDICES

Appendix 2.1. Excerpts on correlative cosmology developed by Dong Zhongshu from *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*

1. Chapter 6 ‘The Kingly Way’ (*Wang dao* 王道): on auspicious signs for a righteous king and government.

……元者，始也，言本正也。道，王道也。王者，人之始也。王正則元氣和順、風雨時、景星見、黃龍下。……故天為之下甘露，朱草生，醴泉出，風寸時，嘉禾興，鳳凰麒麟游於郊。……[949]

…The Origin means the beginning. [It means that] the foundation [must be] upright. The Way is the Kingly Way. [It means that] the king is the beginning of humankind. When the king is upright, the primal *qi* will be harmonious and compliant, wind and rain will be timely, lucky stars will appear, and the Yellow Dragon will descend… Thus, Heaven sent down sweet dew on their behalf. Vermilion grasses came to life; sweet springs issued forth; winds and rains were timely; excellent millet flourished. The male and female phoenix and the *qilin* [a composite beast with the body, legs and horns of a goat and the head and tail of a lion] wandered through the suburbs…[950]

2. Chapter 16 ‘Signs and omens’ (*Fu rui* 符瑞): a laconic chapter reflecting the Western Han intellectual context of a correlative cosmology in which Heaven recognised Confucius as someone worthy to rectify history through auspicious signs and omens.[951]

有非力之所能致而自至者，西狩獲麟，受命之符是也。然後托乎《春秋》正不正之間，而明改制之義。一統乎天子，而加憂於天下之憂也，天下所患。而欲以上通五帝，下極三王，以通百王之道，而隨天之終始，博得失之效，而考命象之為，極理以盡情性之宜，則天容遂矣。……[952]

There are events that cannot be brought about by human effort but that happen spontaneously. Just such an event was the capture of the *qilin* in the royal hunt in the west, which tallied with [Confucius’s] receiving Heaven’s Mandate. Consequently, [Confucius] availed himself of the distinction between proper and improper affairs [recorded] in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to illuminate the righteous principle of reforming regulations to unify governance under the Son of Heaven. He accepted the worries of the world as his own and laboured to eradicate what brought misfortune to the world. He wanted to transmit [the teachings of] the Five Thearchs of high antiquity and attain [the virtue of] the Three Kings of

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949 *Chunqiu fanlu*, 6.100–3.

950 Queen and Major 2016: 132–3.

951 This chapter is likely incomplete. Queen also remarks that the first section of this chapter exhibits some parallels with one of Dong’s memorials preserved in the *Book of Han*, see *Han shu*, 56. Queen 1996: 71; Queen and Major 2016: 179.

952 *Chunqiu fanlu*, 16.157–8.

later ages in order to comprehend the Way of the One Hundred Kings and to follow the cycles of Heaven. With extensive knowledge of the subtle proofs of success and failure, he investigated the various manifestations of fate and portents. He plumbed the principles of things to develop fully what is suitable to the emotions and nature, thereby extending Heaven's prosperity…[953]

3. Chapter 44 'The Kingly Way penetrates three' (*Wang dao tong san* 王道通三): this chapter concerns seasonal phenomena and analogously proposes that the ruler's emotions should issue forth in a regular and timely way.

……是故人之受命天之尊，父兄子弟之親，有忠信慈惠之心，有禮義廉讓之行，有是非逆順之治，文理燦然而厚，積知廣大有而博，唯人道為可以參天。天常以愛利為意，以養長為事，春秋冬夏皆其用也。……[954]

... Therefore, human beings receive as [part of] their destiny the Heaven-venerated relationships of father and elder brother, son and younger brother. They possess hearts that are loyal, trustworthy, kind, and virtuous. They possess conduct that exhibits propriety, righteousness, honesty, and conciliation. They possess knowledge that recognises what is right and wrong, what complies with and what deviates from [Heaven]. Their refinement and principles are manifest and abundant, their knowledge broad and extensive. It is the Way of humankind alone that is able to connect with Heaven. It is the intention of Heaven to constantly love and confer benefit. It is the task [of Heaven] to nourish and bring to maturation. Spring, autumn, winter, and summer all are Heaven's instruments for this…[955]

4. Chapter 45 'Heaven's prosperity' (*Tian rong* 天容): on matching, accompanying, complying, tallying, and joining with Heaven. This chapter reiterates that the inner principles of humanity correspond to the Way of Heaven. It also emphasises the importance of regularity, impartiality, and the constancy of Heaven's Way: yin and yang.[956]

天之道，有序而時，有度而節，變而有常，反而有相奉，微而至遠，踔而致精，一而少積蓄，廣而實，虛而盈。聖人視天而行。是故其禁而審好惡喜怒之處也，欲合諸天之非其時，不出暖清寒暑也；其告之以政令而化風之清微也，欲合諸天之顛倒其一而以成歲也；其羞淺末華虛而貴敦厚忠信也，欲合諸天之默然不言而功德積成也；其不阿黨偏私而美測愛兼利也，欲合諸天之所以成物者少霜而多露也。其內自省以是而外顯，不可以不時，人主有喜怒，不可以不時。可亦為時，時亦為義，喜怒以類合，其理一也。故義不義者，時之合類也，而喜怒乃寒暑之別氣也。[957]

Heaven's Way has sequences and is thereby timely; has measures and is thereby regulated; alters but has constancy; reverts but has reciprocity; is subtle and supremely far reaching; is

[953] Queen and Major 2016: 179–80.

[954] *Chunqiu fanlu*, 44.329–30.

[955] Queen and Major 2016: 400.

[956] Chapter 49 'The meaning of yin and yang' (*Yinyang yi* 陰陽義) and Chapter 50 'Yin and yang emerge, withdraw, ascend, and descend' (*Yinyang churu shangxia* 陰陽出入上下) are similar. They all concern the grand regularities of Heaven's Way, i.e. that things that oppose each another cannot arise together. Such is the case with yin and yang. Queen 1996: 71–3.

[957] *Chunqiu fanlu*, 45.333–4.

superb and supremely refined; is singular yet, bit by bit, piles up and accumulates; is broad yet substantial; is empty yet full. The sage observes Heaven and acts. This is why he carefully chooses the appropriate occasion for [displaying] love, hatred, happiness, and anger, wishing to harmonise with Heaven, which will not send forth warmth, chill, cold, and heat if it is not the appropriate season. He instructs the people with regulations and commands, but his transformation of customs is cool and subtle, as he wishes to harmonise with [the way that] Heaven does not invert the proper sequence of warmth, chill, cold, and heat that completes the year. He disdains shallowness and is shamed by extravagance and hypocrisy. He praises honesty and sincerity, wishing to harmonise with Heaven. [Heaven] remains silent and without speech, yet its meritorious virtue accumulates and is brought to perfection. [The sage] does not assent to partisanship and selfishness, and [he] praises comprehensive love and universal benefit, wishing to harmonise with the way in which Heaven, by giving a minimum of frost and an abundance of dew, brings things to their completion. He reflects inwardly on what is correct and exhibits outwardly what is appropriate to the season. When the ruler is happy or angry, [the sage] must not fail to be timely. [Those feelings] are permissible in their time, and in their time they are righteous. When happiness and anger harmonise with things in the same category, their principle is unitary. Thus [the distinction between] what is righteous and what is not righteous [depends on] whether the time is in harmony with the category. Thus, happiness and anger each are distinct manifestations of the *qi* of heat and cold.[958]

5. Chapter 60 'Complying with and deviating from the five phases' (*Wuxing nishun pian* 五行逆順篇): a thorough discussion on the correlative cosmology of Dong Zhongshu that sought to align the human realm with the normative patterns of the cosmos, and on the mutually auspicious (as well as inauspicious) responsiveness of Heaven and humanity (*tian ren ganying* 天人感應).[959]

木者春，生之性，農之本也。勸農事，無奪民時，使民，歲不過三日，行什一之稅，進經術之士。挺群禁，出輕擊，去稽留，除桎梏，開門闔，通障塞。恩及草木，則樹木華美，而朱草生；恩及鱗蟲，則魚大為，鯨不見。……

火者夏，成長，本朝也。舉賢良，進茂才，官得其能，任得其力，賞有功，封有德，出貨財，振困乏，使四方。恩及於火，則火順人而甘露降；恩及羽蟲，則飛鳥大為，黃鵠出見，鳳凰翔。……

恩及於土，則五穀成，而嘉禾同。恩及蟲，則百姓親附，城郭充實，賢聖皆遷，仙人降。……

金者秋，殺氣之始也。建立旗鼓，杖把旄鉞，以誅賊殘，禁暴虐，安集，故動眾同師，必應義理，出則祠兵，入則振旅，以閒習之。因於搜狩，存不忘亡，安不忘危。飭兵甲，警百官，誅不法。恩及於金石，則涼風出；恩及於毛蟲，則走獸大為，麒麟至。……

水者冬，藏至陰也。宗廟祭祀之始，敬四時之祭，昭穆之序。天子祭天，諸侯祭土。閉門閭，大搜索，斷刑罰，執當罪，飭關梁，禁外徙。恩及於水，則醴泉出；恩及介

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[958] Queen and Major 2016: 405–6.

[959] 'Interactive cosmology' is a loose rendering of the Chinese expression *tianren ganying*. Queen 1996, 206. The inauspicious interactions and signs are not included in this appendix. For reference, see *Chunqiu fanlu*, 60.372–6 and 379–81.

蟲，則黿鼉大為。……[960]

Wood [corresponds to] spring. Its nature is to give birth. It is the root of agriculture. [When wood governs,] make every effort to encourage agricultural affairs, and do not impinge on the common people's seasonal [tasks]. Employ the people not more than three days annually, tax them [only] one-tenth of their output, and promote scholars versed in the classical arts. Relax the numerous prohibitions, pardon light offenses, release the detained and incarcerated, and remove handcuffs and shackles. Open doors and covers, and penetrate barriers and obstructions. Then, [Heaven's] favour will extend to the grasses and trees, the plants and trees will flourish beautifully, and the numerous [kinds of] grasses will germinate. [Heaven's] favour also will extend to the scaly creatures: fish will spawn abundantly; sturgeons and whales will not appear; and numerous dragons will descend…

Fire corresponds to summer, growth and maturation, and the present dynasty. [When fire governs,] promote the worthy and excellent, and advance the 'cultivated talent' so that offices secure their abilities and posts secure their strengths. Reward the meritorious and enfeoff the virtuous. Distribute goods and resources to supplement those in need. Correct the boundaries of the principalities and send envoys to the four quarters. Then [Heaven's] favours will extend to fire. Fire will comply with the people's [needs,] and sweet dew will descend. [Heaven's] favours will also extend to the feathered creatures. Flying birds will greatly proliferate; the yellow crane will appear; and the male and female phoenix will soar…

Earth [corresponds to] midsummer, the maturing and ripening of the numerous kinds of [crops], and the ruler's officials. [When earth governs,] follow the regulations of the palace, heed the distinctions of husband and wife, increase the gratitude of relatives. Then [Heaven's] favours will extend to earth. The five [types of] grain will mature, and the best [types of] millet will flourish. [Heaven's] favours will also extend to the 'naked creatures'. The populace will grow intimate and close; cities and suburbs will fill to capacity; worthies and sages will transfer their lodgings; and immortals will descend…

Metal [corresponds to] autumn and the inception of the 'killing *qi*'. [When metal governs,] set up flags and drums, take hold of tasselled spears and battle-axes in order to execute the violent and injurious, restrain the oppressive and cruel, and thereby bring security to and gather together the populace. Thus, when arousing the multitudes and raising armies, you must respond with righteous principles. When embarking on military expeditions, control your forces; when returning from [expeditions], regulate your forces. In periods of leisure, be sure to drill them, taking advantage of the seasonal hunts to do so. In times of survival, do not forget the possibility of destruction. In times of peace, do not forget the possibility of danger. Renovate your cities and suburbs, repair walls and ramparts, reexamine the various prohibitions, refurbish weapons and armour, admonish the numerous officials, and execute the unlawful. Then [Heaven's] favours will extend to metal and stone, and cool winds will arise. [Heaven's] favours also will extend to the hairy [furry] creatures, so that running animals will greatly proliferate and the *qilin* will arrive…

Water [corresponds to] winter, storing up, and the height of yin *qi*. It marks the beginning

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[960] *Ibid*, 60.371–3, 374–7 and 380.

of the sacrifices and offerings at the ancestral temple, the sacrifices that revere the four seasons, and the proper sequence of the Di and Xia sacrifices before the ancestral spirit tablets, left and right. [When water governs,] the Son of Heaven sacrifices to Heaven; the lords of the land sacrifice to Earth. Shut doors and gates, investigate strangers, apprehend the condemned, garrison the passes and bridges, and prohibit travel abroad. Then [Heaven's] favours will extend to water. Sweet springs will gush forth. [Heaven's] favour will also extend to armoured [i.e. shell-covered] creatures; sea turtles and water lizards will greatly proliferate, and loggerhead turtles will appear…[961]

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[961] Queen and Major 2016: 476–9.

Appendix 4.1. Tombs with mural paintings and/or stone reliefs near Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, Han dynasty

1. Qujiangchi Mural Tomb no.1 (Qujiangchi 1 hao bihuamu 曲江池 1 號壁畫墓), Xi'an.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 1985.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc brick tomb with tomb path, passage, main and side rooms;
L: 28.9 m, w: 11.55 m.

Location and contents of the murals: South part of the east wall of the chamber: 1 rhinoceros;
Middle of the west wall of the chamber: 1 big fish with a slim body, wave underneath;
South wall of the chamber: 4 oxen, 1 animal (fragment);
Middle of the north wall of the chamber: 1 crouching horse;
First stair of the west wall of the chamber: 1 animal (fragment).

Tomb objects: None preserved.

Notes: Looted several times and severely damaged.

Sources: *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1987.

2. Primary School attached to Xi'an Jiaotong University Mural Tomb (Xi'an Jiaotong daxue fuxiao bihuamu 西安交通大學附小壁畫墓), Xi'an.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 1987.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc brick tomb with tomb path, passage, main and side rooms;
Passage l: 12.5 m; Main chamber l: 4.55 m, w: 1.83 m; two side chambers l: 2.13–4 m, w: 1.1 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Red belt motif dividing the murals in the main chamber into 2 parts:
Ceiling and the upper part of the back wall of the main chamber: (ceiling) within the circle: the sun, the moon, a phoenix, cloud swirls, a crane, constellations, the Four Deities; outside the circle: clouds and a crane;
Upper part of the back wall: various cloud swirls, a crane, a monster with a long mouth and a curved tail, a crouching deer;
Lower wall and east, south, and west walls of the main chamber: integrated cloud swirls, flying animals, a crouching deer, a tiger chasing a deer, a deer, a tiger, and a crane.

Tomb objects: Jade: cicada, eye covers, plugs for nose, ears, and anuses;

Bronze: 3 fragmental plates painted with red cloud swirls, mirrors, mask handles and ornaments, weapons, and chariot burials;

Pottery: vessels decorated with mythical creatures, bricks recording numbers with Chinese characters, fret motif floor tiles, floor tiles with *bi*-disc pattern and the inscription 'may you have longevity' (*changsheng weiyang* 長生未央), 回-pattern square floor bricks;

Others: iron tools, *wuzhu* coins, and bone objects.

Notes: Looted.

Sources: Xi'an 1991.

3. Xi'an Science and Technology University Tomb no. 1 (Xi'an Ligong daxue 1 hao mu 西安理工大學 1 號墓), Xi'an.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 2004.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc brick tomb;

Passage l: 27.5 m, w (north): 4.2 m, w (south): 1.3 m;

chamber l: 10.2 m, w: 7.6 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Arc-ceiling of the chamber: a phoenix, a winged dragon, the sun, the moon, a crane, cloud swirls;

East side of the tomb door on the south wall: a dragon, a winged dragon, cloud swirls;

Upper part of the south side of the east wall: procession;

Middle of the east wall: hunting scene;

North part of the east wall: (upper) 3 men, (lower) procession;

Upper part of the north wall: a winged-man riding a dragon, a yellow snake, a green snake;

North part of the west wall: (probably) dancing and music scenes (fragment);

Middle of the west wall: cockfight;

South part of the west wall: the woman tomb owner, guests, banquet and music scenes.

Tomb objects: Jade: cicada, eye covers, plugs for nose and mouth, headpiece and decorations;

Gold[962]: 6 gilded bronze chariot fittings, 1 gilded bronze fitting, 2 gilded rings, and 4 gilded bronze mask handles;

Bronze: seals (1 with turtle motif, 1 with inscription of 'blessing for offspring' (*yi zisun* 宜子孫)), 1 belt buckle with animal head motif at both ends, bronze ring and tools, bronze chariot, and horse burials;

Others: lute with the inscription 'may you have endless offspring and fortune' (*changcheng yongfu* 長承永福); lacquer-wood chariot burials, pottery

[962] The 'Gold' section includes pure gold objects as well as other objects with gold ornamentations.

basin, iron tools, bone objects, and coins.
Notes: Severely looted.
Sources: *Wenwu* 2006.

4. Xi'an Qujiang Cuizhu Garden Mural Tomb (Xi'an Qujiang Cuizhuyuan bihuamu 西安曲江翠竹園壁畫墓), Xi'an.
Date and excavation time: Western Han, excavated 2004.
Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit brick tomb with main and two side rooms;
Main chamber l: 8.2 m, w: 5.5 m; side rooms l: 1.2 m, w: 5.2 m, d: 1.12 m.
Location and contents of the murals: North wall: 2 guards;
East wall: 5 women figures, 1 indeterminate, 2 ladies and 2 servants, fragmentary inscriptions and cloud motifs;
South wall: 5 figures;
West wall: 8 north-facing figures including ladies, children, servants, men and an exotic man; a canopy, and colourful swirls;
Ceiling and upper part of the south wall: cloud swirls, cosmic motifs, including the sun with the black bird, the moon with the toad, the constellations, the dragon, the tiger, and figures; canopy painted in between the cosmic motifs and the life scenes.
Tomb objects: Jade: plugs, figures, a pig, a tiger, *huang*-pendants, *bi*-discs and *huan*-rings, suit plaque pieces, ornament;
Bronze: tools;
Pottery: pots, granary models, and tiles with the inscription 'may you have constant joy without end' (*changle weiyang* 長樂未央);
Others: *wuzhu* coins and a shell.
Notes: A total of 62 m² of murals discovered. This is the largest mural found for the Western Han period.
Sources: *Wenwu* 2010.

5. Qianyang Mural Tomb (Qianyang bihuamu 千陽壁畫墓), Qianyang County.
Date and excavation time: Xin and Early Eastern Han period, excavated 1972.
Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc brick catacomb tomb;
L: 4.35 m, w: 1.8 m; d: 1.82 m.
Location and contents of the murals: Front part of the east wall: the cloud swirls surrounding the constellations, the sun with the black bird inside, a fragmented dragon-like animal:
Front part of the west wall: the cloud swirls surrounding the constellations, the moon with an unidentifiable image inside, a fragmental tiger.
Tomb objects: Bronze: mirrors (1 Four deities design, 2 with patterns representing compasses

and squares, i.e. *guiju* 規矩), a (rotten) lacquer box with a bronze mirror, a knife, 6 mask handles, and 4 bronze ornaments inside, 1 belt buckle with animal head motif, a crossbow;
Pottery: vessels, a granary model and a stove model;
Others: a rectangular lacquer plate with (rotten) ear-cups on it, coins, an iron sword, and chicken bones.

Notes: Few objects preserved.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1975b.

6. Xianyang Gongjiawan Mural Tomb (Xianyang Gongjiawan bihuamu 咸陽龔家灣壁畫墓), Xianyang.

Date and excavation time: Xin and Early Eastern Han period, excavated 1983.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Large-scale brick and stone arc tomb, multi-chambered; Main chamber: l: 13.08 m, w: 1.83m; overall l: 54.5m.

Location and contents of the murals: The facade of the third stone gate of the tomb: (middle) a ram head, cloud swirls; (right) 3 lines dividing the picture into 2 parts, the upper part painted with winged creatures and light, people, trees, and the lower part with mountains (left), including 2 seated people and a tree.

Tomb objects: Gold: a gilded bronze bear, and a gilded bronze hook;
Bronze: a belt buckle, animal-face ornament, vessels and tools, chariot burials;
Pottery: vessels and tiles;
Others: coins, turquoise, irons, mica slices, medicines, and lacquer remains.

Sources: *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1987.

7. Xunyi County Baizi Village Mural Tomb (Xunyixian Baizicun mu 旬邑縣百子村墓), Xunyi County.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 2000.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Dome-ceiling brick tomb with front and back chambers; L: 24.75 m, d: 5 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Two walls on either side of the tomb door: Binwang 邠王 a strongman;
Inner side of the tomb door: an official called Tingzhang 亭長 and a doorman;
Ceiling of the front chamber: the Four Deities, the sun with the black bird inside, the moon with the toad inside, lotus caisson motif, cloud swirls;
South wall of the front chamber: a creature with a rooster/ox head and human body, pasture, horse stable, pig;
East wall of the front chamber: (north) Madam Tingzhang, (south)plough, horses;

West wall of the front chamber: (south) granary;
North wall of the front chamber: (west) official Chengzhubu 丞主簿, hunting monkeys, and birds under the tree; (east) females, female servants (continued to the north part of the east wall);
East side chamber: kitchen;
West side chamber: fragmental image of Chengzhubu's wife (*chengzhubu furen* 丞主簿夫人;
West wall of the back chamber: (south) *Binwang* and official, the painter, inscriptions;
East wall of the back chamber: the official's wife and child, the painter's wife;
Back wall of the back chamber: 'T'-motif;
Wall outside the tomb door inscribed with red characters: 'Please take off your shoes before coming in' 諸觀皆解履乃得入/諸慾觀者皆當解履乃得入觀此.

Tomb objects: Jade: plugs and a sword;
Bronze: chariot burials;
Pottery: glazed earrings, green glazed ware;
Others: coins, iron tools, and mask handles.

Notes: Looted; murals rather well-preserved and thus considered important by scholars.

Sources: Shaanxi Sheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2012.

Appendix 4.2. Tombs with mural paintings and/or stone reliefs near Luoyang, Henan Province, Han dynasty

1. Mural Tomb of King of State Liang (Liangwang bihuamu 梁王壁畫墓), Yongcheng.

Date and excavation time: Early Western Han period, excavated 1987–91.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Rock-cut tomb with tomb path, passage, main and side rooms;
L: 95.7 m, w: 13.5 m; main chamber l: 9.2 m, w: 5.2 m, d: 3.1 m; size 383.55 m².

Location and contents of the murals: Ceiling: a dragon, a creature with a duck mouth and a fish tail, a phoenix, a tiger;
West part of the south wall, south part of the west wall: a leopard, a bird, sacred mountains, and trees fungus;
North part of the west wall: fragmented geometric motifs.

Tomb objects: Jade: pieces;
Gold: gilded bronze chariot and horse fittings,
Bronze: chariot and horse fittings; belt buckles;
Pottery: human figures, tiles (most fragmented and decorated with cloud swirls), vessels, and 1 horse-leg-shaped piece;
Other: wood carvings chariot fittings, iron chariots and weapons, coins.

Sources: Zhengzhou 1996.

2. Balitai Mural Tomb (Balitai bihuamu 八里台壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 1916–24.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Hollowed-brick flat-back slope-ceiling tomb.
L: 240.7 m, w: 73.8 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Different scholars have different opinions on the content of the painting. Chang Renxia: the life of the elites; Otto Elscher: the fight in Shanglin Garden; Edward H. Schafer: ritual activities for offering the gods; Su Jian: welcoming guests or filial piety narrations.

Tomb objects: Looted.

Notes: 4 hollow bricks now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, USA (1 square, 1 rectangular, and 2 triangular).

Sources: Huang Jibo and Huang Jijun 1996; Boston Museum of Fine Arts 2020, https://collections.mfa.org/objects/28946, accessed 17th March 2020.

3. Shaogou Mural Tomb no. 61 (Shaogou 61 hao bihuamu 燒溝 61 號壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 1957.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Hollowed-brick flat-back slope-ceiling tomb with passage, door and main chamber divided into two, east, west and other side rooms;
L: 6.1 m, w: 2.3 m; d: 2.3 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Lintel above the tomb door: A ram head, a tiger, women, and trees;
Front part of the flat-back ceiling: the sun, the moon, and constellations;
Facade of the trapezoidal beam in the main chamber: a monster, little men, a bear, a phoenix, a dragon, a tiger on the middle rectangular brick; black bears, flying horses, jade *bi*-discs on the 2 triangular bricks on each side; 13 men, 3 mountains, 1 plate with 2 peaches on it on the horizontal brick at the bottom;
Back side of the beam: 5 jade *bi*-discs, lozenge motifs in the middle; winged-dragons, winged-man on two sides.

Tomb objects: Gold: 11 gilded bronze ornamental pieces with persimmon flower motif;
Bronze: mirrors, belt buckles, crossbows, chariot implements, 4 ornamental objects decorated with persimmon flowers or animal faces; altogether 363;
Pottery: 45 models of stove, cooking vessels and granaries;
Others: iron swords and knives, coins and bone rings.

Sources: Beijing 1959a.

4. Bu Qianqiu Mural Tomb (Bo Qianqiu bihuamu 卜千秋壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 1976.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Brick pit tomb with passage, a main chamber, right side room, left side room with another small room inside;
Main chamber l: 4.6 m, w: 2.1 m; d: 1.86 m; side rooms: l: 3.43 m, w: 1.18 m, d: 1.15 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Lintel above the tomb door: a creature with a human face and bird body;
The flat-back ceiling (composed of 13 bricks): (from the inner side to the outer side) a yellow snake, the sun, Fuxi, the tomb owner couple riding on a dragon and a phoenix, a nine-tailed fox, a toad, an immortal (most likely Xiwangmu) and an hare with stalk (worn), a tiger, a phoenix, Feilian 飛廉, a dragon, a winged-man, the moon, Nüwa, the cloud swirls;
Back gable: a creature with a bear face, a dragon, a tiger.

Tomb objects: Bronze: 1 basin, 2 mirrors (including 1 *zhaoming* mirror, zhaoming 昭明 means clear and bright), 2 belt buckles, 1 ornamental piece decorated with persimmon flower motif; a seal with the inscription 'The Seal of Bu Qianqiu' (*Bu Qianqiu yin* 卜千秋印).
Pottery: 47 models of stoves, cooking vessels, a well;
Others: iron weapons, tools and a pair of chopsticks, coins.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1977a.

5. Qianjingtou Mural Tomb (Qianjingtou bihuamu 淺井頭壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 1992.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Hollowed-brick flat-back slope-ceiling tomb with passage, door, a main chamber divided into two, east side room with another side room inside;
L: 4.52 m, w: 2.1 m; d: 1.8 m.

Location and contents of the murals: The flat-back ceiling (21 bricks): (from the outer side to the inner side) a phoenix, Fuxi, the sun, a tiger-like creature, a dragon, a winged-man riding on a dragon, a phoenix, a toad, a dragon passing through a *bi*-disc, an immortal, the moon, Nüwa, cloud swirls;
The slope ceiling (61 bricks): cloud swirls.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 jade belt hook;
Gold: 7 gilded bronze nails and 4 gilded bronze ornamental pieces decorated with persimmon flower motif;
Bronze: 2 mirrors (1 *zhaoming* mirror; 1 carved with the inscriptions of 'may the family always be wealthy and prestigious' *jiachang fugui* 家常富貴), belt buckles, crossbows, chariot implements; altogether 42;
Pottery: 32 models of stove, vessels, including 1 incense burner;
Others: 9 iron vessels, square stone ornaments, coins and 1 square stone ornamental piece.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1993a.

6. Yiyang County Paiyou Village Hollow-bricked Western Han Tomb (Yiyang Xian Paiyoucun huaxiang kongxinzhuan mu 宜陽縣牌窯村西漢畫像空心磚墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period, excavated 1985.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc hollow-bricks with passage and path;
Main tomb chamber l: 3.8 m, w: 1.7 m.

Location and contents of the murals: East and wet walls: tigers, running horses, trees, 8 *bi*-discs;
Lower part of the north gable: tigers, horses and trees similar to those on the east and west walls, colourful flying geese;
North and south ridges: a flying green dragon on each side with a warrior, immortals, cloud swirls;
Lintel: (facade) 7 pairs of flying geese, 3 phoenixes; (back) 2 blue *bi*-discs decorated with white spots and red colour.

Tomb objects: Bronze: 1 tripod *ding*-vessel and 1 spoon, 4 mask handles;
Pottery: 1 tripod *ding*-vessel and 2 pots.

Notes: Bricks with incised decorations.

Sources: *Zhongyuan wenwu* 1985.

7. Yiyang Yintun Mural Tomb (Yiyang Yintun bihuamu 宜陽尹屯壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Xin dynasty, excavated 2003.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Dome-ceiling brick tomb with passage, door, two side rooms in the front chamber, front path, middle chamber with east path and side rooms,back chamber;
L: 11.8 m, w: 7.5 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Four walls of the central chamber: imitating timberwork;
Ceiling and the four slopes of the back chamber: cloud swirls, a phoenix head and flowers.

Tomb objects: Mostly fragmented:
Gold: gilded bronze chariots and horses objects;
Pottery: cook, granary, and toilet case models;
Others: stone grind and bones, and coins.

Notes: The murals and objects are not well preserved.

Sources: *Kaogu xuebao* 2005.

8. Jinguyuan Xin dynasty Mural Tomb (Jinguyuan Xinmang bihuamu 金谷園新莽壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Xin and Early Eastern Han period, excavated 1978.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Hollowed and solid brick tomb with dome-ceiling front chamber and flat-back ceiling back chamber;
Front chamber l: 3.6m, w: 2.73m; d: 2.9m;
Back chamber l: 2.92m, w: 2.2m, d: 2.03m.

Location and contents of the murals: Dome ceiling of the front chamber: the sun, the cloud swirls;
Four walls of the front chamber: imitating timberwork;
The flat-back ceiling of the back chamber: (south to north) the sun, Taiyi, Houtu 後土 Goddess of the Earth, the moon;
Door pillar of the back chamber: zoomorphic mask;
West wall upper arch of the back chamber: (south to north) a tiger, a green dragon, a yellow dragon, Feilian 飛廉 God of the Wind;
East wall upper arch of the back chamber: (south to north) Goumang 句芒 assistant spirit, Rushou 蓐收 God of the Metal, a bird, a phoenix;
North wall upper arch of the back chamber: (south to north) Zhurong 祝融 God of the Fire, Xuanming 玄冥 God of the Water, a tortoise, flying horse and constellations.

Tomb objects: Bronze: chariots and horses burials, weapons, incense burner, mirrors, vessels;

Pottery: models of stoves, cooking vessels, ear cups, incense burners, and toilet cases;

Others: iron weapons, stone tools and lamps, and coins.

Sources: *Wenwu ziliao congkan* 1985.

9. Jinguyuan Eastern Han dynasty Mural Tomb (Jinguyuan Donghan bihuamu 金谷園東漢壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Xin and Early Eastern Han period, excavated 1983.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Dome-ceiling brick tomb with passage, path, front and back chambers.

Location and contents of the murals: Tomb door: 1 soldier, 1 female servant;

Ceiling of the front chamber: the sun, the moon, a phoenix, a tiger, a flying bird, colourful cloud swirls;

Back wall of the front chamber: a tree;

Passage between the front and back chambers: the cloud swirls.

Tomb objects: Bronze: mirrors;

Pottery: 1 plate for holding ear-cups, pottery vessels, cookers, granary, well;

Others: coins.

Notes: archaeological report unpublished.

Sources: Luoyang Gumu Bowuguan 1987.

10.Xin'an Tietashan Mural Tomb (Xi'an Tietashan bihuamu 新安鐵塔山壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Xin and Early Eastern Han period, excavated 1984.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc-ceiling brick tomb with a path.

Main chamber l: 5.98 m, w: 2.06 m.

Location and contents of the murals: Tomb door: 1 guard on each side;

Ceiling: the sun, the moon, constellations, a running deer, a ram, colourful cloud swirls;

Back wall: 1 sitting man in the middle, and 2 female servants on each side;

South wall: dancing, playing the drum, playing music scenes;

North wall: dancing and banquet scenes.

Tomb objects: Potteries and coins.

Sources: Huang Minglan and Guo Yinqiang 1996.

11.Luoyang North Suburb Shiyouzhan Mural Tomb (Luoyang Beijiao shiyouzhan bihuamu 洛陽北郊石油站壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Xin and Early Eastern Han period, excavated 1987.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Brick tomb with dome-ceiling front, middle and back

chambers, and arc-ceiling side chambers;
L: 10.42m, w: 7.36m.

Location and contents of the murals: Walls of the passage between the front and middle chambers: fragments of a pair of standing men;
Dome-ceiling of the middle chamber: (east and west) a pair of immortals with human faces and snake bodies holding the sun and the moon; (south and north) a man in a dragon chariot; a man in a deer chariot; both with the cloud swirls;
East and west walls of the middle chamber: (east) a bow with a piece of text below; (west) a guard-like figure.

Tomb objects: Gold: 2 gold inlaid bronze belt hooks decorated with cloud swirls;
Bronze: 2 tools and 2 mirrors;
Pottery: vessels, 1 spoon; models of stoves, granaries, ear cups and wells;
Others: stone tools, iron sword and rings, glaze ear plugs, crystal pearls, and coins.

Notes: The murals are not well-preserved.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1991.

12.Yanshi Xincun Mural Tomb (Yanshi Xincun bihuamu 偃師辛村壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Xin and Early Eastern Han period, excavated 1991.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Lean-back brick tomb;
Front chamber l: 1.34m, w: 2.3m;
Middle chamber l: 2.2m, w: 2.32m;
Back chamber l: 2.72m; w: 2.32m.

Location and contents of the murals: Lintel in between the front and middle chambers: (middle) a tiger head, (left) a creature with a human face and snake body (Changxi 常羲) holding the moon with a cherry bay, (right) a creature with a human face and snake body (Xihe 羲和) holding the sun with a black bird inside;
East and west walls of the middle chamber (symmetrical): (west wall) kitchen to the south, chess-playing and banquet to the north; (east wall) banquet and dancing scenes on both the south and north parts;
Lintel in between the middle and front chambers: Xiwangmu, the hare grinding medicine, a toad, a dog-like animal with two wings, a nine-tail fox, a man, a phoenix;
North to the doors of two side rooms: guards.

Tomb objects: Few tomb objects, all pottery fragments and pottery cooking vessels.

Notes: New mural motifs which are not seen in the Western Han, all well-preserved except the image of the guards.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1992b.

13.Mixian County Dahuting Carved-stone and Mural Tombs (Mixian Dahuting 1, 2 hao huaxiangshi bihuamu 密縣打虎亭 1、2 號畫像石、壁畫墓), Mixian.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1960-1.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Brick and stone tombs with passages and paths, similar structure.

L: 25.16 m, w: 17.8 m;

Location and contents of the murals and carvings:

Passage to the tomb door: fragmental black paintings;

Passage of the front chamber (tomb no. 1): fragmental black paintings; figures of humans;

Arc-ceiling of the front chamber: caisson, monsters carvings;

Walls: carvings of kitchen, banquet, music and travel scenes;

East wall of the middle chamber (tomb no. 2): procession and banquet;

North wall of the middle chamber: tomb owner under the canopy, two rolls of guests, dancing and acrobatic shows, female servants;

South side room of the middle chamber: fragmental chariot, animals;

East side room of the middle chamber: kitchen;

Other parts: decorative cloud swirls, monster.

Tomb objects: Fragmented stones and potteries discovered in the mud of the tomb passage.

Notes: Mainly carved stones in tomb no. 1 (west) and murals in tomb no. 2 (east).

Sources: Beijing 1993a.

14.Mixian Houshiguo Carved Stone and Mural Tomb no. 1 (Mixian Houshiguo 1 hao huaxiangshi bihuamu 密縣後士郭 1 號畫像石、壁畫墓), Mixian.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1963.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Carved brick and stone tomb;

L: 12.46 m, w: 15.34 m; d: 3.88 m.

Location and contents of the murals and carvings:

Murals: Lintel above the tomb door: a flying dragon;

North wall of the middle chamber: (west) windows with border decoration of the cloud swirls, 1 male and 2 females in the window; (middle) windows with border decoration of the cloud swirls, 2 men and 2 roosters (probably a cockfight); (lower) a tiger head, a pair of mandarin ducks; (east) windows with border decoration of cloud swirls, 2 men and 2 roosters (probably a cockfight).

Carvings (all with cloud swirls): Lintel above the tomb door:

a crouching deer, cloud swirls;
West and east side doors: Four deities;
West chamber pillar: a bird;
Back chamber cap blocks: fierce monsters, tigers, birds, geese, hunting scenes;
Back chamber west door lintel: figures, creatures, and monsters;
Back chamber middle pillar: wolf chasing a rabbit, a dragon, a hunter, a lotus and birds around; monsters and creatures, a winged-horse, and a tiger-like creature;
North side chamber: hunting scenes and mythical creatures.

Tomb objects: Gold: 8 gilded bronze fittings; 1 gilded bronze mask handle; 1 gilded bronze ornamental piece decorated with persimmon flower motif;
Bronze: chariot objects, belt buckles and hooks; weapons and music instruments; altogether 61;
Pottery: vessels decorated with pigment, cloud swirls, geometric patterns, ear cups, models of granaries, a pigsty, animal figures, tiles; altogether 61;
Others: iron lamps and tools, fragmented carved stones, a stone ram head, lacquerware, glass cup, beads, lacquer piece with a red facade decorated with a black bird, animal, and cloud swirls, with rotten wood traces on the back, and coins.

Notes: looted several times.

Sources: *Huaxia kaogu* 1987.

15.Mixian Houshiguo Carved Stone and Mural Tomb no. 2 (Mixian Houshiguo 2 hao huaxiangshi bihuamu 密縣後士郭 2 號畫像石、壁畫墓), Mixian.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1963.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Carved brick and stone tomb;
L: 12.46 m, w: 15.34 m; d: 3.88 m.

Location and contents of the murals and carvings:
Murals: Passage arc ceiling: cloud swirls (vague);
East wall of the middle chamber (red lines divide the mural into 3 parts): (upper) big cloud swirls; (middle) 9 males;
North wall of the middle chamber: lozenge window motif, cloud swirls, 1 man, and 1 horse (probably a procession).
Carvings: similar to Mixian Houshiguo Tomb no. 1.

Tomb objects: Jade: plates, pig and cicada figures, a buckle, and fragments;
Gold: 13 gilded bronze fittings; 8 gilded bronze mask handles; 4 gilded bronze ornamental pieces decorated with persimmon flower motif;
Bronze: cups, belt buckles, chariot fittings, weapons and bells; altogether 50.
Pottery: lamps, table decorated with cloud swirls and mythical creatures, ear

cups, toilet case, vessels, granary, pigsty, animal and musician human figures, tiles with cloud swirls;

Others: iron tools and weapons, stone ram head, tiger head, inkstone, and coins.

Notes: Damaged murals.

Sources: *Huaxia kaogu* 1987.

16.Mixian Houshiguo Carved Stone and Mural Tomb no. 3 (Mixian Houshiguo 3 hao huaxiangshi bihuamu 密縣後士郭 3 號畫像石、壁畫墓), Mixian.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1970.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Carved brick and stone tomb, similar to Mixian Houshiguo tomb no. 2.

Location and contents of the murals and carvings:

Mural: Stone lintel on the east wall of the west chamber: brick and wall patterns;

Upper part of the east wall of the west chamber: (south) border decorations, sacred plants, dancing and acrobatic scenes;

North wall of the middle chamber: a fragmental tree with a pot-like object on it, 2 birds on the tree, an old man sitting in a carriage under the tree, 2 men;

Stone pillar, stone bracket and the horizontal stone lintel of the stone gate of the back chamber: monsters and creatures among the cloud swirls, colourful interlocking leaning cross motifs.

Carvings: mythical creatures and cloud swirls.

Tomb objects: Unknown.

Sources: *Huaxia kaogu* 1994.

17.Xigong Mural Tomb (Xigong bihuamu 西工壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1981.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Horizontal arc brick tomb with passage, path and chamber; L: 7m, w: 3m, d: 2.9m.

Location and contents of the murals: East part of the north wall: purple-red horizontal bars, female tomb owner, servants;

East part of the south wall: purple-red horizontal bars, servant holding a plate, 2 horses and 1 chariot (fragment);

East wall: red horizontal bars, tomb owner couple under the canopy, servants, furniture and food vessels, etc.

Tomb objects: Gold: gilded bronze buckles and mask handles, weapons, rings and ornaments;

Pottery: vessels and models, pigsty, animal figures, tiles, bricks with inscriptions;

Others: iron mirrors, lead ornament, coins, bone ruler, stones, pearls, and crystals.

Notes: Looted, many objects missing; murals in bad condition except the east wall.

Sources: *Zhongyuan wenwu* 1982.

18.Yanshi Xingyuancun Mural Tomb (Yanshi Xingyuancun bihuamu 偃師杏園村壁畫墓), Yanshi.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1984.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc brick tomb with passage, path, front and back chambers;
L: 35m, w: 8m.

Location and contents of the murals: South, west and north walls of the front chamber: procession;
East lower part of the north wall of the front chamber: fragmental figures, food vessels (probably banquet scene).

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 little jade pig (inside a pottery model of pigsty);
Pottery: fragmented vessels, models of animals and a pigsty;
Others: 1 iron mirror, coins, etc.

Notes: Severely looted and damaged.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1985.

19.Jigongchang Mural Tomb (Jigongchang bihuamu 機工廠壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1990-1.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc-ceiling brick and stone tomb with passage, path, front and middle chambers with two side rooms respectively, back chamber;
L: 19.12m, w: 16.65m, d: 6.54m.

Location and contents of the murals: Lintel above the tomb door: birds;
Entrance of the passage of the east, west and south walls in the front chamber: a pair of standing men;
Facade of the arc-beam of the passage of the east side room in the front chamber: 3 pairs of figures riding horses;
North wall of the passage of the west side room in the front chamber: a chariot;
East and west walls of the middle passage: the cloud swirls, flying birds, ink-painting auspicious creatures (1 tiger-like and 1 deer-like);
Top of the arc-beam of the middle passage: fragmental flower motifs;
South, east and north walls of the middle chamber: (south) a man wearing a hat, acrobatics; (east) female servants; (north) dancers; (facade of the arc-beam of the north wall) a flying bird.

Tomb objects: Mostly fragmented:
Bronze: vessels and weapons;

Pottery: 1 pot, models of toilet case, table, pigsty, animals; 3 fragments of tiles decorated with cloud swirls;

Others: 1 iron mirror and tool, 1 stone lamp, and coins.

Notes: Looted, few objects and damaged murals.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1992a.

20.Zhucun Mural Tomb (Zhucun bihuamu 朱村壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1981.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Horizontal arc brick tomb with passage, path and chamber; L: 1.7m, w: 3m, d: 2.9m.

Location and contents of the murals: West part of the north wall of the chamber: tomb owner couple under the canopy banqueting, male and female servants, furniture and food vessels;

Mid-lower part of the south wall of the chamber: procession;

Arc door of the east side room in the chamber: a crouching deer.

Tomb objects: Pottery: ear-cups and fragmented vessels.

Notes: Damaged, only few fragmental objects; well-painted and well-preserved murals.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1992c.

21.Luoyang Mural Tomb no. 3850 (Luoyang di 3850 hao bihuamu 洛陽第 3850 號壁畫墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1992.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Horizontal arc brick tomb with passage, path, east and north chambers;

L: 9.3m, w: 3m.

Location and contents of the murals: Passage ceiling: fragmental black-lined winged dragon;

East wall of the passage: 2 walking male servants;

West wall of the passage: 3 male servants with different postures;

North wall of the chamber: fragments of 3 male servants.

Tomb objects: Gold: 1 gilded bronze mask handle and 1 gilded bronze ornament in the shape of flower;

Bronze: fragmented and scattered sword ornament and tools;

Pottery: fragmented vessels;

Others: 1 stone table and pig, 1 iron sword, and coins.

Notes: Severely looted and few objects left.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1997b.

22.Xingyang Chang Village Mural Tomb (Xingyang Changcun bihuamu 滎陽萇村壁畫墓), Xingyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han period, excavated 1994.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Arc-ceiling brick and stone tomb with path, front, east-side and 3 back chambers;
L: 17m, w: 20m, d: 5m.

Location and contents of the murals: Two doors at the two ends of the passage: mask handles, red timber motif;
Passage arc-ceiling: (ceiling) caisson; (lower) house and yard, historical figures;
Ceiling of the front chamber: (middle) caisson; (sides) auspicious creatures among rectangular cells, figures;
Side walls of the front chamber: 4 levels of processions with inscriptions;
South wall of the front chamber: musicians;
West wall of the front chamber: (upper) 2 figures with half bodies within a red square frame; (south) inscriptions 'phoenix' (*fenghuang* 鳳皇); (north) inscriptions 'unicorn' (*qilin* 騏驎) (phonetic loan characters).

Tomb objects: Unknown.

Notes: Severely looted.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1996.

23.Yanshi Mangshan Tomb (Yanshi Mangshan mu 偃師邙山墓), Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Eastern Han period, excavated 2007-(ongoing).

Notes: Imperial tombs.

Sources: More to be published.

24.Hollow-bricks in British Museum, from Luoyang.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han period.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Hollowed bricks (1 square and 2 triangular);
Estimated l: 221 m, w: 62 m.

Location and contents of the carvings: The right triangular brick: a celestial carriage riding on clouds with a colourful canopy, and 2 creatures with long necks and bird-like heads; (above) 2 immortals driving another celestial cart pulled by a dragon-headed bird; 2 figures riding deer moving towards the central brick;
The left triangular brick: a carriage, 2 people beating a drum, an immortal driver; fragments of 3 deer-riders;
Central brick: fragmental seated image of the tomb occupants.

Tomb objects: Unknown.

Notes: The earliest known mural depicting tomb occupants in China; similar collections in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA and Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada etc.
Sources: Huang Jibo and Huang Jijun 1996; Nickel 2000.

Appendix 5.1. Tombs of high-ranking relatives of the Han dynasty's imperial Liu family (kings and queens)

1. King of Zhao 趙, Zhang Er 張耳, Northern suburb, Shijiazhuang 石家莊, Hebei Province.

Date and excavation time: 202 BC, excavated 1978.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb;
L: 14.5 m, w: 12.4 m, d: 4.9 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 *bi*-disc next to the tomb owner's head in the inner coffin;
Bronze: fragmental mirrors and stands, 1 seal, 1 tripod, 1 belt-buckle and bell;
Pottery: tiles with cloud swirl motif and dear-tree motif, 1 pot, and 1 jar;
Others: 6 ivory chess pieces and iron.

Note: Looted and severely damaged.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1980a.

2. King of Changshan 常山, Liu Shun 劉舜, Gaozhuang 高莊, Huolu 獲鹿, Hebei Province.

Date and excavation time: 114 BC, excavated 1991.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit stone chamber tomb with passage;
L: 95.4 m, w: 35.3 m, d: 11.4 m.

Tomb objects: Gold[963]: 1 fully decorated bronze chariot fittings with gold and silver gilding, turquoise;
Silver: 3 basins;
Bronze: 1 tripod, 1 pestle and mortar (for medicine), 1 incense burner decorated with a mythical creature motif, 1 basin, 4 spoons, 15 vessels, and 6 bells decorated with swirl and ring-handles motifs;
Pottery: fragmented vessels;
Others: 14 iron vessels and fragmented lacquerware.

Note: looted.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1994b; Beijing 2006.

3. King Jing 靖 of Zhongshan 中山, Liu Sheng 劉勝, and his consort Dou Wan 竇綰, Mancheng 滿城, Hebei Province.

Date and excavation time: 113 BC, excavated in 1968.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Tomb no. 1: rock-cave multi-chambered tomb with passage, path, north, south, middle, and back chambers;
L: 51.7 m, w: 37.5 m, d: 6.8 m;
Tomb no. 2: same as Tomb no. 1;
L: 49.7 m, w: 65 m, d: 7.9 m.

963 The 'Gold' section, and also the 'Silver' section, include both pure gold and silver objects as well as other objects with gold and silver ornamentations.

<u>Tomb objects</u>: Tomb no. 1:

Jade: 1 jade suit with silk thread in the main chamber, 1 jade-inlaid bronze pillow; *bi*-discs, rings, tablets and belt buckles around the suit; 25 *bi*-discs (most on and beneath the body of the tomb owner inside the suit, decorated with dragons, phoenixes, swirls and cloud motifs), 3 tablets; 6 big *bi*-discs outside the coffin (some carved with dragon and mythical creature motifs); 3 *huang*-pendants used as grips holdings (1 dragon-head shaped, 2 in the hands of the tomb owner); 2 hooks; 1 headdress carved with phoenix and cloud swirls; 7 orifices plugs (2 for eyes, 2 for nose, 2 for ears and 1 for mouth); dozens of pendants (tubes, dragon-shaped, flying-dragon-shaped, phoenix-birds, mythical creatures, clouds and peaches);

Gold: gilded bronze rings, ingots on and around the jade suit; gilded rings on the lacquer coffin in the main chamber; 12 gilded bronze ring-handles around the coffin; gilded bronze lamps and 5 incense burners in side rooms; gilded bronze vessels with dragons and mythical creature motifs; gilded lamps in the shapes of a male servant and ram; 9 stick heads gilded with gold and silver, and inlaid with gems, on the path near the east side of the middle chamber (2 carved into dragons, 1 bear, 1 pair of blossoming flowers, 1 crouching mythical creature, 1 pair immortal mountain and flying dragons); 1 gilded pestle carved with sea waves and cloud; 5 gilded bronze tiger-shaped stands (probably for wood objects); dozens of ornamental pieces decorated with different mythical creatures and cloud swirls; gilded bronze lacquer table fittings with dragon and swirl motifs; gilded chariot fittings and tools; 40 ingots (97% gold);

Silver: a few silver vessels and fittings;

Bronze: weapons, vessels, and incense burners around the jade suit;

Pottery: 78 vessels;

Others: 6 chariots, 16 horses, 11 dogs, and 1 deer in the path and south chamber; stone servants and lacquerware in the path); (rotten) lacquerwares and bones inside; iron weapons next to the tomb owner; coins; agate, pearls, ivory, and crystal; stone pestle and mortar.

Tomb no. 2:

Jade:1 jade suit with gold thread; 1 lacquer coffin inlaid with 192 jade plaques; 18 *bi*-discs mainly in or around the suit (mostly decorated with dragons, phoenix-birds, and swirl motifs); 2 *huang*-pendants in the hands parts of the suit (carved with phoenix and dots); 2 hooks (1 inside the left sleeve of the suit, 1 at the waist); 9 orifices plugs (2 eye covers, 2 ear plugs, 2 nose plugs, 1 mouth plug, 1 anus plug and 1 tablet-shaped piece probably for covering the vulva); 8 ornamental pieces inside the suit (1 dancing figurine, 2 cicadas, 1 bead, 1 flower-shaped, 1 vase-shaped); 5 bar ornamental pieces; 1 fragmental piece;

Gold: (mostly from the middle chamber) 1 fully gilded lamp in the shape of a female servant with the inscription *changxingong* 長信宮; gilded lamps (1 in the shape of a phoenix); gilded vessels with swirls and mythical creature motifs; 4 gilded bronze leopards;1 gilded bronze cup in the shape of a phoenix picking up a ring-handle; gilded fittings and tools;

Silver: fittings for lacquerware and other objects; 1 silver gilded bronze lamp in the shape of a human riding on a mythical creature and mountains, cloud swirls, and various animals; fitting remains for lacquer vessels;

Bronze: (mostly from the middle chamber) 1 incense burner in the main chamber; vessels, and lamps; mirrors, seals; spoons; mirrors with inscriptions such as '[May you have] big happiness and wealth, get what you want, and long live' (*dale fugue, de suo hao, qianqiu wansui, yannian yishou* 大樂富貴，得所好，千秋萬歲，延年益壽); 1 ox, 1 human figurine, 4 human riding horses; chariot fittings;

Pottery: (mostly from the south chamber) 246 vessels and a few ingot-shaped objects;

Other: 4 chariots and 13 horses in the north chamber; iron tools; coins; 1 crystal seal and crystal beads, agate, stone beads; fragmented lacquerware in the main and back chambers (some persimmon and swirl motifs recognisable); cloth (some with swirls and birds motifs).

Sources: Beijing 1980a.

4. King Huai 懷 of Zhongshan, Liu Xiu 劉修, Beizhuang 北莊, Dingxian 定縣, Hebei Province.

Date and excavation time: 55 BC, excavated 1973.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb with passage, front and back chambers;

Front chamber l: 18 m, w: 9.6 m;

Back chamber l: 11.5 m, w: 11.4 m, d: 3.3 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 jade suit with gold thread in the back chamber,6 *bi*-discs fragmented pieces, 1 *bi*-disc with phoenix motifs, 6 *bi*-discs under each arm of the deceased, 2 eye covers, 2 nose plugs, 2 ear plugs, 1 cicada-shaped mouth piece, 1 orifice plug, 1 genital case, 1 *yuan*, 1 pendant under the chin of the deceased, 2 pendants at the shoulders; front body of the deceased decorated with 4 pendants and agate and crystal ornament, 4 rings, 2 *huang*, 5 *xi*, 4 human figurines; back of the deceased decorated with 2 pendants and 2 rings; 2 *huang* held in two hands of the deceased;

Gold: 1 *qilin*-hoof shaped piece; 1 gold sheet-decorated lacquer case with silver rim at the foot of the deceased, 2 big gold ingots under the two armpits of the deceased, 40 ingots, gilded bronze chariot fittings;

Bronze: 2 lamps, 4 silver inlaid rams, 1 spoon;
Pottery: vessels;
Others: lacquerware (some decorated silver rims), iron tools, and coins.

Note: looted.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1981b.

5. Kings of Zhongshan, Tomb nos 120–2, Sanpan Shan 三盤山, Dingxian, Hebei Province.

Date and excavation time: Tomb no. 120: 55 BC; Tomb no. 121: AD 90; Tomb no. 122: AD 174; all excavated 1965.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Tomb no. 120, wooden chamber tomb.

Tomb objects: Gold: 1 fully decorated bronze chariot fittings with gold and silver gilding, turquoise and gems.

Note: Reports to be published.

Sources: Wu 1984; Su Bingqi 2014.

6. King Jiang 簡 of Zhongshan, Liu Yan 劉焉 and his consort, Beizhuang, Dingxian, Hebei Province.

Date and excavation time: AD 90, excavated 1959.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Horizontal brick and stone tomb with passage and a main chamber;
L: 20 m, w: 8.4 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: (mostly in the main chamber) 5,169 jade plaques for the jade suit; other jades: 47 pieces including 1 pillow, 1 belt-buckle, 23 *bi*-discs, 2 mouth-pieces, 1 eye-cover (1 stone eye-cover), 2 plugs (1 stone plug), 1 hand grip (4 stone grips), 1 jade turtle and 1 cicada;
Gold: 1 gold sheet;
Silver: silver ornament for a lacquer cup;
Bronze: (mostly gilded or decorated with gold) 139 pieces including mirrors, utensils, weapons, and fragmented ornamental pieces;
Pottery: models of granary, stoves, and vessels;
Others: bones and coins.

Note: Looted.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1964.

7. King Mu 穆 of Zhongshan, Liu Chang 劉暢, and his consort, Beilingtoucun 北陵頭村, Dingxian, Hebei Province.

Date and excavation time: AD 141–174, excavated 1969.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Domed-ceiling horizontal brick tomb with passages, main chambers, and side rooms;
L: 27 m, w: 13.8 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: over 1,100 jade suit plaques with silver thread of Liu Chang in the main chamber and east and west back chambers; c. 400 pieces of stone suit plaques with bronze thread of the consort in the main chamber and east

back chamber; 1 screen with motifs of King Father of the East, Queen Mother of the West, dragons, phoenixes, birds, turtles, snakes, bears and other mythical creatures, the sun and the moon; 1 *bi*-disc probably from inside the jade suit of the male tomb owner; 1 ornamental piece fully decorated with cloud swirls and unicorns; 2 *huang* decorated with two dragons playing; 2 rings decorated with dragons; 2 human-shaped ornamental pieces; other animals (birds and frogs) and creature figurines; stone pillow, plugs, suit plaques, and figurines (rams and pigs).

Gold: over 80 pieces of gold, only 1 gold ornamental piece in the west back room, and all others in the main chamber including 2 filigree dragon-shaped ornamental pieces decorated with cloud swirl motifs, millet-shaped gold and turquoise; 2 filigree *bixie* 辟邪 (literally means to ward off evil spirits) mythical creatures decorated with millet-shaped gold, turquoise, ruby, and a background gold piece with cloud swirl motifs; 1 filigree gold piece depicting 4 rams decorated with cloud swirl motifs, millet-shaped gold, crystal and turquoise; many ornamental pieces in different shapes;

Silver: 25 silver boxes, utensils, and ornamental pieces.

Bronze: chariot ornaments, nails (some gilded), ingots, and vessels;

Pottery: (mostly fragmented) tiles with cloud swirl motifs, lamp, pig, other vessels, a house, animal and vessel models;

Others: iron tools, bones, coins, agate and coral, stone instruments.

Note: Looted.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1973b.

8. King of Qi, Liu Xiang 劉襄, Linzi 臨淄, Shandong Province.

Date and excavation time: c. 180–157 BC, excavated 1978–80.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Rock-cave tombs with 5 pits;
L: 19.9 m, w: 4.1 m, d: 3 m.

Tomb objects: Gold: 2 gilded incense burners (lids carved with two dragons, bodies decorated with wave motifs, gilded chariot fittings decorated with dragon and cloud motifs, some in the shapes of tigers, 3 gilded silver plates decorated with dragon, cloud, wave, and geometric motifs; gold-rim lacquerware.

Silver: 131 vessels and fittings;

Bronze: 6,751 objects, including 75 vessels and utensils, 2 musical instruments, 4,352 chariot and horse fittings, 1,904 weapons, 418 ritual objects, 5 mirrors (1 decorated with a curved dragon);

Pottery: 79 mainly fragmental vessels from pit no. 1;

Others: fragmented lacquerware, 4 chariot remains, 994 lead bars and weapons, and bones.

Note: disturbed.

Sources: *Kaogu xuebao* 1985b.

9. King of Jinan 濟南 (surname Lü 呂), Luozhuang 洛莊, Zhangqiu 章丘, Shandong Province.

Date and excavation time: early Western Han, excavated 1999–2001.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit tomb with passage;
Overall l: 180 m, d: 20 m;
Main chamber l: 37 m, w: 35 m.

Tomb objects: (mainly from the 36 subordinate tombs rather than the main tomb chamber in which the tomb owner Lü was buried)

Gold: (no. 9) 40 pure gold ornamental horse pieces weighing c. 600g; (no. 11) 3 gilded chariots, each with 4 horses with gold ornament;

Silver: 3 basins;

Bronze: (no. 5) c. 100 vessels and tools; musical instruments; (no. 14 'musical instrument pit') c. 140 bells and drums;

Others: some potteries and animal bones.

Note: more materials to be published.

Sources: *Shandong daxue xuebao* 2004.

10. King Ai 哀 of Changyi 昌邑, Liu Bo 劉髆 (Han Wudi's son), Juye 巨野, Shandong Province.

Date and excavation time: 97–87 BC, excavated 1971–72 and 1977.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Cave tomb with passage;
L: 70 m, w: 4.7–7.1 m, d: 6–11.9 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 43 fragmented jade pieces mostly in the coffin, including 28 *bi*-discs (10 under the deceased, 17 on the deceased and 1 on the coffin, mostly decorated with motifs including birds, mythical creatures, and swirls), 1 ring, 1 thumb ring, 1 heart-shaped pendant, 1 seal, 1 tablet, 1 belt buckle, 1 cicada mouth piece, 1 plug at the lower end of the deceased, 4 short tubes, 1 horse figurine, 2 pig figurines; sword pommels and chapes carved with dragons, tigers, and cloud swirls;

Gold: 1 gilded lacquer table, 2 gilded eating vessels, 5 gilded nails, 3 gilded ornamental pieces, 108 gilded chariot fittings, and 17 gilded fittings decorated with cloud, tiger, deer, and bird motifs;

Bronze: 526 pieces, including vessels, chariot fittings, mirrors (1 with a stand inscribed '… [May you have] long life and endless happiness…' (*yannian yishou, anle weiyang* 延年益壽，安樂未央), belt-buckles, coins, figurines, and weapons;

Pottery: c. 29 fragmented vessels and tiles with geometric patterns, 12 fragmental incense burners, 14 bells, and coins.;

Others: lacquer table wares, bamboo and horn objects, gems, red and pink powders in various vessels.

Note: damaged.

Sources: *Kaogu xuebao* 1983.

11.King of Jibei 濟北, Liu Kuan 劉寬, Shuangrushan 雙乳山, Changqing 長清 County, Shandong Province.

Date and excavation time: 97–87 BC, excavated 1995–96.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit wooden chamber tomb with passage;
Passage l: 64–66 m, w: 14 m, d: 14 m;
Chamber l: 25 m, w: 24.3 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: c. 50 pieces including 1 face-cover on the face of the tomb owner (18 composition parts covering all the face, the 1 piece covering the nose fully carved with cloud motif; silk thread remains); 1 pillow under the head of the deceased (9 plaques, 3 big plaques, mostly carved with cloud, geometric, and animal motifs, and 2 tiger heads); 5 *bi*-discs next to the waist and back (1 carved with a phoenix-bird motif, 1 flying dragon); 2 grips in the hands of the tomb owner in the shape of pigs; 3 sword fittings next to the pillow;

Gold: 20 ingots weighing 4,262.5g (19 big ones at the south side of the pillow, diameter 6.2–6.6 cm, weight 178.5–228.7 g; 1 small one at the lower belly of the tomb owner, diameter 3.2 cm, weight 66.5 g); some scattered gilded bronze chariot fittings;

Bronze: c. 100 objects, including mainly vessels, 2 lamps, mirrors, and incense burners;

Potteries: 6 jars;

Others: fragmented and rotten lacquer pieces (including 1 small chariot), remains of iron tools, coins and poultry remains.

Note: looted and damaged.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1997a.

12.Queen of Zichuan 甾川, Tomb no. 1, Dongquan 東圏, Changle 昌樂 County, Shandong Province.

Date and excavation time: c. 91–33 BC, excavated 1987.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit cave tomb with passage, path, south and north chambers, and 4 side rooms;
Overall 86 m, d: 11.7 m;
Main chamber l: 37 m, w: 35 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 18 pieces including 4 dancing figurines, 2 rings, and 12 fragmental pieces;

Gold: 68 gilded bronze chariot and horse fittings, tools; 2 gilded weapon fittings decorated with dragon heads; 3 gilded ring-handles (for lacquerwares/coffins/tomb doors); 3 basins; 18 gilded fittings for lacquer furniture; 8 gilded fittings for lacquer ear-cups; 10 gilded small bronze rings for lacquerware; 5 gilded mortises for zithers (2 decorated with cloud swirl motifs, 2 decorated with two dragons playing with beads); 8 gilded bronze fragmental persimmon-shaped

ornamental pieces (1 carved with cloud swirls motif); 2 gilded bronze *bi*-discs (probably for decorating the coffin); 2 frame-shaped gilded bronze ornamental pieces decorated with cloud swirl motifs; 19 cylinder-shaped ornamental pieces (1 decorated with cloud swirl motifs and 2 with dragon motifs); 2 gilded hooks; 6 gilded nail-shaped ornamental pieces; 1 fully gilded bronze dragon-shaped piece carved with wings and scales;

Bronze: 2 fragmented mirrors, 1 tripod, 2 lamp plates, 2 bronze pieces; 3 animal figurines (bird, monkey, and monster-head);

Potteries: fragmented vessels;

Others: fragmented iron objects and bones, severely rotten lacquer pieces (some decorated with cloud swirls, lines, dragons, and birds), 85 sealing muds, and 769 *wuzhu* coins.

Note: severely looted; more to be published on Tomb no. 2.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1993.

13.King Xiao 孝 of Lu, Liu Qingji 劉慶忌, and his consort, Tomb nos 2–5, Jiulongshan 九龍山, Qufu 曲阜, Shandong Province.

Date and excavation time: Mid-Western Han, excavated 1964.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Rock-cave tombs with passages, main chambers, and side rooms;

Tomb no. 2 l: 64.9 m, w: 22.5 m, d: 18.1 m;

Tomb no. 3 l: 72.1 m, w: 24.3 m, d: 18.4 m;

Tomb no. 4 l: 70.3 m, w: 23.5 m, d: 16.9 m;

Tomb no. 5 l: 53.5 m, w: 19.8 m, d: 18 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 jade suit with silver thread from Tomb no. 3, 248 tubes next to the suit, 2 tablet-shaped ornamental pieces (1 carved with adragon, fish dragon, and cloud swirl motifs), 7 *bi*-discs (1 carved with dragon motifs);

Gold: scattered gold ornamental pieces, gilded weapons, chariots and horse fittings, and vessels;

Bronze: belt buckles and seals;

Pottery: house, animal, and vessel models.

Others: weapons, coins, stone instruments, agate, and coral.

Note: Looted.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1972b.

14.Queen of Rencheng 任城, Jining 濟寧, Shandong Province.

Date and excavation time: c. AD 146–189, excavated 1991.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Stone chamber tomb with front and back chambers and a side room;

L: 8.08 m, w: 6.18 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 15 fragmented plaques with bronze thread remains scattered in the front and back chambers (mainly rectangular, others square and trapezoid);

1 nose plug, 1 eye cover, 2 pendants (1 carved with cloud and mythical creature motifs);

Gold: 1 gilded bronze ring-handle;

Bronze: 19 pieces including 9 chariot fittings and 1 belt buckle in the shape of an animal head;

Pottery: 46 vessels (2 had cinnabar remains inside), tools, and animal figurines;

Others: fragmented iron objects and bones, rotten lacquer pieces, stones, and coins.

Note: Ceiling in the back chamber painted with constellations; looted several times.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1994a.

15.King Qing 頃 of Guangyang 廣陽, Liu Jian 劉建, or King Yan 燕, Liu Dan 劉旦, and consort, Dabaotai 大葆台, Beijing.

Date and excavation time: Tomb no. 1 (male tomb owner): c. 94–80 BC, excavated 1974;
Tomb no. 2 (the consort): c. 91–69 BC, excavated 1975.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb with passage, path, front and back rooms;
Passage l: 4 m, w: 3.95–4.14 m;
Tomb no. 1 l: 23.2 m, w: 18 m, d: 3.7 m;
Tomb no. 2 l: 21 m, w: 16.2 m.

Tomb objects: Tomb no. 1:

Jade: fragmental jade suit plaques, 1 *bi*-disc decorated with dragon-and-phoenix motif, 1 tiger and 1 dragon head decorated gilded bronze and crystal;

Gold: 1 gilded bronze weapon;

Bronze: 1 mirror with constellation and cloud motifs, ornamental pieces;

Pottery: vessels and human figurines;

Others: many lacquerwares, including vessels, casesm and furniture (2 beds decorated with flying dragons and cloud swirls, and a table), iron tools and weapons, chariots, animals, and coins.;

Tomb no. 2:

Jade: 1 pair of dancing figurines, 1 pendant with tiger motif, 1 *xi* with phoenix motif, 1 fragmental *bi*-disc with dragon-and-phoenix motif;

Bronze: 1 crouching tiger;

Pottery: fragmented vessels.

Note: Looted.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1977b.

16.King/Queen of Yan 燕, Laoshan 老山, Beijing.

Date and excavation time: Late Western Han, excavated since 2000.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb;

Tomb objects: Pottery, lacquerware, and bronze.

Note: more to be published.
Sources: *Wenhuibao* 18th, 25th, and 31st March 2000.

17.King of Chu 楚, Beidongshan 北洞山, Xuzhou 徐州, Jiangsu Province.
Date and excavation time: c. 180–157 BC, excavated 1986.
Materials and structure of the tomb: Horizontal brick and stone tomb with passage, 19 chambers, and 7 niches;
L: 26 m, w: 21.3 m.
Tomb objects: Jade: c. 50 jade suit plaques with gold sheet remains (a few plaques may have been adapted from *bi*-discs with dragon-snake creatures), 2 sword fittings (1 carved with a winged-mythical creature on each side), 1 pommel fully covered with dragons and mythical creatures, 1 thumb ring carved with dragon-and-phoenix motifs, 9 *bi*-discs decorated with dragon and swirl motifs on one side, 1 ring, 14 jade cups, fragmented mythical creature figurines;
Gold: 4 belt buckles decorated with cloud motifs, 2 ear ornament;
Bronze: mostly small and fragmental pieces;
Pottery: 422 painted human figurines (c. half fragmented, including servants, soldiers, musicians, and officers), vessels, and tiles (some decorated with cloud swirl motifs);
Others: fragmented lacquerware with geometric and cloud motifs, fragmented and severely damaged iron and wood objects, bones, coins, and stone objects.
Note: looted several times.
Sources: *Wenwu* 1988.

18.King Yuan 元 of Chu, Liu Jiao 劉交, and his family (4 tombs), Chuwangshan 楚王山, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.
Date and excavation time: 179 BC, to be excavated.
Materials and structure of the tomb: Rock-cave tombs.
Sources: Liang Yong and Liang Qingxuan 1999.

19.King of Chu, Liu Wu 劉戊, Shizishan 獅子山, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.
Date and excavation time: c. 154 BC, excavated 1994–95.
Materials and structure of the tomb: Rock-cave horizontal multi-chambered tomb with 12 chambers and 1 subordinate tomb;
L: 117 m, w: 13.2 m.
Tomb objects: Jade: 1 jade suit with gold thread (4,248 jade suit plaques); 1 jade-inlaid wooden coffin (jade plaques in rectangular, triangle, and rhombus shapes, *bi*-discs); 1 jade sword carved with cloud swirls, tiger-like mythical creature and phoenix-bird motifs; 1 jade dragon-shaped ornament carved with cloud swirls and phoenix-bird motifs; *bi*-discs; *huang*s (some decorated with dragon and cloud swirl motifs),

dragon-shaped and heart-shaped ornamental pieces, pendants, and *chongya*; pommels with cloud motif; cups and ear-cups (some decorated with swirls, cloud swirls, persimmon and flower motifs); fragmented pillow (two ends in the shape of tiger heads);

Gold: belt buckles in the shapes of fish, birds, and fierce and mythical creatures; ornamental pieces (some carved with mythical creature motifs);

Silver: seals;

Bronze: tripods, bells, tools, weapons, and vessels;

Pottery: vessels and huge numbers of figurines (soldiers and servants etc.);

Others: sealing mud, iron tools and weapons, chariots, lacquerware, stone tools, and coins.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1998; Wang Kai and Ge Mingyu 2005.

20. King of Chu, Liu Zhu 劉柱, and his consort, Guishan 龜山, Tongshan 銅山, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: 115 BC, excavated 1982.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Rock-cave horizontal tomb with 2 paths and 12 chambers; L: 83.5 m, w: 33 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 ring, 1 bar-shaped piece, and 2 stone plaques;

Gold: gilded chariot fittings (some decorated with high-relief tiger motifs), ornamental pieces;

Bronze: scattered and fragmented weapons and mirrors;

Pottery: fragmented tiles carved with cloud and swirl motifs, vessels, large numbers of scattered *qilin*-hoof shaped pieces, figurines, *bi*-disc;

Others: coins and food remains.

Note: looted and the positions of objects disturbed.

Sources: *Kaogu xuebao* 1985a; *Wenwu* 1973a.

21. King of Jiangdu 江都, Liu Fei 劉非, and his consort, Dayunshan 大雲山, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: Western Han; Tomb no. 1 (King of Jiangdu), Tomb no. 2 (the king's consort) excavated 2009–11.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Tomb no. 1: *huangchang ticou* tomb with inner and outer paths; L: 40.5 m, w: 26 m, d: 19 m;

Tomb no. 2: pit tomb with head, foot, and east and west side niches; L: 30 m, w: 14.4 m, d: 15 m.

Tomb objects: Tomb no. 1:

Jade: 1 damaged jade suit with gold thread, and the remain of a jade-inlaid lacquer coffin in the front chamber; tablet, sword, *huang*, shells, and (crystal) hooks around the suit;

Gold: 1 gilded bronze elephant figurine near the suit; 1 gilded bronze musician; gilded bronze chariot fittings, weapons (some decorated with dragon and bird motifs), mostly in the outer path; gilded bronze fittings for

musical instruments (decorated with dragon motifs, and some in the shape of mythical creatures), also in the outer path;

Silver: 1 silver gilded bronze canopy stand decorated with cloud swirl motifs and inlaid with gems;

Bronze: lamps; 1 rhinoceros figurine;

Pottery: vessels, toilet utensils, and lamps;

Others: iron weapons;

Tomb no. 2:

Jade: 1 complete jade-inlaid lacquer coffin;

Others: Gold, bronze, and pottery vessels, c. 200 pieces.

Notes: looted; more to be published.

Sources: *Kaogu* 2012.

22.King of Chu and his consort, Nandongshan 南洞山, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: Western Han.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Rock-cave tomb with passage and multi-chambers;
L: 80 m.

Note: looted, and more materials to be published.

Sources: Xuzhou bowuguan 徐州博物館 (Xuzhou Museum). 'Xuzhou Nandongshan Han mu diaocha ji 徐州南洞山漢墓調查記' (Record of the Survey of the Han Tomb at Nandongshan, Xuzhou), to be published.

23.King of Guangling 廣陵, Liu Xu 劉胥, Tianshan 天山, Gaoyou 高郵, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: Mid-late Western Han, excavated 1979–80.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb;
L: 14.28 m, w: 16.65 m, d: 24 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: jade suit plaques, *bi*-disc and *yuan*;

Gold: 1 gilded bronze rim;

Bronze: vessels, incense burners, mirrors, weapons, and tools;

Pottery: *qilin*-hoof shaped pieces and vessels;

Others: lacquerware (some decorated with cloud swirls and mythical creature motifs); many wood objects, including figurines, vessels, tools, and weapons; a few iron tools and coins.

Sources: *Wenbo tongxun* 1980.

24. King of Chu and his consort, Dongdongshan 東洞山, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: Mid-late Western Han, excavated 1982.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Horizontal brick and stone tombs with paths and main chambers;

Tomb no. 1 l: 61 m, w: 16.5 m;

Tomb no. 2 path l: 19.9 m, w: 1.1 m; chamber l: 4.3 m, w: 3.5 m, d: 2.05 m.

Tomb objects: Tomb no. 1:

Jade: 2 jade suit plaques, 2 *bi*-discs decorated with swirl motifs on both sides, and 1 ornamental piece;

Gold: 4 belt buckles decorated with cloud motifs, 2 ear ornament;

Bronze: 2 vessels;

Tomb no. 2:

Jade: 1 nose plug and 1 ear plug (probably stone); 3 *huang* carved with mythical creature heads, 1 *xi* with swirl motifs, 1 ring with dragon-and-phoenix and cloud motifs, 2 ornamental pieces with dragon motifs, 2 dancing figurines, 2 shells, and 1 bead;

Gold: 2 gilded bronze incense burners (similar to those excavated from Maoling), 3 fully gilded bronze basins, 6 gilded bronze nails, 37 gilded lacquer furniture fittings (1 decorated with jade and 1 with cloud swirl motifs), and fragmental gilded lacquer ear-cups; 5 gilded bronze rings; 8 g gold sheet (ornamental pieces) in the shapes of a wild goose, lion, tiger, leopard, fox, and fish, as well as cloud swirl motifs;

Bronze: 7 tripods, 2 spoons, 4 lamps (3 with bamboo motifs), 4 mirrors (3 fragmented), 11 brushes, and 1 bell;

Pottery: 1 fragmented pot;

Others: rotten lacquerware, iron knives and rings, pearls, amber, and stone ornaments.

Note: looted and positions of the objects disturbed.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1984b.

25.King of Guangling, Liu Shou 劉守, Yangshou 楊壽 Village, Hanjiang 邗江, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: AD 5, excavated 1985.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Tomb nos 104 and 105, both pit tombs;

L: 100 m.

Tomb objects: Tomb no. 104:

Jade: 19 suit plaques (probably glass, 1 carved with a tiger, 3 carved with persimmon motifs, 4 carved with cloud swirl motifs, and 10 carved with cloud motif), 2 pigs, 2 plugs;

Gold: 1 fully gilded bronze brush, 4 gilded bronze ornamental pieces in the shape of phoenixes, 5 gilded bronze coins, 2 gilded bear-shaped stand feet, 7 gilded ornamental fittings for lacquer tables, 6 gilded lacquer vessels with cloud motifs, 2 gold rings;

Silver: 5 lacquer fittings;

Bronze: 55 objects, mostly vessels, others include 1 lamp, 2 mirrors (1 decorated with cloud motifs, 1 with grass and geometric motifs and inscribed with c. 38 worn characters expressing the wish for everlasting prosperity and happiness), 1 persimmon-shaped ornamental piece (probably for a lacquer case);

Pottery: 27 vessels including 9 jars with recognisable yellow glaze and 3 horse-hoof shaped pieces with yellow glaze and cloud swirl motifs;

Others: lacquerware, 1dragon-head wood carving, iron tools;

Tomb no. 105:

Gold: 1 gilded lacquer case with cloud swirl motif,;

Bronze: 1 seal, 1 fragmented incense burner (lid missing) decorated with persimmon and mythical creatures (phoenix-bird and ape motifs), 1 lamp, fragmented vessels and fittings for lacquerware;

Others: some fragmented lacquerware and 1dragon-head wood carving.

Note: severely looted.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1991.

26.King of Xiapi 下邳, Liu Lou 劉樓, Suining 睢寧, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: Early Eastern Han, excavated 1975.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb with a main chamber, 2 side rooms, and 1 back room;

L: 11.9 m, w: 6 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 jade suit with bronze thread (c. 140 pieces in the main chamber, in different shapes including mainly rectangular, square, triangle, trapezoid pieces);

Gold: gilded ornamental pieces and bronze lids;

Bronze: 1 lamp in the shape of an ox, 1 lamp in the shape of a wild goose foot; vessels, basin, and 1 incense burner with 3 animal-foot-shaped legs;

Pottery: vessels, lamps, and models;

Others: iron weapons, tools, and coin.

Sources: *Wenwu ziliao congkan* 1981b.

27.King of Pengcheng 彭城, Tushan 土山, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: Eastern Han, Tomb no. 1 excavated 1970; Tomb nos 2–4 to be published.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Brick and stone tombs.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 jade suit with silver thread, *bi*-discs decorated with dragon-and-phoenix motifs;

Gold: 1 gilded mythical creature-shaped case;

Bronze: lamps and vessels;

Pottery: vessels;

Others: lacquerware and iron.

Sources: *Wenbo tongxun* 1977.

28.King of Guangling, Liu Jing 劉荊, Ganquan 甘泉, Hanjiang, Jiangsu Province.

Date and excavation time: AD 58, excavated 1980.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Domed-ceiling brick horizontal chamber tomb with path;

Main chamber l: 8.8 m, w: 9.6 m;

Path within the tomb l: 2.6 m, w: 2 m, d: 3.4 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: human figurines, tubes, and fragmented pendants;

Gold: 11 gold ornamental pieces in different shapes (1 shield-shaped piece carved with the inscription 'Blessings for sons' (*yi zi* 宜子), 1 filigree and gold thread decorated dragon-shaped piece, 1 crown-shaped piece, 1 ring decorated with crystal, 1 hollow gold ball (diameter 1.3 cm, weight 2.7 g), 6 heart-shaped ornamental pieces (probably for clothes), 1 gold-cased iron sword, 3 gilded bronze incense burners, 2 gold inlaid belt buckles (1 in the shape of a flying bird), 1 fully gilded bronze object handle, 1 *qilin*-hoof shaped piece; 1 gold sheet decorated lacquer case with silver rim at the foot of the deceased, 2 big gold ingots under the two armpits of the deceased, 40 ingots, gilded bronze chariot fittings;

Silver: 1 bowl;

Bronze: 1 lamp in the shape of an ox, 1 lamp in the shape of a wild goose foot, 1 silver gilded case-shaped lamp, 1 iron, 1 seal with the inscription '[May you have] everlasting happiness' (*changle wuji* 長樂無極), 7 ring-handles;

Pottery: 15 vessels and models of a house, pigsty, and stoves, 1 fragmented incense burner;

Others: lacquerware, 1 iron sword, 1 iron incense burner, glass fragments, and jewellery.

Note: looted.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1981c.

29.King Qing 頃 of Chen 陳, Liu Chong 劉崇, Huaiyang 淮陽, Beiguan 北關, Henan Province.

Date and excavation time: Late Eastern Han c. AD 124, excavated 1988.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Brick stone tomb with passage, path, front and back chambers, and two side rooms;

L: 28.3 m, w: 18.2 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: scattered jade suit plaques with silver thread; 1 bar carved with curved grass, cloud swirls and painted with cinnabar; 2 *huang* (1 carved with a snake-dragon and a phoenix), 1 dancing woman, 2 *xi* carved with snake-dragons and with cloud swirl motif background; 2 ornamental pieces (1 in the shape of a dragon) and 1 crouching big creature;

Gold: 3 gilded rings and 1 gilded fragmented bronze tool;

Bronze: c. 60 objects including chariot and horse fittings;

Silver: 1 fragmented headdress;

Pottery: 2 tiles decorated with cloud swirl motifs, and fragmented vessels;

Others: back chamber door carved with cloud swirls, a ring-handle with a tree and 'auspicious bird' (*ruiniao* 瑞鳥) in the middle, snake-dragon motif; coins, stone figurines in the shapes of human, tigers, lions, birds, pigs

and mythical creatures, granary; 5 pearls, bones, and coins.

Note: disturbed.

Sources: *Kaogu xuebao* 1983.

30.King of Liang 梁, and his consort, Bao'anshan 保安山, Yongcheng 永城, Henan Province.

Date and excavation time: Western Han, Tomb no. 1 (King of Liang) partially excavated in 1978 and 1990; Tomb no. 2 (the king's consort) excavated in 1993.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Tomb no. 1: rock-cave multi-chambered tomb with passage, path, and 10 chambers;
L: 96.45 m, w: 32.4 m, d: 3 m;
Tomb no. 2: rock-cave multi-chambered tomb with 2 passages, 2 paths, front hall, front and back chambers, and 34 side rooms;
L: 210.5 m, w: 72.6 m, d: 4.4 m.

Tomb objects: Tomb no. 2:
Jade: 1 stone plug;
Gold: 22 gilded bronze chariot fittings (some decorated with cloud swirls, mountains, birds, tigers, mythical creatures, and human motifs), 68 gilded bronze rings, 4 gilded bronze belt buckles, 911 gilded ornamental pieces (in shapes of ox heads, bears, and ram heads), 54 gilded nails, 2 gilded bronze tubes, 2 gilded bronze lacquer table fittings carved with cloud swirl motifs;
Silver: 2 silver gilded bronze horse fittings, hundreds of scattered gilded fittings;
Bronze: 18 nails, vessels, and tools;
Pottery: fragmented tiles decorated with cloud motifs;
Others: iron weapons and hooks, bone carvings (persimmon motifs) and 1 plug, and decayed cloths;

Notes: looted and disturbed; for other similar tombs in the mausoleum of the kings of Liang, see Zhengzhou 1996; for the Shiyuan mural tomb of King Gong of Liang in the mausoleum, see Zhengzhou 1996 and Appendix 4.2.

Sources: Zhengzhou 1996: 12–75; *Wenwu* 2001.

31.King of Changsha 長沙, Xiangbizui 象鼻嘴, Changsha, Hunan Province.

Date and excavation time: c. 180–141 BC, excavated 1975.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb with passage;
Passage l: 18.75 m, w: 3.9–6.8 m;
Chamber: l: 17.5–19 m, w: 15.85–17.2 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 2 *bi*-discs on the middle coffin of the three (1 ornate openwork decorated with cloud swirls, dragon-and-phoenix motifs), 2 ornamental pieces at the end of the coffin (1 carved with several creatures， including

dragons, phoenixes, and bears);

Pottery: fragmented vessels and tiles with geometric patterns, 12 fragmented incense burners, 14 bells, and coins;

Others: fragmented lacquerware and severely damaged silk pieces.

Sources: *Kaogu xuebao* 1981.

32.King Jing 靖 of Changsha, Wu Zhu 吳著, Shazitang 砂子塘, Changsha, Hunan Province.

Date and excavation time: 157 BC, excavated 1961.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit wooden chamber tomb with passage, a main chamber, and niches;

Main chamber l: 5.95 m, w: 4.1 m, d: 4.5 m.

Tomb objects: Gold: c. 10 pieces of gold coated plaques (each c. 5 cm in length and width);

Others: lacquerware and wood figurines.

Note: Looted several times.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1963.

33.King of Changsha, Liu Jiao 劉驕, and Queen of Changsha, Yang Zigan 楊子贛, Yangjiashan 楊家山, Changsha, Hunan Province.

Date and excavation time: Western Han, Tomb no. 1 (Liu Jiao) excavated 1950–51; Tomb no. 2 (Yang Zigan) excavated 1975.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit wooden chamber tombs;

Tomb no. l: 20.34 m, w: 11.1–13.7 m, d: 8.8 m.

Tomb objects: Tomb no. 1:

Gold: 1 gold disc-shaped ingot;

Silver: 1 silver seal;

Pottery: several vessels.

Others: lacquerware decorated with cloud swirl motifs, mythical creatures or animal motifs, and inscriptions; lead bells, bars and ingots; wood objects, and coins.

Tomb no. 2: Bronze: vessels, lamps, and weapons.

Others: lacquerware decorated with cloud swirl motifs, mythical creatures or animal motifs, some decorated with silver ornamental pieces.

Note: Looted.

Sources: Beijing 1957.

34.Queen of Changsha, Cao Zhuan 曹嬛, Yangjiashan, Changsha, Hunan Province.

Date and excavation time: Mid-Western Han, excavated 1974.

Materials and structure of the tomb: *Huangchang ticou* tomb with passage;

Passage l: 4 m, w: 3.95–4.14 m;

Tomb l: 11.6–12.8 m, w: 9.5–10 m, d: 2–2.8 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 4 pendants (from the middle of the inner coffin near the waist, 2 carved with dragon-horse motifs, 1 cloud swirl motifs), 12 *bi*-discs (some

with phoenix motifs), 2 rings (1 dragon-and-phoenix motif), 1 *yuan*, 6 *huang*, 12 shells, 1 weapon implement, 1 pair of crystal plugs;

Gold: 1 gilded bronze weapon;

Bronze: 3 mirrors;

Pottery: fragmented vessels and plaques with inscriptions (unrecognisable);

Others: c. 150 (some fragmented) lacquerware, iron tools, and weapons, scattered stone, agate, horn and etc.

Sources: *Wenwu* 1979b.

35.King of Nanyue 南越, Zhao Mo 趙眜, Xianggang 象崗, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province.

Date and excavation time: 122 BC, excavated 1993.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Stone multi-chambered tomb with 7 chambers; L: 10.85 m, w: 12.5 m, d: 2.1–2.3 m.

Tomb objects: Jade: 1 jade suit with silk thread, over 10 *bi*-discs on and beneath the body of the tomb owner; 6 big *bi*-discs outside the coffin (some carved with dragon and mythical creature motifs); hand grips, *huang*-pendants from head to toe, belt buckles, tube (carved with mythical creatures), *huang*-pendants, beads; seals; dancing figurines and scattered pieces outside the main chamber;

Gold: 8 gold sheets on the face part of the jade suit; 1 big seal carved into a dragon on the body of the town owner (l: 3.1 cm, w: 3.1 cm, h: 1.8 cm, weight: 148.5 g); 1 seal in the shape of a turtle; belt buckles; bead pendants; ornamental pieces and gilded chariot fittings;

Silver: 1 case; eating and drinking vessels;

Bronze: belt buckles, tools, weapons, lamps (carved into the shapes of clouds, dragons, and phoenix), and screen stands; over 100 vessels in the back chamber (mostly containing meat bones and seashells); 15 mirrors (mostly decorated with dragon-and-phoenix motifs, others include snake-dragon and geometric motifs); incense burners (some decorated with dragon motifs); bells and musical instruments; pestles and mortars;

Pottery: over 100 *bi*-discs at the end of the outer coffin; vessels and models of vessels and cookers; tiles with inscriptions such as 'Everlasting happiness' (*changle* 長樂);

Others: lacquerware (some with pearls inside); silk remains; ivory chess pieces; various beads and jewelleries; glass; iron and lead weapons; sealing muds; wood figurines; human and animal bones; scattered medicine powder in five colours;

Notes: Mural painting (cloud swirl motifs) on the 2 doors of the front chamber and the main chamber at the back, as well as on the walls and ceiling of the front chamber.

Sources: Beijing 1991a.

36.King of Dian 滇, Dabona 大波那, Yunnan Province.

Date and excavation time: Western Han, excavated 1964.

Materials and structure of the tomb: Pit wooden chamber tomb;
L: 7.5 m, w: 2.05–2.55 m, d: 4 m.

Tomb objects: Bronze: 1 coffin decorated with mythical creatures at the two ends; 1 ox; bells and instruments; eating vessels;
Pottery: house, animals (horse, ram, pig, dog, and chicken), and vessel models.
Others: weapons.

Note: Looted.

Sources: *Kaogu* 1964.

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