

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2012
The Culture and Arts of China: From the Neolithic Age Through the Tang Dynasty
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

October 5, 2012

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The Han Dynasty (Planning for the Living and the Dead)

HAN 漢 DYNASTY (206 BCE-220 CE)

Western Han (206 BCE-9 CE): capital at Chang'an 長安 (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi)

Capital planned on model received from Zhou, with imperial palace in the middle (see remains of the Weiyang Palace and reconstructed city plan).

Imperial Mausoleums of the Western Han

Changling 長陵: Burial of Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 206-195 BCE), 1st W. Han emperor

Maoling 茂陵: Burial of Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 140-87 BCE), 6th W. Han emperor

Yangling 陽陵: Burial of Han Jingdi 漢景帝 (r. 157-141 BCE), 4th W. Han emperor

Satellite pits: containing pairs of animals (cows, dogs, pigs, chickens, goats, sheep, etc.) and 400 nude, armless figures of boys and girls, painted earthenware, originally equipped with cloth garments and cloth or wooden arms.

Compare: AAMSF earthenware nude boy and girl; Jointed puppet frame, wood with silver rod, Laixi, Shandong, ca. 107 BCE.

Mawangdui, Changsha, Hubei 湖北長沙馬王堆 (old state of Chu 楚), Western Han, ca. 186- ca. 168 BCE: Tombs 1-3

Tomb #2: Li Cang 利蒼, Marquis and Prime Minister of Changsha (appointed 193 BCE, died 186 BCE).

Tomb #3: His son's tomb (died 168 BCE)

Tomb #1: Lady Dai 軀 (died just after 168 BCE)

1. Outer structure (the *guo* 槨)

Location of storage "rooms" with inventory detailing lacquer (compare AAMSF cup), ceramics (compare AAMSF painted jar), figures of Grand Chamberlain and other personal attendants, cases of clothing, food, and medicine, fake coins, and musical instruments.

2. Three inner coffins: (1) plain black lacquer, (2) black lacquer with images of protectors and *xiangrui* 祥瑞 (auspicious images), (3) red lacquer with Mt. Kunlun 崑崙

Po 魄 (soul that stays with body) vs. *hun* 魂 (soul that separates from body)

3. The innermost sarcophagus (*guan* 棺), covered with embroidered silk interwoven with feathers and containing the corpse of Lady Dai

4. T-shaped painting, ink and colors on silk (Compare: T-shaped painting from Mawangdui, Tomb #3, belonging to Lady Dai's son, sealed in 168 BCE)

Gentleman on Dragon-back and *Lady and Phoenix*, ink on silk, state of Chu (ca. 3rd c. BCE)

Mancheng, Hebei 河北滿城: Tombs of Prince Liu Sheng 劉勝 (d. 113 BCE) and Princess Dou Wan 竇綰 of

Zhongshan 中山 (Tombs #1-2)

Tomb plans: two rockcut "palaces" with stables, granaries, central audience and banqueting chamber, and private chamber. Note also the circumambulatory surrounding the burial chamber (compare to plans of W. Han palatial tombs in Jiangsu)

Antechambers: containing the stable and food storage.

Central chambers: modeled on an audience chamber with wooden pavilion.

Bronzes: Lamp in the form of a kneeling servant, gilt bronze, Tomb of Dou Wan (compare AAMSF gilt bronze *lian* vessel)

Boshanlu 博山爐 ("immortal mountain incense burner"), bronze inlaid with gold, Tomb of Liu Sheng (compare two *Boshanlu*, bronze and glazed earthenware, W. Han, AAMSF)

Rear chambers: point of burial with a pavilion built of stone.

Jade suits (*xia* 匣), plaques of jade joined with gold wire and pasted onto a silk backing, Tombs of Liu Sheng and Dou Wan

Compare: Early W. Han suit from Shandong; embossed glass plaques (Boston MFA); Zhou-period jade shrouds; Liangzhu jade burial

Xianggang Shan, Guangzhou, Guangdong 廣東廣州象崗山: Tomb of Emperor Wen 文帝 (Zhao Mo 趙昧) of Nan Yue 南越 (r. 137-122 BCE): jade suit and jade objects.

Mingqi 明器 (luminous or spirit objects): earthenware with lead-fluxed glazes (green—colored with copper, brown—colored with iron). **Many examples in the AAMSF collection.**

Dogs, well, mill, barnyard, stove, watchtower

Money Tree with images of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母), Sichuan, Eastern Han, glazed earthenware base with bronze tree (AAMSF)

Hunping (Spirit jars) with architectural structures on top and one with Buddha-images, 3rd c. BCE, glazed stoneware (compare AAMSF jar, glazed stoneware, E. Han).

Reading:

WU Hung, *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010).

Patricia Berger, "Body Doubles: Sculpture for the Afterlife," *Oriental Art* (February 1998): 46-53.

WU Hung, "Art in a Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 7 (1992): 111-144.

Jessica Rawson, "The Eternal Palaces of the Western Han: A New View of the Universe," *Artibus Asiae* 59, 1/2 (1999): 5-58.

Early thoughts on the dead and their proper care:

Confucius 孔子 on sacrifice: "He sacrificed as though they (the spirits) were present, sacrificed to gods as though the gods were present." Confucius said of this attitude: "Unless I involve myself in the sacrifice it is as though I did not sacrifice."

Trans. A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Dao*.

Xunzi 荀子 (3rd c. BCE) on imagination and sacrifice: "To neglect when dead someone you cared for when alive is to respect him while he has knowledge and be rude to him when he hasn't. I say then sacrifice is memory and imagination, contemplation and yearning at their most authentic, the utmost in loyalty and trustworthiness, demeanor. If it were not for the sages no one would be capable of understanding it... Among gentlemen it is deemed the Way of Man; among the 100 Clans, it is deemed the service of ghosts."

Trans. A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Dao*.

Confucius' objection to *yong* 俑 (burial figures): Later commentators said burial figures offended Confucius (while straw figures that were burnt at the graveside did not), because they were "doubles" (*ouren* 偶人) that reminded people too much of actual people when they moved (*tiao* 跳 = "postured" or "lept").

On the tombs of the Western Han emperors:

If then
One gazes upon the surrounding suburbs,
Travels to the nearby prefectures,
Then to the south he may gaze on Du and Ba,
To the north he may espy the Five Mausoleums,
Where famous cities face Chang'an's outskirts,
And village residences connect one to another.
It is the region of the prime and superior talents,
Where official sashes and hats flourish,
Where caps and canopies are as thick as clouds.
Seven chancellors, five ministers,
Along with the powerful clans of the provinces and commanderies,
And the plutocrats of the Five Capitals,
Those selected from the three categories, transferred to seven locations,
Where assigned to make offerings at the mausoleum towns.
This was to strengthen the trunk and weaken the branches,
To exalt the Supreme Capital and show it off to the myriad states.

From Ban Mengjian 班孟堅 (Ban Gu 班固), "Western Capital Rhapsody" (*Xijing fu* 西京賦) in *Wenxuan* 文選 or *Selections from Refined Literature*. Trans. David Knechtges, pp. 107-9.

On vessels and figures for the dead: "He who made the vessels which are so only in imagination knew the principles underlying mourning rites. They were complete to all appearances and yet could not be used. Alas! For if the dead used the vessels of the living, would there not have been a danger of this leading to the interment of the living with the dead? They were called vessels in imagination, the dead being thus treated as spiritual intelligences. From ancient times there have been carriages of clay and figures of straw. Confucius said that the making of straw figures was good and that the making of tomb figures was not benevolent--Was there not a danger of this leading to the use of living men?"

Tangong (xia) 檀弓[下] chapter of *Liji* 禮記 (Ritual Records)

On man's ultimate return to *qi* 氣: “Man is born in the universe between Heaven and Earth, as ice is produced, so to say. The *yangqi* 陽氣 and the *yinqi* 陰氣 crystallize and produce man. When his years are completed and his span of life comes to an end, he dies and reverts to the *qi*.”

Wang Chung 王充 (27-ca. 100 CE), *Lunheng* 論衡 (Critical Essays). Trans. Alfred Forke (1907).

Fired clay as analogous to the human body: “Among the five elements earth alone admits of several transformations. Moistened with water, it can be shaped into a horse and this again can be altered into a human being. But be it noted that it must not yet have been put into a kiln and fired. If, after having been modeled into a utensil, it has already been hardened by firing in the kiln, a new transformation is out of the question. Now, man may be thought of as having been baked and molded in the kiln of Heaven and Earth. How can he still undergo a change after his shape has been fixed?”

Wang Chong, *Lunheng*.