

**Fall 2025 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
It's Magic: Art and the Power of Transformation
Sponsored by the Society for Asian Art**

Mapping as Worldmaking in Early China

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Relevant dates

Eastern Zhou (c. 771-221 BCE)

Spring and Autumn period c. 771-475 BCE

Warring States period c. 475-221 BCE

Qin dynasty 221-206 BCE

Han dynasty 206 BCE-220 CE

Western Han dynasty 206 BCE-9 CE

Xin Interregnum 9-25 CE

Eastern Han dynasty 25-220 CE

Main objects (in order of appearance)

Mausoleum Diagram (兆域圖 Zhaoyu tu), c. 310 BCE, excavated from Zhongshan tomb 1 located in Sanji, Pingshan County, Hebei Province. Bronze with gold and silver inlay, 48 x 96 x 0.7-1.2 cm.

Garrison Diagram (駐軍圖 Zhujun tu), Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), excavated from tomb 3 at Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan Province. Ink and pigment on silk, 98 x 78 cm.

Topography Diagram (地形圖 Dixing tu), Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), excavated from Mawangdui tomb 3. Ink and pigment on silk, 96 x 96 cm.

Suggested Readings

Bray, Francesca, Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Georges Métailié, eds. *Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China: The Warp and the Weft*. Sinica Leidensia 79. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Chapman, Jesse J. *Celestial Signs and Classical Rhetoric in Early Imperial China*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2025.

Edney, Matthew H. *Cartography: The Ideal and Its History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Fu Xinian. *Traditional Chinese Architecture: Twelve Essays*. Edited by Nancy S. Steinhardt. Translated by Alexandra Harrer. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.

- Harley, J. B. and David Woodward, eds. *History of Cartography: Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies*. Volume 2, book 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Hsu, Hsin-Mei Agnes and Anne Martin-Montgomery. "An Emic Perspective on the Mapmaker's Art in Western Han China." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17, no. 4 (October, 2007): 443-457.
- Ingold, Timothy. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
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- Olberding, Garrett. *Designing Boundaries in Early China: The Composition of Sovereign Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.
- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War: A Norton Critical Edition*. Translated and edited by Michael Nylan. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2022.
- Wu, Hung. "The Emergence of Dynastic Time in Chinese Art." A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., 2019. 59 minutes, 25 seconds.
<https://www.nga.gov/stories/videos/end-beginning-chinese-art-and-dynastic-time>
- Wu, Xiaolong. *Material Culture, Power, and Identity in Ancient China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
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- Zhang, Hanmo. "Mapped Territory Floating in the Clouds: A Reinterpretation of the Mawangdui Maps in Their Art and Religious Contexts." *Artibus Asiae* 2 (2016): 147-163.