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Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity? Legendary Heroes in a Late-Eastern Han Tomb

Carved into the supporting slabs that flanked the doorways in the central chamber of a late-Eastern Han stone tomb are images of legendary and mythical sages and heroes. Their attributes, props, and stances would have signaled to the Han-era viewer their identity as Confucian founders of civilization and heroes of moral rectitude: Confucius respectfully listening to Laozi's parting words, Jing Ke 荊軻 chasing the king of Qin 秦王 around the pillar in the famous assassination attempt, Cang Jie 蒼頡 and Shen Nong 神農, the inventors of writing and agriculture at the dawn of history, conversing under a tree.

Representations of these culture-heroes are found in many second-century funerary monuments and scattered stones throughout Shandong 山東 province. Wu Hung and Martin Powers have argued for an important rhetorical function in the images. Wu Hung links their representation at the Wu family shrines to the political ideology of Wu Liang 武梁 himself, a New Text scholar, and Powers to the duplicitous ambitions of the bureaucratic Confucian middle class.[1] Powers relates Shandong-area pictorial style to the discourse of literati officialdom.

My study concerns culture-heros in one such tomb – the Yi'nan tomb discovered in 1954 in Beizhai 北寨 village, Yi'nan 沂南 county, Shandong. (It has been referred to as Yi'nan M1 since 1994, when a second Yi'nan tomb was discovered; below, I refer to it for convenience simply as "Yi'nan" or "Yi'nan tomb".) According to Powers, Yi'nan is placed among others of its type within the Confucian "classical" tradition of tomb art and appurtenances, which is set in opposition to the more opulent "descriptive" tradition of the competing merchant-eunuch *nouveaux riches*.[2] However, this

[1] Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1989); Martin Powers, *Art and Political Expression in Early China* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1991).

[2] Eugene Yuejin Wang has further refined the notion of the rhetorical function of Han pictorial art by looking at narrative figures on mirrors and wall-carvings, characterizing the Yi'nan figures as "locked in a dialogic stance" and "rhetorical in terms of both narrative and

dialectic omits another important social group: the increasingly disgruntled local populace who were the constituency of the provincial elite. Furthermore, the mortuary context might have also conjured up in the mind of the mourner (viewer), local tall tales about these figures, who in the popular imagination served as protectors of both the living and the dead.

The Yi'nan tomb was built after the mid-150s, when the Shandong region was subject to political upheavals and rebellions by the poor peasantry against prosperous, and often corrupt, officials and landowners. During this period of growing social tension, the local elite may have attempted to express sympathy with the common people by participating in local religious activities of deity worship and other cult practices. Incorporating cult imagery into the pictorial programs of their funerary monuments was an ideal way for the local elite to cultivate support amongst a semi-literate to illiterate population. In the case of pictorial representations in funerary monuments, a single image may have been viewed differently depending on the viewer's status and education.

This multivalence is especially evident in the representations of culture-heroes in the central chamber of Yi'nan, where, flanking the doorways, are images of legendary and mythical sages and heroes (their placements are schematized in figure 1).[3] In these quintessentially "Confucian" subjects it is possible to discern a decidedly non-Confucian discourse. Although textual sources identify many of the figures in the context of Confucian moral exemplars and actions, nevertheless, their mode of representation and placement in the central chamber evokes powers of supernatural protection associated with local cults. It is in the representations of these culture-heroes that the dual role of a member of the provincial elite becomes clearer and more nuanced. That patron and/or designer of the images may be seen as both disseminating the ideology of the state (in many cases stopping or destroying such cults) and, as occurred increasingly towards the end of the Eastern Han, accommodating or coopting them.

style"; Eugene Wang, "Mirror, Death and Rhetoric: Reading Later Han Chinese Bronze Artifacts" *Art Bulletin* 76.3 (1994), p. 526.

[3] The tomb at Yi'nan was first published in Zeng Zhaoyu 曾昭燏, Jiang Baogeng 蔣寶庚, Li Zhongyi 黎忠義, *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu fajue baogao* 沂南古畫像石墓發掘報告 (Shanghai: Wenhua guanli, 1956). A reexamination of the pictorial narrative of this tomb is undertaken in my dissertation; Lydia Thompson, "The Yi'nan Tomb: Narrative and Ritual in Pictorial Art of the Eastern Han (25–220 C.E.)" (Ph.D. diss., New York U., 1998).

THE DATE AND STATUS OF THE YI'NAN OCCUPANTS

The initial publication of the Yi'nan tomb report in 1956 stimulated a flurry of articles concerning its date. The authors of the excavation report, titled *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu fajue baogao* 沂南古畫像石墓發掘報告, argued for the period encompassing the end of the reign of Lingdi 靈帝 (r. 168–189 AD) through the beginning of the reign of Xiandi 獻帝 (r. 189–220 AD).[4] Other scholars, both on the mainland and in the United States, have argued that the tomb should be dated to the succeeding Wei-W. Jin 魏晉 period (220–316 AD). They approached the problem from a variety of angles, taking into account the tomb's construction and layout, carving techniques, conventions of pictorial representation in the wall reliefs, calligraphy, and historical circumstances.[5] Even so, using similar methods they arrived at varied conclusions.

In the more than forty years since the initial excavation of the tomb at Yi'nan, many more Han-period tombs and shrines, some with dated inscriptions, have come to light. This allows a reexamination of the Yi'nan tomb's date by comparing the tomb's structure with that of other dated tombs.[6] Other data brought to bear on the question are dated pictorial stones and burial objects, such as those found in a second tomb (M2) found at Beizhai village in the summer of 1994.[7] The similarity of layout and size suggest that the two tombs at Beizhai (M1 – the Yi'nan tomb – and M2) were contemporaneous. Some eighty examples of burial objects and currency found in tomb M2 further reinforce a late-Eastern Han date.

We should furthermore consider the local history of southeast Shandong province at that time. In the mid-180s the political situation of Langya principality 瑯琊國, in which Yi'nan was located administratively, suggests that the construction of an elaborate stone tomb would have been unlikely,

[4] Zeng et al., *Yi'nan*, pp. 52–67. Li Zhongyi reexamined the question by citing recent excavations in the Shandong-Jiangsu region and bolstering his argument for a late-2d c. date for tomb M1; Li Zhongyi, "Ye tan Yi'nan huaxiangshi mu de niandai jiqi huaxiang yishu" 也談沂南畫象石墓的年代及其畫象藝術, *Nanjing bowuyuan jikan: Jian yuan wushi zhounian lunwen zhuan hao* 南京博物院集刊建院五十周年論文專號 6 (1983), pp. 178–80.

[5] An Zhimin 安志敏, "Lun Yi'nan huaxiangshi mu de niandai wenti" 論沂南畫象石墓的年代問題, *Kaogu tongxun* 考古通訊 2 (1955), pp. 16–22; Li Wenxin 李文信, "Yi'nan huaxiangshi gumu niandai de guanjian" 沂南畫象石古墓年代的管見, *Kaogu tongxun* 6 (1957), pp. 67–76; Hsio-yen Shih, "I-nan and Related Tombs," *Artibus Asiae* 22.4 (1959), pp. 277–312.

[6] For detailed analysis, see Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," pp. 34–103.

[7] Wu Wenqi 吳文祺 and Zhao Wenjun 趙文俊, "Yi'nan Beizhai Han mu" 沂南北寨漢墓, in Wang Rutao 王汝濤, Xue Ningdong 薛寧東, Chen Yuxia 陳玉霞, and Li Zungang 李尊剛, eds., *Jin qiu Yangdou lun Zhuge, quan guo di ba ci Zhuge Liang yanlun hui lunwen xuan* 金秋陽都論諸葛全國第八次諸葛亮研論會論文選 (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1995), p. 326.

especially since that year hundreds of thousands of followers of Zhang Jue 張角, known as Yellow Turbans, staged an empire-wide rebellion to overthrow the Han dynasty. Langya was also one of the important centers of the Taipingdao 太平道 movement, another inspirational religious force behind the insurrection. Since it was a principality, Langya would have been governed by a close relative of the imperial Liu family. The Yellow Turbans "were especially hostile to those branches of the imperial family ruling the provincial principalities," and several were exterminated by the rebels.[8] Apparently, the prince of Langya was among those killed. According to a list of Langya princes given in *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, the last prince was Shunwang Rong 順王容, who governed from 176 to184 and died in the year of the rebellion. The same year, Langya ceased to exist as a political entity.[9] After 184, the Han court lost almost all control over the provincial areas, and even after the defeat of Zhang Jue, the Yellow Turbans continued to cause trouble in the Shandong and northern Jiangsu areas. It was not until 192 AD that Cao Cao 曹操 suppressed them once and for all.[10]

Scholars have approached the problem of social status in different ways. The earliest attempt was made by the authors of the excavation report, who argued that the imagery referred to the status of the deceased and to key events during his lifetime: for example, the so-called "Battle at the Bridge" scene, located over theYi'nan entrance, depicting armed conflict between Han and non-Han soldiers. This was cited as evidence that the occupant had likely been a military official.[11] Following upon this line of thinking, the ritual scenes of homage and gift-giving depicted on the horizontal lintels of the front chamber, and the chariot procession and entertainment scene in the middle chamber, were all interpreted as signifiers of high status. Zeng Zhaoyu 曾昭燏 argued this in only general terms, without attempting to pinpoint the office held or the exact identity, observing: "Taken together these four sections record the lavish mourning and great status and achievements of the deceased in his former life..."[12] However, the

[8] Ch'en Chi-yun, *Hsun Yüeh (A.D. 148–209): The Life and Reflection of an Early Medieval Confucian* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1975), p. 37

[9] *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965) 42, p. 1452.

[10] Sun Zuomin 孫作民, *Shandong tongshi* 山東通史 (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1992), p. 133.

[11] Zeng et al., *Yi'nan*, p. 30.

[12] Ibid., p. 31. Alexander Soper, writing some twenty years later, also invoked the imagery in the tomb as evidence of the deceased's status; thus the battle at the bridge over the entrance represented a key event in his life, and acted as evidence that he must have been a military commander against western non-Han people. However, Soper goes even further than Zeng, linking the tomb to the Wangs, a prominent clan in the Langya area from the end

theory that the Battle at the Bridge may be used as an indication of the deceased's role as a military commander has been largely discredited because of the number of similar scenes excavated in the Linyi 臨沂 area surrounding the Yi'nan tomb. This suggests that the Battle at the Bridge was a stock scene produced by workshops in this period.[13]

More recently, mainland Chinese scholars have attempted to pinpoint the status of tomb occupants by analyzing the representations of chariot processions that are often found in Eastern Han tombs. The "Treatise on Carriages and Robes" ("Yu fu zhi" 輿服志) in *Hou Han shu* provides a detailed discussion of the number and types of chariots used in processions of officials of different ranks,[14] and indicates that the chariot procession at Yi'nan was appropriate to an official of the rank of 2,000 *shi* 石.[15] This is supported by representations of chariot processions in other tombs of known officials of the same rank, for example as at Dongjiazhuang 董家莊, Anqiu 安丘 county, Shandong, where the commandery inspector (*cishi* 刺史), Sun Song 孫嵩, is believed to be buried.[16] Other 2,000-*shi* officials were governors of commanderies and principalities. Although this method for determining the tomb occupants' status is suggestive, it is not in itself sufficient to prove rank in a previous life. Representations of chariot processions associated with high rank may be wishful thinking on the part of the family of the deceased for his achievement of high office in the afterlife.[17] Inscriptions found in tombs and on bronze mirrors often express the wish that the

of the Han to the beginning of the Tang period. Assuming that the tomb was built just after the Han, he suggested that it belonged to either Wang Yi 王乂 or Wang Hun 王渾, both of whom led campaigns against non-Han in the west as part of their official duties. See Alexander Soper, "The Purpose and Date of the Hsiao-t'ang-shan Offering Shrines: A Modest Proposal," *Artibus Asiae* 36.4 (1974), pp. 249–66.

[13] Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," chap. 4, discusses this issue.

[14] Zhao Huacheng 趙化成, "Han hua suo jian Han dai cheming kaobian" 漢畫所見漢代車名考辨, *WW* 3 (1989), p. 80.

[15] During the Han, official ranks were described in units of grain-measurement that were roughly equivalent to half a bushel, called *shi* 石 (also read as *dan*). The ranking system ranged from 10,000 *shi* for the central administration's highest-level officials, the Three Excellencies (*sangong* 三公) and the grand tutor (*taifu* 太傅), to the next level at 2,000 *shi*, which included the court's Nine Ministers (*jiu qing* 九卿) and the grand administrators (*taishou* 太守) and chancellors (*xiang* 相) who served as local officials of the commanderies and principalities. At the lowest, 100-*shi*, level were ladies-in-waiting and local clerks. See Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1980), and Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, *Han Social Structure* (Seattle: U. of Washington P., 1972), p. 84.

[16] Zheng Yan 鄭岩, *Anqiu Dongjiazhuang Han huaxiangshi mu* 安丘董家莊漢畫像石墓 (Jinan: Jinan chubanshe, 1992), pp. 30–35.

[17] Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, "Go-Kan jidai no shaba gyōretsu" 後漢時代の車馬行列, *THGH* 37 (1966), pp. 183–226.

deceased achieve high office in the afterlife.[18]

Otherwise, scholarship has attempted to link tomb structure and layout to social groups. Martin Powers argues that the two most prevalent tomb structures of the late-Eastern Han period reflect the interests and tastes of conflicting political groups in the second half of the second century AD. The vaulted tombs built of regular sized brick or stones were commissioned by the eunuch *nouveaux riches*, while tombs like Yi'nan, which were conceived of as modular units with stone slabs organized into a post-and-lintel system and cantilevered ceilings, were sponsored by provincial officials.[19]

Chai Zhongqing 柴中慶, Yamashita Shihō 山下志保, and Li Yinde 李銀得 in separate articles have argued that most tombs of stone-slab construction (usually decorated with relief carvings) can be linked to provincial officials, primarily at the level of grand administrator (*taishou* 太守) of a commandery or district head (*zhangshi* 長史), and ranked at 2,000 and 600 *shi* 石, respectively.[20] This ranking corresponds with Powers' argument that stone-slab tombs were purchased by middle level officials.

All of these scholars seek to discover aspects of tomb design that can be used as diagnostic features for determining the tomb-occupant's status. However, the criteria of their surveys differ from one to the other in the manner of organization and use of data.[21] In my own studies, I have undertaken a survey of tomb design and patronage, and have compiled a typology of tombs where inscriptions identifying the rank of the occupant have been found, where textual evidence strongly indicates the identity of an occupant, or where burial objects, such as jade shrouds (markers of nobility) remain.[22] I have also considered such factors as the region where the tomb was excavated (and proximity to the capital) and economic factors like clan wealth and power, and evidence of land ownership. My diagnostic features include tomb structure, material, scale, and the absence or presence of pictorial imagery. Using these tombs as a standard, I argue here that the male and female tomb occupants at Yi'nan were the members of a clan of considerable local importance and that if the male occupant held office it would have likely been at the rank of 2,000 *shi*, in keeping with the governor of a commandery or, since Langya was a principality, a governing chancellor.[23]

[18] An inscription found on the front of a shrine in Anhui province says that the sons and grandsons were responsible for erecting the stone tomb, that it was hoped that, in heaven, men and horses would eat from the Great Granary, that he would wear the colors red and gold around his waist (achieve high office), that gifts provided for him would be of gold and silver and inexhaustible, etc.; Wang Buyi 王步毅, "Zhulan Han huaxiangshi ji you guan wuxiang de renshi" 楮蘭漢畫像石及有關物像的認識, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 3 (1991), p. 64.

[19] Powers argues further that the subject matter and style of the carvings in the vaulted tombs advertised the wealth and power of the *nouveau riche*. In contrast, the "classical" subject matter, technique and carving style found in the tombs and shrines of the scholar-bureaucrats were intended to display Confucian values of frugality, restraint and upright behavior as a kind of high-minded aesthetic response to such ostentation; *Art and Political Expression*, pp. 31–72.

[20] Chai Zhongqing 柴中慶, "Nanyang Han huaxiangshi mu muzhu ren shenfen chutan" 南陽漢畫象石墓墓主人身分初探, in Nanyang Handai huaxiangshi xueshu taolunhui bangong shi 南陽漢代畫象石學術討論會辦公室, eds., *Han dai huaxiangshi yanjiu* 漢代畫象石研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987); Yamashita Shihō 山下志保, "Huaxiangshi mu yu Dong Han shidai de shehui" 畫象石墓与東漢時代的社會, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 4 (1993), pp. 79–88; Li Yinde, "Xuzhou Han huaxiangshi mu muzhu shenfen kao" 徐洲 漢畫像石墓墓主身分考, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 2 (1993), pp. 36–39. The evidence presented in these articles suggests this to be the case in several regions throughout China including Nanyang in southern Henan (Chai's article), Xuzhou in northern Jiangsu (Li's), and Shaanxi (Yamashita's), Shanxi, and Zhejiang. For an analysis of the arguments, see Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," pp. 108–11.

[21] Chai and Yamashita (see previous n.) focused primarily on tombs whose occupants were probably provincial governors and district heads. Li Yinde (see n., above) undertook a broader survey of tomb structure and rank, dividing his data into four groups: nobles, officials ranked at 2,000 *shi* and below, merchants and rich families, and the common people. He has concluded that 2,000-*shi* officials and below made use of wall carvings in their tombs, while the tombs of the nobles, merchants and common people generally did not.

[22] According to *Hou Han shu*, only kings, princes, and first generation nobles such as dukes and marquises were presented with silver-threaded jade shrouds. Lords with inherited titles, wives of enfeoffed marquises and dukes, sisters of princes, etc. were given copper threaded jade shrouds. Archeological evidence has borne this out; Lu Zhaoyin 盧兆蔭, "Zai lun liang Han de yuyi" 再論兩漢的玉衣, *WW* 10 (1989), pp. 60–67. See also Wang Zhongshu, *Han Civilization* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1982), p. 182.

[23] For a full treatment of my methods and findings, see Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb."

LATE-EASTERN HAN MORTUARY ART AND SOCIAL HISTORY

As a member of the local elite of Langya principality who lived at the end of the Eastern Han period, the male occupant of the Yi'nan tomb would have been identified with the *shi* 士, a term that denoted in general the scholar-official bureaucrats responsible for the day-to-day administration of the state.[24] However, this is not to say the occupant of the Yi'nan tomb necessarily held office. As Patricia Ebrey has argued, the "*shi* was a class with fluid borders...," which included not only active officials but also retired worthies (like Wu Liang), intellectuals, and local magnates.[25] More recently, Christopher Leigh Connery has proposed that *shi* is a discursive

[24] On this group, see Christopher Leigh Connery, *The Empire of the Text: Writing and Authority in Early Imperial China* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), pp. 79–109.

[25] See Patricia Ebrey, "Toward a Better Understanding of the Later Han Upper Class," in Albert Dien, ed., *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1990), pp. 58–63.

category closely identified with the textual sphere. He defines this group in "sociotextual" terms: the readers, writers and circulators of texts. The *shi* were instrumental in expanding textual authority in the Han period. Moreover, he writes that the production of texts by the *shi* was the primary medium through which their identity was constructed.[26]

Martin Powers' and Wu Hung's studies of Shandong-area relief carvings fit easily into Connery's view that the identity and self-representation of the *shi* are bound up with textual culture and directed towards other members of this elite. Wu Hung argues that the pictorial program of the Wu Liang shrine is organized according to the narrative conventions of such Han-era historical texts as *Shiji* 史記. Powers has argued that the organization of scenes into registers at such monuments as Wulaowa 五老洼, the Wu family shrines, and the Yi'nan tomb was a rhetorical device, allowing for the juxtapositions of scenes from history and legend so that comparisons between the morals of the stories could be made and cause-and-effect relationships be perceived by the viewer. He also argues that the two-dimensionality and clear contours of the classical style seen in Shandong-area carvings (namely, Jiaxiang 嘉祥) enhance legibility, a quality commensurate with the rhetorical function of these monuments.[27] In these studies, the imagery from funerary monuments is interpreted in terms of the discourse of the educated Han elite. The patrons are represented as presenting themselves as staunch defenders of the Confucian ethos against the extravagance of eunuch courtiers (and corruption at court) and the superstitious beliefs of the local populace. In linking the pictorial representations of these monuments to Han historiographic texts, the portrait of the elite as eschewing religious concerns in deference to secular Confucian ideology is reinforced.

While there is plenty of imagery in Shandong-area Eastern Han funerary monuments that can be related to the secular values of the *ru* 儒 (scholars and ritualists in general), there is much that falls outside of it. In the Shandong region, the corpus of Eastern Han bas-reliefs also includes imagery related to the supernatural: shamans, demon quellers, fertility gods, immortals and various other icons of popular cults. The decorative programs of intact tombs dating to the late Eastern Han, such as the ones at Yi'nan and Anqiu, are a hodge-podge of official ideology and unofficial religious beliefs. How does one reconcile the sophisticated, politically savvy image of the patrons and their audience with the fantastic imagery associated with folklore? As Mu-chou Poo has recently pointed out, members of the educated elite, in many cases, supported and participated in local religious activities – activities that may have fallen outside of state sanctioned religion. It is in the archeological evidence, burial objects, and pictorial imagery decorating the tombs and shrines of the elite that one can detect what Poo has called a "religion of personal welfare," that is, deity worship and mantic techniques to ensure good outcomes in life. This contrasts to the official religion of cosmology and moral prescriptions associated with Confucianism and set forth in the standard histories and Confucian tracts.[28]

Reinforcing Poo's point that members of the Confucian elite often shared or participated in the religious beliefs and activities of the community at large is the imagery of demon quellers, exorcists, fertility gods and other local icons so often found on the walls of their funerary monuments.[29] The combination of "religious" imagery with that associated with Confucian ideology can also be explained by the heterogeneous viewership of these monuments, which consisted of not only the educated social and political elite but also the illiterate to semi-literate local populace. As early as the first century AD, it appears that members of the *shi* not only catered to but even contributed to the superstitions and tall tales that circulated amongst the general public.

In *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Discourses Weighed in the Balance*), Wang Chong 王充 (27–97 AD) writes:

> It is the nature of the general public 世俗 to like strange and marvelous tales and fantastic literature. Why? Because facts do not satisfy the imagination and embellished language are stimulating and moving. Therefore scholars 士 of talent and glib essayists exaggerate and embellish the facts with lush, beautiful language. Writers create empty writings, transmitting the fantastic. Those who hear these things consider them real and tirelessly repeat them; those who read them take them as facts and continuously transmit them until they are recorded in books of bamboo or silk. Being

[26] Connery, *Empire of the Text*, pp. 98–103.

[27] Powers, *Art and Political Expression*, pp. 371–77.

[28] Mu-chou Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998).

[29] In the Yi'nan tomb itself such imagery abounds: on the upright pediments in the front chamber, the brackets and pillars, and in the front and central chambers, and in the rear chamber. Perhaps the most prominent example is the horizontal lintel on the threshold to the central chamber, which depicts a demon queller in twelve different poses brandishing weapons. I have interpreted this scene as ritual purging by an exorcist/shaman; Thompson, "Yi'nan tomb," pp. 199–211.

further repeated, these mistakes are even heard by the worthies. It may even be that the emperor 南面 takes such a man as a teacher and spreads his falsehoods, and that the officials and nobility all read such books.[30]

Causing Wang Chong especial dismay is that some of the *shi* used their scholarly talents to transmit heterodox tall tales up the social ladder. In the Yi'nan tomb we see a kind of pictorial equivalent of this transmission.

Funerary monuments and their representations, as part of the clan graveyard, stood at the intersection of Eastern Han society – a shared cultural space where members of the local community would gather not just during the funeral but on an ongoing basis for ancestral sacrifice. The amount of money spent on funerary monuments (often recorded on stelae), the subject matter, and the degree of ostentation or restraint were the subjects of public discussion. The funerals of such officials were highly public events, likely attended by both members of the classically educated officialdom and the marginally literate, on one hand, and the illiterate local populace, on the other. A passage in *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 indicates that the elite who hosted funerals felt compelled to entertain the locals, even to the point of undermining the solemnity of the occasion: "Nowadays when the common people attend a funeral they expect to have wine and meat. If they stay at the home of those in mourning, they demand to have song and dance and entertainment, and will laugh incessantly at acrobats and actors."[31]

This description of the funeral of an elite suggests that the common people were indeed a group to be catered to. Even further, it indicates that one of the functions of the local elite was, in Christopher Connery's words, to "hold in tension the imperial on the one hand and the familial, communitarian, regional, and local on the other."[32] Whereas Connery sees this tension played out in the textual domain, I see it refracted in the visual, specifically in the imagery found in the local elite's funerary monuments. It is here that we get an alternative view of the *shi*'s educated and upright persona constructed for the appreciation of other members of this elite. In funerary monuments of the late Eastern Han, the imagery increasingly seems

[30] Huang Hui 黃暉, annot., *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋 (1938; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990) 29 ("Dui zuo 對作"), p. 1179; all translations of *Lunheng* are based on Alfred Forke, *Lun Heng* (New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962) 1, p. 1. Powers argues that the term *shisu* refers to a "large more mixed group comprised of literate individuals of varying levels of education"; Powers, *Art and Political Expression*, p. 96.

[31] Huan Kuan 桓寬 (1st c. BC), *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (Han Wei congshu edn.) 7 ("San buzu 散不足"), p. 13a; trans. Martin Powers, "Pictorial Art and Its Public in Early Imperial China," *Art History* 7.2 (1984), p. 144.

[32] Connery, *Empire of the Text*, p. 107.

directed towards the local, semi-literate to illiterate constituency.

By the end of the second century, the political power of the Han ruling house and the court was challenged by the growing concentration of wealth and strategic alliances among the elite of the outlying areas.[33] Moreover, by that time government corruption at both the central and provincial levels and the concentration of land in the hands of wealthy families had led to tensions between provincial authorities and the local populace. Rebellions periodically flared up in the Shandong region. In 154, Gongsun Ju 公孫舉 led a peasant uprising some 30,000 strong in an area that included Taishan 太山 commandery and Langya principality. Many local officials were killed, and imperial forces were sent to the area to put down the rebellion in 156. Four years later, in 160, another rebellion arose, led by Langya native Lao Bing 勞肉, and one in Taishan by Shusun Wuji 叔孫無忌. The two movements united to stage another rebellion in the area of Ju 莒, a neighboring prefecture of Yi'nan.[34] Once again imperial troops intervened to quell the unrest.

As mentioned, above, Langya was an active focus of Taipingdao activity, which fed at least indirectly into the empire-wide Yellow Turban rebellion of 184.[35] Led by Daoist master Zhang Jue, its adherents lived by the slogan that "azure heaven" had already perished and that "yellow heaven" was about to be established in its place – a signal of a coming new reign. Zhang and his brothers Zhang Liang 張良 and Zhang Bao 張寶 built a community structure, organizing their followers into thirty-six districts, each nominally consisting of 10,000 followers, all led by ritual adepts. Ominous signs of political change circulated widely, one of which forecasted an apocalypse to occcur in the *jiazi* 甲子 year of the Han calendar (namely, 184 AD),[36] and the Yellow Turbans accorded with this date to stage their uprising.

The Taiping movement was particularly strong in the southern Shandong area. This may have been due in part to the fact that Zhang's teachings were based upon a writing known as "Taiping qingling shu" 太平清領書 ("The Book of Great Peace and Pure Guidance") that was said to have been compiled and sponsored by natives of Langya. One of the best known

[33] Lavish tombs after the middle of the Eastern Han in areas far outside of the capital probably indicate this devolution of wealth and power; Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," pp. 112–16.

[34] Sun Wei 孫瑋 and Wang Ruigong 王瑞功, *Yimeng jianshi* 沂蒙簡史 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1988), pp. 115–16. See also *Hou Han shu* 65, p. 2132.

[35] Howard Levy has pointed out that a series of natural disasters, epidemics and famines in the 170s and early 180s were contributing factors to the wide-spread participation of the peasantry; "Yellow Turban Religion and Rebellion at the End of Han," *JAOS* 76 (1956), p. 219.

[36] *Hou Han shu* 71, p. 2299.

of these was Xiang Kai 襄楷 who, in a memorial to emperor Huan, promoted a certain "Taipingjing" 太平經 as a useful guide for governance. Barbara Kandel's study of the origin and transmission of *Taiping jing* has traced it to the Western Han, and finds that the majority of such works were from Langya.[37] Although the text has been lost, the biography of Xiang Kai given in *Hou Han shu* includes some of the main tenets:

> ... [I]n the time of Emperor Shun, Kung Ch'ung [Gong Chong] 宮崇 of Lang-yeh [Langye, or Langya] had come to the palace and had presented a sacred book in a hundred and seventy chapters, which his master, Kan Chi [Gan Ji] 干吉, had obtained by the waters of the Ch'ü-yang [Quyang] spring 曲楊泉. It was all [written on] pale green silk, with vermilion borders, dark green heading and vermilion titles. It was called "The Book of Great Peace and Pure Guidance." The text dealt mainly with the Yin-yang and Five Elements School, and it had a number of sayings from witches and shamans... 其言以陰陽五行為家, 而多巫覡雜語. Later, Chang Chüeh [Zhang Jue] had some of the text of its teachings.[38]

In addition to prescriptions of how to live according to the metaphysical ideas of *wuxing* and *yinyang*, it also included methods for the practice of medicine and magic, such as achieving longevity or immortality, traditions long associated with the culture of the eastern coastal regions.[39] Along with the inclusion of local traditions in Taiping ideology came recent alien influences such as Buddhism, which is reflected in some of the language and lessons used by Xiang Kai in his memorials to emperor Huan. Furthermore, hagiographies of Yu Ji (Gan Ji) in third- and fourth-century texts describe him as having participated in Buddhist practices: "At that time the Daoist (*daoshi* 道士) Yu Ji from Langya who had formerly lived in the East came to Wuhui where he built a hut for concentration, burnt incense, recited Daoist and Buddhist texts and cured diseases through water mixed with the ashes from burnt talismans..."[40]

The Yellow Turban rebellion has been characterized as a popular uprising of destitute and disenfranchised peasants against the wealthy and powerful local elite.[41] However, Ch'en Ch'i-yun and others have suggested that the local elite of Shandong and elsewhere may have encouraged and even collaborated in the rebellion for their own political purposes.[42] Twenty years before the Yellow Turban rebellion, that is, in 164, a struggle for power took place between the court eunuchs and court high officials. Precipitating the violent struggle was a development among the educated elite in which their discourse (conversations and written opinions) became pointedly critical of various state practices and court personages, especially the eunuchs. This became known in subsequent literature as "*qingyi* 清議," or "Pure Criticism," activism. which criticized the growing influence and corruption of the eunuchs at court. Xiang Kai's memorial occurred in 166, and is also regarded as having been anti-eunuch and related to the "Pure Criticism" faction.[43] The same year, in response to these activists, the eunuchs manipulated the court into cashiering and harrassing (sometimes mortally) its leaders (who became known as the victims of "*danggu* 黨錮," that is, of the court's "reprisals against the factions".) The reprisals aimed at purging various high-ranked scholar-officials at court, and resulted in the murder or imprisonment of thousands. Many of those who escaped went back to their provincial home areas. Linking the "Pure Criticism" and Taipingdao movements, Ch'en Ch'i-yun has argued that once back in the provinces, these former high officials formed alliances with the leadership of the nascent Yellow Turbans as a means to undermine the court eunuchs, "bringing together not only the scholar-officials (nominally the Confucians) and the local magnates but also reaching out to the local multitude (the latter two were often considered to be local Taoist supporters)."[44]

Memorials by court officials to the emperor dated to 184 AD, as recorded in *Hou Han shu*, indicate an awareness by court officials that *danggu* sufferers were collaborating. Court advisors like Lü Qiang 呂彊 argued to the emperor that *danggu* reprisals must be halted if the rebellion was to be put down. He warned that the people were full of resentment and that if the oppressed were not pardoned they would conspire with Zhang Jue,

[37] Barbara Kandel, *The Taiping jing: The Origin and Transmission of the Scripture on General Welfare: The History of the Unofficial Text* (Hamburg: Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Natur- und Volkerkunde Ostasiens, 1979), pp. 9–18.

[38] *Hou Han shu* 30, p. 1084; trans. Rafe de Crespigny, *Portents of Protest in the Later Han Dynasty: The Memorials of Hsiang K'ai to Emperor Huan*, Oriental Monograph Series 19 (Canberra: Australian National U.P., 1976), p. 31.

[39] V. C. Y. Shih, "Some Chinese Rebel Ideologies," *TP* 44 (1956), p. 163.

[40] Kandel, *Taiping jing*, pp. 35–36. According to traditional Daoist hagiographies Yu Ji 干吉, an adept from Langya, was considered the true transmitter of the *Taiping qingling shu*; ibid., pp. 9–18.

[41] Levy, "Yellow Turban Rebellion," p. 219.

[42] Ch'en Ch'i-yün, "Who Were the Yellow Turbans: A Revisionist View," *Cina* 21 (30th European Conference of Chinese Studies, Aug. 31–Sept. 6, 1986), pp. 57–68. See also, Rolf Stein, "Remarques sur les mouvements du Taoisme politico-religieux au IIe siecle AP. J.-C.," *TP* 50.7 (1963), pp. 14–15. For further discussion, see Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," pp. 144–51.

[43] Kandel, *Taiping jing*, pp. 27–29.

[44] Ch'en, *Hsun Yueh*, p. 59.

causing even greater unrest..." 呂彊言於帝曰：黨錮久積，人情多怨，若久不赦宥，輕[清]與張角合謀，為變滋大，悔之無救.[45]

The growing tensions between regional powers and the court, and, at the same time, between the provincial elite and the local populace in the second half of the second century would have compelled local leaders like the occupant of the Yi'nan tomb to negotiate positions amongst competing forces. As a member of the *shi* class and possibly a local representative of state authority, it was necessary to display one's support of Confucian ideology. On the other hand, as the member of a prominent Langya family, it was important to express sympathy with the local populace. In the Yi'nan tomb, it seems the occupant (who may also have been patron, and/or designer) tried to play it both ways by including Confucian heroes in the tomb but by organizing and representing them in a way that evokes a supernatural aura associated with their local cult status.[46] This suggests an alternative source for the imagery – a popular oral one. In the following, I argue that the representational mode of the legendary heroes and their placement in the tomb differ significantly from that at the Wu Liang shrine, revealing a different ideological strategy, one more oriented towards winning the support of the common people.

A COMPARISON OF THE WU LIANG SHRINE WITH THE YI'NAN TOMB

The Wu Liang shrine is located about 200 kilometers west of the Yi'nan tomb, in Jiaxiang county (the capital of Lu principality 魯國 during the Eastern Han period), and just outside of Confucius' hometown of Qufu 曲阜. It was constructed around 151 AD, the year of Wu Liang's death, during the reign of Huandi 桓帝 in a period of relative calm before the eunuch purges of court officials and the chaos of rebellion.[47] In the shrine, scenes from history are arranged chronologically and include moral exemplars from earliest civilization to more recent tales of exemplars and villains. It is also arranged linearly in space, read from right to left, and across the registers of the shrine (figure 2). At Yi'nan, this chronological and linear framework is replaced by one in which the protagonists are framed in stacked

[45] *Hou Han shu* 67, p. 2189.

[46] The identity of the designer/author of Han funerary monuments is a complicated question. It seems likely that the design was a collaborative effort involving the deceased, his family, friends, colleagues, builders and, perhaps, a ritual specialist. For further discussion, see Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," pp. 153–54.

[47] For a discussion of date, see Wu, *Wu Liang Shrine*, pp. 24–30.

registers, located on either side of doorways (figures 1, and 3–6). The Wu-family shrines contain mostly tales from history that are represented as full-fledged scenes, assisted by the trappings of architecture and supporting characters. At Yi'nan, on the other hand, chief protagonists are by and large paired, with the emphasis more on the individual players in a historical drama. In some cases, the pairing appears to be dictated by type and historico-mythical time period. For example, Cang Jie and Shen Nong are paired because of their roles as mythical sages who originated the practices of writing and agriculture (figure 3, top register). In the register below are two of the five ancient emperors (*wudi* 五帝), Huangdi 黃帝 and Zhuan Xu 顓頊, revered for their wise rulership and for bringing order and civilization to a previously chaotic world.[48]

In other cases figures are paired because they are the chief protagonists in a story, as in the case of the assassination attempt on the king of Qin by Jing Ke (figure 4, bottom). On two of the supporting slabs, three of the registers may be identified as scenes from the tale of the Hongmen Banquet 鴻門宴, which concerns the scheming of the partisans of Liu Bang 劉邦 and his adversary, Xiang Yu 項羽, in their struggle to establish the next dynasty. The bottom register of wall-section 44 appears to be a representation of Fan Kuai 樊噲, a partisan of Liu Bang, confronting a sentry outside the banquet (figures 5 [lower] and 6).[49] The top register of section 45 portrays Xiang Zhuang 項莊 and Xiang Bo 項伯 performing the sword dance at the banquet. The bottom register depicts Fan Zeng 范增, a partisan of Xiang Yu, in a rage smashing Zhang Liang's 張良 gift to him after having been foiled in his attempt to assassinate Liu Bang. In still other cases, historical heroes, antiheroes, and martyrs excerpted from different tales are paired together.

In the top register of figure 5, inscriptions identify the figures as Lin Xiangru 藺相如 on the left and Meng Ben 孟奔 on the right. Taking the inscriptions at face value, these two characters belong to different stories

[48] In Han pictorial carvings, including those at Yi'nan, the imperial status of these figures was conveyed by appropriate headdress and gowns. The head-gear of these figures appear to have been based on the regulations of caps and clothing as recorded in *Hou Han shu*, in which the imperial crown was described as flat with ornaments hanging from the brim; Wu, *Wu Liang Shrine*, pp. 158–59.

[49] One of the key motifs in this pivotal confrontation in the Hongmen Banquet tale, as described in *Shiji* ("Basic Annals of Xiang Yu"), is Fan Kuai's shield, which he uses to knock the guards aside. In the Yi'nan representation, a shield is placed prominently between the two actors. Moreover, a cartouche inscribed with the words *tiedun* 鐵盾 ("iron shield") placed next to the shield further highlights it as a signifier of this scene; Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992) 7, p. 313.

set in different times. The tale of Lin Xiangru is recorded in chapter five of the *Shiji* and was set during the reign of Qin Zhaowang 秦昭王. Meng Ben, a hero of the state of Qi 齊國known for courage and strength, is mentioned in the text of *Mengzi* and was said to have lived during the reign of Qin Wuwang 秦武王.[50] However, an examination of the right-hand figure indicates that the inscription is incorrect. A closer look at the props, which include a tall stand with two round objects and the grasping gesture of the right-hand figure calls to mind a famous tale that is represented over and over in Western and Eastern Han tombs – the "Two Peaches Kill Three Warriors" story, related in *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋. Illustrated here is an example from Songshan 宋山 in Jiaxiang county (figure 7). The right-most figure in the third row is depicted in a posture similar to that in the scene at Yi'nan: he holds a sword in his left hand as he grasps at the peaches with his right. In both scenes, the warriors' sleeves billow out, conveying their vigorous energy.[51] The protagonists are three extraordinarily brave warriors who referred to themselves as the "three warriors of the state of Qi." The prime minister of Qi, Yanzi, felt slighted by the braves and devised a plot to destroy them. At a banquet he played them off against each other by advising duke Jing of Qi to present two peaches to the two warriors who could best prove their merit. Turning amongst themselves, each slit his own throat from anger and humiliation. As Jonathan Chaves has pointed out, a Han-era *yuefu* 樂府 poem, "The Song of Mount Liangfu" 梁甫吟, indicates that these well-known warriors were lamented during this time period as having suffered an unjust death because of the politically jealous prime minister:

> Walking out of the gates of Ch'i city,
> In the distance I see the hamlet of T'ang-yin.
> In the hamlet are three graves,
> Piled up and each alike.
> I ask whose tombs these are:
> They belong to T'ien K'ai-kiang, Ku Ye-tzu and Kung Sun-chieh
> Their strength was such that they could move the Southern Mountain;
> Their wisdom exhausted the principles of the earth.
> But one morning they were slandered,
> And two peaches killed the three heroes.
> Who could have made such a plot?
> The Prime Minister Yen-tzu of Ch'i.[52]

[50] Zeng et al., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu*, pp. 40–41.

[51] Another more sedate depiction of the warriors in this story is found at the Wu family shrines. See An Chunyang, *Han Dynasty Stone Reliefs: The Wu Family Shrines in Shandong Province* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), p. 105.

The disjunction between the iconography and identifying inscription, on the one hand, and the resulting conflation of two heroes from Qi, on the other, as seen in the top register of figure 5, suggests that the designer of this tomb was less concerned with historical accuracy and clever juxtapositions of Confucian morals than his counterparts in Jiaxiang. More important were the physical characteristics of a fierce countenance and bold posture signifying strength and bravery.[53] And, as discussed later in this article, these attributes may also signify his supernatural status as a tomb guardian.

The left-hand figure of the pair is labeled Lin Xiangru. In this case, the iconography does correspond with the identifying inscription. According to *Shiji*, Lin Xiangru was a minister of the state of Zhao 趙. The king of Zhao had in his possession a precious jade *bi* 璧 disk. The king of Qin offered fifteen cities in exchange for it. However, the Zhao king feared that the Qin king would not hold up his end of the bargain. Yet, if he refused he feared that the Qin king would take the jade by force. Thus he sought out a wise and brave man, Lin Xiangru, to negotiate with Qin. The scene in the Yi'nan tomb shows Lin Xiangru's having realized that Qin had no intention of giving the cities in exchange, thus holding the *bi* over his head and threatening to smash it.[54] A comparison with an inscribed stone at the Wu Liang shrine confirms that this is indeed a portrayal of Lin Xiangru (figure 8). Although Lin Xiangru and the Qi warrior are protagonists from different stories, they are paired for their fame as exemplars of bravery and wisdom.

Carvings of Confucian heroes executed by the Jiaxiang school (as epitomized in the Wu family shrines) are characterized by stark silhouettes and ordered, geometric shapes. According to Martin Powers, such a carving style enhances legibility and hence their didactic and rhetorical effectiveness. At Yi'nan, the mode of representation is quite different, as is clearly illustrated by a comparison of the representations at both places concern-

[52] Trans. Jonathan Chaves, "A Han Painted Tomb at Loyang," *Artibus Asiae* 30.1 (1968), p. 10.

[53] A relief carving excavated from the Xuzhou area portrays a series of figures with similar attributes. One figure who carries an oxen flung over his shoulder might be identified as Meng Ben; see Chang Renxia 常任俠, *Zhongguo meishu quanji, huihua bian* 18, *huaxiangshi zhuan* 中國美術全集：繪畫編 18, 畫象石 畫象磚 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1988), pls. 81–82.

[54] See Wu Hung's synopsis and translation of the pertinent *Shiji* chapter in Wu, *Wu Liang Shrine*, pp. 305–8.

ing the tale of the king of Qin and Jing Ke (figures 4, bottom, and 9). At Wu Liang, the Jing Ke character, seen to the right of the pillar, is represented as a robed official, whose facial features are given almost no attention. At Yi'nan, he is at the right of the pillar and represented unusually – bare to the waist, with disheveled hair bound up with a head band. His undress and disheveled aspect recall Tang-period accounts of shamans who carry out exorcistic rites.[55] This kind of appearance is also associated with devotees of the Queen Mother of the West 西王母, a deity of immortality that dates to pre-Han times.[56]

His bulging eyes, grimace, and martial posture convey ferocity and are features typical of many of the legendary figures represented on the upright slabs of the middle chamber at Yi'nan. These may in fact have been conventional attributes of supernatural creatures with prophylactic powers. In a text treating demonography titled "Jie" 詰, one of those found at Shuihudi 睡虎地, a 217 BC tomb excavated in Hubei province, "a repugnant face with a protruding brow" is listed as one effective method of repelling demons.[57] During the fifth and sixth centuries AD, such features were typical of door guardians, for example, the figure at the entrance to the Binyang Cave at Longmen, Henan (figure 10). One of the figures at Yi'nan closely resembles it: the hand is thrust outward and fingers extended, with violently flowing drapery and fierce expression. Dramatic martial postures and fierce expressions continue to be conventional features for door guardians to this day, as seen in contemporary woodblock prints pasted onto gates and doors of residences to ward off demons and pestilence.[58]

The earliest evidence for door guardians is found among first-century AD pictorial stones excavated in the Nanyang area of southern Henan. Although much cruder in execution, they share features with the Yi'nan figures (figure 12). These two have been identifed by Chinese archeologists as the demon-quellers Shen Tu 神荼 and Yu Lei (Lu) 鬱壘 who, according to Han-period legends, were painted on the gates of the Yellow Emperor to exorcise demons. Two martial figures engraved on stone doors excavated from a 164 AD Cao 曹 family tomb at Dongyuancun 董園村, Anhui, also appear to play the role of door guardians (figure 14). The posture and facial expression of the Dongyuancun door-guardian closely resemble those of the Yi'nan figure illustrated in figure 11 (and detail, figure 13), suggesting that he was a stock character late in the Eastern Han period.

Modern anthropological studies have demonstrated the existence of popular belief in the supernatural powers of legendary or historical figures who, having died a violent death through murder or suicide, become ghosts and/or gods.[59] Shrines were erected to their memory, and they became gods to whom the local people pray and offer sacrifices to prevent malevolent deeds. The Daoist canonical text *Zhengao* 真誥, a fourth- or fifth-century text associated with the Maoshan 茅山 movement, includes a list of divinities all of whom had been historical figures that died a violent death.[60] Han-era literature like Wang Chong's *Lunheng* and Ying Shao's 應劭 (active ca. 165–204 AD) *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (*A Comprehensive Discussion of Customs*) indicate that such beliefs existed at least as early as the Han.[61] A passage from *Lunheng* indicates that wronged ministers or other heroic figures who were unjustly killed were believed to return as ghosts to harass the living:

> King Hsüan 宣 [Xuan] of the Chou [Zhou] Dynasty, is reported to have killed his minister, the Earl of Tu 杜 [Du], who was innocent. When King Hsüan was going to hunt in his park, the Earl of Tu rose on the roadside with a red bow in his left hand. He shot an arrow at the king, who expired under the cover of his own bow-case. Duke Chien 簡 [Jian] of Chao [Zhao]

[55] See Lin Fu-shih, "Chinese Shamans and Shamanism in the Chiang-nan area during the Six Dynasties Period (3rd-6th century A.D.)" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton U., 1994), pp. 96–97. The state of undress is also similar to descriptions of contemporary magicians in Taiwan. See Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1993), p. 49. I wonder if the headwear might be a *jin* 巾 kerchief of the type worn by the Yellow Turbans, described in *Hou Han shu* 61, p. 2300.

[56] A description of the cult's activities in the 3rd c. BC mentions the participants as having disheveled hair and bare feet; *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962) 27, p. 1476. See also Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, p. 155.

[57] Trans. Donald Harper, "A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B.C.," *HJAS* 45.2 (1985), p. 480.

[58] For a contemporary example, see the print of Zhong Kui the demon queller in Po Sung-nien and David Johnson, *Domesticated Deities and Auspicious Emblems: The Iconography of Everyday Life in Village China* (Berkeley, Publications of the Chinese Popular Culture Project 2, 1992), pl. 107.

[59] Steven Harrell "When a Ghost Becomes a God," in Arthur Wolf, ed., *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford, Stanford U.P., 1974), p. 195. For more on the popular worship of dead culture-heroes, see Uchida Michio 内田道夫, "Kō U shin monogatari" 項羽神物語, *THGH* 12 (1956), pp. 1–15.

[60] Rolf Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Centuries," in Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion* (New Haven and London, Yale U.P., 1979), p. 59.

[61] See also Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, pp. 146–52. Michael Nylan has observed that although the Confucian elite disapproved of "heterodox" cults and "superstitions" both Old- and New Text scholars condoned and participated in "exorcism, name magic, physiognomy, divination, portent astrology, metamorphosis, ominous dreams and the magical effects of recitation of the classics"; Nylan, "Ying Shao's 'Feng Su T'ung Yi': An Exploration of Problems in Han Dynasty Political, Philosophical and Social Unity" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton U., 1982), pp. 85–86.

put his minister Chuang Tse Yi 莊子義 [Zhuang Ziyi] to death, although he was innocent. When Duke Chien was about to pass through the Huan gate, Chuang Tse Yi appeared on the road, a red cudgel in his left hand, with which he struck the duke, then he died under his carriage. This is considered as proving that two dead persons became ghosts, and as showing that ghosts are conscious, and can hurt people, and that there can be no help against it.[62]

One of the most famous of the martyred righteous ministers was Wu Zixu 伍子胥, a hero associated with Wu, a powerful state in the Warring States period. At Yi'nan he is represented with his ruler and, later, adversary, the king of Wu 吳王 (figure 4, top). Wu Zixu, a loyal minister, repeatedly warns the king of the duplicity and threat of the state of Yue. Wu Zixu's advice is disregarded and his persistence earns him only accusations of disloyalty. He is ultimately ordered to commit suicide by the king of Wu.

There is no inscription identifying the Yi'nan figure. However, a bronze mirror in the Yamaguchi collection portrays an almost identical scene and has superscript identifying the pair as Wu Zixu and Wuwang (king of Wu) (figures 15, 16). Both in the tomb and on the mirror, Wu Zixu is portrayed as wild-eyed and furious. He appears to leap after the king of Wu, who brandishes a sword. It is telling that Wu Zixu, though unarmed and facing certain death, wears a fierce expression and takes an agressive posture signifying his bravery and defiance. A number of Han-period sources, including *Shiji*, *Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋, and *Lunheng*, show that a cult grew up around Wu Zixu in the area once known as the state of Wu, encompassing Zhejiang, Anhui, and Jiangsu.[63] Later texts indicate that the cult to Wu Zixu spread into Henan and Shandong in the fourth through sixth centuries AD, although I would argue that based on the representation of Wu Zixu at Yi'nan, the cult existed in Shandong at least as early as the second century AD.[64] A passage from the *Lunheng* chapter named "Falsehoods in Books" describes its formation as follows:

> It has been recorded that the king of Wu, Fuchai, put Wu Zixu to death, had him cooked in a cauldron, sewed into a leather pouch, and thrown into the river. Wu Zixu, incensed, lashed up the waters so that they rose in great waves, and drowned people. At present, temples have been set up on the Yangzi River at Dantu 丹徒 in Guiji 會稽 and at Qiantang 錢唐 on the Zhe 浙 River for the purpose of appeasing his anger and stopping the wild waves.[65]

[62] *Lunheng* 21, pp. 885–87; trans. Forke, *Lun Hêng* 1, p. 202.

[63] David Johnson, "The Wu Tzu-hsü Pien-wen and Its Sources: Part 1," *HJAS* 40.2, pp. 472–74. See also Patricia Berger, "Rites and Festivities in the Art of Eastern Han China: Shandong and Kiangsu Provinces" (Ph.D. diss., U. California, Berkeley, 1980), pp. 68–70.

[64] Johnson, "Wu Tzu-hsü Pien-wen," p. 479.

Wang Chong further laments that popular tales about Wu Zixu and others were spread not only through word of mouth but also pictorially, a point that is illustrated by the Han-period bronze mirrors excavated at Shaoxing 紹興, Zhejiang, and the wall-carving at Yi'nan:[66]

> These events seem to be true, and yet they are fictitious. Now not having his body intact, Wu Tzu-hsü could not have acted like the Earl of Tu or Chuang Tse Yi, taking his revenge upon the king of Wu. How can the rolling to and fro of the waves be considered a revenge or proof of Wu Tzu-hsü's consciousness?
>
> Popular legend though not true, form the subjects of paintings and, by these pictures, even wise and intelligent men allow themselves to be mystified.[67]

Figures like Wu Zixu, who never receive a proper burial, became wandering ghosts who harass and threaten the living. Yet they also played positive roles, once won over to the side of the supplicant through proper sacrifice and treatment, and could serve as his protectors and intermediaries in the realm of the spirits. In a section of Liu Xiang's 劉向 "Jiu Tan" 九嘆 ("Nine Laments"), which describes the ascent of Mount Kunlun, Wu Zixu along with the emperor Zhuan Xu and others guide the narrator on his journey up the *axis mundi*:

> I rode in the high wind's face, hither and thither;
> I wandered, gazing, all over the north.
> There I came to Zhuan Xu and laid my plaint before him,
> And examined Xuan Ming on Kongsang Mountain.
> I turned my chariot about and journeyed to Chongshan
> And made my report to Yu Shun at Cangwu;
> Crossed in a willow boat to Guiji,
> And came upon Shen Xu (Wu Zixu) among the Five Lakes.[68]

Legendary figures who had died a violent death were not the only ones deified and worshipped. As recorded in various Han-period stelae,

[65] *Lunheng jiaoshi* 4 ("Shu xu 書虛"), pp. 180–81; trans. adapted from Johnson, "Wu Tzu-hsü," p. 473, which is based on Forke, *Lun Hêng* 1, p. 248.

[66] For a discussion of this, see Johnson, "Wu Tzu-hsü," pp. 497–98.

[67] *Lunheng jiaoshi* 4 ("Shuxu"), p. 184; trans. Forke, *Lun Hêng* 2, p. 250.

[68] Trans. David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 301.

popular local officials or heroes who had acted in an extraordinarily meritorious and brave manner also had memorial shrines erected to them and were worshipped by the local people.[69] The section on "Gods and Marvels" in Ying Shao's *Fengsu tongyi* records that a cult grew up around Liu Zhang 劉章, one of the sons of the founder of the Han dynasty. Aware that the growing power of the family of the empress-dowager Lü 呂 posed a threat to the survival of the Han, Liu was celebrated for having the foresight to exterminate the Lü family. Ying Shao approves of offerings celebrating Liu's virtues: "For his loyalty, righteousness and prodigious courage, it is proper that he receives sacrificial offerings." However, he disapproves of local cults devoted to what he considers heterodox and delusional beliefs about Liu's supernatural powers:

> From Lang-ya and the six commanderies of Ch'ing-chou [Qingzhou] to Po-hai [Bohai] (all located in Shandong), every city, town, hamlet, ward and settlement has erected a shrine to him. They built and decorated five carriages... Merchants undertook the arrangements to have them made. They set up [statues to line the spirit road] in robes and official sashes [to represent] his entire entourage. With the boiling and the slaughtering, the chanting and singing, all was commotion for days on end [until] the people, deluding one another, claimed his spirit was present. When they interrogated it about their fortune, [the predictions] immediately came true.[70]

Many of the heroes located on the upright slabs of the Yi'nan tomb were associated with the Shandong region, known in the Han period as Qi and Lu. Located in southeast Shandong, Yi'nan was a region where the cultural traditions of Qi, Lu, and Chu intersected.[71] During the Warring States period, the area encompassing Yi'nan had alternately been dominated by those three states, with Chu, by the end of this period, eclipsing all others in size and power. Many of the legendary figures represented on the upright slabs of the Yi'nan tomb could also be regarded as local heroes. Confucius and the Duke of Zhou 周公, for example, were the quintessential heroes of the state of Lu, located in central Shandong. The three warriors of the two peaches story, were, according to the Han-period poem, buried outside the capital of the former state of Qi in northern Shandong.

[69] Yang Shuda 楊樹達, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidu shi yanjiu* 中國古代陵寢制度史研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), p. 157; Wu, *Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 212.

[70] Trans. Nylan, "Ying Shao's 'Feng Su T'ung Yi,'" p. 526.

[71] For a discussion of imagery associated with Chu culture, see Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," pp. 263–69.

Although Jing Ke was said to be from the state of Wei, his ancestors are recorded as being from the state of Qi.

GUARDIANS OF THE DECEASED

Funerary rites are represented on the horizontal lintels in the central chamber of the Yi'nan tomb.[72] A series of horse-drawn chariots extending across the north and west walls depicts the male and female funeral processions to the burial ground (figure 1). In subsequent scenes, representations of the Great Granary and the entertainment suggest the bounteous and pleasurable afterlife enjoyed by the deceased. Images of Mount Kunlun 昆侖山 and the Queen Mother of the West, carved on to the central pillar, allude to the ascension of the soul to the heavenly domain (figure 17). The representation of the funerary procession's journey to and arrival at the burial ground is a metaphor for the journey of the deceased to the afterworld and provides the context for an alternative interpretation of the function of the culture heroes in the central chamber.

Structurally and iconographically, the pillar in the central chamber functioned as a central axis, or sacred center, linking the three realms of the cosmos – heaven, earth, and the underworld. As mentioned earlier, two of the five founding emperors of Chinese civilization are seen on the upright slabs of the central chamber (see figure 3). Their proximity to the realm of the Queen Mother of the West represented on the central pillar suggests they played a similar role in the tomb. In unofficial texts, even the five founding emperors, the most revered of Confucian sages, were invoked as the guardians of the deceased as he journeyed to the sacred center. The divinatory text titled *Yilin* 易林, written around 3 BC, includes Yao and Yu as protective deities of the deceased: "In the company of Yao and Yu and [the immortal] Pengzu, you will go west to meet the Queen Mother. The way of your life will be smooth and easy, and no one will make trouble" 戴堯扶禹. 從喬彭祖. 西過王母. 道里夷易, 無敢難者.[73]

This parallel with tomb guardians is also indicated in the decorations on bronze mirrors. As the popularity of the Daoist religion spread in the second half of the second century, these decorations (buried in tombs as talismans) shifted from abstract representations of the cosmos, as exemplified by "TLV" mirrors, to figural portrayals of deities and guardians associated with the Queen Mother and her cult of immortality. The five emperors

[72] For a more detailed discussion, see ibid., pp. 211–47.

[73] *Yilin* 易林 (SPPY edn.) 8, p. 9b; trans. Wu, *Wu Liang Shrine*, pp. 130–31.

together with the directional animals were often represented on the mirrors as protective deities. An inscribed mirror reads:

> 205 AD. The Zhu family fashioned [this mirror] and wishes you great luck and fortune. In seclusion I have refined the *gong* element (earth) and the *shang* element (metal). Around the periphery I have arranged images of the five emperors and the heavenly emperor. Boya plays the *qin* and Huangdi expels evils. There are the red bird, dark warrior, white tiger, and green dragon. May you achieve high office and a position among the three ministers. May your sons and grandsons be numerous and prosperous 建安五年朱氏造, 大吉羊(祥). 幽練官商, 周緣容象, 五帝天皇, 伯牙彈琴, 黃帝除凶, 朱鳥玄武, 白虎青龍, 君宜高官, 位至三公, 子孫番昌 (figure 18).[74]

In the register above that of the two founding emperors are representations of Cang Jie and Shen Nong.[75] Cang Jie, as the inventor of writing, may have also played the role of demon-expeller. In the Han period, talismanic characters and spells were often inscribed on ceramic vessels and buried in the tomb to keep demons at bay. A passage in *Huainanzi* 淮南子 records that when Cang Jie invented writing the demons wailed at night.[76] His mythical status as the progenitor of writing may also have implied his role as a guardian spirit. This is further suggested by the fact that at Yi'nan he is represented with four eyes, a physical attribute that was associated with exorcists. In a commentary to the discussion of *fangshi* 方士 in the Confucian classic *Zhouli* 周禮, they were described as needing four eyes to scour the four quarters for demons.[77] A stele inscription dating to 163 AD indicates that Cang Jie's eyes continued to be associated with supernatural power in the Eastern Han: "Heaven produced power in this great sage. His four eyes had a supernatural radiance. He created writing so that the names

[74] See Umehara Sueji 梅原末治, *Kan Sangoku Rikuchō kinen kyō zusetsu* 漢三國六朝紀年鏡圖說 (Kyoto, 1943), pp. 34–35, no. 28, pl. 17. On a similar inscription, perhaps the same mirror, see Bernhard Karlgren, "Early Chinese Mirror Inscriptions," *BMFEA* 6 (1934), pp. 63–64, 78; my translation is adapted from Karlgren's. The phrase "in seclusion I refined the *kung* and *shang* elements," as Suzanne Cahill has pointed out, presages Daoist texts from the fourth century AD describing alchemical practices. See Suzanne Cahill, "The Word Made Bronze: Inscriptions on Medieval Chinese Bronze Mirrors," *Archives of Asian Art* 39 (1986), p. 64.

[75] The authors of the excavation report identify the figure opposite Cang Jie as Ju Song 沮誦. However, Hayashi Minao has convincingly argued that the figure is Shen Nong; Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, *Kandai no kamigami* 漢代の神神 (Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 1989), pp. 34–40.

[76] Harper, "Chinese Demonography," p. 479. See also Wang Chong's reference to Cang Jie's effect on demons; *Lunheng jiaoshi* 5 ("Ganxu 感虛"), pp. 249–50.

[77] *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注, Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) et al., eds., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經註疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979) 31, p. 851.

of the 100 kings could be transmitted for ten thousand generations."[78]

Another physical attribute suggestive of both Cang Jie's and Shen Nong's role as numinous beings is their squatting posture. The demonographic text discovered at Shuihudi records a physical remedy for expelling demons: "What demons 鬼 detest are namely reclining in a crouch 屈臥 ... ."[79] Furthermore, the flowering trees that shade Cang Jie and Shen Nong may allude to the *jian* tree 建木, which according to *Huainanzi* functioned as an central axis "forming a canopy over the center of the world."[80] As a link between heaven and earth, the tree acted as conduit for travel between the two domains for spirits and immortals:

> The Chien [Jian] Tree on Mount Tu-kuang [Duguang], by which the gods ascend and descend (to and from Heaven), casts no shadow at midday. If one calls (from that place), there is no echo. It forms a canopy over the center of the world.[81]

A description of the *jian* tree in the "Haineijing 海內經" section of *Shanhaijing* corresponds closely to the knarled flowering trees represented in this scene. It is described as follows:

> There is a tree with green leaves, purple stems, black flowers and yellow fruit. It is called the *jian* tree. The *jian* tree is more than 100 *zhang* (1,000 feet) tall and has nine branches which wend their way upwards. Below are nine interwoven roots, which resemble hemp. The leaves resemble those of the pear tree.[82]

The allusion to the central axis dovetails with my hypothesis that the legendary figures in Yi'nan's central chamber, in addition to their identity as Confucian heroes of statecraft, may have been seen as deities on the journey to Mount Kunlun along the central axis (as represented by the pillars). The stalk of straw held in Shen Nong's hand is an attribute of the inventor of agriculture often seen on late-Eastern Han mirrors.[83] However,

[78] Weng Fanggang 翁方綱, *Liang Han jinshi ji* 兩漢金石記 (1789), reproduced in vol. 3, part 4, of Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望, ed., *Shike shiliao congshu, jia bian* 石刻史料叢書甲編 (Taibei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1966) 11, pp. 1A–8; see also William Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954), p. 95.

[79] Harper, "Chinese Demonography," p. 476.

[80] See the "Dixingxun 地形訓" sect. of *Huainan zi* 淮南子 (SPPY edn.) 4, pp. 3b–4a. For a translation, see John Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought: Chapters Three, Four and Five of the Huainanzi* (Albany: State U. of New York P., 1993), p. 158.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Yuan Ke 袁珂, ed., *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), p. 509.

[83] According to Hayashi Minao's study, figures clutching stalks of straw seated under a kind of hemp-like *jian*-tree with flowering branches are found most often on mirrors of the

within the context of the domain of the Queen Mother of the West represented on the central pillar, the stalk may also allude to Shen Nong's place in her pantheon. On the central pillar a winged immortal clutches a similar object as he ascends skyward (figure 17). Scholars have linked this stalk to a mass cult movement to the Queen Mother during which time, to quote a *Han shu* passage, "It happened that people were disturbed and running around, passing a stalk of grain or flax from one to another and calling it 'the tally for transmitting the goddess's edict.'"[84] Here Shen Nong's stalk may have also been perceived as an attribute of allegiance to the immortal deity. Like the Queen Mother's worshippers described in the passage above, Shen Nong appears to be passing off the "wand" to Cang Jie. And, like the emperors represented in the register below, these Confucian inventors of civilization have also been adopted as subsidiary gods in the immortal realm of the Queen Mother of the West. In the tomb they are charged with guarding the deceased on its journey there.

CONCLUSION

The occupants of the Yi'nan tomb lived during a time when the central government was in decline and regionalism and localism were on the rise. As a member of the social elite of Langya principality and possibly a local official, the male occupant of the Yi'nan tomb was very likely "caught in this conflict between centralism and localism."[85] In Langya from the late-160s through the early-180s there was growing unrest, not only among the peasantry but also among the local elite, particularly those sympathetic to the movement of expelled and persecuted officials, many of whom had fled to their home provinces. This may have led to an unusual alliance between social forces normally separated by class. The ideology fostered by such an alliance would have included several traditions, perhaps exemplified by Langya native Xiang Kai's memorial to emperor Huan of 166, which made reference to Confucian and Daoist traditions, Yinyang cosmology, and early-Chinese Buddhist tracts. additionally, the *Taiping qingling shu* (later used by Zhang Jue) that Xiang Kai presented to the emperor

three-register type; Hayashi, *Kandai no kamigami*, pp. 34–40.

[84] *Han shu* 27, p. 1476. trans. Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, p. 155. There are several representations of supplicants clutching stalks of straw approaching Xiwangmu in bas-relief carvings from the Jiaxiang area. See, Zhu Xilu 朱錫祿, *Jiaxiang Han huaxiangshi* 嘉祥漢畫像石 (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 1992), pls. 8, 9, 10, 46, 49.

[85] Ch'en, *Hsun Yüeh*, p. 13.

was an ideological medley, including sayings from witches and shamans.

The differences between the representational modes and organization of the culture-heroes in the Wu Liang shrine and Yi'nan tomb point up different ideological strategies. The pictorial narrative of the Wu Liang shrine is devoted to promoting Wu Liang and his family's image as upright Confucians of the New Text school. As argued by Wu Hung and Martin Powers, the imagery is arranged in an ordered way and rendered in a carving style that is both didactic and rhetorical. Unlike the pictorial narrative of the Wu Liang shrine, however, the culture-heroes in the Yi'nan tomb are not arranged according to historiographic textual conventions. Located on either side of doors and surrounding a central pillar, they are organized in accordance with the tomb's function as a cosmic diagram.[86] Unlike the Wu Liang shrine, where accompanying inscriptions carefully identify the story and sometimes even explain the intended moral, the cartouches at Yi'nan are mostly uninscribed. Where there are inscriptions, they are crudely written names identifying the individual hero – sometimes incorrectly. This disregard for accuracy, as seen in the figure identified by the inscription as Meng Ben but represented pictorially with the attributes of a hero from the "Two Peaches Kill Three Heroes" story, indicates that the display of Confucian erudition was not foremost in the mind of the tomb's designer. The confusion of identity of these figures also suggests that the source for many of these pictorial representations was not an elite textual tradition but a popular, oral one.

The depiction of culture-heroes in the central chamber bridges the gap between the orthodox and the heterodox, the secular and the religious, elite and popular cultures. Their attributes signify their Confucian identity (Lin Xiangru's *bi* disc, Jing Ke's dagger stuck in the pillar, Huangdi's and Zhuan Xu's imperial robes and caps, Fan Zeng's jettisoned wine vessel), but their location flanking the doorways, the grimaces, thrusting hand gestures, and flying leaps link them with demon-quellers. In the Yi'nan tomb, their role as moral exemplars is displaced by their role as tomb guardians. My reading of the culture-heroes in the Yi'nan tomb implies that the patron(s) had no qualms about promoting tales of the strange and the marvelous at the expense of Confucian ideology. Such an attitude may point to a shift in the balance of power at the end of the Eastern Han period: from the state to the local, from the textual to the oral, as the elite became increasingly concerned with cultivating the support of the local populace.

[86] This major point is elucidated in Thompson, "Yi'nan Tomb," chaps. 4–7.

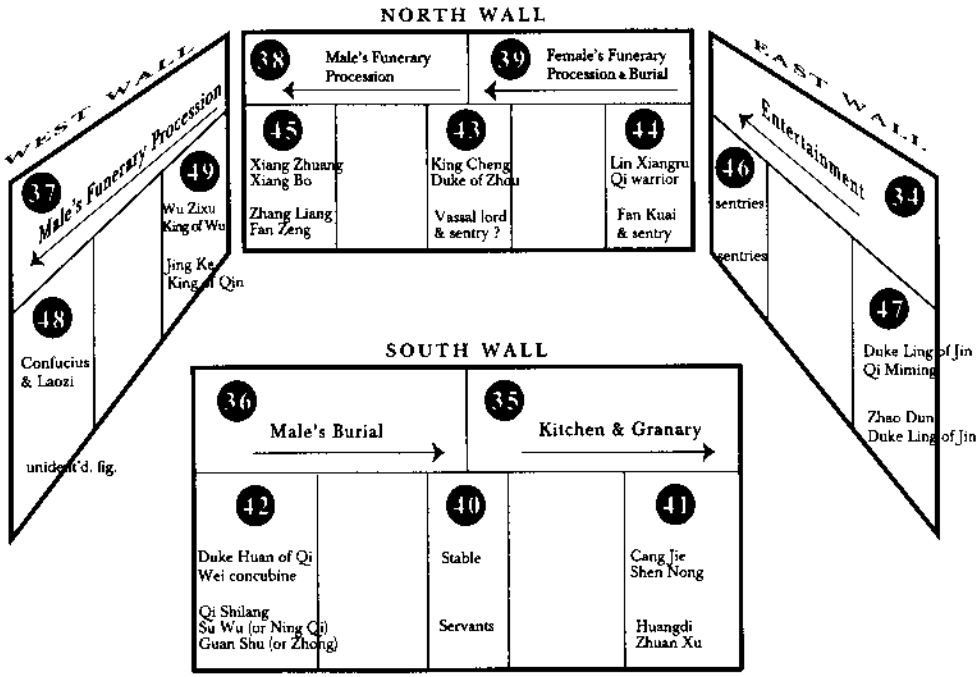

Figure 1. Schema of Yi'nan Tomb, Central Chamber

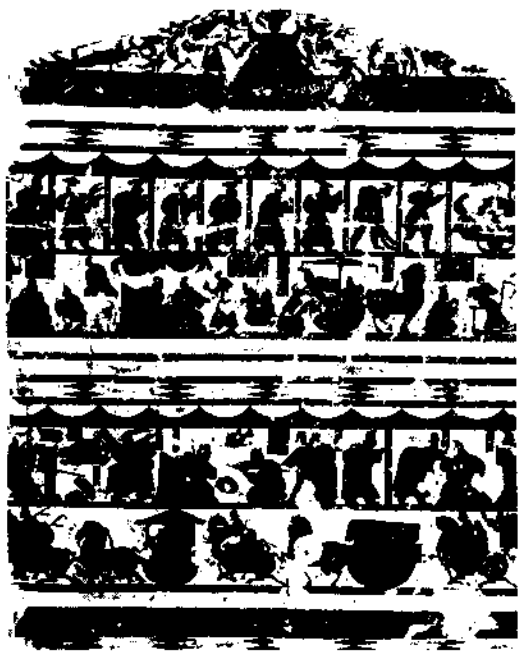

Figure 2. The Wu Liang Shrine

Chang, *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, pl. 4 (see n. 53).

Figure 3. Supporting Slab; E. Sect. (41) of So. Wall of Central Chamber

Zeng et al., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu*, pl. 52 (see n. 3).

Figure 4. Supporting Slab; N. Sect. (49) of W. Wall of Central Chamber

Zeng et al., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu*, pl. 60 (see n. 3).

Figure 5. Supporting Slab; E. Sect. (44) of N. Wall of Central Chamber

Zeng et al., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu*, pl. 55 (see n. 3).

Figure 6. Supporting Slab; W. Sect. (45) of N. Wall of Central Chamber

Zeng et al., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu*, pl. 56 (see n. 3).

Figure 7. Two Peaches Kill Three Warriors; Middle Register

Bas-relief carving from Songshan. Zhu, *Jiaxiang Han huaxiangshi*, p. 38, fig. 45 (see n. 84).

Figure 8. Story of Lin Xiangru; Wu Liang Shrine

An, *Han Dynasty Stone Reliefs*, p. 47 (see n. 51).

Figure 9. Jing Ke's Assassination Attempt on King of Qin; Wu Liang Shrine

Wu, *Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 148a (see n. 1).

Figure 10. Entrance to Binyang Cave at Longmen

Photograph by author.

Figure 11. Supporting Slab; So. Sect. (48) of W. Wall of Central Chamber

Zeng et al., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu*, pl. 59 (see n. 3).

Figure 12. Tomb Doors Excavated at Nanyang

Nanyang Handai huaxiangshi bianji weiyuanhui 南陽漢代畫像石編輯委員會, *Nanyang Handai huaxiangshi* 南陽漢代畫像石 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1985), figs. 16–17.

Figure 13. Figure in Central Chamber (Sect. 48); detail

See figure 11.

Figure 14. Tomb Guardian

Dongyuancun 董園村 tomb 2, Bo county, Anhui; Li Can 李燦, "Anhui Bo xian faxian yipi Handai Zizhuan he shike" 安徽亳縣發現一批漢代字磚和石刻, *Wenwu ziliao congkan* 2 (1977), p. 174.

Figure 15. Bronze Mirror in Yamaguchi Collection

Umehara Sueji 梅原末治, *Shōko kokyō shuei* 紹興古鏡聚英 (Kyoto, 1939), pl. 49.

Figure 16. Detail of Figure 15

Figure 17. Line Drawings of Imagery on Pillar; Yi'nan Central Chamber

Zeng et al., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu*, pls. 65–66 (see n. 3).

Figure 18. Mirror Dating to 207 AD

Umehara, *Kan Sangoku Rikuchō*, pl. 17, no. 28 (see n. 74).