Dialogues in Art History, from Mesopotamian to Modern: Readings for a New Century

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Frontispiece: Simone Martini with Lippo Memmi, detail of Gabriel from Annunciation with Saints, 1333, tempera and gold
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; photograph Scala/Art Resource, New York
Rethinking East Asian Tombs: A Methodological Proposal

What are the physical properties and perceptual modes of a traditional East Asian tomb? First of all, a tomb consists of two architectural complexes, one above ground and the other hidden beneath the surface of the earth. It is tempting to think of these as the exterior and interior of a tomb or graveyard. But instead of constituting a continuous architectural program, the above-ground and underground sections of a tomb are disconnected spatial and perceptual entities: the two complexes have separate physical environments and architectural designs, as well as different ritual functions and relationships with people (fig. 1). The exterior section of an elite tomb, often including a tumulus, one or more ritual buildings, and statues and stelae, was exposed to view as the site of routine ritual performances; the interior section, often more lavishly decorated and furnished, is revealed only through robbery or archaeological excavation. For this reason, and also because most freestanding structures in ancient graveyards (which were often timber framed) no longer exist, studies of East Asian funerary art have predominantly dealt with grave chambers and their contents. Responding to this scholarly tradition, the methodological rethinking in this essay also focuses on the underground section of a tomb.

According to ancient texts, objects created for a burial were exhibited during the funeral prior to the entombment, and a brief ceremony was sometimes performed inside such chambers to allow the living to bid a final farewell to their deceased kin. But once the grave was sealed, no one would explore its secret again. The entombment thus marked a radical shift in the identity and meaning of the underground chambers and their content. Before this moment, they belonged to this world and were subject to the scrutiny of human eyes; afterward, they became solely the domain of the departed soul. Before this moment, the patrons, builders, and artisans collaborated in designing, constructing, and furnishing the chambers; afterward, these spaces and all the images and objects inside them—murals and relief carvings, figurines and architectural models, and articles made of various materials—would remain unseen forever. Thus if people in traditional East Asia created such images and objects (often of extraordinary quality) to display their artistic imagination and aesthetic judgment, they also voluntarily withdrew them from circulation by burying them with the dead. It is for this reason that a tomb was glossed as cang, or “concealment.”

An underground tomb can thus be studied in two different ways. One type of research focuses on the process of a tomb’s preparation, construction, and especially the series of mortuary rites from the moment of death to that of entombment. During these rites, the body of the deceased was dressed and
coffined, offerings were made, funerary paraphernalia was displayed, and the site of ritual performance moved gradually from the home of the deceased to the graveyard. A reconstruction of this process aims to reveal the complex social relationships involved in mortuary rites and to demonstrate a funeral as visual spectacle. The second type of research studies the burial as a spatial rather than temporal construct. Its primary goal is to reveal the underlying logic of a tomb's design, decoration, and furnishing, and to interpret a tomb as an embodiment of social relations, history and memory, cosmology, and religious beliefs.

This essay explores the methodological potential of the second approach, not only because a recent doctoral dissertation has pursued a temporal analysis of funerary art, but, more important, because the concept of concealment remained fundamental to East Asian funerary art throughout its development. We can trace this concept all the way to prehistoric times. The longevity of the tradition of cang is especially startling in China, where, from at least the fourth millennium B.C.E. to the early twentieth century C.E., people devoted an extraordinary amount of wealth and labor to constructing underground burial structures and furnishing them with exquisite objects. Sustained by a family-based social structure and the moral teaching of filial piety, the hope of providing the dead with an eternal home stimulated seemingly inexhaustible artistic creativity and technological innovation. Indeed, instead of defining a tomb in a purely architectural sense, it is more appropriate to consider it a persistent site of art production. Elite tombs were never mass-produced. Their designs and construction always resulted from extensive decision making and involved complex negotiations between various social sectors. Many objects in these tombs were "spirit articles" made specifically for the afterlife; special paintings and sculptures were also created to meet the silent needs of the dead, either to protect a grave or to enliven it with sensual pleasures.

Because of their practical function and their inauspicious association with death, tombs were never treated as aesthetic objects in traditional East Asia. Ancient writers uniformly avoided talking about underground graves, and as a result, these spaces were hidden both in reality and in literature. This situation changed dramatically after modern archaeology began in East Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since then, the excavations of numerous ancient tombs in China, Japan, and Korea have generated a huge amount of scholarship in diverse fields, including archaeology, history, anthropology, philology, the history of religion, and the history of science. In art history, ancient tombs have mainly been appreciated as treasure troves of exciting and often previously unknown works of art; the finding of these works has allowed art historians to constantly enrich and even rewrite histories of individual art forms such as bronze-work, jade carving, painting, sculpture, ceramics, and calligraphy.

Such use of ancient tombs can be considered a product of art history itself at a particular stage of the discipline's development. Since the nineteenth century, art history has grown into a conglomeration of semi-independent fields based on art medium; each field has developed its own research methods and historical narrative, supported by specialized collections, exhibitions, and publications. Observed in this light, art historical studies of ancient East Asian tombs over the past century have served mainly to articulate medium-specific histories, which in turn have become the building blocks of general narratives of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean art.

Traditional tombs have served this function, however, at the expense of being fragmented in both preservation and analysis: the integrity of a tomb is obscured when it becomes the subject of medium-oriented classification and research. This type of scholarship based on decontextualization
especially characterizes the studies of East Asian art in the West, which were founded initially on collections of individual objects derived from various sources, including plundered tombs. Even today, European and American museums rarely display East Asian funerary art in its ritual and architectural context but habitually funnel it into discrete sections for jades, bronzes, sculpture, and painting. Once funerary art is integrated into this system of presentation and intermingled with works created for other purposes, it ceases to pose questions about specific concerns in its design and making. As a result, few publications on funerary objects in Western collections have tried to explain their material, color, size, proportion, style, or typology in terms of their original function and symbolism. It is ironic that although such decontextualized art collections inspire formalist research projects, they also prevent a genuine understanding of forms as cultural and artistic expressions.

Two changes in East Asian art history have now challenged this way of studying funerary art, contributing to a growing awareness of ancient tombs as important architectural and artistic creations in their own right. One change concerns the preservation and exhibition of archaeological finds in East Asia, where many “ancient tomb museums” have been established in recent years and begun to generate new scholarship. Located at the sites of important tombs, these museums display the excavated artifacts alongside the underground structures and provide detailed information about the tombs’ historical background and occupants. Elaborate digital and architectonic reconstructions allow visitors to visualize the tombs’ original plan and furnishings.5

The second change has taken place in art historical scholarship. Initially articulated in the studies of Western art, various types of contextual research have shifted historians’ attention from works of art per se to their production, perception, and consumption in specific historical circumstances. The far-reaching interest in visual and material culture in recent years has further blurred the boundaries of art history, opening the discipline to broader issues related to visual presentation and representation. Not surprisingly, this research turn, along with the emergence of tomb museums in East Asia, has encouraged historians of East Asian art to make entire tombs the subject of historical reconstruction and interpretation. Since the early 1980s, an increasing number of research projects, including several PhD dissertations, exemplify this trend in studying funerary art.6 Each focusing on one tomb or cemetery, these projects share a clear methodological premise: a tomb was designed, constructed, and decorated as a whole and so should be studied as such. The fundamental purpose and tactic of the researcher is therefore to keep an entire burial—rather than any of its individual components—at the center of both observation and interpretation.

The present essay promotes this type of scholarship but makes research methods the central subject of consideration. As mentioned earlier, funerary art has mainly been studied in separate fields in East Asian art history as displaced images and objects; the research methods used are often based on later notions of works of art as aesthetic objects created to please (or intrigue) the eye. Are these notions appropriate for understanding spaces and objects created for the dead? Has their unexamined adoption actually distracted us from recognizing the uniqueness of funerary spaces and objects? Such general reflections lead to more specific questions. For example, we employ standard architectural terminology to describe and analyze tombs, often forgetting that an underground grave chamber often “reverses” the architecture of an above-ground model by transforming exterior surfaces into an interior space (fig. 2).7 We use the concepts of “viewing” and the “gaze” uncritically in discussing tomb murals and figurines, but these concepts must be redefined when we realize that the murals’ principal intended viewer was probably not a living one, the persistent use of miniatures in tombs also raises questions about the identity of the supposed audience. As for the objects found in graves, we still tend to group them together with those created in different social, religious, and artistic contexts, and to use the entire assemblage to illustrate general shifts in style, iconography, and taste. But ancient writers asserted repeatedly that “spirit articles” for the dead should be different from those made.
for the living with respect to material, size, color, function, and technique.

To study a tomb as a manufactured interior space, then, we need to develop an analytical framework based on the special nature of this ritual structure. This essay proposes a framework based on three essential aspects of a tomb: spatiality, materiality, and temporality. The section on spatiality discusses various symbolic environments constructed inside a tomb and a particular "subject space" created for the disembodied soul. The section on materiality considers how and why certain materials, media, sizes, shapes, and colors were selected for tomb architecture and furnishing. The last section considers time: building on the preceding discussion, it shows how spaces, objects, and images work together to allude to various temporalities, such as the past, the future, or eternity, and to generate a sense of movement through time inside a sealed space. Although this short essay can only touch on the complexity of these large topics, by analyzing some typical examples I hope to offer a set of concepts that will facilitate individual case studies of East Asian tombs and challenge certain established assumptions in art historical methodology.

**Spatiality**

Within the general silence about underground tombs, a few references in traditional literature stand out as rare testimonies of people's visions of such hidden spaces. By no means factual records of real situations, these writings describe graves as constructed symbolic realms while testifying to two different ways of perceiving their interiority. The first way is exemplified by the report by Sima Qian (b.c. 145 B.C.E.) on the burial chamber of the first Qin emperor—the earliest description of any grave in Chinese history. Writing a century after the tomb's construction, this Western Han historian recounted how the emperor assembled seven hundred thousand workers from all over the country to create a posthumous home for himself: "They dug through the three springs, stopped their flow, and built the burial chamber there. They carried in [models of] palaces, pavilions, and the hundred officials, and strange objects and valuables to fill up the grave. . . . With mercury they made the myriad rivers and the ocean with a mechanism that made them flow about. Above were all the heavens and below all the Earth."
Because the first emperor’s burial chamber has not yet been excavated, we still cannot verify Sima Qian’s report. At present, therefore, the significance of his account lies primarily in his conceptualization of the tomb’s interior as a manufactured microcosm, with the essential components of the universe—heavenly bodies, earthly landscapes, and human creations—represented in different positions inside a sealed space. Writing retrospectively, Sima Qian positioned himself as an uninvolved observer of a forbidden realm—an imaginary position inherited by later historians.

The other way of perceiving and describing a tomb is exemplified by a third-century C.E. poem, the last of three “Mourner’s Songs” by the Jin poet Lu Ji (261–303). The first two songs in the sequence describe a funerary procession that escorts the “soul carriage” of the dead and moves silently from his old home to his otherworldly abode. In the third song, the deceased, now buried inside his tomb, has regained his senses and is seeing, hearing, and speaking in the first person:

The piled-up hill, how it towers!
My dark hut is hidden inside it.
Wide stand the Four Limits;
High-arched spread the azure skies.
By my side I hear the hidden river’s flow;
On my back, I gaze at the sky roof suspended.
How lonely is the wide firmament!

Identifying himself with the dead, the poet defines his position at the center of the “dark hut” (that is, the underground burial chamber) inside a “piled-up hill” (the tumulus). As we have found in Sima Qian’s description of the first emperor’s grave, this interior space is once again perceived as a symbolic universe, with the sky above and the earth below, and surrounded by the Four Limits—the infinite extension of the four cardinal directions. The difference is that the observer and speaker in Lu Ji’s poem is the very person to whom the tomb was dedicated. Through describing the tomb’s interior, the poem reconstructs the perception of the tomb occupant or his soul, which, according to traditional beliefs, would retain consciousness and intelligence after death.

These two views underlie my discussion in the rest of this section, which analyzes the spatiality of East Asian tombs from two different perspectives. I first explore a number of symbolic frameworks which routinely determined the pictorial program of a tomb’s murals or carvings, and I then focus on a specially constructed space called the wei—literally the “place” of the soul. I suggest that, although a symbolic framework—whether a happy homeland, an immortal paradise, or the universe—constituted an imagined environment for the dead, a wei signified a point of view within a tomb. Although often empty and formless, this second space bestowed a dark, underground chamber with subjectivity and identity a center. In other words, a tomb’s symbolic decoration and its wei imply two basic, complementary impulses in its design: to create a physical or metaphysical environment for the dead, and to give the dead a place and voice in this environment. Each impulse stimulated a large variety of images. When the two were intertwined, they generated infinite possibilities in constructing an “eternal home” for the dead.

Symbolic Environments

Sima Qian reported that the first emperor’s grave was transformed into a space where “above were all the heavens and below all the Earth.” Lu Ji’s poem situates the deceased under “azure skies,” surrounded by “the Four Limits.” We can easily connect these descriptions to a particular type of tomb decoration found not only in China but also in Korea and Japan. In China, it became conventional from the first century B.C.E. onward to depict heaven on the ceiling of a tomb. In Japan, the Takamatsuzuka tomb has wall murals depicting the zoomorphic symbols of the four directions; images on the ceiling represent the Big Dipper and other constellations with gold foil. The designer of this Japanese tomb likely derived his model from the Koguryo kingdom on the northern Korean peninsula, which was in turn influenced by earlier and contemporary tomb murals in China. Indeed, such cosmological images constituted a pan-East Asian pictorial program in tomb decoration, but each region also developed distinct characteristics.

For example, Koguryo tombs of the sixth and seventh centuries exhibit profusely
varied star maps on the ceiling, some also display large images of the four directional animals on the corresponding walls (fig. 3). This type of spatial representation is seen in many Chinese tombs, but the decorators often enriched this basic program with additional images of heavenly beings, legendary heroes, and auspicious omens. The increased richness of a cosmological representation reflected the desire to render a multifaceted universe by integrating pictorial images from different sources. In one interesting case, the designer of a twelfth-century tomb near Inner Mongolia combined Chinese and Babylonian zodiac systems in decorating a tomb's domed ceiling (fig. 4).

To render a standard cosmological program underground, however, was not a simple matter of dislocation. In many instances, tomb murals appear as mirror images of normal representations of the cosmic order. Thus if the Green Dragon conventionally symbolizes east and the White Tiger signifies west, their positions are reversed in tombs. The unspoken message of this reversal seems to be that the underground—the realm of death—demanded a perceptual mode opposite to that of the world above. Reversing the logic of the living created a different space for the dead underground.

Depicting such cosmological images was only one way to transform an underground chamber into a symbolic space. An alternative choice was to render an immortal paradise inside a tomb. This imaginary space was at first inhabited by indigenous immortals and fairies such as the Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East, but when Buddhism reached East Asia it supplied new, exotic symbols for immortality. The decorators of several Koguryo tombs thus covered the surface of the burial chambers with images of lotus flowers—symbols of the Buddhist Pure Land, where the departed soul of the faithful would be reborn. A follower of Daoism could choose images of a white crane in place of the lotus. Painted on the ceiling or above a tomb's entrance, this popular symbol of longevity helped transform a tomb into a Daoist cave heaven (Dongtian), a transcendent realm beyond the mortal world.

A symbolic framework in tomb decoration can also be historical or moral. An entry in the History of the Latter Han records that Zhao Qi, a second-century Confucian scholar, designed his own grave while he was still living. He painted four historical figures of outstanding virtue "as guests flanking his portrait in the position of the host." This tradition of siting the dead in the company of exemplary historical figures survived into later periods, but the identities of such figures changed in accord with shifting intellectual trends and cultural conventions. When Confucianism prevailed during the Eastern Han and Song (25–1279), numerous funerary murals and carvings illustrated Confucian paragons, especially filial sons. When Daoism became fashionable during the Six Dynasties (220–589), however, a different set of cultural heroes took over the role of the "guests" flanking the deceased in a tomb. These are the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove—a group of third-century poets, philosophers, and musicians who escaped politics and found tranquility in nature. Portrayed on the side walls of a burial chamber, these men are grouped with a much earlier figure named Rong Qi, who is said to have attained immortality in antiquity (figs. 5 and 6).
The most popular symbolic program in decorating and furnishing a tomb, however, manifested the notion of a happy homeland. Even from the prehistoric period, a tomb was imagined as an underground household and transformed into an ideal home for the dead. Initially realized by furnishing a tomb with food, drink, and utensils, this idea also underlay the designs of later tombs that mimicked a household in architectural forms. Murals in large tombs sometimes depicted the office held by the deceased before his death. But in most cases a stereotypical image of the afterlife was constructed in tombs to fulfill the generic desire for wealth and sensual pleasure: the deceased sits in elaborate halls, feasting on delicacies while watching colorful performances. His possessions include numerous servants and attendants, large estates and livestock, and vast agricultural fields. Decorating the walls of a tomb, this idealized secular world formed a counterpart to the celestial and immortal realm on the ceiling and gables.

An exploration of these pictorial programs falls into the general domain of iconographical and iconological research, but the underground location of the images strongly informs their meaning. In other words, a study of East Asian funerary art should engage two types of questions. On the one hand, the awareness of some basic symbolic
Structures in tomb decoration encourages us to trace their origins and development; to observe their variations across regions; to link them with religious, cosmological, and ideological systems of the time; to think about the intention underlying the selection of one model over another, and to interpret the integration of heterogeneous images into complex designs. On the other hand, we need to consider the physical environment of these images and link them with other components there. One of these components is the wei. Instead of representing heaven, immortal paradise, or a happy home, it defines the subject for whom a symbolic environment was created.

Positioning the Soul

As the “place” or “position” of the posthumous soul, a wei could be signified by either tangible or intangible signs. One type of wei image presents the tomb occupant sitting on ascreened couch and surrounded by attendants. Another type omits the portrait but frames an empty space with furniture and objects. A third combines such framing with a nonrepresentational form of the dead, such as a wooden tablet. Before the emergence of the mortuary portrait in the third century B.C.E., these last two types were the dominant visual modes in representing the dead and maintained their currency even after the portrait was invented. 20

The concept of wei thus explains the many empty spaces constructed inside tombs. One such space is found in Mawangdui Tomb 1, of the early second century B.C.E., in which the body of a deceased aristocratic woman was placed in a series of nesting coffins in the middle of a large wooden casket. 21 Of the four chambers that surrounded the coffins, those to the east, west, and south contained grave goods, whereas the north chamber at the head of the corpse was arranged as a stage. Silk curtains were hung on the walls, and a bamboo mat covered the floor. Elaborate lacquer vessels were displayed in front of an empty couch furnished with thick cushions and backed by a painted screen—a seat prepared for an invisible subject. We realize the identity of this subject from the objects placed around the seat: in front of the couch were two pairs of silk shoes, next to which were a cane and two toilet boxes containing cosmetics and a wig—all intimate personal belongings of the deceased woman. Joining these objects to frame the space of the woman’s soul were several groups of figurines, including singers and dancers performing to the accompaniment of a group of musicians. This performance was staged at the east end of the room, opposite the couch at the west end. We can well imagine the invisible tomb occupant enjoying food and drink while watching the performance from the couch.

This example helps clarify the identity of the imaginary spectator in Lu Ji’s poem cited earlier: when the narrator speaks about what he is hearing and seeing under the “wide firmament” inside a tomb, he most likely assumes the point of view of the disembodied spirit of the dead, not of his corpse. Mawangdui Tomb 1 belongs to an early type of burial site known as a casket grave. When this form developed into what is known as a chamber grave, greater efforts were made to construct places for the posthumous soul within a roomier, houselike structure beneath the earth. Starting from the first and second centuries C.E. in China, even small and mid-sized tombs contained a special raised platform for a ritual offering. Sometimes a tent or screen further adorned

5. Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove and Rong QiQi, brick relief excavated from a tomb at Xishanqiao, Jiangsu Province, China, mid-fifth century C.E., ink rubbing
From Tao Qian and Gu Bing, Lin Chao yishu (Art of the Six Dynasties) (Beijing, 1981), fig. 162

6. Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove and Rong QiQi, brick relief excavated from a tomb at Xishanqiao, Jiangsu Province, China, mid-fifth century C.E., ink rubbing
From Tao Qian and Gu Bing, Lin Chao yishu (Art of the Six Dynasties) (Beijing, 1981), fig. 16
platform in the main chamber shows the male tomb occupant—a former governor of Youzhou named Chin—receiving homage from thirteen magistrates under his jurisdiction (fig. 8).

The concept of the wei has three methodological implications for a study of traditional East Asian tombs. First, because this space is often an "empty center" constructed through framing, it is never recorded in archaeological reports, which instead itemize the framing devices as individual objects. This crucial space must therefore be reconstructed through art historical research. Second, the restoration of a wei enables us to see a tomb's interior from the vantage point of the posthumous soul. Instead of conducting purely iconographic research on tomb murals and carvings, we can now shift our focus to the dynamic relationship between such images and an imaginary viewing subject.

Third, representations of the wei continued in East Asia for at least two thousand years. In a newly excavated multichamber tomb belonging to the tenth-century warlord Wang Chuzhi, the wei acquired more complex forms in multiple locations.23 In the middle of the main chamber, which mimics a reception hall, a stone epitaph bearing Wang's biography was placed in front of a large screen. Both epitaph and screen, as well as two large relief carvings on the side walls representing elegant female musicians, signified the presence of Wang's soul. While this arrangement followed the tradition of the Mawangdui tomb, additional wei for Wang and his wife were constructed inside two small rooms on either side of the main chamber. The mural in each room portrays not the likenesses of husband and wife but two groups of male and female objects, including different types of hats and mirrors, screens painted with landscapes or flowers, and toilet boxes of complementary shapes (figs. 9 and 10). In deliberate symmetry, this pair of pictures indicates the couple's posthumous existence by constructing two gendered spaces.

Materiality

Having discussed some major symbolic spaces constructed in East Asian tombs, here I shift the focus to the things that
furnished grave chambers and consider how and why certain materials, media, sizes, shapes, and colors were chosen for these objects. Differing from traditional connoisseurship and formal analysis, my approach is to identify not their independent historical or aesthetic value but rather their associations with death and the afterlife—associations that stimulated a wide range of experiments in medium, form, and style in East Asian art.

Spirit Articles

A key concept in the study of East Asian funerary art is *mingqi*, often rendered in English as “spirit articles.” By definition, *mingqi* are objects [including figurines] made for the dead, but it was also understood that their association with death had to be realized through specific physical attributes. Checking traditional Chinese texts, we find that a conscious effort emerged in the late Eastern Zhou [fourth to third centuries B.C.E.] to define *mingqi* as a special category of objects within a larger assemblage of tomb furnishings; the other two categories were *shengqi* [utensils] and *jiqi* [sacrificial vessels], both of which had belonged to a tomb occupant when he was alive. The philosopher Xunzi [fl. 298–238 B.C.E.], for example, used the terms *mingqi* and *shengqi* to designate two types of burial goods. The same distinction also underlay funerary rites, in which grave goods were displayed in groups before entombment. According to *Yi li* [Ceremonies and rites], a funerary ceremony for a *shi* [lower official] would have included *mingqi* as well as *shengqi*: the latter further consisted of daily utensils, musical instruments, weapons and armor, and intimate possessions of the dead, such as his cap, cane, and bamboo mat. When the deceased was a *dafa* [senior official] or had an even higher rank, he was entitled to bring with him not only *mingqi* and *shengqi* but also sacrificial vessels previously used in communal ritual affairs. The author of the *Book of Rites* thus called *mingqi* “ghost articles,” as opposed to the sacrificial vessels known as *renqi*, or “human vessels.”

How can a “ghost article” be distinguished from utensils and sacrificial vessels? Answers to this question were also sought by Eastern Zhou philosophers and ritual specialists, Xunzi among them. He concluded his
relationship. Following the first line of inquiry, we can trace the tradition of mingqi back to a very early period in East Asia, as some of the most impressive vessels from prehistoric times were made specifically for burials (figs. 11–13). We can also define certain crucial stages in the development of mingqi. For example, scholars have noted an important change in Chinese tomb furnishings from the fifth to the third centuries B.C.E.—exactly the period when writers developed an intense interest in the nature of spirit articles. The great bulk of grave pottery of this period comprised soft and low-fired vessels, differing markedly from contemporary utilitarian objects found in habitation sites. Many such grave vessels imitated ritual bronzes, but one should not mistake them for cheap surrogates for more expensive objects, as they often have complex shapes and decoration and were placed in tombs belonging to those of the highest rank. The reason for their production must be found in the concept of mingqi: as objects made for the dead, they were designed to retain the form of real ritual vessels but not their function and substance.

Following the second line of inquiry, we can discover the deliberate mixing of spirit articles and other types of objects. One such example occurs in the mausoleum of King Cuo of the state of Zhongshan. Artifacts from this late-fourth-century B.C.E. tomb fall into three categories with radically different appearances and functions: the first group consists of temple vessels, made of pure bronze and sometimes bearing long commemorative inscriptions (fig. 14). The second group consists of expensive utilitarian objects—beautiful lamps, a table, and a screen—all brilliantly inlaid and exhibiting naturalistic or fantastic images (fig. 15). Objects in the third group—black pottery vessels decorated with incised and scraped patterns—give an opposite, solemn impression (fig. 16). However striking visually, these are soft and low-fired ceramic wares that could not have been put to use; their shining black surface resulted from a special burning process. The identity of this third group as unusable mingqi is further confirmed by the vessels' design: a plate has a sculpted bird in the middle; a he has a spout shaped like a duck's head that could hardly be used to pour out water or wine.


Material, Size, and Medium

Most domestic buildings in traditional East Asia were timber framed; the use of stone to construct tombs and coffins was thus necessarily a deliberate choice invested with specific meaning. Such stone ritual structures appeared in different regions across East Asia roughly from the second century B.C.E. to the sixth century C.E. Textual and archaeological evidence from China allows an exploration of the religious implications of this broad historical development. Briefly, when stone tomb and sarcophagi appeared in China from the second century B.C.E. onward, this material was symbolically opposed to wood. Whereas all the natural characteristics of stone—strength, plainness, and especially endurance—became analogous to eternity, wood, which was vulnerable to the natural elements, was associated with temporal, mortal existence. From this dichotomy emerged two kinds of architecture: structures made of wood, used by the living, and structures made of stone, dedicated to the dead, the gods, and the immortals. The double association of stone with death on one hand and with immortality on the other further strengthened the link between death and immortality.

Stone was sometimes employed in making mingqi, but many spirit articles for members of the elite favored materials that were not only durable but also precious and beautiful. Thus these materials—gold, bronze,
and jade—conveyed a heightened sense of timelessness and pleasure in the afterlife. Texts record that early Korean rulers commissioned jade coffins for themselves; one such object and many “jade suits” have been excavated from Han princely tombs, demonstrating a high fashion at the time. Abundant gold and gilded ornaments furnished the royal burials of the kingdoms of Silla and Paekche. Among the nearly five thousand such objects from King Munyong’s tomb is a pair of golden ornamental shoes with long spikes protruding from the bottom, suggesting that an entire array of gold and gilded costume and ornaments from the tomb, including a dazzling crown, was created for the deceased ruler (fig. 17). Similar objects found in other Korean and Japanese tombs indicate that similar ritual conventions transcended political boundaries.

The mortuary use of bronze mirrors provides another interesting case for studying cultural transmission in East Asia. Like stone, bronze symbolized longevity during the Han because of its durability, and mirrors made of this material appear in Han tombs on a fairly regular basis. It was uncommon, however, for a large number of these objects to accompany the deceased; neither is it certain whether some mirrors were specially made for burials. The situation was different in Japan: after Chinese mirrors were introduced to Japan, possibly by the legendary Queen Himiko of Yamatai in the third century (as recorded in the History of the Kingdom of Wei), bronze mirrors—both imported ones and local imitations—became prestigious grave goods and were buried in large quantities—sometimes more than thirty—in a single tomb. When Japanese-style mirrors eventually appeared, some of them bore the so-called chokkomon patterns consisting of broken arcs drawn over diagonals and crosses (fig. 18). Firmly associated with the realm of the dead, these patterns also decorated tomb chambers and sarcophagi.

Size is another important aspect of East Asian funerary art and architecture. In his influential Fa li (Family rituals), the Song dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200 C.E.) begins the section “Making Spirit Articles” with this instruction: “Carve wood to make carts and horses, male and female servants, and all the things needed to care for the deceased. The objects should resemble those used in real life but be smaller.” Clearly based on the classic notion that spirit articles resemble real objects but cannot be put to use, Zhu’s instruction also summarizes a time-honored convention in making tomb figurines throughout Chinese
Buried underground, the miniatures in Yangling and other ancient tombs not only substituted for the human world but also constituted a world free from the natural laws of reality, thereby extending life in perpetuity.

Medium, the third aspect of a tomb's materiality, underwent a series of changes over the history of East Asian funerary art and became increasingly rich during this process. Spirit vessels signified the first major advance toward a system of representation inside grave chambers: by imitating and distorting real objects, they symbolized both connection and separation between life and death. When tomb figurines appeared around the mid-first millennium B.C.E. in China, they conveyed similar significance but were given a more definite representational function in substituting for human sacrifices. Such sculptured forms were subsequently replaced by pictorial images. An important piece of evidence for this development comes from Mawangdui Tomb 3: an inventory of grave goods from the burial specifies that 676 "male spirit servants" and 180 "female spirit servants" served their deceased master in the underworld. Among these, only 104 were represented by figurines; the rest appeared in large silk paintings hung on the walls of the coffin chamber. Compared to sculpture, painting had the advantage of representing lively activities in complex compositions. After chamber tombs became popular in the first century B.C.E., their walls and ceilings provided large spaces for pictorial images, whose subjects were expanded to include historical stories, star maps, and immortal paradise.

Although invented at different times, spirit articles, funerary figurines, and tomb murals were not consecutive stages in a linear evolution. Instead of replacing older forms and mediums, later inventions enriched and supplemented them. In other words, after the first century B.C.E., wall painting, sculpture, and objects were often used in combination to furnish a tomb. In a late third-century tomb at Foyemiaowang in Gansu, for example, architectural forms (a niche and a platform), a mural (a painted tent), and sacrificial vessels together defined the wei of the departed soul (see fig. 7). Much more complex paintings covered the walls of
elite tombs of the sixth to eighth centuries in north China, which also contained hundreds of figurines in burial chambers and along the passageways. No convincing explanation has been offered to illuminate the relationship between these two-dimensional and three-dimensional images. One hypothesis is that together they constituted large processions entering or leaving the burial chamber, thereby symbolizing various stages in the soul’s transformation. This and similar interpretations lead us to the issue of time in funerary art and architecture.

Temporality

A standard definition of temporality is a “quality and state of time” that substantiates a temporal order or concept. Paul Ricoeur, for one, speaks about no fewer than twenty kinds of time in his book *Time and Narrative*. One issue at the center of his rumination, however, is the interaction between a “lived time” experienced by individuals and a cosmic or mythic time attributed to an external order. According to Ricoeur, this interaction—both tension and collaboration—gives rise to historical narrative and fictional imagination. Not intending to apply his theory to East Asian tombs, I have nevertheless been surprised by how well this interaction helps illuminate these ancient ritual structures.

*Cosmic Time, Biography, and “Lived Objects”*

Above I discuss a cosmic space constructed inside many graves in East Asia: we see it in Koguryo and Paekche burials in Three Kingdoms Korea, in the Takamatsuzuka tomb of early historical Japan, and in numerous Chinese chamber tombs constructed after the second century B.C.E. (see fig. 3). In all these instances, the interior space of an underground chamber is transformed into a microcosm of the universe, with the sky above and earth below. This spatial configuration also offers an important mode for representing time, as one of its main purposes is to delineate temporal movements in a cosmic space. Approached as such, even the minimalist decoration of an early-first-century tomb near Luoyang played this double role (fig. 20): according to the ancient “Five Elements” theory, the five protrusions on the tomb’s ceiling symbolized both the five divisions of the universe and the five phases of a perpetual cosmic transformation. We can thus redefine this type of interiority as a spatial and temporal program and relate it to Ricoeur’s notion of cosmic or mythic time.

The historical development of this type of decoration also reflects a constant desire to portray time, thereby infusing motion and dynamism in a place locked in darkness. Whereas the basic visual structure of the spatial and temporal program came into being in the first century B.C.E. and changed little for the next two thousand years, it constantly incorporated new images pertaining to various kinds of cosmic movements. One crucial advance in this development is the inclusion of the twelve calendrical animals, symbols of the Twelve Earthly Branches [*Di zhi*]. In the traditional calendar, these branches were combined with the Ten Heavenly Stems to form sexenary cycles. Used independently, they correlate with the twelve *chen*, the sectors of the sky around the equator, across which the sun, the moon, and Jupiter moved. In Chinese and Korean tombs from the sixth century onward, the Twelve Branches were represented in tombs in different forms, from painted zoomorphic images to freestanding and relief carvings of
half or full human figures (fig. 21). Their placement also became gradually systematized, eventually forming a tight circle to surround an underground chamber. Schematic drawings of this arrangement exist in Da Han yuanling mizang jing (The secret burial classic of the original sepulchres of the Great Han), a twelfth-century ritual manual concerned mainly with the proper alignment of a tomb with cosmic forces. The diagrams reproduced in figure 22 show burial chambers designed for people of different social status, from emperor to commoner. While the figurines in each design (identified by labels) vary markedly in number and kind, the spatial-temporal schema is the same: the four layouts all place the coffin in the center, within a rectangular frame made up of the Twelve Earthly Branches.

The same schema characterizes the designs of stone epitaphs, which became regular components of Chinese aristocratic burials after the sixth century. Placed in the center of a tomb, a standard epitaph consists of two matching square slabs. The lower slab bears a biography of the deceased; the upper one is inscribed with the individual's name and official title, sometimes framed by a cosmic diagram. In an example dated to 946, four sets of cosmic or mythic symbols constitute this frame: they include, from inside to outside, the eight trigrams, the twelve calendrical animals, the twenty-eight xiu or lunar lodgings, and the four directional animals (fig. 23). In the original burial, metal bindings fastened the two sections of an epitaph into a whole with the biography sealed inside. The object can thus be considered a symbolic tomb within a tomb: the biography as a representation of the dead was concealed much as the corpse was entombed under a starred ceiling. A stone epitaph thus encapsulates the essence of a grave by inscribing a cosmic spatial and temporal program over an actual life.

Whether composed as an epitaph or a pictorial narrative, a biographical representation
human hair, a mirror and a mirror polisher, a used needle case, and a personal seal. The wooden cane placed next to the couch confirms that these objects were indeed personal possessions of the deceased woman; her portrait from the tomb depicts her leaning on the same cane (fig. 34).

Like spirit articles, shengqi offer a fundamental concept through which to rethink East Asian funerary art. “Lived objects” might include paintings and jades from the collection of a deceased art lover, books and manuscripts from a scholar’s personal library, legal documents accumulated by a former official, and ritual paraphernalia owned by a Buddhist or Daoist monk. Connected with the corpse, such objects represented the former existence of the deceased. Used to frame a wei, they indicated the present existence in a tomb is a retrospective narrative with a strong emphasis on the public image of the dead. As such, it highlights the distinguished career of an official, the intellectual aspiration of a scholar, or the outstanding virtue of a wife. Stock images and analogies supplied this type of representation with a standard vocabulary, while biographical details perceived as insignificant were largely omitted. Such writings and paintings were often complemented by another kind of representation, which conveyed the deceased’s personal experiences in the afterlife. The basic means to achieve this goal was to install shengqi in a tomb. As explained in the previous section, shengqi differ from mingqi or “spirit articles” made for the departed soul; they are grave goods originally possessed and used by the occupant of a tomb. Borrowing Ricoeur’s concept, we can define shengqi as objects that embody “lived time.”

Many ancient East Asian tombs contained such objects, although archaeological reports typically ignore their identity. Often placed inside the coffin or around a wei, they attached memories of the tomb occupant to his or her body and soul. In Mawangdui Tomb 1, these special objects included two pairs of silk shoes that bore traces of use, two exquisite toilet boxes, carefully wrapped in silk, containing cosmetics; a wig made of

A

B

C

D

21. Two calendrical pottery animals, excavated at Hansenzhai, Xi’an, Shanxi Province, c. eighth century C.E. Museum of Chinese History, Beijing.

22. Designs for tombs of different ranks
From Zhang Jingwen, Da Han yanhuang jingzi (The secret burial classic of the original sculptors of the Great Han), twelfth century C.E., Yongle dadian (The encyclopedia of the Yongle emperor’s reign in the Ming dynasty), vol. 8199, 1-53.

23. Cover of a stone epitaph from a tomb in Jiangsu, China, 946 C.E., ink rubbing, Yangzhou Museum
From Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Zhongguo guqi tianwen wenwu tuji (Illustrated cultural relics related to ancient Chinese astronomy) (Beijing, 1980), pl. 72.
of the posthumous soul. This dual temporality underlies Xunzi’s reason for displaying shengqi at the funeral: these objects most effectively remind people of the continuity between life and death. Buried inside a tomb, shengqi extended this continuity into the afterlife. No longer visible, they ceased to stir up people’s memories of the dead and instead helped define and bridge the dual existences of the dead in the netherworld as both an immobile corpse and a living soul. The meaning of shengqi thus lay in their pastness as well as in their presentness: originating in the past, they now reattached themselves to a perpetual present in a grave. Their double association with the past and the present implies the passage of time and transformation, and prompts us to explore narrative representations in funerary art.

Journeying through Time and Space

Each of the three representations of time discussed so far—a cosmic spatial and temporal program, biography, and lived objects—is a self-sustaining visual system pertaining to a specific temporal order. The temporalities these representations signify are not interchangeable. But two structural devices—spatial juxtaposition and narrative linking—allowed tomb builders and decorators to relate these representations in an overall architectural and pictorial program. I have shown many examples that demonstrate juxtapositions between above...
25. Image of sailing from Mesurashi-zuka tomb, Fukuoka Prefecture, innermost wall, drawing after mural painting
Visual Resources, Department of Art History, University of Chicago

26. Image of sailing from Toritune-zuka tomb, Fukuoka Prefecture, innermost wall, drawing after mural painting
Visual Resources, Department of Art History, University of Chicago
and below, center and periphery, and the corpse and the wei. Although all such pairings were necessarily based on conceptual duality, there was also a conscious effort in East Asian funerary art from early on to connect separate states of being into a continuous progression. The most important visual metaphor for such continuity is a journey.

That death represents a transitory stage was a widespread belief in traditional East Asia. Correspondingly, a tomb was conceived as a vehicle for a posthumous journey. In China, horse-drawn chariots became a regular component of the tombs of the elite from the second millennium B.C.E. on; some Western Zhou tombs were themselves arranged like a chariot, with wheels placed alongside the walls of a grave chamber. Horses also furnished Three Kingdom Korean tombs; the finding of two sets of harness above the great Silla royal burials at Huangnam has led Korean scholars to contend that horses were sacrificed there to facilitate the ascension of a deceased royal couple to heaven. In Japan as well as on the continent, the widespread custom of burying the dead in boat-shaped coffins again discloses the notion of journeying in the afterlife.

When chamber tombs emerged and pictorial decoration prevailed, the idea of a posthumous journey stimulated many new images. Boats and sailing became prominent motifs in Japanese “decorated tombs” of the late Kofun period (figs. 25 and 26) and are believed to be “associated with the transporting of the soul of the deceased to another land.” But it was large procession scenes that most effectively alluded to a continuous metaphorical journey, in which death is conceived as a liminal experience. The most explicit representation of a two-part journey—first a funerary procession to the grave and then an imaginary tour in the afterlife—is found in a mid-second-century tomb at Cangshan in Shandong. Fortuitously for art historians, this tomb also contained a long inscription that explains the tomb’s decoration in a coherent narrative.

The writer of the inscription begins his description from the rear chamber, where the coffin lay. All carvings in this section are mythical in nature, including celestial scenes and heavenly beings. He then moves on to identify the pictures in the main chamber. Here, human figures become the main subject of depiction, and a funerary procession is represented in two horizontal compositions on the east and west walls. The first picture on the west wall shows an official funerary procession crossing a river, a symbol of death (fig. 27). As the funerary journey continues on the east wall, it becomes more private. The wife of the deceased now takes over the main role in the ritual, escorting the “soul carriage” of her husband to the burial ground. The funerary journey ends at a traveler’s inn. With its half-opened gates, this symbol of transit offers a poignant metaphor for a tomb (fig. 28). Passing through the gates signified the burial of the deceased: he would live in his underground home for eternity. The next picture, placed directly under the image of the traveler’s inn, is therefore an idealized portrait of the deceased. Set in a niche, this portrait defines the wei of the deceased’s soul in the tomb. As in Mawangdui Tomb 1,
the deceased, or his soul, enjoys sensual pleasures such as delicacies, music and dance performances, and female beauty. The last scene in this pictorial program once again shows a chariot procession, but the inscription tells us that this scene represents a posthumous journey taken by the deceased's soul. This explains why this procession is carved on the tomb's facade and why its orientation is reversed: now running left to right instead of right to left, its objective is the great immortal the Queen Mother of the West, who appears on the right column under the door lintel.

Conclusion

This essay proposes a conceptual framework based on two premises as a way to study traditional East Asian funerary art. The first is the concealment of underground tomb chambers after burial—a fundamental cultural convention which must have determined the purposes and designs of these ritual structures as well as their decoration and furnishing. The second is the organic, multifaceted nature of a tomb, which never simply offered an empty container but always brought different media—architecture, objects, and pictorial forms—into complex interplay. This basic recognition questions the medium-oriented approach of current scholarship on East Asian funerary art and also problematizes some general art historical concepts such as visual perception and iconography.

My discussion has shown that various symbolic environments were created for the dead in tombs. The special place prepared for the disembodied soul—the *wei*—defined the vantage point of an imaginary perception within a tomb's sealed interior. Conceived as integral components of these symbolic spaces, *mingqi*, or spirit articles, grew into a distinct art tradition and constantly generated new interest in the visual forms of objects. The desire to infuse the afterlife with dynamism and movement further stimulated various representations of time, among which a pictorial journey unified related but separate realms into a continuous transformation of the soul.

This conceptual framework does not lend itself to constructing a teleological evolution of funerary art, but it is especially useful in revealing complex historical situations, diverse ideologies, and regional differences. One such situation is the coexistence of radically different burial forms and decorative modes in Song times. The type of tomb with ornate architectural details and illusionistic murals mentioned earlier in this essay (see fig. 2) reflected the taste of the merchant-landlord class only. It was rejected by contemporary scholar-officials, who constructed for themselves much plainer graves in a classical style. Promoted by leading neo-Confucian thinkers, this second type of burial became orthodox not only in Ming-Qing China but also in Korea, where King Kong-yang decreed in 1390 that funerary rites should be conducted according to Zhu Xi's *Ja Li* (Family rituals).

In the end, this conceptual framework implies the need to establish funerary art as a subfield of East Asian art history. If tombs
have been fragmented to provide materials for studying painting, sculpture, bronze, jade, ceramics, and architecture, they should now be scrutinized in their own right, because only in so doing can we uncover their internal logic, reconstruct their historical development, and understand their essential role in shaping visual norms and criteria in traditional East Asian art.

NOTES


3. A famous passage repeated in *Lushi chunqiu* (Mr. Li’s spring and autumn annals) and *Li ji* (Book of Rites) reads: “What does burial mean? It means to conceal [cang].” See *Zhuzi jicheng* (Collected works by ancient philosophers), 10 vols. (Beijing, 1986), 4:96. Valuable archaeological evidence for this concept is found in Feng Ruiju’s tomb at Yanghe, Henan. An inscription in the tomb dates it to 10 C.E. and identifies the central chamber as the “hidden pavilion” (cang ge) of the deceased. Another inscription expresses the wish that this burial “will not be exposed for a thousand years.” Han Yuxiang and Li Chenquang, eds., *Nanyang Han dai huaxiangshi shu* [Han dynasty pictorial stone tombs at Nanyang] (Zhengzhou, 1998), 70.


5. Examples of such museums include the Museum of the Western Han King of Nanyue in Guangzhou, the Museum of King Murong of the Xiongnu Kingdom in Xianju, and the Takamatsuzuka Kofun Museum in Nara.


7. Developing this idea, which I proposed in a seminar course at the University of Chicago, Wei-cheng Lin has written an excellent paper, “Wooden Architectural Structure in Brick: A Case Study of Northern Song Cupola-like Corbelled Dome Tombs,” unpublished MS.

8. Sima Qian, Shi ji [Historical records] [Beijing, 1959], 265.


11. These examples include a series of chamber tombs found near Luoyang and Xi’an, two metropolitan centers of the Han Empire. For an introduction, see He Xilin, Gomu dangqing: Han dai mau shi biaohua de juxian yu yanjiu [Paintings in ancient tombs: The finding and study of tomb murals of the Han dynasty] [Xi’an, 2001], 18–41.

12. See Suenaga Masao and Inoue Mitsusada, eds., Takamatsuzuka hekiga kofun [The painted ancient tomb at Takamatsuzuka] [Tokyo, 1972].

13. For an up-to-date introduction to Koguroy tomb murals, see Kim Lena, ed., Koguroy Tomb Murals [Seoul, 2004]. This pictorial program was not limited to Koguroy but also characterizes tomb murals in Paekche in the south: some tombs decorated with large directional animals exist in Puyo, the site of the final capital of Paekche.


16. Similar phenomena are also discussed in Wei-cheng Lin, “Wooden Architectural Structure in Brick.”

17. See Wei Cuncheng, Gaogouli yiti [Remains of Koguroy] [Beijing, 2002], 172–203.

18. One such example is the tomb of Feng Daozheng at Datong, Shanxi Province. According to an inscription from the tomb, Feng was the founder of a Daoist temple in the precinct. See “Shanxisheng Datongshi Yuan dai Feng Daozheng, Wang Qing mu qingli jianbao” [A brief report on the discovery of tombs of Feng Daozheng and Wang Qing of the Yuan Dynasty at Datong], Wenwai 1962, no. 10: 34–43.


20. I have observed elsewhere that the concept of wei underlies an entire system of visual presentation and representation in ancient China beyond funerary art. Numerous texts and images, including all those classified as tu-diagrams, are created based on this concept. Wu Hung, “A Deity without Form: The Earliest Representation of Laozi and the Concept of Wei in Chinese Ritual Art,” Orientations 34, no. 4 [April 2002]: 38–43.

21. For a detailed excavation report of this tomb, see the Hunan Provincial Museum and Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu [Mawangdui Tomb no. 1 in Changsha], 2 vols. [Beijing, 1973].

22. The most detailed publication on this tomb is Kôkuri hekiga kofun [An ancient Koguroy mural tomb at Tokunuri] [Tokyo, 1986].


24. For a discussion of the emergence of this concept and related discourse, see Wu Hung, “‘Mingqi’ de liulan he shijian—Zhangqiu siqi liyi meishuo zhong de guanxinhuaxing qingxiang” [The theory and practice of “spirit vessels—A conceptual tendency in Warring States ritual art], Wenwai 2006, no. 6: 72–81.

25. Kunzi [Writings of Kunzi], in Zhuzi ji chang, 2:245. For an English translation of the passage, see Burton Watson, trans., Hsin Tsu: Basic Writings [New York, 1963], 104.


27. See Zhang Xuan’s commentary on the Yi li, in Ruan Yuan 1980, 1:1149.


30. Such vessels include ceramic wares from the Shandong Longshan culture that flourished on the Shandong Peninsula from the third to the second millennium B.C.E. In Korea and Japan, special pottery vessels also furnished tombs from early on. Korean archaeologists have identified a type of bright
red-orange pottery as grave vessels. Similar ceramic products were used in Jomon burials in prehistoric Japan and continued into the Yayoi period. See Anne Underhill, *Craft Production and Social Change in Northern China* (New York, 2006), 85, and Sarah M. Nelson, *The Archaeology of Korea* (Cambridge, 1993), 121-123.


32. A huge tomb inside the capital of the Yan state contained many such pottery objects, which imitated an entire array of ritual bronzes, including bells used in a ritual orchestra. For the excavation report, see Hebei Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics, *"Hebei Yinxian Yanxiadu di shiliu hao mu fajue"* [The excavation of Tomb No. 16 at Yinxian Xia, Hebei], *Kaogu xuebao* 1965, no. 2: 79-102.

33. For a complete excavation report of the tomb, see Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics, *Cuo ma—Zhanggou Zhongshangou guowang zhi mu* [Tomb of Cuo, the King of the Zhongshan State in the Warring States period], 2 vols. (Beijing, 1995).

34. Li Zhiyan, "Zhongshan wangu chu chu de taqgi" [Bronze objects unearthed from the mausoleums of Zhongshan kings], *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 1979, no. 2: 93-94.

35. Here I refer to architectural and architectonic structures constructed of prepared masonry materials, not burial mounds or dolmens of piled stone, which were widespread in East Asia during prehistoric times.

36. This historical process is discussed in greater detail in Wu Hung, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford, Calif., 1995), 121-142.

37. Sima Qian mentioned a stone chamber of the Queen Mother of the West in *Shi ji* (1959), 3163-3164. Extant stone structures dedicated to gods and immortals include pillar gates at Dengfeng in Henan, one forming the entrance to the sacred mountain Shaozhi and the other belonging to the temple of the legendary figure Qinzi [the Mother of Qi]. See Chen Mingda, "Han dai de shiqi" [Stone que pillar gates of the Han dynasty], *Wenwu* 12 (1961): 9-23.


41. For a detailed excavation report of the tomb, see Administrative Bureau of Cultural Properties, the Republic of Korea, *Munjong wanggung* [Mausoleum of King Munjong] (Tokyo, 1974).

42. For an illustration of the ornamental shoes from King Munjong’s tomb, see National Museum of Korea, *Paekche* [exh. cat.] (Seoul, 1999), fig. 234. For a comparative Japanese example, see fig. 207 in the same book.


44. For example, in the Otsukayama tomb in Kyoto Prefecture, thirty-two of the thirty-six mirrors are of the "divine animal" type. Scholars like Kobayashi Yukinari believe that these mirrors were funerary gifts distributed to regional rulers by a central authority located in Kini.


46. A glaring exception to this convention is the first emperor’s Lishan mausoleum, whose thousands of life-size figures broke with the tradition of miniature figurines. I have explained these unusual forms as reflections of the emperor’s penchant for the gigantic: Wu Hung, *"On Tomb Figurines: The Beginning of a Visual Tradition," in Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture*, ed. Wu Hung and Katherine R. Tsiang, *Harvard East Asian Monographs* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 46-47. However not all images in the Lishan Mausoleum duplicate real things. The most precious object so far discovered there—a bronze chariot stationed next to the emperor’s grave—is only half size. It seems that in making a vehicle for his posthumous journey, the emperor had to adhere to the traditional norms for spirit articles.

47. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narrative of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, N.C., 1993), 65.


49. For a full excavation report of the tomb, see Gansu Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, *Dunhuang Foyemiaowan Xi Jin huaxiangzhuang mu* [Pictorial brick tomb of the Western Jin period at Foyemiaowan, Dunhuang] (Beijing, 1998), 31-39.

50. One such tomb belonged to Lou Rui, a royal relative of the Northern Qi. See Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, *Taiyuan Municipal Administrative Committee of Cultural Relics, Taiyuan shi Bei Qi Lou Rui mu fajue jianbao* [A brief report on the excavation of the Northern Qi tomb of Luo Ruo at Taiyuan], *Wenwu* 1983, no. 10: 1-21.
51. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols. (Chicago and London, 1984–1988). Temporal concepts discussed by Ricoeur include cosmic time, universal time, monumental time, mythic time, astral time, common time, objective time, historical time, mortal time, lived time, ordinary time, ritual time, physical time, psychological time, private time, public time, anonymous time, as well as calendar, chronicle, and other concepts. See especially part 4, vol. 2, "Narrated Time."

52. This last form is exemplified by the tenth-century tomb of Wang Chuzhi. See Hebei Provincial Institute 1998.

53. In Judy Ho's words, "The square epitaph can be understood as a miniature version of the tomb. The domed cover and square bottom are analogous to tomb structure" in "The Twelve Calendrical Animals in Tang Tombs," in Kuwayama 1991, 60–83, quotation from 71.


58. For a detailed discussion of this tomb, see Wu Hung, "Beyond the Great Boundary: Funerary Narrative in Early Chinese Art," in Hay 1994, 81–104.