

W10 (Week 3, Friday)

# **The landscape of the tomb**

## Chinese Tombs: Housing for the Afterlife

HPAR4010

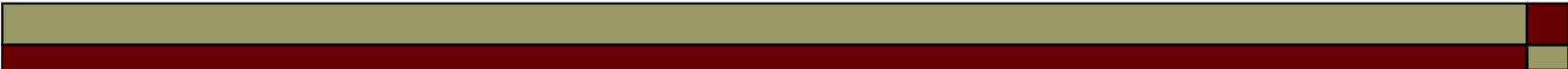
What makes civilisation?

Dr Katharina Zinn / Dr Thomas Jansen

# Why Chinese tombs?

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- “[T]he early Chinese tomb is not only the repository for the body of the deceased but also a site of funerary rituals, the cult of the dead, and an expression of individual and collective concerns about death and the afterlife.” (Lai Guolong 2015: 22)
- Transition from the vertical pit-style tomb to the horizontal chamber-style tomb → spatial transformation



# Three shifts in burial culture

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1. Shift in burial ideology from the hiding of the corpse in the Shang and Western Zhou periods to its luxurious public display in the Warring States period and the early empires.
2. Demand for burying a husband and wife together in a single burial space; demand reflects fundamental social changes in early China from a lineage-based structure to a more family-based structure.
3. Driving force behind the spatial transformation was the new conception of the dead as baleful and potentially threatening ghosts that needed to be pacified and segregated.

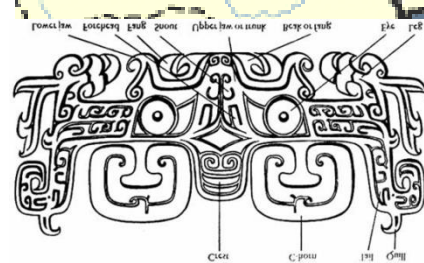
# Chinese dynasties mentioned in this module

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|                                       |     |                |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----------------|
| Xia (legendary)                       | 夏   | 21-16 c. BCE   |
| Shang                                 | 商   | 16-11 c. BCE   |
| Zhou                                  | 周   | 11 c.- BCE 256 |
| Western Zhou                          | 西 周 | 11 c.-BCE 771  |
| Eastern Zhou                          | 東 周 | BCE 770-256    |
| Spring-and-Autumn /<br>Chunqiu-Period | 春 秋 | BC 770-476     |
| Warring States / Zhanguo-<br>Period   | 戰 國 | BCE 481-221    |
| Qin                                   | 秦   | 221-206 BCE    |
| Han                                   | 漢   | 206 BCE-220 CE |

# Shang (1523 - 1028 B.C.)

商。。。 history



# *Shi Qiang* bronze vessel (*pan*)



Middle Western Zhou Dynasty (end of tenth century B.C.)  
Zhouyuan Administrative Office of Cultural Relics, Fufeng  
©2015 National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

## Bronze gui, known as Kang hou gui.

Early Western Zhou dynasty (1050-770 BC);

[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A\\_1977-0404-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1977-0404-1)

- The Zhou developed the Shang practice of inscribing vessels to record family achievements and honours, and inscribed vessels are still very highly prized.
- New function, that of communicating the political and social achievements of their owners
- This *gui* is famous for its inscription, which is written in the centre of the interior of the vessel and was intended to be seen by the ancestors for whom it was made.



## Shift in attitudes between Shang/Western Zhou and Warring States

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- New, previously undocumented category of unquiet ghosts appears in the religious pantheon;
- Individuals who died without posterity (*jue wu hou zhe* 絕無後者), who perished violently (*qiang si* 強死) or who were slain with weapons (*bing si* 兵死)
- Initially this involved only aristocrats but also encompassed conscripted commoners who died in war and other members of the general population.

## Changes in pantheon: Baoshan Tomb 2 (excavated 1986) (Zhao Tuo, Chief Minister of the Left at the Chu court, died 316 BCE

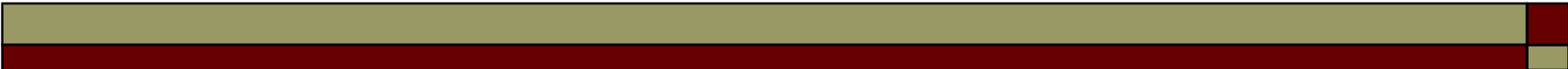
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- S1. Pre-dynasty kings of the Shang people;
  - S2. Shang dynastic ancestors, starting with Da Yi (also called Tang, the founder of the Shang dynasty);
  - S3. Heir-producing ancestral consorts;
  - S4. Former lords: human spirits outside the Shang lineage core, such as Yi Yin;
  - S5. Nature deities, such as river gods, mountain gods, the sun, and the earth; and
  - S6. Di, the supreme god and the highest celestial power.
- W1. His direct ancestors: King Zhao (r. 515–489 bce), the Lord of Pingye (Ziliang), the Lord of Wu (Zichun), Marshal Ziyin, the Lord of Cai (Zijia), and Shao Tuo's mother; these are the five generations of Shao Tuo's recent ancestors;
  - W2. Royal ancestors of the Chu state: the three royal ancestors
  - W3. Nature deities: such as the Grand One, the Lord of Earth, the Controller of Lifespan, the Controller of Misfortune, the Grand Water, the Two Children of Heaven, the Five Mountains, Mount Wei; the sun and the moon; etc.;
  - W4. Individuals who died violent deaths or without posterity: Shao Tuo's uncle Dongling Lianxiao (Zifa) and his brothers Shao Liang, Shao Cheng, and the Lord of Xianluo; and
  - W5. Those slain with weapons, the spirit of At-the-Water, those who drowned, the blameless dead, and others.

# Divination and Pledge Ritual

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- Shao Tuo used divination and exorcism to deal with the malevolent spirits
- **Divination 3:** “The illness presents intumescences, he cannot breathe; may it still be possible that he not die.”
- **Prognostication:** “He will not die, but there are calamities stemming from those who died without posterity and signs of calamities appearing on the wooden stand for the fecundity god (*jian mu wei* 漸木位).”
- **Pledge ritual:**
  - a type of bargaining typical in Chinese religious practice;
  - a certain number of offerings are pledged to the spirits;
  - when the prayers were answered and the wishes granted, the requital (i.e., thanksgiving) sacrifice would be made to those spirits who had been efficacious in granting the requests.



# Violent deaths and ghost stories

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- 畏 *wei* (fear) is etymologically linked to 鬼 *gui* (ghost)
- Ghost stories deal with the unfinished business between the living and the dead



Mass graves at Yonglu, Gaoping County, Shanxi, where the army of the state of Zhou was besieged and massacred by the Qin, 262–260 BCE.



# *Zuo Commentary*

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Ghost narrative from the *Zuozhuan*, Lord Cheng, 10<sup>th</sup> Year:

The Lord of Jin dreamed of a huge vengeful ghost (*li* 厲), with disheveled hair hanging to the ground. It beat its chest, leapt up and down, and said, “For you to slay my descendants was unjust. I have already obtained the approval of the God (Di) for my request.” It smashed the main gate of the palace, advanced to the gate of the Lord’s chamber, and entered. Terrified, the Lord withdrew into the inner chamber, but the ghost smashed that door too. The Lord then awoke and summoned the shaman of Mulberry Fields, who described a situation that corresponded exactly to the content of the Lord’s dream. “What is it about?” asked the Lord. “You will not live to taste the grain of the new harvest,” the shaman replied.

# Concepts of the ‘Soul’ and Rise of Afterlife

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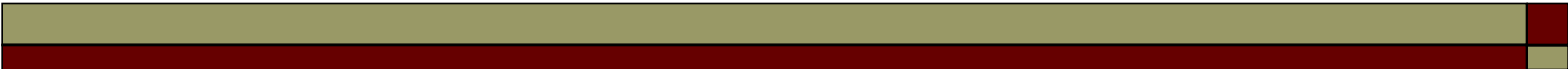
- *Hun* and *po* dualism to explain ghosts:

In the transformation of human life the first stage [the fetus, TJ] is called *po* 魄. After this has been produced, its *yang* is called *hun* 魂. Through the use of material substances the quintessential essence is multiplied, and the *hunpo* become strong, and thus the quintessential vigor grows and reaches the level of spirit illumination. When an ordinary man or woman dies a violent death, his or her *hunpo* are still able to possess (pingyi 憑依) someone in the form of a malevolent ghost (yinli 淫厲). This is all the more so in the case of Liangxiao [i.e., Boyou], a descendant of our former ruler Mu Gong, the grandson of Ziliang, and the son of Zi'er, who were ministers of our state and belonged to a family that had held the handle of government for three generations! (transl. from Lai Guolong 2015: 44)

- *po* 魄 is the material base or starting point of human beings:

“Thus when human beings are engendered . . . in the first month it [the fetus] is called ‘flowing into the form.’ Food and drink must be the finest. . . . In the second month it first becomes lard (*gao* 膏). . . . In the third month it first becomes suet (*zhi* 脂), and has the appearance of a gourd.” (“Treatise on Generation of the Fetus” (*Taichanshu*), excavated from Tomb 3 at Mawangdui (before 168 BCE).

- Need to pacify and segregate the avenging dead by finding them a place



# Activity

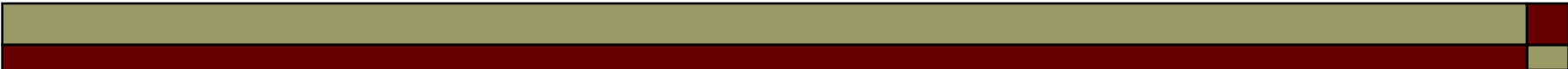
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- What artifacts would you put into a tomb to facilitate the dual function of severing ties with the dead while also maintaining the connection between the world of the living and the world of the dead?

# Tomb figurines

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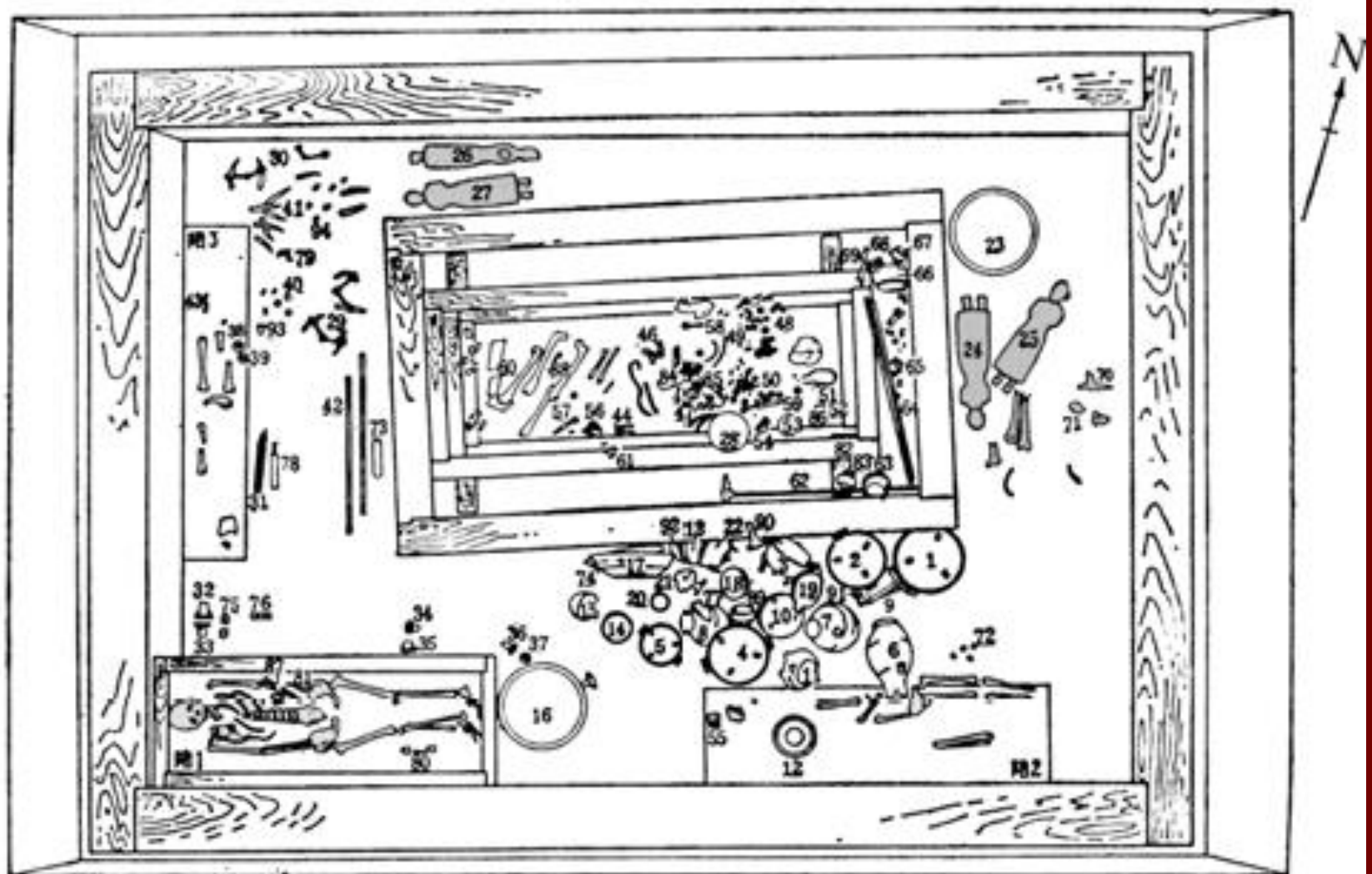
- ❑ Human figures not a prominent theme in Neolithic and Bronze Age sites → not enough context to elucidate meanings and functions (reason: human sacrifice still too common?)
- ❑ Shang/Western Zhou human figures represent people with minor or negative positions in society → avoidance of portraying kings and gods
- ❑ Figures in early Chinese art often naked, crippled, toiling, or criminals and enemy captives (barbarian chiefs, prisoners, slaves and servants)



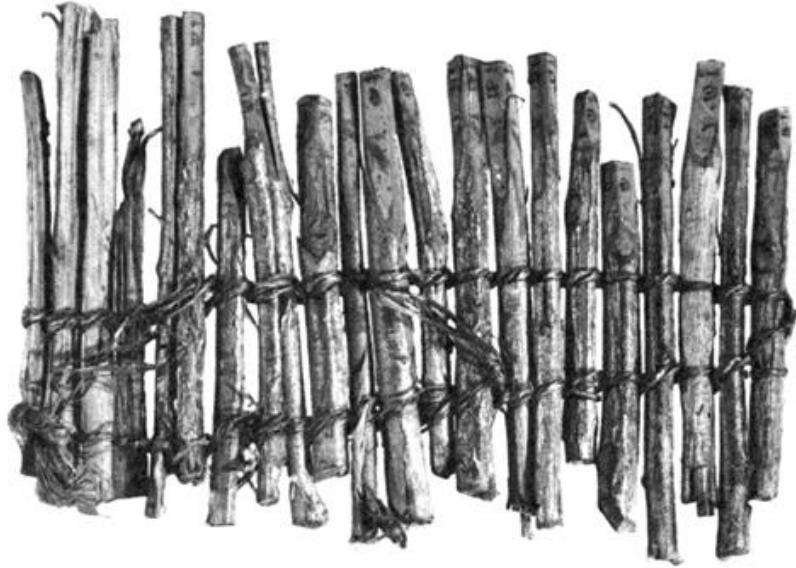
# Warring States Developments

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- ❑ Gradual increase of figurines in tombs. End of Warring States: almost all elite and commoner tombs contained figurines.
- ❑ Anthropomorphic representation of the deceased in Warring States and later tombs.
- ❑ What are the reasons?
  - Replacement of human sacrifice?
  - One-to-one correspondence with real people or representing types or roles?



Plan of Tomb 7 at Niujiapo in Changzi County, Shanxi. Late Spring and Autumn period. Tomb figurines coincide with human sacrifice. (Lai 2015: 108-109)

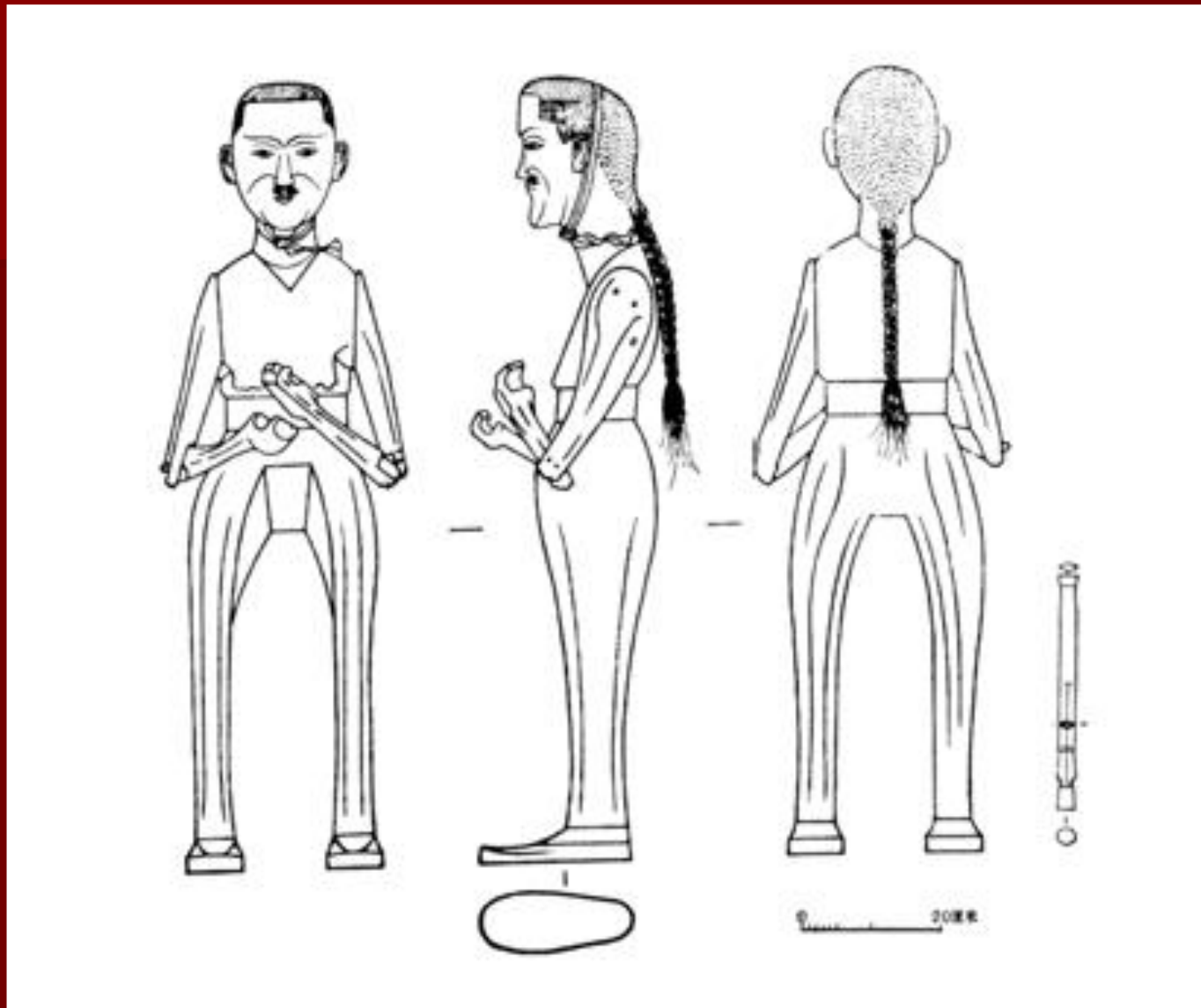


Slim wooden figurines found on top of the innermost coffin in Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha City, Hunan. Early Western Han dynasty. (Lai Guolong 2015: 112)



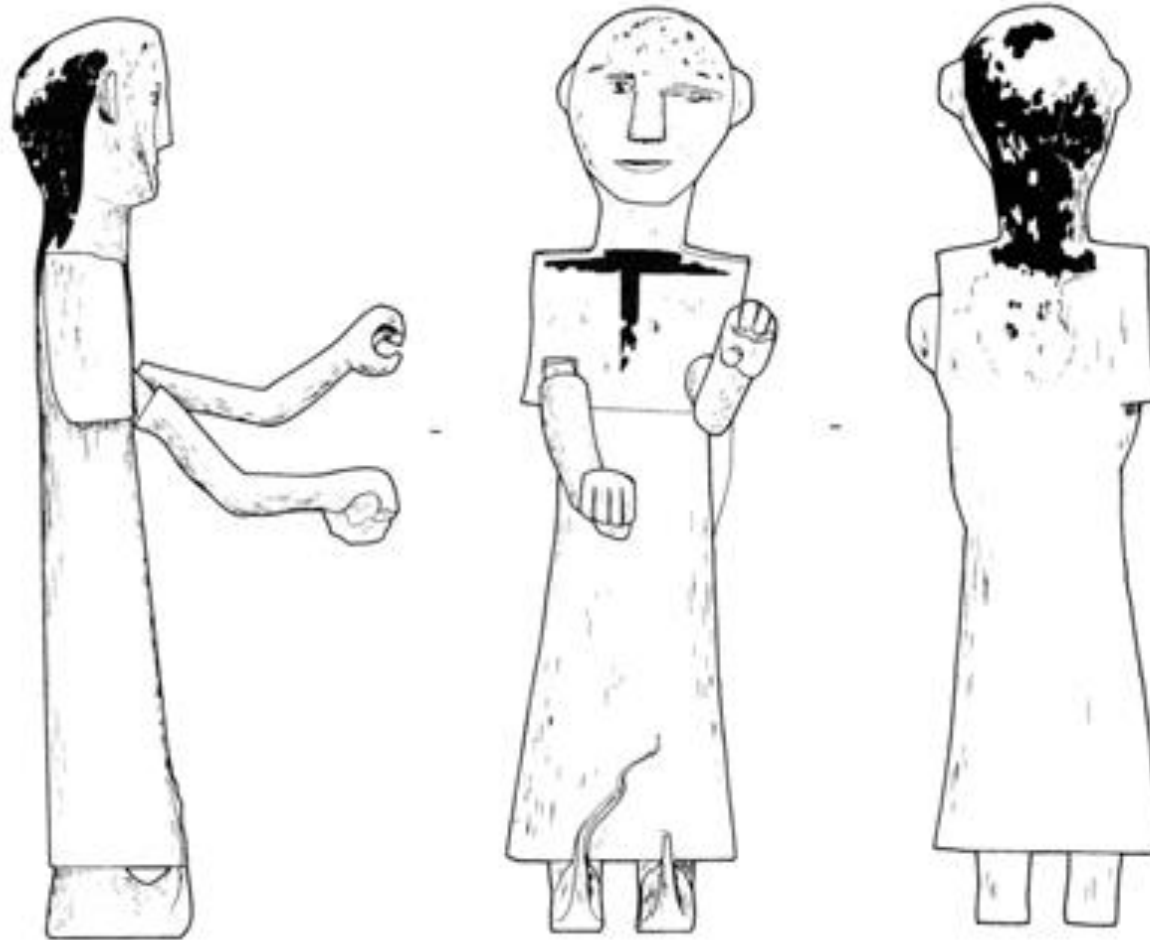
Different groups of wooden figurines excavated from Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha City, Hunan. Early Western Han dynasty. (Lai Guolong 2015: 113)





Drawing of three views of a wooden figurine excavated from Tomb 2 at Baoshan, Jingmen City, Hubei. Warring States period. Fourth century BCE.

Drawings of one of the four human figurines excavated from Tomb 502 at Liangdaicun, Hancheng City, Shaanxi. Late Western Zhou period.



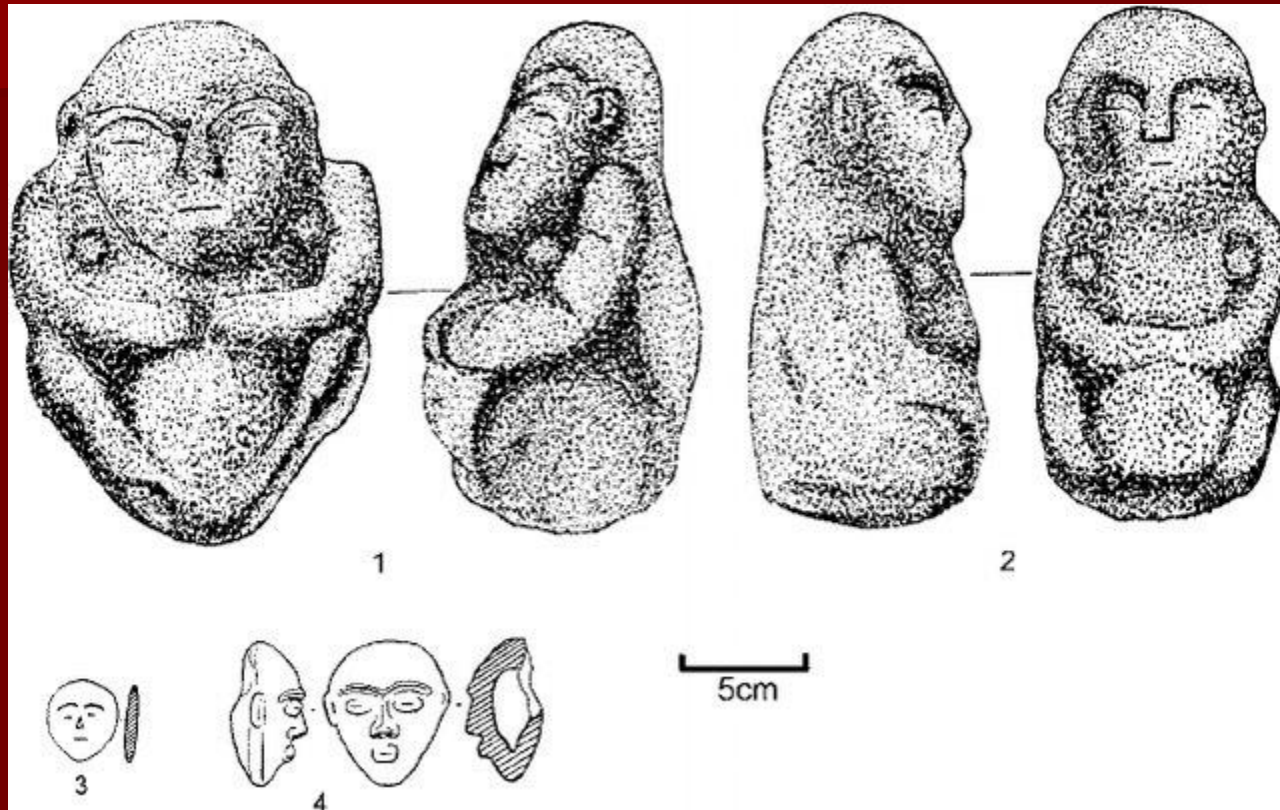
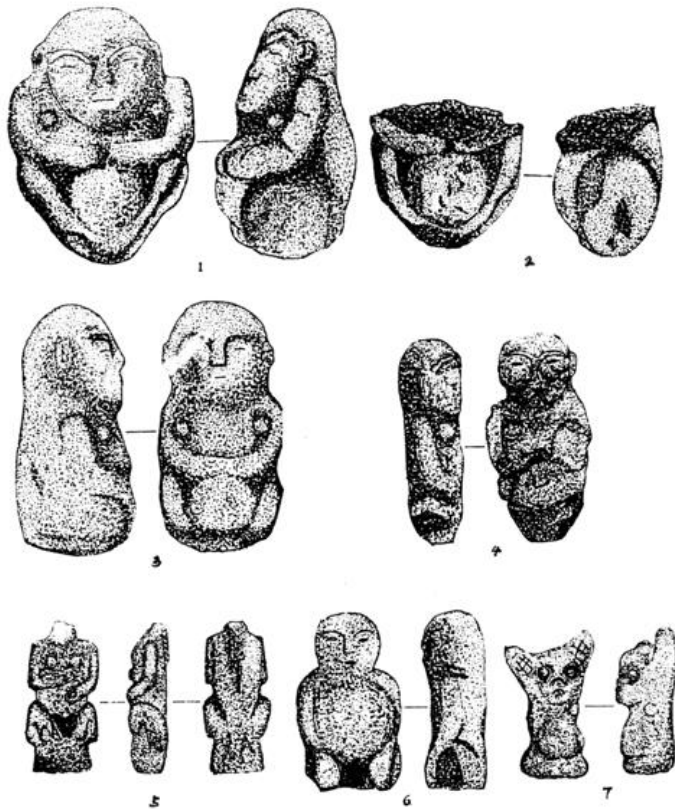


Fig. 13. Figurines of the Zhaobaogou culture: 1 and 2: stone figurines from the Houtaizi site (after Chengde, 1994, p. 62); 3 and 4: clay figurines from the Zhaobaogou site (after Zhongguo, 1997b, p. 95).



- Drawings of a group of stone female figurines from Houtaizi, Luanping County, Hebei. Ca. 5000 BCE.
- Stone female figurines from Houtaizi, depicting the different stages of a woman giving birth to a child.
- Newborn with open eyes and raised arms is visible in image group 7.

# Houtaizi figurines

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- ❑ Prominent example of human figures in burial context: Stone female figurines from Houtaizi, depicting the different stages of a woman giving birth to a child.
- ❑ Statues of a so-called Venus or goddess? Instruments of “the sympathetic magic of the human figure” (*renxing fangshu*)
- ❑ Image making as a form of magic, a means to identify, control and assist the dead through the magic power of image making → ‘Affecting presence’ or ‘power of images’ → image making as a form of social or psychological control (contrast to biblical traditions where image making constitutes an act of worship)
- ❑ Regional cultural tradition of using female figurines as fertility symbols → ritual devices for image magic → “Representing someone or something in material form was in some sense seen as controlling the subject itself.” (Lai Guolong 2015: 105)
- ❑ Consequence: Ambivalent attitude towards verisimilitude

# Artefacts in tombs

## Rujiazhuang Tomb 1, dated around 950-900 BC

- Over 2,700 bronze objects, including 33 vessels and 13 weapons
- 4 musical instruments
- over 100 chariot parts
- 11 pieces of pottery
- over 280 jade and stone objects

The tomb of his wife Jing Ji contained:  
10 bronze vessels

## Tomb of Marquis Yi (430 BCE)

124 musical instruments, including bells, chimes, drums, zithers, pipes, and flutes

134 bronze vessels and other bronze household items

4,777 weapons, mostly made of bronze

1,127 bronze chariot parts

25 pieces of leather armour

5,012 pieces of lacquer ware

26 bamboo articles

5 gold objects and 4 gold belt hooks

528 jade and stone objects

6,696 Chinese characters written in ink on slips of bamboo

over 280 jade and stone objects

# Spirit artefacts as tie-breaking rituals

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- a tie-breaking ritual severs the bond, or tie, between the living and the deceased and is performed to break the old life pattern;
- tie-breaking ritual simultaneously emphasizes the mourner's separation from the dead and integration with the living;
- it facilitates the psychological transition of the bereaved and ensures that the soul of the deceased makes its proper transition from earthly life to its new life in the land of the dead;
- Self-conscious systematic use of spirit artifacts to facilitate tie-breaking rituals → negotiate gradual transition from life to death
- Activities involved:
  - Ceremonial “killing” of objects at funerals
  - the disposal of the belongings of the dead
  - the placement of a taboo on the name of the deceased, and
  - the bereaved's temporary or permanent changing of residence.

# Spirit artefacts as tie-breaking rituals

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- Spirit artefacts were made “unfinished,” or “secondary” and “inferior” to everyday utensils in terms of their materiality, size, and craftsmanship;
- Xunzi, “Discourse on Ritual” (*Lilun* 禮論), defines a spirit artifact as something that “resembles real objects but cannot be used.”
- “Burying spirit artifacts and personal belongings helped the bereaved reduce and eventually sever their ties with the dead while maintaining the connection between the world of the living and the world of the dead. The rituals were also designed to help both the bereaved and the deceased negotiate the gradual transition from life to death.” (Lai Guolong 2015: 53)

Wooden outer  
coffin within the  
central coffin  
chamber  
surrounded by  
four side boxes,  
tomb 1, 672 x  
488 x 280 cm



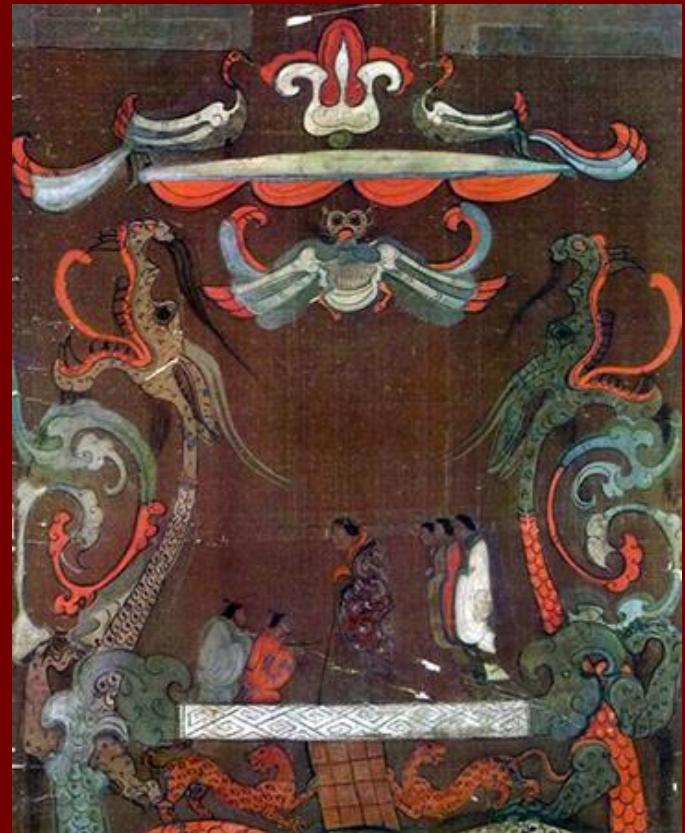


Nesting coffins of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui), 2nd century B.C.E., wood, lacquered exteriors and interiors, 256 x 118 x 114 cm, 230 x 92 x 89 cm and 202 x 69 x 63cm, from tomb 1 (Hunan Provincial Museum)



Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui), 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum) - Detail

## Lady Dai and her attendants



Heavenly realm (detail), Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui), 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)

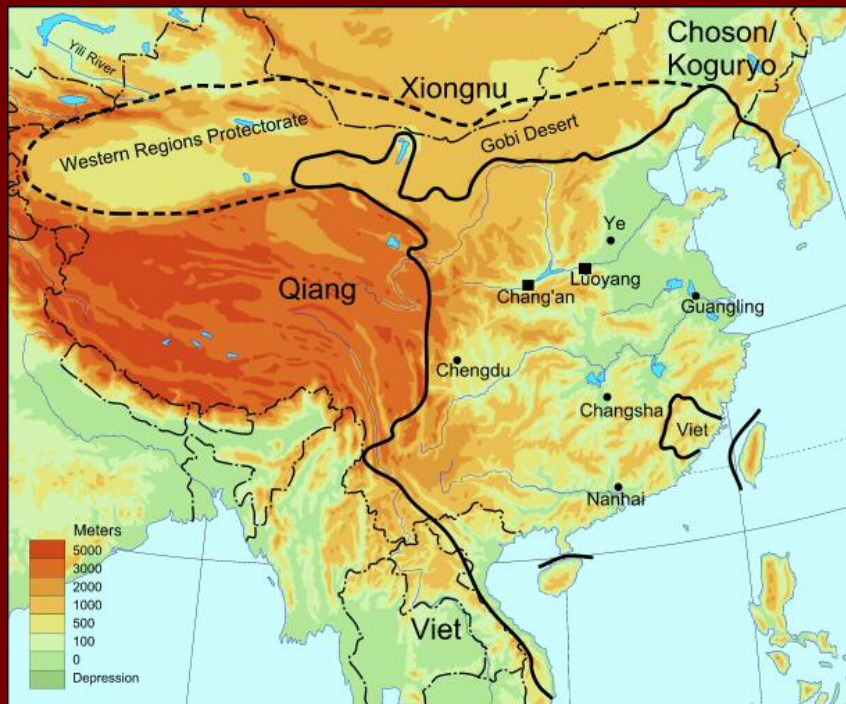


Body of Lady Dai with mourners (detail), Funeral banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui), 2nd century B.C.E., silk, 205 x 92 x 47.7 cm (Hunan Provincial Museum)

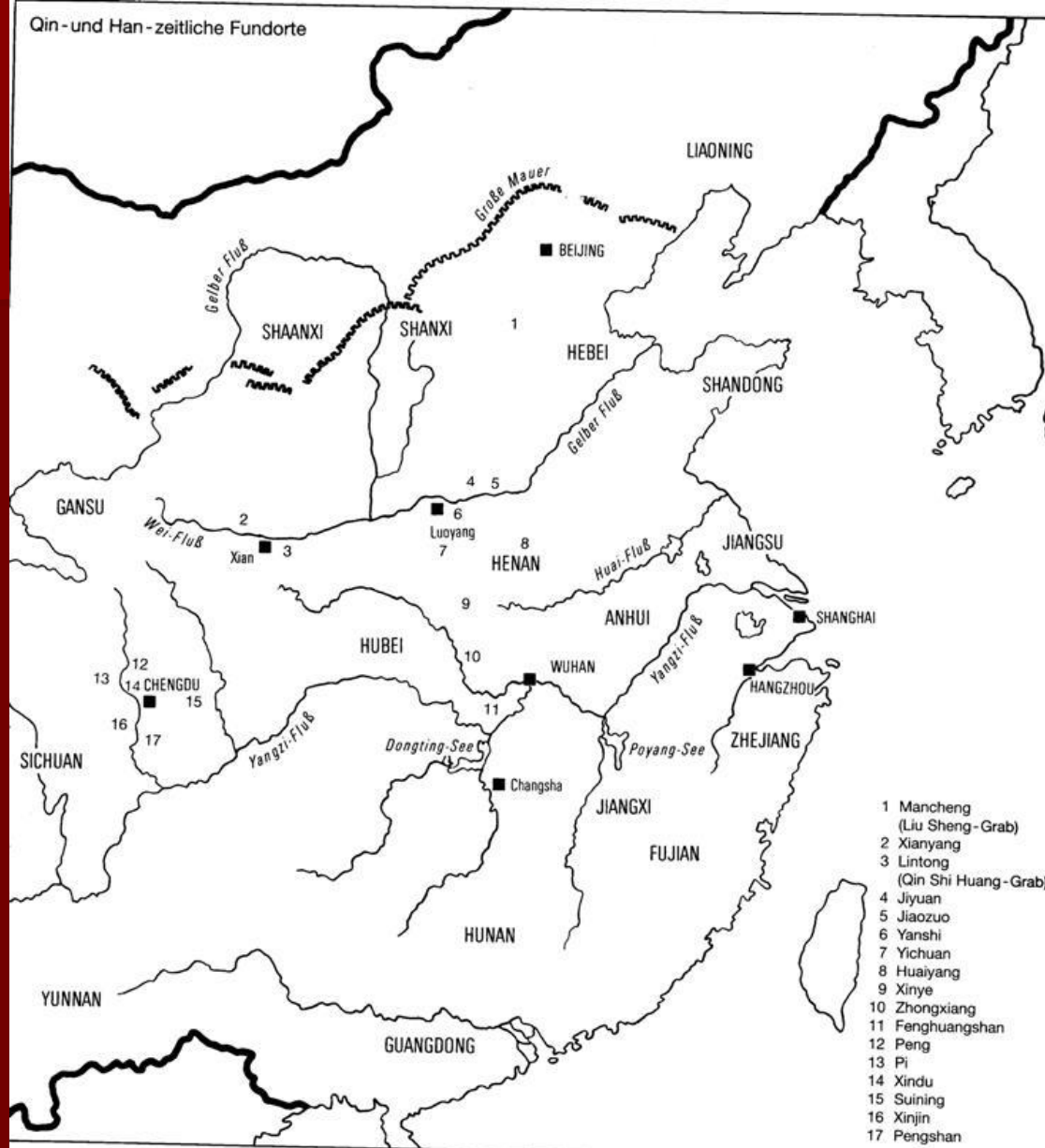




# Han dynasty China



# Qin- und Han-zeitliche Fundorte



# The Secret of Lingshan 陵山



Abb. 62 Luftbildaufnahme des Lingshan-Hügels mit den Gräbern des Liu Sheng (links) und der Dou Wan (rechts). Mancheng, Provinz Hebei (Standphoto aus einem chinesischen Dokumentarfilm).

*yu yi* 玉衣  
“jade suit”



# The royal couple

- Liu Sheng 劉勝
- King Jing of Zhongshan 中山靖王 (r. 154-112)
- Father: Han Jingdi (r. 157-141)
- Mother: Lady Jia 賈夫人
- Princess Dou Wan 竇綰 (d. 112-104 BCE)



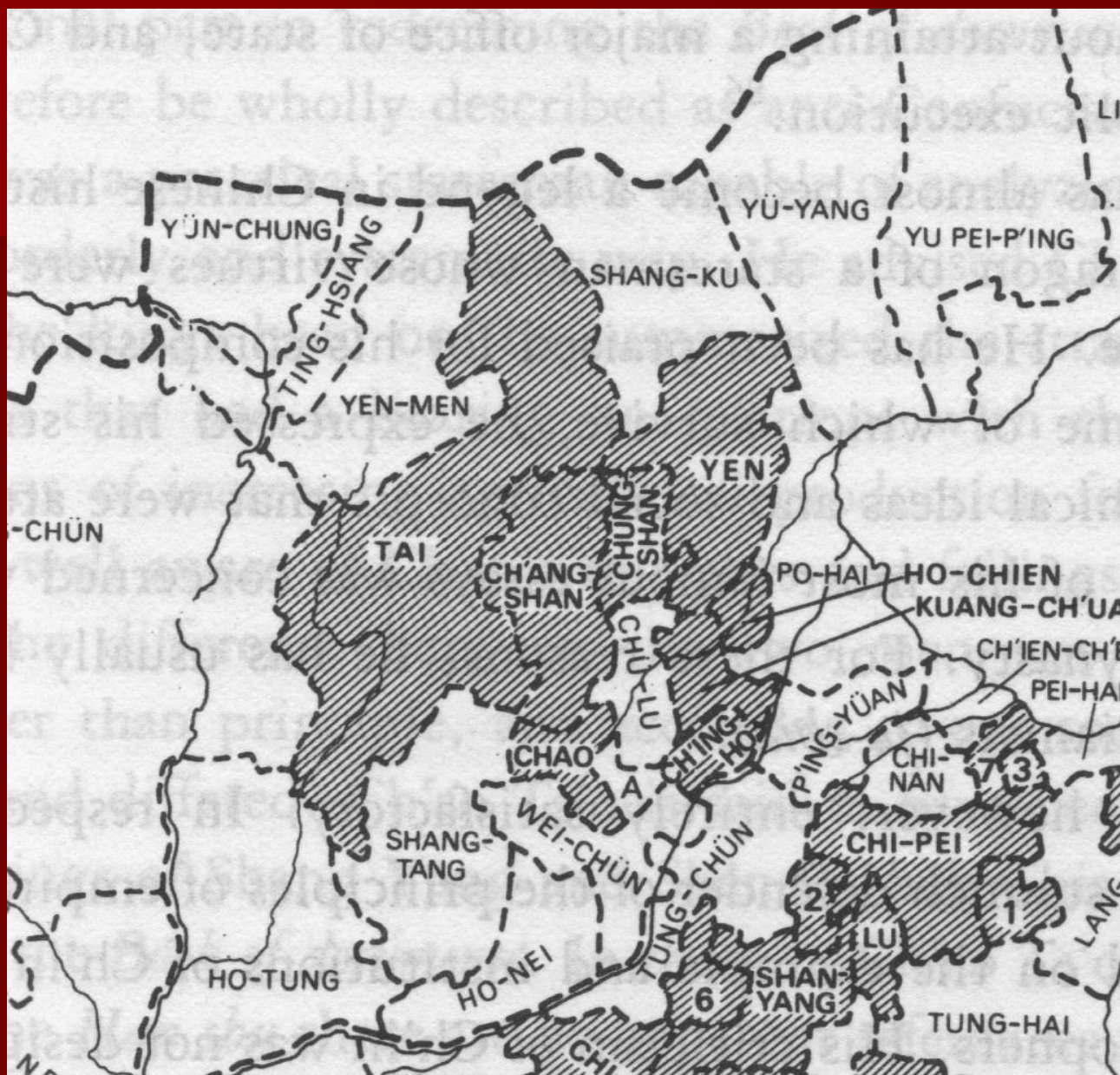




Abb. 63 Eingang zur Grabanlage des Liu Sheng zur Zeit der Ausgrabung 1968 (Standphoto aus einem chinesischen Dokumentarfilm).



Abb. 62 Luftbildaufnahme des Lingshan-Hügels mit den Gräbern des Liu Sheng (links) und der Dou Wan (rechts), Mancheng, Provinz Hebei (Standphoto aus einem chinesischen Dokumentarfilm).

*fangshi* 方士 “magicians”; “masters of recipes”

*bu si zhi yao* 不死之藥 “drug of no-death”

# Basic beliefs concerning the afterlife

- spirits of the dead could be harmful or beneficial to the living depending on whether or not they were properly taken care of
- The dead can become ghosts and haunt the living (premature death; lack of offerings; etc.)
- The dead are not completely cut off from the living; **interaction between living and dead**

# Basic beliefs...

- Humans consist of several souls (precise number subject to variation; 3 or 7)
- Souls separate after a person has died
- Some souls move upwards, some reside in the grave or underworld
- Aim of the tomb is to provide a home for the soul



Fig. 1. The seven *po* and three *hun* of the human soul. From *Xing ming gui zhi* (1615).

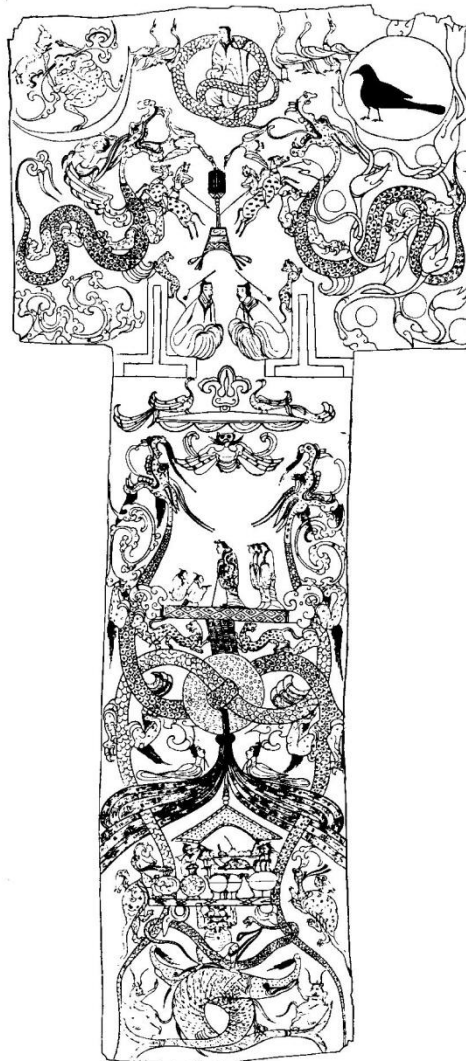
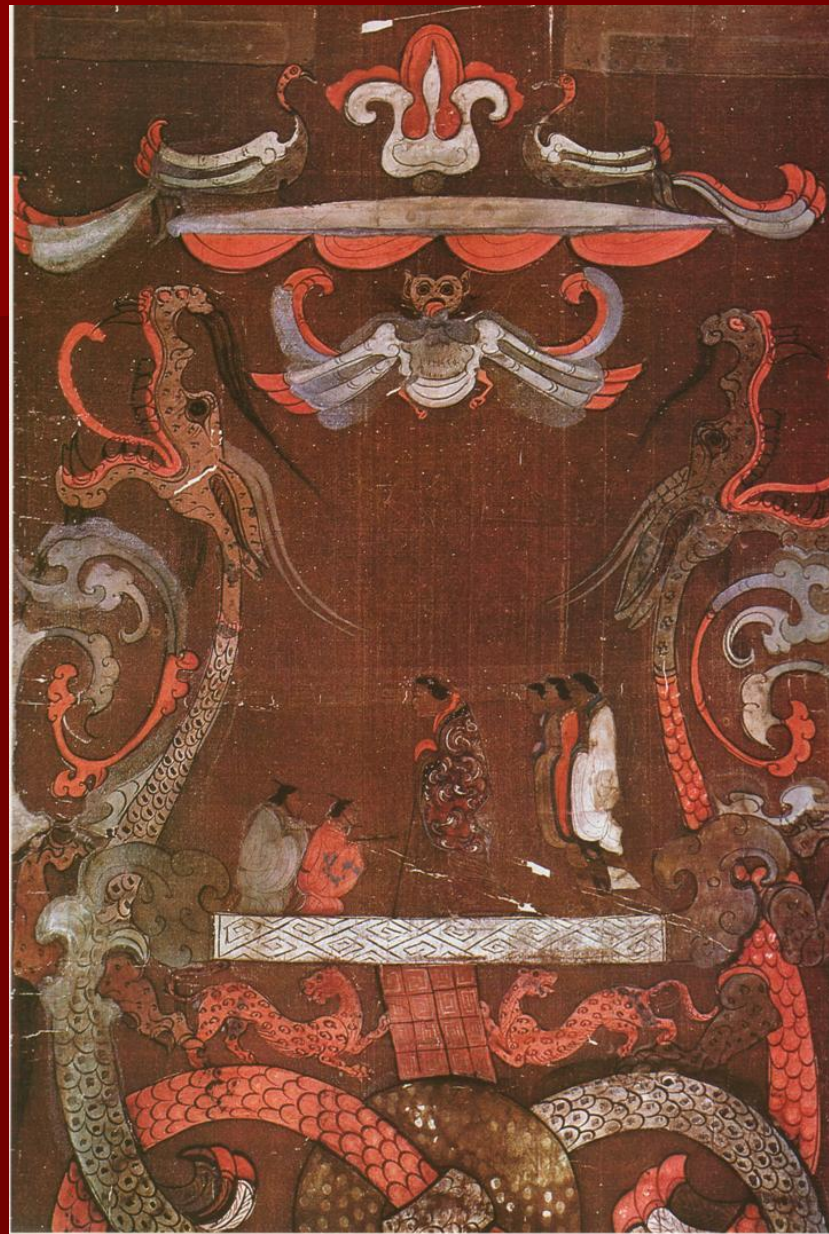


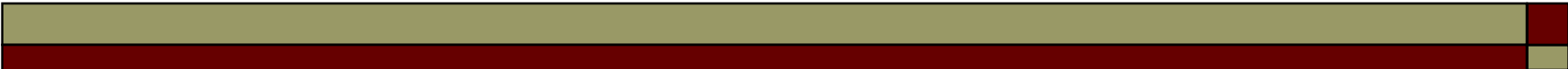
Fig. 2. Banner illustrating the journey of the *hun* to Heaven.  
From *Changsha Mawangdui I-hao Han mu* (1973).



# Basic beliefs...

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- ❑ The otherworld, the realm of the spirits and ghost is organised like the world of the living
- ❑ Jade Emperor at the top
- ❑ Officials have specific areas of jurisdiction (e.g. underworld prisons)
- ❑ Registers with the names of deceased
- The duty of the family is to ensure the safe passage of the deceased through the underworld bureaucracy (rescue from hell)
- Life after death should replicate life on earth

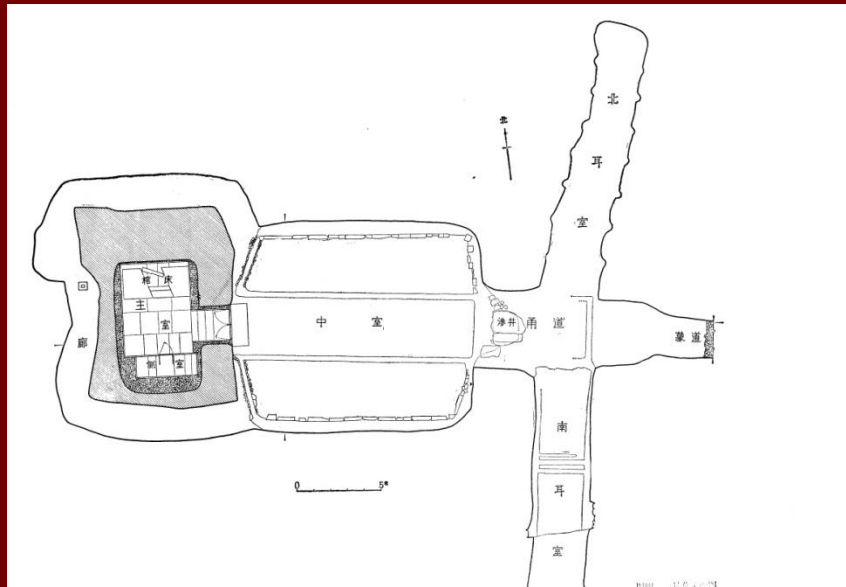


## *Chuci* “Songs from Chu” (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC)

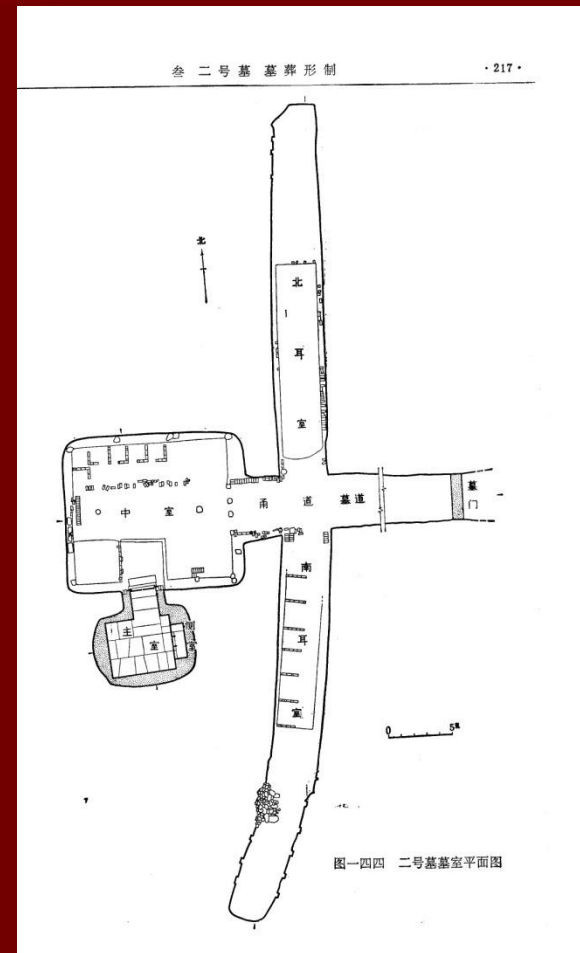
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“O Soul, go not to the West  
Where level wastes of sand stretch on and on;  
And demons rage, swine-headed, hairy-skinned,  
With bulging eyes;  
Who in wild laughter gnash projecting fangs.  
Oh Soul, go not to the West  
Where many perils wait!  
O Soul, come back to idleness and peace.”

# Tomb no. 1



# Tomb no. 2



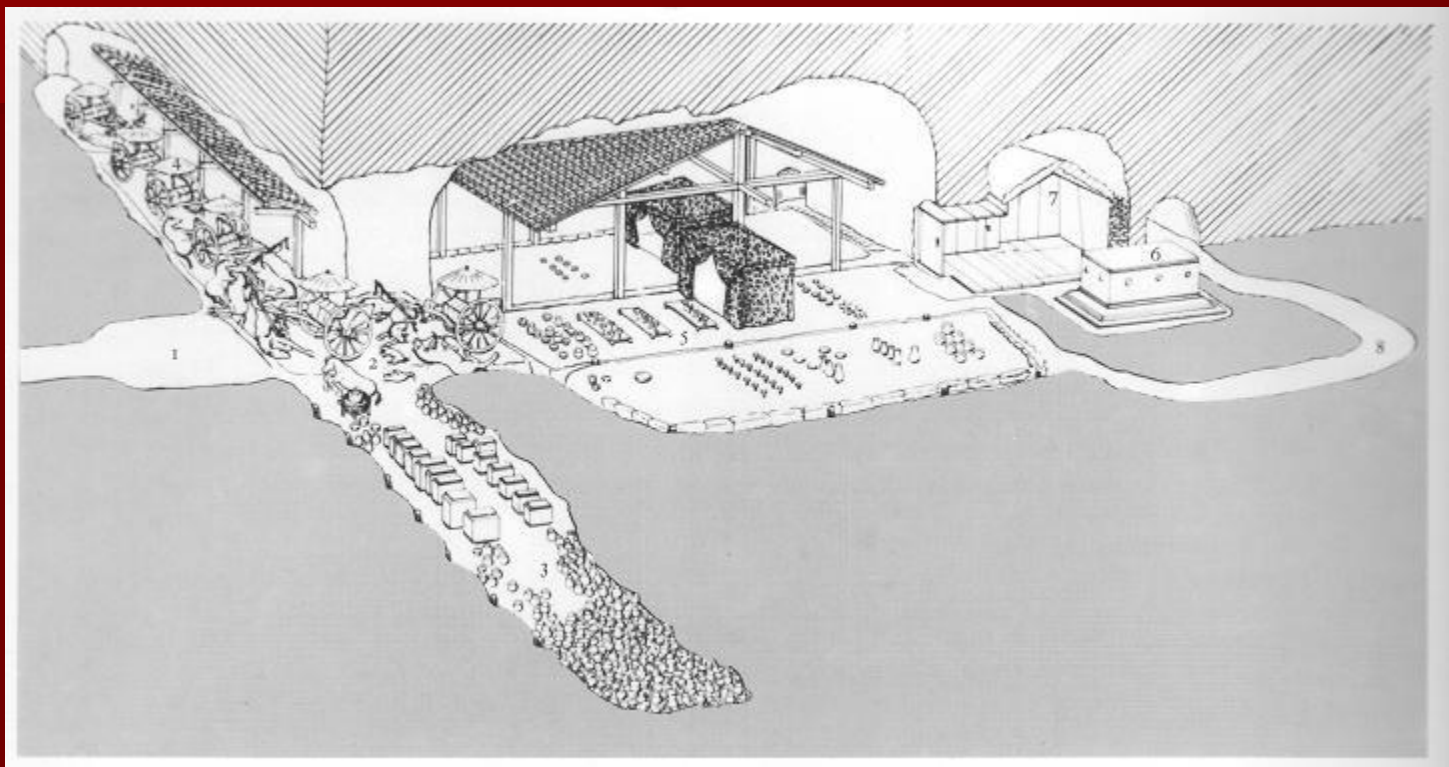


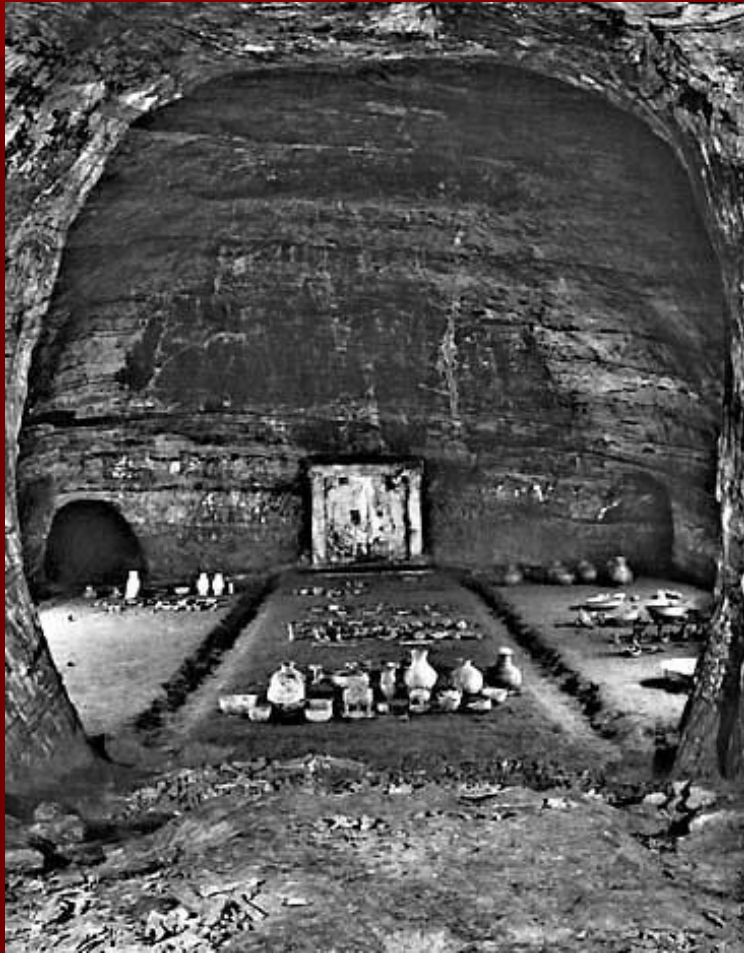


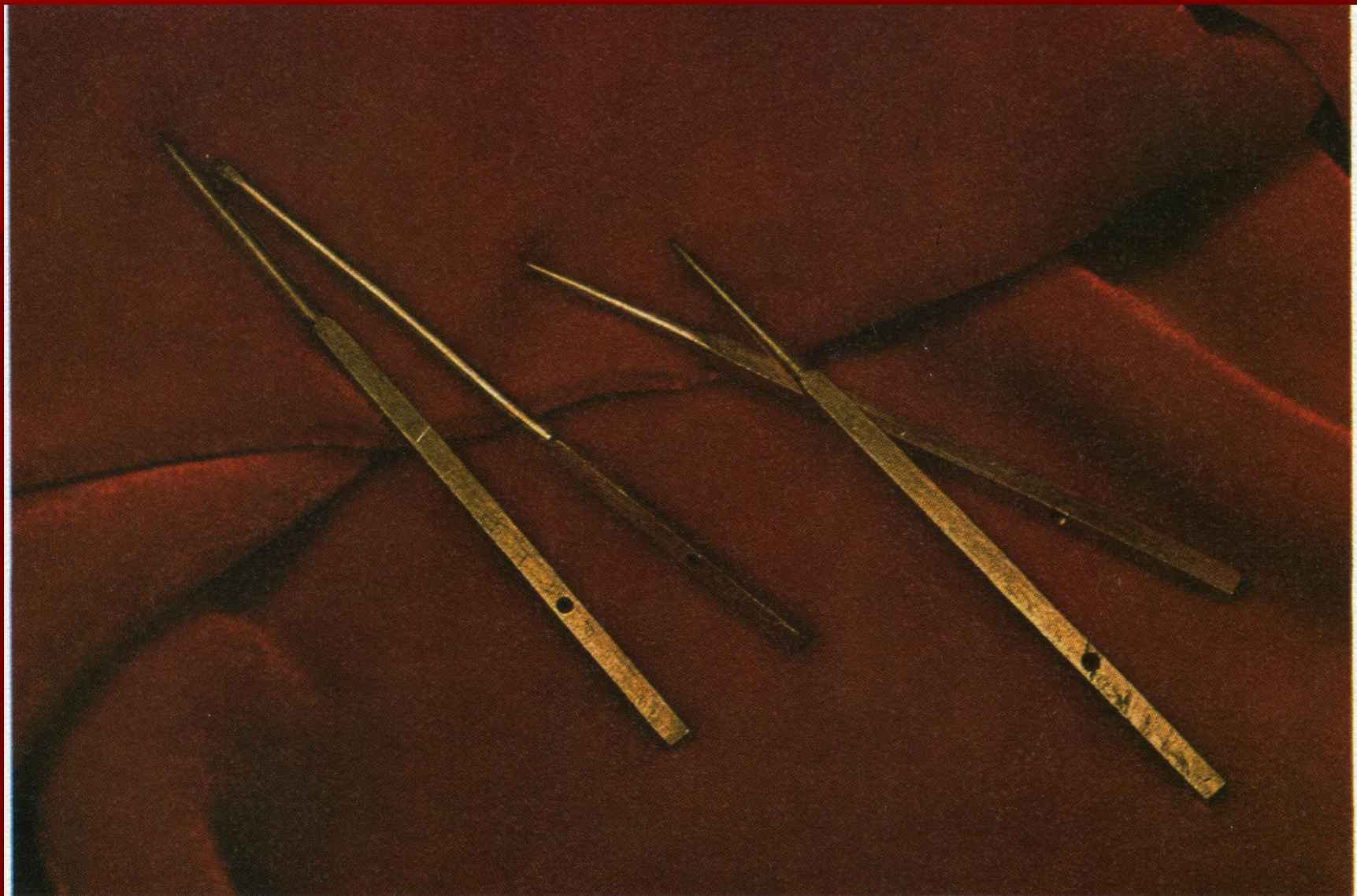
Abb. 63 Eingang zur Grabanlage des Liu Sheng zur Zeit der Ausgrabung 1968 (Standphoto aus einem chinesischen Dokumentarfilm).



Abb. 68 Grab des Liu Sheng (Grab Nr. 1), Blick durch die Vorratskammer. Mancheng, Provinz Hebei (Standphoto aus einem chinesischen Dokumentarfilm).

# Central chamber (*zhong shi* 中室)







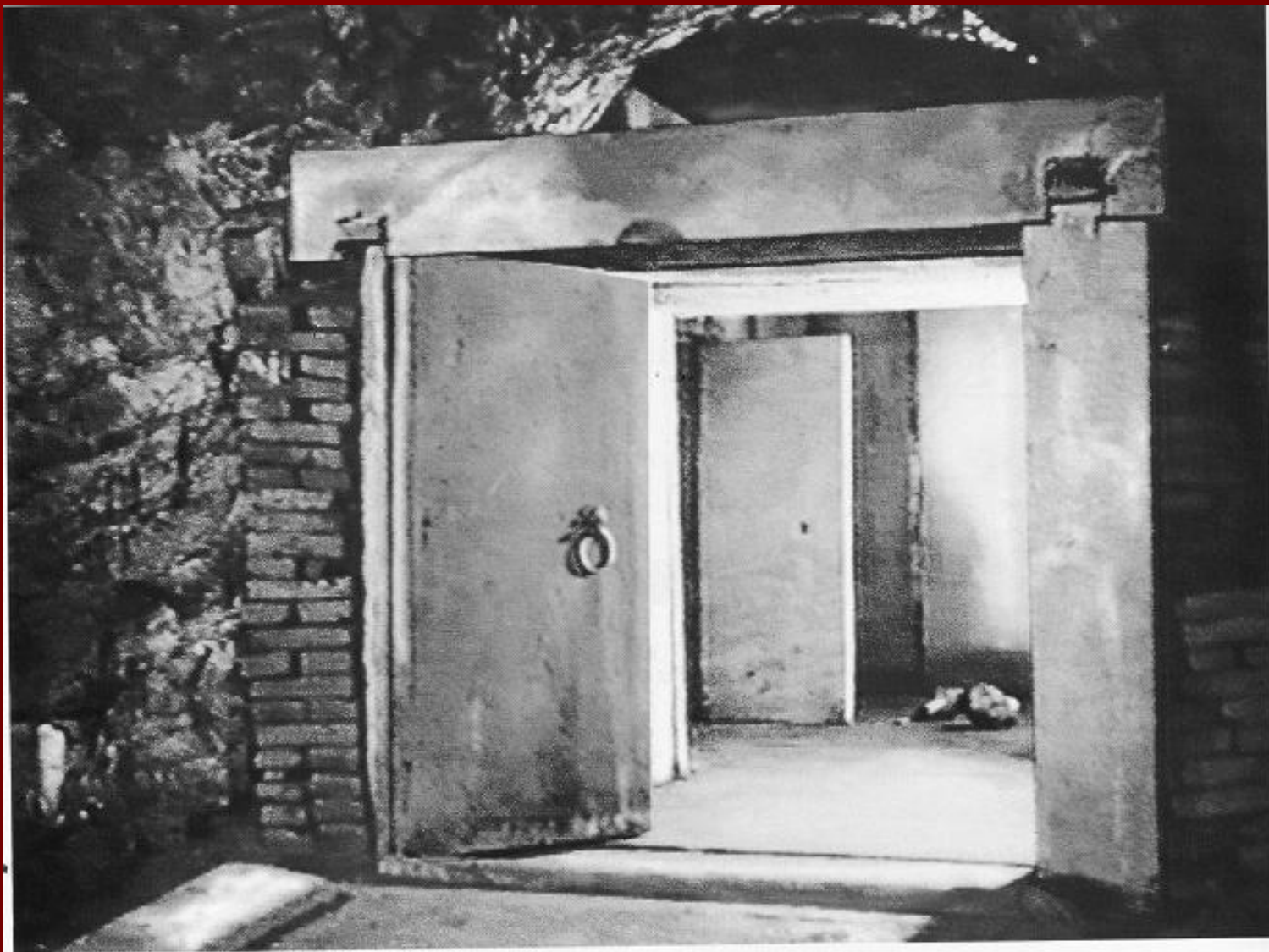


Abb. 66 Grab des Liu Sheng (Grab Nr. 1), Eingangstür zur Grabkammer aus weißem Marmor. Mancheng, Provinz Hebei (Standphoto aus einem chinesischen Dokumentarfilm).

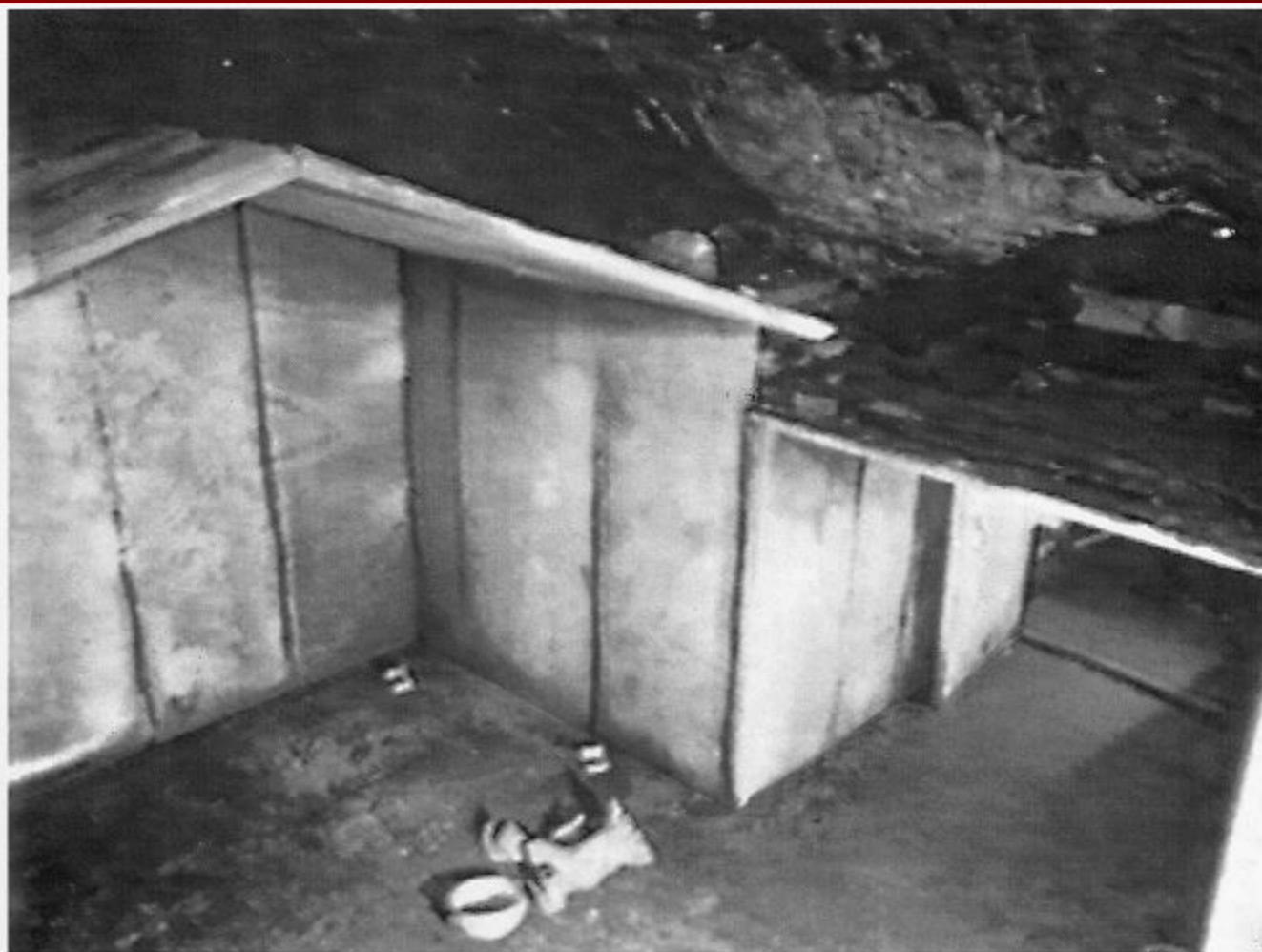
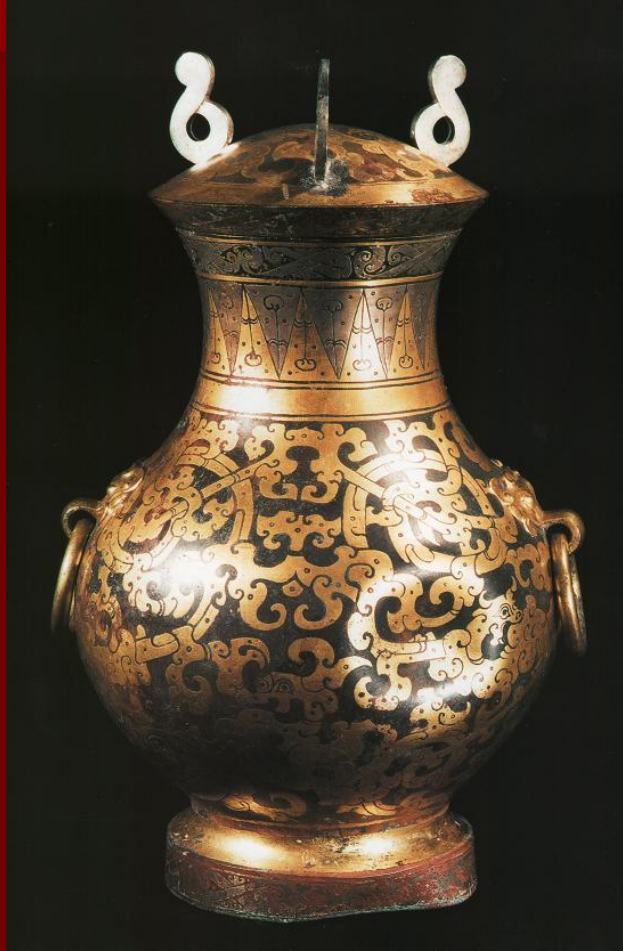


*Abb. 67 Grab des Liu Sheng (Grab Nr. 1), Blick in die mit Marmorplatten ausgekleidete Grabkammer. Mancheng, Provinz Hebei (Standphoto aus einem chinesischen Dokumentarfilm).*

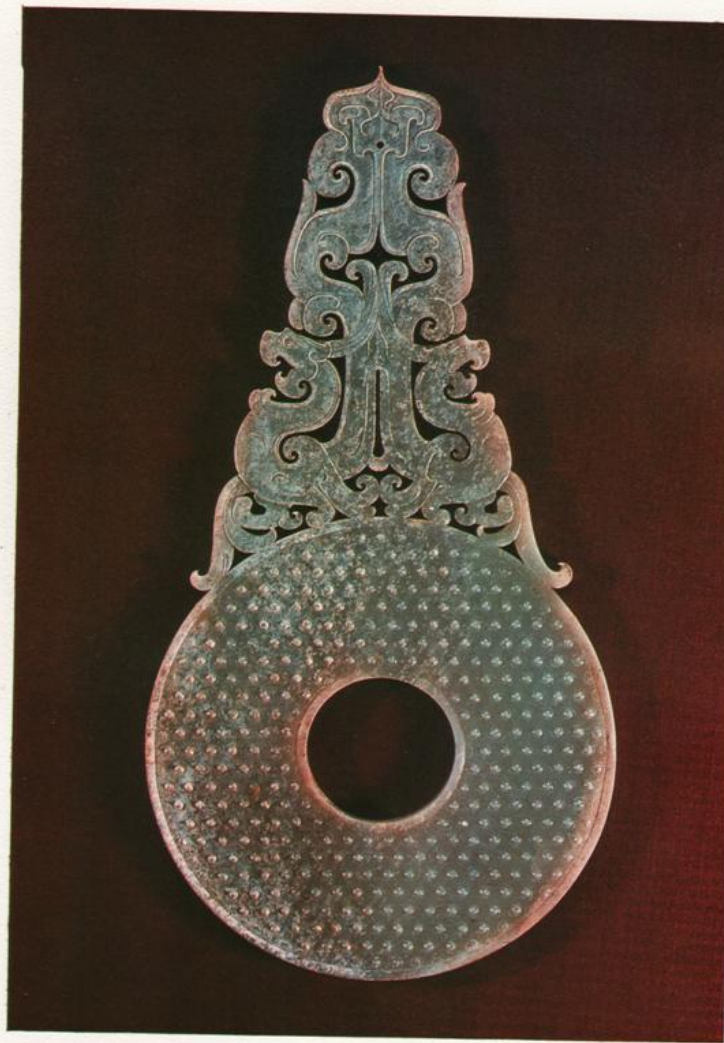


incense burner

*boshanlu* 博山爐







I型玉璧 (1:5048)

