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Rolling between Burial and Shrine: A Tale of Two Chariot Processions at Chulan Tomb 2 in Eastern Han China (171 C.E.)

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Abstract: Chulan Tomb 2 (dated to 171 c.e.) in present-day Suxian, Anhui province, offers the rare opportunity to study the hitherto unknown relationship between multiple depictions of chariot processions—one of the most popular pictorial motifs in Eastern Han funerary art—at different locations in a single cemetery. Comparing this tomb’s two chariot processions in stylistic, iconographic, and positional terms, this paper draws attention to a special dragon motif that ornaments a few special chariots and argues that these “dragon chariots,” unique among stone carvings of the Eastern Han, were meant to carry the deceased couple, who were buried separately but received joint sacrifices in their shared shrine. Unlike previous studies, which focus on either the shrine or the burial as self-contained units, this paper approaches the entire cemetery as an organic architectural and pictorial nexus without breaking the narrative link between its units. This case study of depictions of chariot processions presents a dynamic view of the afterlife during the Eastern Han dynasty: the burial and the shrine formed two temporary stops rather than permanent homes for the deceased souls, which were ceaselessly traveling on the posthumous road.

Chariot processions, among the most popular and best studied pictorial motifs in Chinese funerary art, still remain a contentious subject matter. Within the cemetery, chariots could be anywhere, sometimes on the walls of the burial and at other times on those of the offering shrine, which was usually built near the burial to commemorate the deceased’s soul during the sacrifice. According to previous studies, as the vehicles varied their positions, they changed their meanings, too. On one occasion, the fantastic journey raises the deceased from the underground burial to heaven or the immortal lands.¹ On a second, the procession constitutes the deceased’s funerary cortège.² And on yet a third, the traveling represents the deceased’s imaginary journey to the underworld.³ Although Michèle Pirazzoli t’Serstevens is certainly right in asserting that the voyage might “have multiple connotations and different, non-exclusive ideas,”⁴ all the above interpretations suffer from a common flaw: the shrine and the burial were examined separately as self-contained architectural units rather than as an architectural and pictorial nexus. In fact, according to ancient historians, tombs including both a shrine and a burial were popularly commissioned during the Han dynasty.⁵

Although it is rare for such tombs to survive, a remarkable example remains largely intact and sheds light on the mysterious link between the chariot processions. Among hundreds of Eastern Han cemeteries excavated, Chulan 褚蘭 Tomb 2, dating from 171 by inscription, is the first scientifically excavated and reported Eastern Han tomb with a shrine and a burial, both of which bear pictorial representations, including chariot processions.⁶

Located in present-day Suxian 宿縣 in the northeast of Anhui province in south China, the east-west oriented burial is enclosed by a rectangular earthen wall, in which is set a shrine made of carved stone slabs and oriented to the south (Fig. 1). An inscription carved on the rear

wall of the shrine, “Tomb of Hu Yuanren 胡元壬 from Piyang 辟陽,” clearly identifies the tomb occupant as a man surnamed Hu. Beneath the ground of the walled zone archaeologists unearthed a multi-chamber burial, also constructed of stone slabs.

The interior face of the stone slabs is carved in low relief with pictorial images framed by ornamental patterns. Among them the chariot processions appear on the wall bases in both the shrine and the burial (Figs. 2a, 2b).⁷ Unlike most other excavated sites, in which chariots either emerge entirely in the aboveground shrine or hide completely in the underground burial, the two chariot processions at Chulan Tomb 2 echo each other in the two adjacent funerary structures that constitute a single cemetery. This basic fact raises a series of questions never asked before: Are these two processions related? If so, in what ways? And if related, why are they simultaneously kept apart in two different structures? To tackle these questions, the previous methodology that focuses exclusively on either the shrine or the burial must be modified. Neglecting the logic between the two units has prevented us from seeing the larger picture of the tomb.

The Chinese archaeologist Xin Lixiang 信立祥 was the first to note the possible link between the two chariot processions. In a bold move, he considers the shrine and the burial as forming an organic architectural compound and assumes that the tomb occupant was represented as departing from his tomb, ascending to the ground, and heading toward the shrine to receive the worshippers’ offerings.⁸ Illuminating as it is, Xin’s theory lacks sufficient evidence to explain why and how the two processions are united as a one-way journey. The real problem, however, lies in his methodology. Rather than deriving evidence directly from the tomb itself, he extrapolates it typologically from a number of unrelated burials or shrines from various cemeteries and uses data from them to reconstruct a “master narrative” connecting the chariot processions in the shrine and in the burial.⁹ True, Eastern Han tombs shared some degree of “family resemblance,” but each cemetery and its pictorial program is more or less different.¹⁰ Therefore, I will implement a different methodology by directly engaging the chariots. As I argue, in contrast to what Xin has proposed, the idea the Chulan artist tried to communicate was not a unidirectional journey, but rather the split, variation, and transition between the two chariot processions and between the burial and the shrine.

As a case study, this paper begins with a formal and iconographic investigation of the two chariot processions in the architectural context at Chulan Tomb 2, and further argues that the two chariot processions were bound together by an implicit narrative of separation and reunion of the deceased couple. While the burial accommodated a single male tomb occupant, the shrine was pictorially transformed into a virtual cemetery, in which the filial son was represented as rejoining his deceased parents in a ritual setting. As the study shows, it is the hidden theme of traveling (either for separation or for reunion) that encompasses the two units of the architectural complex and underlies a more dynamic aspect of Chinese tombs in the Eastern Han dynasty.

This paper approaches Chinese tombs not as individual funerary structures, but rather as a nexus between interconnected architectural units. This perspective, however, is not my invention. As early as the late nineteenth century, Édouard Chavannes visited the remains of the Wu family shrines on site in present-day Jiexiang 嘉祥, Shandong province, and tried to map the entire cemetery, including such monuments as the shrine, que 闕 pillar towers, bei 碑 steles, etc.¹¹ In the 1930s Sekino Tadashi 関野貞, in his study of the Xiaotangshan 孝堂山 shrine in Changqing 長清 (Shandong), was keen enough to consider it as meaningfully related to two unidentifiable underground stone structures, probably burials, located nearby.¹² In the 1940s Wilma Fairbank took a step further and studied the burial and the shrine as an organic funerary

complex. In a rare cemetery at Jinxiang 金鄉 (Shandong), she retrieved the “Zhu Wei 朱鮪 Shrine” together with the unexcavated burial just a few meters away below the ground.¹³ Due to the Sino-Japanese war, however, her project was never finished. In the footsteps of these pioneers, my study of the chariot processions aims at establishing the interrelations between shrine and burial rather than investigating the individual funerary structures per se.

The varying “dragon chariots” between burial and shrine

At Chulan Tomb 2, the chariot processions carved in both the burial and the shrine are characterized by a distinctive dragon motif that highlights and distinguishes several outstanding vehicles and passengers in the two processions.

At first glance, all the chariots carved in the cemetery look similar and generic (see Figs. 2a, 2b). The roundish style of the bas-reliefs, represented by the dominant use of curving lines, highly consistent between the burial and the shrine, suggests their shared provenance in the same local workshop.¹⁴ One following another at regular intervals, it looks as though the chariots were modified copies of one another. Drawn by a number of horses, each vehicle is portrayed in full profile. A driver sits in the front of the tilted carriage, holding reins in hands, and a passenger rests at leisure in the back of the carriage. Both figures are rendered with such sketchiness that few facial or bodily details can be recognized.

A close scrutiny, however, reveals subtle differences among these chariots that betray the inherent structure and hierarchy within each procession and between the two processions. In either the shrine or the burial, all vehicles advance from the right to the left in a uniform direction along the walls, except that in the shrine the south stone is omitted to make room for the entry (see Figs. 1, 2).¹⁵ As observed by the excavator, this yields two parallel processions.¹⁶ Beneath this apparent evenness, however, each procession hinges upon a unique center, occupied by the most important chariot and passenger in the journey. The central vehicle is highlighted by 1) more horses that draw the chariot; 2) the fantastic imagery of dragons in front of the chariot; 3) the central positions of the chariot in the architecture. These three elements, in such a rare combination, elevate Chulan Tomb 2 above most of its contemporary counterparts.

Let me elaborate on the observations on the principal chariots in the burial and the shrine respectively. In the burial the unique and nonparallel chariot L (see Fig. 2a) appears on the east stone under the rear wall and faces the entrance. This chariot is drawn by four horses, the only chariot as such in the entire cemetery. During the Eastern Han dynasty, the number of horses one could deploy in front of one’s chariot depended on one’s social status: the more horses, the higher one’s status.¹⁷ For example, only the emperor was entitled to a chariot pulled by six horses; imperial emissaries representing the emperor could muster as many as four horses; princesses and empresses were allowed no more than three.¹⁸ Thus on the social ladder the only passenger enjoying the chariot drawn by four horses should be two levels above those riding in vehicles drawn by two horses.

The number of horses makes only half the story. Chariot L is also made unusual by a special dragon motif that highlights the rider’s social status even more. Before the carriage an extra beast emerges among the four horses, raises its head up, and swings it back toward the driver sitting behind (Fig. 3a).¹⁹ The beast’s long, slim, almost serpentine neck, two curving antler-like horns, and willow-leaf-shaped ears distinguish it from the horses. Unlike all the other horses, this “born-out-of-nowhere” beast surprises us as being legless. Despite the sketchiness of the carving that squeezes all animals into a small blurry area, the four horse heads and sixteen

legs (one of which is hard to see in the reproduction) match perfectly in number, leaving no further doubt that the legless beast is beyond the regular horse quartet.²⁰ Wang Buyi has interpreted it as a dragon, which I regard as plausible. The unusual dragon motif adds extra weight to the personage in the outstanding carriage, which not only features the strongest horsepower, but also occupies the privileged position facing the entrance of the burial.

Within the shrine, the same visual strategies are implemented. Although here it is the north stone that bears the most important chariots in the procession, with the shrine reoriented to the south, the north stone nevertheless remains at the rear and likewise faces the entrance (see Fig. 2b). But the order of the procession is fundamentally different in one vital aspect: whereas in the burial one chariot is clearly privileged, in the shrine the north stone features two equally privileged vehicles (Fig. 2b, A' and B') rolling one ahead of the other. Each of the two chariots is drawn by three horses, while the rest of the procession in the shrine is powered by either one or two horses.²¹ Both chariots further secure their distinction with the same dragon motif that decorates the primary chariot in the burial (Fig. 3b).²² The two almost identically honored chariots attest to the equal status shared by their passengers.

In both the shrine and the burial, following the social protocols of the Han dynasty, the superior chariots were supposed to carry the most eminent figures. Although no cartouches have been found in the tomb, the iconography of dragons reveals the identity of the anonymous passengers and offers a crucial piece of information in understanding the purpose of the chariot processions.

The dragon was a symbol of divinity and power during the Han dynasty. It was reported that members of the Han imperial house traveled in lavish carriages equipped with a so-called dragon shaft (longzhou 龍輈 or longyuan 龍輦), a long, wooden center-pole, curved at its front end in the shape of a serpentine dragon, linking the bottom of the carriage to the yoke on the horses' necks.²³ In tombs dating from the Han dynasty and earlier, Chinese archaeologists have discovered a number of chariots adorned with cast and gilt bronze finials in the shape of dragon heads fitted over the front end of the center-pole.²⁴ Unlike these zoomorphic finials, however, the carved dragons at Chulan were exaggerated to look as if they were real beasts rather than ornamentations: the dragons appear disproportionately large; their necks are harnessed by reins grasped in the driver's hands; the beasts forcefully raise their heads, as if untamed, and roar (see Figs. 3a, 3b). These minute, yet convincing details transform the dragons into active carriage-pullers the same as horses. Beginning in the late Eastern Zhou dynasty (475–221 B.C.E.), various kinds of "dragon chariots," carrying either deities or (deified) ancestors, were represented as rolling across the sky in many fantastic compositions in Chinese funerary art.²⁵

It is unusual, however, that the Chulan artists paradoxically mixed the flying dragons with the galloping horses powering the chariots.²⁶ This special combination renders the privileged chariots and their passengers as both heavenly and earthly. No gods other than ancestors in ancient China better fit into this double role. Imagined as illusive, indefinite beings, ancestors in the minds of the Han people were considered both live and dead, both natural and supernatural, as well as both earthly and heavenly, capable of ascending up to the blue sky and descending down to the Yellow Springs.²⁷ The imperial status of "dragon chariots," at the same time, might have alluded to the authority of the ancestors that was proclaimed over their domestic subjects.

From separated burial to united shrine

Sufficient archaeological and pictorial evidence in Chulan Tomb 2, as I will explain below, pinpoints the riders of the “dragon chariots” as Mr. Hu Yuanren and his wife, buried in separate burials, but worshipped jointly in the shrine.

That the burial was constructed for a male occupant is an obvious fact in the tomb structure and its decoration. In structure the burial consisted of four chambers: a square antechamber, two square side-chambers flanking the antechamber, and a rectangular rear chamber (see Fig. 1). Despite the severe damage and the total absence of its original content, with the rear chamber just spacious enough to hold one coffin, the burial must have been intended to house a single tomb occupant.²⁸ Not surprisingly, one man dominated the pictorial representations in the antechamber. His presence is hinted at by the images on the front and side walls of the antechamber.

The front door is framed by four stone slabs carved in low relief, two on the west wall and two on the north and south walls. The north slab of the western wall features a three-level composition (Fig. 1, no. 1). In the largest middle register stands a doorman. Holding a shield in both hands before his chest, he humbly bows down with his upper torso slightly inclined toward the entrance, as if he were saluting visitors.²⁹ In the upper register of the slab a bird stretches its wings to fly and in the bottom tier a fantastic winged and horned beast crouches on the ground.³⁰

If this simple tripartite composition does not suggest the identity of the tomb occupant, the other two panels on the north and south walls do. Despite the repetition of the three-level composition, the human figures standing in the middle level switch their role from recipients to messengers (see Fig. 1, nos. 2, 3). Also in three-quarter view, the two men slightly bend their bodies, each holding a stick in the right and a tablet in the left hand. But unlike the doorman on the western wall bowing toward the entrance, these men are turned toward the rear chamber, in which the deceased’s coffin was once laid. An explanation for this orientation might be deduced from the small tablets in their hands, identified by the excavators as “name strips” (mingci 名刺), prototypes of the business card.³¹ It was conventional during the Han dynasty that a visitor had to deliver a name strip inscribed with his name and greetings to the male host. So these men might be helping the guest pass the messages.³²

The idea of the tomb being occupied by a man is reinforced in the south slab of the west wall, carved into a larger composition of four registers (Fig. 1, no. 4). In the top register a group of five men are sitting together. A clear hierarchy is embedded. The most honorable man, presumably the host, takes the central position behind an armrest. Three other men, one on the left followed by a lady and two on the right holding name strips, all wearing official hats and robes, represent the guests. In the other three registers below, the female counterpart of the host does not appear.³³ The disproportion between men and women on this slab unambiguously speaks of male dominance.

Such male dominance in the burial of Chulan Tomb 2 contrasts sharply with the equality between men and women in the adjacent Chulan Tomb 1 at Jiunüdü 九女墩. Rather than having one rear chamber, Tomb 1 juxtaposes two parallel chambers at the rear for two equal tomb occupants, presumably a couple.³⁴ Accordingly, in the antechamber the artist(s) juxtaposed the images of a host and a hostess in a strictly symmetrical manner. In the antechamber of Tomb 1, a group of women dance before two ladies sitting and chatting in a house-shaped tent. On the opposite wall, almost as a mirror image of the feminine scene, several gentlemen are lined up outside a tent in which two gentlemen are talking over wine. The comparison with Tomb 1

clinches the burial of Tomb 2 as being occupied by one male occupant. With such an obvious gender scenario, it is no longer surprising that the chariot procession portrayed in the burial rests upon only one center: the tomb occupant Mr. Hu Yuanren, who must ride the most privileged chariot located on the innermost stone base closest to his coffin chamber.

The above theory well explains the secondary “dragon chariot” in the burial. In addition to the four-horse-drawn “dragon chariot” on the east stone, on the other side of the front chamber a second “dragon chariot” makes its appearance on the west (or the outermost) stone (Fig. 2a, E). Although this chariot also falls on the east-west central axis of the burial in parallel with the first “dragon chariot,” the former is clearly inferior to the latter in terms of social status: drawn only by two horses, the west vehicle is no match for the east vehicle (Fig. 3c). Likewise, the occupant of the second chariot is of less esteemed status, although still privileged.

Why does this second “dragon chariot” appear in the burial of a single tomb occupant? Placement might hold the answer. This unusual chariot was placed literally at the threshold of the front door—a liminal position, which leads beyond the burial. This prompts us to believe that the passenger was most likely Mr. Hu Yuanren’s wife, who, buried elsewhere, coheres perfectly with the following three implications in the iconography and placement of the second “dragon chariot”: (1) being an ancestor, (2) being inferior, and (3) being separate from the male deceased. At this liminal location she is not united with but apart from her husband.

Although the gender of the passengers, represented in such a sketchy manner, is too obscure to tell, my assumption of the female rider finds good support in a hitherto neglected detail of the chariots. Although the carriages all look similar in form, they actually fall into two major types. One is called *chaoche* 𨋖車 (opened-up carriages), characterized by a canopy supported with outward curving poles (*wei* 維), and the other type, *pingche* 駟車 (or *yiche* 衣車, clothed carriages), a carriage enclosed on four sides by walls and curtains, which are pierced by small windows. A fundamental difference between the two types of vehicles is associated with gender: while only men were entitled to the former, the latter could be ridden by either men or women.³⁵ At Chulan Tomb 2 all the “dragon chariots” belong in the category of *pingche* with thick straight walls rather than curving poles (see Figs. 3a–c), implying that the hidden passengers could potentially be women.³⁶

External evidence lends more weight to this assumption. Using a couple of *pingche* carriages to portray a couple was not rare in contemporary stone carvings. One of the best known examples is from a tomb at present-day Cangshan 蒼山 (Shandong), dated to 151 C.E. On the stone lintel resting above the east wall of the antechamber, a group of two *pingche* carriages, in which the passengers reveal nothing but their faces through the windows, follow a horseman. Greeted by a bowing doorkeeper, they are approaching a station (*ting* 亭) whose gate is half open. Zhang Qihai 張其海, the author of the excavation report, has identified the passengers as male, but Wu Hung considers them female.³⁷ In a recent essay Sun Ji 孫機 verifies the first passenger by his official hat as being a gentleman.³⁸ Although he remains silent on the second passenger’s gender, he notes that this person’s goat-drawn carriage was similar to a small-size vehicle called in transmitted texts *guoxiama zhi che* 果下馬之車, a small-scale carriage often ridden by court ladies.³⁹ I argue, however, that the first *pingche* carriage at Cangshan takes a man and the second takes a woman. My evidence is derived from an analogous carved lintel from the nearby tomb at Chengqiancun 城前村 in Cangshan, in which a chariot procession similarly approaching a station includes two clothed carriages, one occupied by a covert male passenger only exposing the top part of his official hat, and one by a lady flashing her face and bundled

headress through the carriage's side window.⁴⁰ In this case, the artist chose to represent femininity directly through the female body rather than indirectly through a feminine sign, that is, the goat-drawn carriage.

Back to Chulan: although it remains unclear why Hu Yuanren and his wife ended up in two separate burials, the couple are reunited in the common shrine, whose three remaining walls were all lavishly carved in low relief. As part of a standard cemetery during the Han dynasty, the single-chamber shrine, like many other inscribed Eastern Han funerary shrines, was almost certainly dedicated to the deceased couple.⁴¹

Bearing the largest composition in the shrine, the rear wall features a magnificent two-story pavilion, which forms the unmistakable visual center in the whole shrine, confronting the viewer head on (Fig. 1, no. 5). A male figure sits on the second floor of the central pavilion on the rear wall. His importance is highlighted, like that of the chariot occupants, more by his central position than by his small sketchy image. This obviously honorable gentleman is accompanied by two other men, presumably his guests, on both sides. On the left and right of the pavilion two rows of gentlemen stand on stairs, each holding a ceremonial tablet in his hands. These officials are either subordinates of the host or his guests. In this highly symmetrical composition, all other figures around the building are oriented toward the central figure, making a bow or kneeling toward him. This rigorous composition may prompt one to wonder: could this dominant male be the tomb occupant, Mr. Hu Yuanren?

Although the generic, barely recognizable image can hardly be regarded as a faithful portrait of the deceased, scholars have realized that such generic images often symbolically stood for the shrine occupants in the conventional composition dubbed “Central scene” or “Pavilion scene” located on the rear wall of the shrine.⁴² The rear composition at Chulan falls easily into this category.⁴³

In this composition, along the vertical central axis of the pavilion, several female figures on the first floor form a triangular structure.⁴⁴ The lady in the upper center sits behind a loom and holds an infant in her hands. Below, on the two sides of the vertical central axis two other ladies sit on the same level, almost mirroring each other. The one on the left is spinning the warp, and the other on the right, revolving the weft. All the three ladies are executing their “born” duties, for weaving cloth and raising children were two major obligations of wives in traditional China.⁴⁵ The central lady above working the loom and holding the infant (heir) almost certainly represents the deceased's principal wife (qi 妻), and the two lower female companions most likely refer to his concubines or extra wives (qie 妾).⁴⁶ Along the vertical central axis of the rear wall, the husband reigns at the top and the wife rules the bottom. Reflecting the domestic order, this symbolic juxtaposition, a reversion of the conventional “Central scene,” in which women top men,⁴⁷ suggests that the two levels, one male and one female, were meant to be two parallel counterparts, despite the internal hierarchy among them.

The double dominance of the idealized deceased couple on the rear wall of the shrine closely matches the description in the tomb stele of Hu Yuanren, located just a few inches below the portraits (Fig. 4; see Fig. 1, no. 5). Although the stone is badly damaged by a severe crack in the center and numerous smaller dents, the remaining text unambiguously parallels father (fu 父) with mother (mu 母):

On the renzi day [the 22nd day] of the second month of the fourth year of the Jianning era [171 C.E.]. Hu [illegible characters] constructed this stone hall in the cemetery [illegible characters]. [My] father on the yisi day in the ninth month and [my] mother on the xinyou day in the sixth month were respectively buried. [They are survived by] many sons and grandsons [illegible

characters]. [They are survived by their] son named [Li], whose brother is named [illegible characters]. On the first day of [illegible characters] [sacrifices are made] in the springs and autumns on the first day of the season. [illegible characters] all the above people and horses will be fed by the Great Granary [illegible characters] [according to] the laws and the administrative order [illegible characters].

[May he receive] high official salary, honor and longevity, waistbands in red and purple, chariots [illegible characters], gold and silver in his pocket, available [to him] at any time [illegible characters]. [May it pass on to] the sons and grandsons for ten thousand years. Always be [illegible characters].

建寧四年二月壬子，胡... [立] 冢墓石堂... 父以九月乙巳，母以六月辛酉，已 [葬]。傳 [承] 多子孫... 子男 [利]，弟 [長]... 以某... 之朔... [春秋] 祭祀，以時之朔... 以上人馬，皆食大倉... [如] 律令。某故... 祿慕高，榮壽四... 要帶朱紫，車... 金銀在懷，何取不得... 萬年傳子孫，常為...⁴⁸

Despite a number of illegible characters, the inscription, divided into two paragraphs, generally follows a relatively formulaic structure shared by many other Eastern Han shrine inscriptions. It begins with the date when the shrine was established, reports the deaths of the deceased for whom the shrine was made, lists the names of the descendants who probably commissioned the structure, announces the times when sacrifices should be made, and ends with a concluding paragraph blessing the deceased or the visitors to the shrine.⁴⁹ In light of the generic structure, the major content of the inscription becomes clear. The “father” must refer to Hu Yuanren and the “mother” to Hu’s wife. They died in different months, possibly in different years, too.⁵⁰ The parallel indications of the deceased parents suggest that the two were regarded as equal recipients of the shrine, as in many other contemporary shrines.⁵¹

The chariots mediated between the separation (burial) and the reunion (shrine) of the deceased couple. During the endless back-and-forth traveling the burial became a stop on the way where the deceased couple parted, and the shrine another stop at which the couple’s reunion was temporarily fulfilled.

Situating chariots in a simulated cemetery

One question remains: if Mr. Hu’s chariot procession in the burial could be imagined as traveling in the Underworld, in what world did the other procession travel? It turns out that the aboveground chariot procession was situated within a simulated cemetery made of pictorial stone carvings in the shrine. The shrine of Chulan Tomb 2, a rectangular stone chamber 1.3 meters tall, 1.03 meters deep, and 1.36 meters wide, was transformed pictorially into a miniature version of a cemetery, in which ancestors and descendents could meet during the ritual festivals that followed the funeral (see Fig. 1).

With only a shrine, a burial, and a wall, Chulan Tomb 2 did not qualify as a standard Eastern Han cemetery. According to Ann Paludan’s reconstruction, a standard Eastern Han cemetery normally consisted of six elements: a pair of pillar towers (que 闕 flank and mark the tomb entrance; a spirit path (shendao 神道) connects the entrance with the funerary shrine, which precedes the burial in the innermost part of the cemetery; a group of sculptures or tomb guardians, usually in the shape of winged felines (bixie 辟邪), flank the spirit path; one stele (bei 碑) stands on the spirit path.⁵² In such standard cemeteries the posthumous reunion of a family

was realized through various ritual activities (muji 墓祭) regularly held each year. The organizer of the ritual, usually the son of the deceased, and his guests rode chariots to reach the entrance of the cemetery, passed the pillar towers, the tomb stele, and guardian figures, and joined in receptions and gatherings in the cemetery. The son prepared banquets, played music, and arranged amusements in the cemetery.⁵³ Such lavish festivals sometimes lasted for days and cost as much as a hundred gold coins per day.⁵⁴

In contrast to these lavish cemeteries, Chulan Tomb 2, less than a hundred square meters in area, did not possess enough space for freestanding funerary monuments. Although it was no standard cemetery, thanks to the images on the walls of the shrine Chulan Tomb 2 acquired all the other major structures necessary for a real cemetery, including pillar towers, steles, and guardians, and formed a virtual space for the family reunion and subsequent ritual celebrations.

On the rear wall, two identical pillar towers flanking the central building correspond to the que towers marking the entrance of the cemetery (Fig. 5).⁵⁵ Below the twin que a stele—the aforementioned Tomb Stele of Hu Yuanren—is represented in the lower register of the rear wall.⁵⁶ Similar to an actual Han stele, this represented version has a square base for the main text and a semicircular or triangular head to hold a titular inscription, although the physical contour of the stele is completely dissolved (see Fig. 4).⁵⁷ Beneath the two sidewalls, the south ends of the two stone bases, which face outwards, are carved with two almost identical crouching winged beasts, one on each stone (see Fig. 5, nos. 8–9). Occupying the two lower corners of the shrine, these two fantastic beasts face and mirror each other in a way reminiscent of the freestanding tomb guardians that flank the spirit path in front of the shrine.⁵⁸

Although these elements were chiseled out in low relief on different stones or in different registers of a stone, to a viewer who stood directly in front of the shrine looking northwards at the shrine, they would appear symmetrically on the two sides of the shrine's vertical central axis, an imaginary line coinciding with the invisible spirit path. As a result, the viewer might have experienced the illusion that the pillar towers, stele, and winged beasts all lined up along the spirit path in an imaginary standard cemetery. From this perspective it looks as if the front part of the standard cemetery were “pressed” into two-dimensional pictures and projected onto the walls of the shrine, which is located at the rear of the cemetery (see Fig. 5).

The reason for creating this two-dimensional cemetery may have been very simple: Hu Yuanren was not eligible for a real standard cemetery. In her discussion of the Chulan tomb, Michael Nylan, likewise struck by the shrine's humble size, argues that “large, permanent, aboveground citang could not be lawfully erected at the grave site by the non-nobility.”⁵⁹ According to the regulations of the Eastern Han dynasty, only officials or aristocrats were allowed such costly funerary monuments as pillar towers and steles.⁶⁰ But Hu, as indicated by his stele inscription, was only a titleless commoner. Nonetheless, art provided a pictorial version as a substitute, which allowed the tomb occupant to bypass the hierarchic regulations and to honor the ancestors with a standard cemetery he could otherwise not receive.

This virtual cemetery provided ample space for representing rituals, usually held in front of the shrine. Leading the rituals was the filial son, whose image, as I will argue below, appears on the right bottom of the stele on the rear wall.

The importance of this central male figure is beyond doubt. Sheltered under a canopy or umbrella and followed by two gentlemen and a lady, he is receiving another person dressed in official costumes kneeling in front of him (see Fig. 1, no. 5). It is worth noting that in Han funerary art the imagery of the canopy, a kind of royal regalia usually attributed to rulers or gods, appears only once in the entire shrine.⁶¹ But despite his obvious high social status, the

figure is ironically shorter than his inferior followers. This subtle visual paradox is amplified in another almost identical scene in the nearby shrine at Baoguangsi 寶光寺 (dated to 168 C.E.), located only a few miles away.⁶² In the Baoguangsi shrine, dedicated to a local male official, a similar figure stands under a canopy before a group of kneeling officials in the lowest register of the rear wall. The figure's childish hair bundles and dwarfish torso indicate a young age. This type of childlike figure was a conventional pictorial motif associated with the young King Cheng 周成王 (r. 1042–1021 B.C.E.), second ruler of the Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771 B.C.E.). According to historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 B.C.E.), King Cheng was just a little boy when he ascended the throne after the untimely death of his father, King Wu 武王 (r. 1046–1043 B.C.E.). His uncles, Duke Zhou 周公 and Duke Shao 召公, faithfully assisted him through a series of political crises till the boy had reached adulthood.⁶³ This motif, imbued with strong political and moral implications, was well received in Eastern Han funerary art.⁶⁴ Despite minor variations in form, the standard iconography always centers on a small figure, i.e., the young king, standing on a dais, either en face or in profile, under a canopy or umbrella.⁶⁵ One example of this kind is carved in the small niche attached to the rear wall of the so-called “Left Stone Chamber” in the Wu family cemetery, dated to the second century C.E.⁶⁶ Likewise, the short man at Chulan is almost certainly an appropriation of this popular iconography.

To an Eastern Han subject, the young King Cheng was an exemplary filial son. In The Book of Odes (Shi jing 詩經), one ode, titled “Pity Me, Your Child” (Min yu xiaozi 閔予小子), was believed to be a pious expression of King Cheng when he paid a visit to the temple of his recently departed father:

閔予小子 Pity me, your child,
 遭家不造 Inheritor of a House unfinished,
 嬛嬛在疚 Lonely and in trouble.
 於乎皇考 O august elders,
 永世克孝 All my days I will be pious,
 念茲皇祖 Bearing in mind those august forefathers
 陟降庭止 That ascend and descend in the courtyard.
 維予小子 Yes, I, your child,
 夙夜敬止 Early and late will be reverent.
 於乎皇王 O august kings,
 繼序思不忘 The succession shall not stop!⁶⁷

Following the Western Han annotators from the Lu 魯, Qi 齊, and Han 韓 schools,⁶⁸ the Eastern Han annotator Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) interpreted the “child” in the ode as King Cheng. He wrote: “The new king was King Cheng. To conclude the mourning period for King Wu and prepare himself for office, he visited [his father’s] temple.”⁶⁹ Clearly, this ode, as understood by Zheng and other Han scholars, was composed in a funerary context.

Cited by Eastern Han authors on various occasions, the story of King Cheng’s visit to his father’s temple became an embodiment of filial piety.⁷⁰ To extol the virtue of the current emperor, who traveled to Nanyang 南陽 on a pilgrimage-like trip to pay homage to the old house of the founding emperor of the Eastern Han dynasty, the scholar and writer Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139), by referring to the story, compared the emperor to King Cheng.⁷¹

Filial exemplars also appeared on the shrine’s west wall, which boasts a more dynamic narrative illustration with two groups of armed women besieging an ox-drawn chariot rider in the

center (Fig. 1, no. 6). Scholars have identified this scene as an illustration of the “Revenge of the Seven Daughters,” a lost story from the Han dynasty about seven courageous daughters taking revenge upon the Administrator of Chang’an, who wrongly sentenced their father to death. In a well-planned action, they ambushed the administrator’s chariot procession on a bridge.⁷² Also illustrated in the Baoguangsi shrine, this and another unidentified filial story on the same wall propagandized Confucian virtue.⁷³

Among all the illustrations extolling filial piety, the “King Cheng” scene was the only one located on the privileged rear wall. What’s more, on this wall the young king took a prominent position right next to the simulated stele and below the Central pavilion, where the deceased sit. More importantly, the motif of “Young King Cheng Visiting the Temple” (siwang chaomiao 嗣王朝廟), which derives from a funerary context, fits well into Hu’s funerary shrine, a simplified version of a temple.⁷⁴ The little figure in the shrine of Chulan Tomb 2, intentionally dwarfed to indicate his young age and put under a canopy to highlight his high social status, perfectly echoes the major patron of the shrine mentioned in the simulated funerary stele, Hu Li, the son of Mr. Hu, who resembled King Cheng in recently having lost his father.⁷⁵ Probably to differentiate this figure from King Cheng, the artist edited out any iconographic indications of divinity, such as the three-pointed hat (or crown) normally worn by the young sage king. The subtle visual analogy projected not only the image of King Wu, a saintly father, onto Mr. Hu Yuanren, but also the image of King Cheng, a virtuous son, onto the one who most likely commissioned the shrine.

Staged on the virtual cemetery are imaginary ritual events in pictorial form. On the rear wall two groups of people flank the stele in the lowest register (see Fig. 1, no. 5). The left group includes musicians, dancers, and acrobats. In the middle, two kneeling performers beat an elaborate drum; on the left, a lady plays the lute; on the right, two women dance. Accompanied by music, one entertainer juggles balls. The whole picture exudes a cheerful atmosphere. The register above this scene shows a symposium of eighteen men and women sitting in small groups served by wine pots and cups. Similar celebratory events also appear on the east side wall (see Fig. 1, no. 7).⁷⁶ Through these visual representations of funerary rituals the anonymous tomb designer ingeniously turned a physical shrine into a lively illusionary cemetery, where reunions of the deceased and the living could happen as they would have occurred in an actual cemetery.

During the Eastern Han, with the popularity of the “cemetery sacrifice” (muji 墓祭), funerary shrines or temples became active sites in the public space. The filial son had to conduct ritual performances before the deceased’s “spirit seat” as if the ancestors were still alive. Emperor Ming 明帝 (r. 58–75) even shifted the imperial ceremony of New Year Audience (yuanhuiyi 元會儀) from the imperial palace to his deceased father Emperor Guangwu’s 光武帝 (r. 25–57) mausoleum. In the funerary temple, he led his officials to brief the empty “spirit seat” of the former emperor, “wishing the spirit of His Majesty could hear them.”⁷⁷ It is possible that the Hu family created this illusionary cemetery to emulate the imperial model.

The chariot procession, carved on the interior faces of the wall bases, was one of the scenes in the virtual cemetery. Situated below the walls, it looks as though the hosts and guests of the cemetery sacrifice were riding chariots, passing pillar towers, and receiving audiences in the graveyard. A detail of the north stone right below the rear wall shows two birds, presumably chicks or ducks, next to the first horse, implying that the procession has entered a populated area, presumably the virtual cemetery in the form of a manor (see Fig. 5).

Conclusion

Beyond the specific iconographic and spatial meaning I have presented above, the two related chariot processions in the shrine and the burial have taught us two broader lessons.

First, separate studies of either the shrine or the burial in an Eastern Han cemetery must be carried out with caution, because burial chambers and shrines could have been conceived as an organic ritual complex and thus encompassed a greater pictorial program. Had the shrine of Chulan Tomb 2 collapsed and completely vanished prior to its excavation—just as many of its contemporary counterparts have—we probably would have confined our analysis exclusively to the burial, perhaps even without realizing the shrine’s previous existence. Consequently, any conclusions based on such isolated studies could potentially be problematic.

Perhaps for this reason it is more accurate to call the Chulan cemetery a shrine-burial nexus. The essence of the nexus lies precisely in the connection (as indicated by the hyphen) between the two ritual units and meant to keep the deceased constantly moving on the posthumous way from separation to union, or the other way around.

With such a nexus in mind, even in cases where only part of the shrine or burial survives, researchers should be aware of a potential loss and absence and include that scenario in their observations and interpretations. This challenge should stimulate the researcher to make closer observations of the surviving structure, including its elements and structural logic, even though this may generate more open questions than closed interpretations. In larger tombs, the funerary nexus might extend beyond burial and shrine to involve other architectural units such as que pillar towers, or perhaps even elements in other related tombs, if evidence permits.

Second, the Chulan case makes us reflect upon such typological concepts as *leixing* 類型 (“type”) or *getao* 格套 (“formula”), which have been employed to interpret Han pictorial art. These concepts assume that the pictorial program in each decorated tomb is made up of a number of generic types or formulas shared by tombs in a given geographic region.⁷⁸ I would not deny the validity of types, but propose further that it is more important to understand how and why tombs made of identical types or formulas could end up so differently. In the case of Chulan, despite a similar pictorial style and even iconography, the two neighboring Tombs 1 and 2 express radically different ideas: while Tomb 1 displays a strict symmetry in structure and pictorial program in both the burial and the shrine, Tomb 2 only embraces the idea of symmetry in the shrine while asserting male dominance in the burial. The cause for the departure, I argue, was the practice of separate burial (*fenzang* 分葬) between Mr. Hu and his wife, which directly contradicts the practice of joint burial (*hezang* 合葬) in Tomb 1. The particular mortuary situation forced the artist(s) to improvise, reorganizing the established types or formulas into a new structure to best serve the client. It is in such varying manifestations of generic motifs—with such subtle, meaningful modifications as the dragon shaft—that the true creativity of the Eastern Han anonymous artists, sometimes called “artisans,” was concealed.

Footnotes:

This work is dedicated to the memory of Chinese archaeologist Mr. Wang Buyi 王步毅 (1927–2011), the leading excavator of the Chulan tombs. Had it not been for his generous help, I would never have completed this study.

1. Wu Hung, “Where Are They Going? Where Did They Come From? Hearse and ‘Soul-chariot’ in Han Dynasty Tomb Art,” *Oriental Art* 29.6 (1998): 24–28; Zhao Dianzeng 趙殿增 and Yuan

- Shuguang 袁曙光, “‘Tianmen’ kao: Jianlun Sichuan Han huaxiang zhuan (shi) de zuhe yu zhuti” 天門考：兼論四川漢畫像磚（石）的組合與主題, *Sichuan wenwu* 1990.6: 3–11.
2. Lydia D. Thompson, “The Yi’nan Tomb: Narrative and Ritual in Pictorial Art of the Eastern Han (25–220 C.E.),” Ph.D. diss., New York Univ., 1998.
3. Satake Yasuhiko 佐竹靖彦, “Kandai no funbo saishi gazō ni okeru teimon teiketsu to shaba gyōretsu” 漢代の墳墓祭祀画像における亭門、亭闕と車馬行列, *Jinbun gaku* 人文学報 325 (2002): 1–149; Wu Hung, “Beyond the ‘Great Boundary’: Funerary Narrative in the Cangshan Tomb,” in *Boundaries in China*, ed. John Hay (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 81–104.
4. Michèle Pirazzoli t’Serstevens, “Death and the Dead,” in *Early Chinese Religion*, ed. John Lagerwey (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 955.
5. For example, see Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), 59.2653, 68.2948; Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 24.852, 37.1258, 49.1637.
6. Besides these two Chulan tombs, there is only one other combined example that has been excavated, located at Baiji near Xuzhou, Jiangsu province. For the excavation report, see Nanjing bowuyuan 南京博物院, “Xuzhou Qingshanquan Baiji Dong Han huaxiangshi mu” 徐州青山泉白集東漢畫像石墓, *Kaogu* 1981.2: 137–50. The so-called “Zhu Wei” 朱鮪 shrine at Jinxiang, Shandong province, was discovered in the 1930s but not excavated; see Wilma Fairbank, “A Structural Key to Han Mural Art,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7 (1942): 52–88. The two burials excavated in the Wu family cemetery are at Jiexiang, Shandong province, which also includes several shrines whose initial owners have not yet been identified. See Jiang Yingju 蔣英炬 and Wu Wenqi 吳文祺, *Han dai Wu shi muqun shike yanjiu* 漢代武氏墓群石刻研究 (Ji’nan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 1995), 119–27.
7. Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu” 安徽宿縣褚蘭漢畫像石墓, *Kaogu xuebao* 1993.4: 515–49; Wang Buyi, “Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu ji youguan wuxiang de renshi” 褚蘭漢畫像石墓及有關物象的認識, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 1991.3: 60–67.
8. Xin Lixiang, “Su, Wan, Zhe diqu Han huaxiangshi zongshu” 蘇皖浙地區漢畫像石綜述, in *Zhongguo huaxiangshi quanji* 中國畫像石全集, ed. Wang Buyi (Ji’nan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2000), 4: 1–16, esp. 4–6. See also idem, *Han dai huaxiangshi zonghe yanjiu* 漢代畫像石綜合研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2000), 323–28.
9. Xin Lixiang, *Han dai huaxiangshi*, 322–35.
10. A chariot procession represented in a shrine from cemetery A may have no relationship to one depicted in a burial from cemetery B, or, in another scenario, the journeys from different cemeteries might have served contradictory purposes. Thus, without analyzing an intact cemetery that contains both the shrine and the burial, it would be impossible to unravel the full logic between the two structures.
11. Édouard Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1909), 20–24.
12. Tadashi Sekino, *Shina Santō-shō ni okeru Kandai funbo no hyōshoku* 支那山東省ニ於ケル漢代墳墓ノ表飾 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku, 1916), fig. 4; idem, *Shina no kenchiku to geijutsu* 支那の建築と藝術 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1938), 430–39.
13. Fairbank, “A Structural Key to Han Mural Art.”

14. For studies on the workshops of Han masons, see Xing Yitian 邢義田, “Han bei Han hua he shigong de guanxi” 漢碑、漢畫和石工的關係, *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 14.4 (1996): 44–59; Anthony Barbieri-Low, “Carving Out a Living: Stone-Monument Artisans during the Eastern Han Dynasty,” in *Recarving China’s Past: Art, Archaeology, and Architecture of the “Wu Family Shrines,”* ed. Cary Liu (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2005), 485–512.
15. Despite the slightly different style, the two chariot processions in burial and shrine generally resemble each other in location and content. The number, size, and complexity of the bas-reliefs slightly vary. The comparative sizes are listed below:
- | Directions Shrine (Length/Height) | Antechamber (Length/Height) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| North 139/24.5 cm | 157/28 cm |
| East 105/24 cm | 171/28 cm |
| South — | 159/28 cm |
| West 104/24 cm | 174/28 cm |
16. Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 544.
17. It was reported that during the Zhou “in carriage, the Son of Heaven drove six horses; kings drove four; great gentlemen [dafu 大夫] drove three; gentlemen [shi 士] drove two; and commoners drove one.” See also Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, “Go Kan jidai no shaba gyōretsu” 後漢時代の車馬行列, *Tōhō gaku* 37 (1966): 184–90.
18. Sima Biao 司馬彪, “Xu Han zhi” 續漢志, in *Hou Han shu* 119.3645–47.
19. Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 543–44.
20. The artist(s) remained very careful in representing a horse with all its four limbs. Thus, where two horses are present, there are always eight legs; where one horse is present, always four. There are no exceptions throughout the tomb.
21. Even though in the published rubbing reproductions the horses’ legs are not easy to count, it is evident that these two chariots have at least ten legs among them, which indicated the presence of more than two horses.
22. Although the quality of the rubbing provided in the excavation report is regrettably poor, according to the excavator “the heads of the dragons rise high upon the chariot shafts.” Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 541.
23. Xiao Tong, ed., *Selections of Refined Literature*, tr. David R. Knechtges (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982), 271.
24. For the use and function of such chariot shafts, see Sun Ji 孫機, *Han dai wuzhi wenhua ziliao tushuo (zengdingben) 漢代物質文化資料圖說 (增訂本)* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 131–33; Hayashi Minao, *Kandai no bunbutsu 漢代の文物* (Kyoto: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1976), 314–15. A Western Han bronze dragon-shaped ornament of the shaft is reproduced in *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所, Mancheng Han mu fajue baogao 漢城漢墓發掘報告* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980), 2: color plate XVII, left. Other than the Chulan chariots, another pictorial example with an unambiguous representation of the dragon-shaft is in the final episode of the famous scroll *Nymph of the Luo River (Luoshenfu tu 洛神賦圖)*, attributed to Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (348–409), but mostly likely an eleventh-century copy, now in the collection of the Palace Museum at Shenyang. In this example, the male protagonist, prince Cao Zhi 曹植, is depicted as traveling in a four-horse-drawn carriage, but a fifth golden dragon head emerges in front of the carriage. There is no doubt that this detail was used to highlight the prince’s royal status.

25. Dragon imagery as a vehicle for ascension in early Chinese pictorial art appeared in an Eastern Zhou silk banner from Zidanku 子彈庫. For the archaeological report, see Hunan sheng bowuguan 湖南省博物館, Changsha Chu mu 長沙楚墓 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2000), 1: 428; for discussion, see Sōfukawa Hirōshi 曾布川 寬, “Konronsan to shōsenzu” 崑崙山と昇仙圖, *Tōhō gaku* 51 (1979): 114–18. Dragon-pulled chariots became popular in Eastern Han bas-reliefs; see K.te Finsterbusch, *Verzeichnis und Motivindex der Han-Darstellungen* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1971), 2: 67, 261n.
26. For a very interesting comparison with similar dragons, see *Zhongguo huaxiangshi quanji* 5: 197, pl. 266. In this example found in north Shaanxi, however, the horses and dragons are physically merged into fantastic hybrids with a dragon’s body and a horse’s legs.
27. Anna Seidel, “Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs,” in *Dokyō to shūkyō bunka* 道教と宗教文化, ed. Akizuki Kan’ei 秋月 觀英 (Tokyo: Hirakawa, 1987), 21–57.
28. The width of the rear chamber is 1.32 meters, and the average width of a regular coffin for commoners in the Han dynasty usually varies between 0.6 and 0.8 meters. Considering the margins between the coffins and the side walls, it is clear that the rear chamber is too narrow for two coffins placed in parallel; see Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 523. At the Shaogou 燒溝 cemetery near Luoyang, one of the most systematically excavated “standard” cemeteries of the Han dynasty, a burial chamber with two coffins is seldom narrower than 1.90 meters; see *Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo* 中國科學院考古研究所, *Luoyang Shaogou Han mu* 洛陽燒溝漢墓 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1959), Tables.
29. Such a welcoming scene is also portrayed in one of the bas-reliefs from the antechamber of Tomb 1, in which a doorman is saluting an approaching chariot procession. See Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 526–27.
30. Though a simple composition, the placement is carefully calculated according to Han cosmology: the flying bird is correlative to the top (or front), and the resting beast, correlated with the north, dwells at the bottom (or rear); see Cheng Te-k’un, “Yin-Yang Wu-Hsing and Han Art,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 20 (1957): 162–86.
31. Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 543. For a study of mingci in traditional China, see Yang Zhishui 楊之水, “Cong mingci dao baitie” 從名刺到拜帖, *Shoucangjia* 2006.5: 47–50.
32. It must be noted that in Eastern Han funerary art it was very rare to see a male guest portrayed as visiting a female host, or vice versa. Instead, gender segregation was rather strict, probably due to Confucian ideology that dictated that men and women should never mix in public. A good example is Chulan Tomb 1, in which the male and female gatherings are clearly separate on two opposite walls of the antechamber.
33. The second register shows a male attendant inspecting a groom kneeling before him. The two bottom registers show two parallel gatherings of sitting men and standing women. The men hold semi-circular fans, the ladies circular ones. Such gathering motifs must not be confused with the previous reception motif, as the participants here are at leisure in an informal atmosphere. They are mostly likely male subordinates and their wives.
34. See Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 520.
35. Sun Ji, *Han dai wuzhi wenhua*, 113.
36. According to Sima Biao, many female members of the imperial house were entitled to pingche carriages. *Hou Han shu* 119.3647.

37. Zhang Qihai 張其海, “Shandong Cangshan Yuanjian yuannian huaxiangshi mu” 山東蒼山元嘉元年畫像石墓, *Kaogu* 1975.2: 127; Wu Hung, “Beyond the ‘Great Boundary,’” 81–104.
38. Sun Ji, “Xianfan youming zhijian: Han huaxiangshi yu ‘daxiang qisheng’” 仙凡幽明之間：漢畫像石與“大象其生,” *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 2013.9: 93.
39. Sun Ji, “Xianfan youming zhijian,” 94. An example was interred in the south side chamber at Mancheng Tomb 2, occupied by the princess Dou Wan 竇綰 (d. late 2nd c. b.c.e.), wife of the famous prince Liu Sheng 劉勝 (d. 113 b.c.e.); see *Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, Mancheng Han mu fajue baogao*, 1: 319–20.
40. Jiao Deseng 焦德森 and Yang Aiguo 楊愛國, eds., *Zhongguo huaxiangshi quanji* (Ji’nan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2000), 3: 46, pl. 56.
41. Nagata Hidemasa 永田英正, *Kandai sekkoku shūsei 漢代石刻集成* (Tokyo: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1994), 29, 84.
42. Wilma Fairbank, “The Offering Shrines of ‘Wu-Liang Tz’u,’” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 11 (1941): 34–35; Jiang and Wu, *Han dai Wushi muqun shike yanjiu*, 96–97; Xin Lixiang, *Han dai huaxiangshi zonghe yanjiu*, 83–102. His conclusion is on p. 101.
43. For the meaning of the “Central scene” or “Pavilion scene,” a few other theories have been proposed. Nagahirō Toshio 長廣敏雄, “Bushi-shi sa-sekishitsu da-ku-seki no gazō nit suite” 武氏祠左石室第九石の畫象について, *Tōhō gaku* 31 (1961): 95–116; English translation available as “A Study on the Central Pavilion Scenes of the Wu Family Shrines,” *Acta Asiatica* 2 (1961): 40–58; Doi Yoshiko 土居淑子, *Kodai Chūgoku no gazōseki 古代中国の画像石* (Tokyo: Dōhōsha, 1986), 107–11; Sahara Yasuo 佐原康夫, “Kandai shidō gazō kō” 漢代祠堂畫像考, *Tōhō gaku* 63 (1991), 23; Doris Croissant, “Funktion und Wanddekor der Opferschreine,” *Monumenta Serica* 23 (1964): 89–161, esp. 161; Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1989), 193–213.
44. Xin Lixiang, “Su, Wan, Zhe diqu Han huaxiangshi zongshu,” 4–6.
45. For such female images in the pictorial narrative, see Julia Murray, *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 2007), 27–36. See also Bret Hinsch, “Women in Early Imperial China” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1993), 122–76; a briefer version is seen in idem, *Women in Early Imperial China* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 67–79. For child imagery in early Chinese art, see Ann Barrott Wicks, “Representations of Children in Three Stories from Biographies of Exemplary Women,” in *Children in Chinese Art*, ed. Ann Barrott Wicks (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 84–107.
46. For studies of polygamy in Han China, see Qu Tongzu, *Han Social Structure*, ed. Jack L. Dull (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1972), 44–48; Yang Shuda 楊樹達, *Han dai hunsang lisu kao 漢代婚喪禮俗考* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), 44–46; Liu Zenggui 劉增貴, *Han dai hunyin zhidu 漢代婚姻制度* (Taipei: Huashi chubanshe, 1980), 19.
47. Although scholars have different arguments regarding these female figures, Xin Lixiang’s view, which I basically accept, is that the ladies represent wives or concubines of the male tomb occupant; see Xin, *Han dai huaxiangshi zonghe yanjiu*, 101–2. For a new study of the second-floor ladies in Wu family and other related shrines in Jiexiang, see Jie Shi, “The Overseeing Mother: Revisiting the Frontal-Pose Lady in the Wu Family Shrines in Second-Century China,” *Monumenta Serica* 63 (2015), forthcoming.

48. Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 545. The transcription is based on an original photograph of the inscription, which the author of the excavation report, Mr. Wang Buyi, kindly sent me.
49. This formula is shared by all Eastern Han shrine inscriptions published in Nagata’s *Kandai sekkoku shūsei*, entry nos. 12, 20, 27, 35, 37, 51, 57, 61, 64, 68, 72, 76, and 79.
50. Because, unlike most other inscriptions, this inscription does not specify the years before the months and days, we may assume the years were omitted as being obvious. This would mean that the Hu couple most likely died in the previous year, or in 170. In this case, the husband would have died on the twelfth day of the ninth month, and the wife would have died on the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month. The calculations are based on Zhang Peiyu 張培瑜, *Sanqian wubai nian liri tianxiang 三千五百年曆日天象* (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 1997), 649.
51. Nagata, *Kandai sekkoku shūsei*, entry nos. 29, 84.
52. Ann Paludan, *The Chinese Spirit Road: The Classical Tradition of Stone Tomb Statuary* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1991), 28–51.
53. Yang Kuan 楊寬, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidushi yanjiu 中國古代陵寢制度史研究* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), 119–22.
54. *Hou Han Shu* 92.3707.
55. For surviving Han stone pillar towers, see Chen Mingda 陳明達, “Han dai de shique” 漢代的石闕, *Wenwu* 1961.12: 9–23. For a discussion of que pillar towers in Han bas-reliefs, see Xin Lixiang, *Han dai huaxiangshi zonghe yanjiu*, 293–321. For textual evidence, see Yang Kuan, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidushi yanjiu*, 135–39.
56. The excavator considers this stele as a new form of real steles (see Wang Buyi, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 545–47). In my opinion, this is but a representation of a stele.
57. For Chinese steles, see Sekino Tadashi, “Shina hiketsu no yōshiki” 支那碑碣の様式, in *idem, Shina no kenchiku to geijutsu 支那の建築と藝術* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1938), 167–96; Yang Kuan, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidushi yanjiu*, 154–56; Dorothy Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 15–42.
58. For such guardian images and their role in early Chinese cemeteries, see Paludan, *The Chinese Spirit Road*, 28–51.
59. Michael Nylan, “Constructing Citang in Han,” in *Rethinking Recarving: Ideals, Practices, and Problems of the “Wu Family Shrines” and Han China*, ed. Cary Y. Liu and Naomi Noble Richard (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 212–13.
60. Yang Kuan, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidushi yanjiu*, 136, 151.
61. For the canopy or umbrella as the attribute of a king in the West, see H. P. L’Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press 1953), 134–37.
62. Wang Huamin 王化民, “Suxian Baoguangsi Han mu shici huaxiangshi” 宿縣寶光寺漢墓石祠畫像石, *Wenwu yanjiu* 8 (1993): 64–70, esp. 60, 66; *idem*, “Suxian chutu Han Xiping sannian huaxiangshi” 宿縣出土漢熹平三年畫像石, *Zhongguo wenwubao* 1991.12.1.
63. Sima Qian, *Shiji 史記* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 4.132–33.
64. For the public scenario of this iconography, see Martin Powers, “Pictorial Art and Its Public in Early Imperial China,” *Art History* 7.2 (1984): 153.

65. Although most depictions of King Cheng represent him as a frontal figure, sometimes he is shown in profile. In Xuzhou, not far away from Chulan, archaeologists recently found inscriptional evidence that identifies portraits of King Cheng and Duke Zhou in profile without the dais and the canopy; see Hao Lirong 郝利榮, “Xuzhou xin faxian de Han dai shici huaxiang he mushi huaxiang” 徐州新發現的漢代石祠畫像和墓室畫像, *Sichuan wenwu* 2008.2: 62–68, esp. 65, fig. 13.
66. Jiang and Wu, *Han dai Wu shi muqun shike yanjiu*, 78.
67. Arthur Waley, tr., *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 301. [Orig. publ. 1937.]
68. Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shi sanjia yi jishu 詩三家義集疏* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 2: 1037. 69. Ruan Yuan 阮元, *Shisanjing zhushu 十三經註疏* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 1: 598.
70. For one example, see *Hou Han shu* 42.1426.
71. Zhang Heng 張衡, “Southern Capital Rhapsody” (Nandu fu 南都賦), in Knechtges, *Selections of Refined Literature*, 311–36, esp. 335.
72. A slightly different but better-preserved illustration of this story recurs at the bottom of a wall from the Baoguangsi shrine. See Wang Huamin, “Suxian chutu Han Xiping sannian huaxiangshi.” For a comprehensive iconographic discussion, see Xing Yitian, “Getao, bangti, wenxian yu huaxiang jieshi: Yi yige shichuan de ‘Qinü wei fu baochou’ Hanhua gushi weili” 格套、榜題、文獻與畫象解釋：以一個失傳的「七女為父報仇」漢畫故事為例, in *Disanjie guoji Hanxue huiyi lunwenji: Zhongshiji yiqian de diyu wenhua, zongjiao yu yishu 第三屆國際漢學會議論文集：中世紀以前的地域文化、宗教與藝術*, ed. Xing Yitian (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 2000), 183–234.
73. The other scene above could possibly be identified as an illustration of the story of a well-known filial son in the Eastern Han period, whose name is Jiang Ge 江革. His story is recorded in *Hou Han shu* and later became one of the twenty-four stories of exemplary filial piety. Born in a turbulent period, Jiang was brought up by his mother. To escape rampant bandits, he carried his mother and fled his hometown. Several times, Jiang fell into the hands of the bandits, who tried to recruit him. Afraid to leave his old mother alone, Jiang begged the bandits to release him. The bandits, moved by his filial piety, finally granted his request. The scene portrayed here is probably the touching moment when Jiang, alongside his hunchbacked mother, begged the bandits for freedom; see *Hou Han shu* 39.1302.
74. Édouard Chavannes calls such shrines *jiaomiao* 家廟, or family temples; see his *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, 7.
75. Other similar images were found in the same area. One is from the Baoguangsi site, while another’s provenance is unknown; see Gao Shulin 高書林, *Huaibei Han huaxiangshi 淮北漢畫像石* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 2002), 49.
76. Wang, “Anhui Suxian Chulan Han huaxiangshi mu,” 537.
77. *Hou Han shu* 2.99; Sima Biao, *Xu Han zhi*, in *Hou Han shu* 94.3103.
78. Xing Yitian, “Getao, bangti, wenxian yu huaxiang jieshi”; Zeng Lanying 曾藍瑩, “Getao, zuofang yu diyu zichuantong: Cong Shandong Anqiu Dongjiazhuang Han mu de zhizuo henji tanqi” 格套、作坊與地域子傳統：從山東安丘董家莊漢墓的製作痕跡談起, *Taiwan guoli daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 8 (2003): 33–86. For a recent study of the getao approach, see Xing

Yitan, “Han hua jiedu fangfa shitan: Yi ‘laodingtu’ wei li” 漢畫解讀方法試探：以“撈鼎圖”為例, in his Hua wei xinsheng: Huaxiangshi huaxiangzhuan yu bihua 畫為心聲：畫像石, 畫像磚與壁畫 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 398–439.