

## CHAPTER I

## PROBLEMS OF CHRONOLOGY

*Han Material Culture* is intended as a guide to the dating of Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220) Chinese artefacts and tomb structures, an analysis of the material utilized in the course of establishing this guide, and a framework for future research. Both guide and analysis are focused on the three categories of vessel forms – *hu* (壺), *guan* (罐), and *ding* (鼎) – and on the tomb structures, which constitute the basis of the chronology presented here. This chronology depends on positively dated sites, whose dates are then applied to objects from the site (unless another date becomes apparent), and on date-inscribed objects. Dates for objects that are not positively dated are produced by comparison to the positively dated, on the principle that (essentially) identical objects, in the absence of information to the contrary, must be contemporaneous. Questions deriving from the material I have used, but not physically incorporated in it, such as vessel function, object assemblages, interpretation of inscriptions, development of burial rituals, and so forth, as well as artefacts that presently appear either unique or unreliable for narrow dating, are deferred for future investigation. This approach tends to emphasize commonality across geographic China and across social classes. For vessels, this translates into an emphasis on the utilitarian – most often relatively unadorned ceramic ware, although some forms, whose chronological and geographic distribution indicates widespread use and presumably popularity, are carefully decorated. It is nonetheless apparent that, over the course of the Han dynasties, clay became the medium of formal and decorative experimentation, as the preceding Bronze Age was replaced by the beginning of what might be called the Age of Ceramics. Within this context, I am particularly interested in three overriding questions, viewed from the material under investigation: What can we conclude about regional interaction within Han China, about the interaction of the Han with the Chinese past, and about the interaction of Han China with the foreign?

The guide itself is a chronological typology of those Han vessels whose forms appear to be narrowly datable. Vessels not included in this typology may be dated through comparison to it, again on the principle that, within certain constraints, identical pieces may be termed contemporaneous and, in a closed context, the objects found with such pieces may be

considered to share the same date. Positively dated vessels of forms not included here may of course be directly incorporated. The typology is thus infinitely expandable. As with any archaeological research, it also remains subject to modification in the light of future discoveries or differing interpretations. The methodology used to create this typology has been made as simple as possible, in an effort to reduce the number of assumptions needed to proceed. A variety of assumptions are nonetheless made, each of which introduces subjective elements that need to be understood, even if they are provisionally accepted.

## METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Archaeological excavations have yielded a number of self-dated objects of various kinds, including administrative records, deeds of land purchase, vessels and similar objects, molds for casting coins, memorials to the dead, and tombs. Theoretically, beginning with these positively dated sites and objects, a chronological typology of Han dynasty material could be developed. To incorporate a broad range of data, further comparisons need to be established to include undated material. Starting with the archaeological theorem that, in the absence of other information, identical objects are considered contemporaneous is both natural and problematic. Stated as such, the theorem is simplistic. It is possible to find essentially identical vessel forms at different times or in different cultures. For example, a Late Shang (ca. thirteenth through eleventh centuries BC) earthenware *fu* (釜, cooking pot) from Gaoshaji (Wangcheng, Hunan) is virtually identical in form with *guan* 105 in my typologies. Similarly, a *guan* pot excavated at Dashi (Songyang, Zhejiang), dated to the Springs and Autumns period (ca. 771–475 BC), could be classified as my *guan* 210.<sup>1</sup> In another case, a Machang (Pingba, Guizhou) tomb dated to the Six Dynasties (ca. AD 221–557) yielded a pot identifiable as Han because it is inscribed with an AD 104 date of production (here, *guan* 246).<sup>2</sup> Presumably, in the absence of this inscription, the form would have been dated with the tomb to the post-Han era. In some cases, such coincidence may lead to reevaluation of the date assigned to the non-Han-era comparative piece.

Chronological classification of isolated objects obviously carries additional risk, particularly when there is continuity of form over an extended period of time. In any case, context becomes essential. At the same time, context is generally determined by the objects themselves, creating a circular argument and self-justification. This problem is acute in the non-Chinese context, where otherwise identifiable data is rare and analysis relies to a large extent on the subjective criteria of the analyst (see Chapter 2). For sites that are apparently Chinese, such problems of context are perhaps most visible in the early Western Han, when differentiation with the brief period of dynastic Qin (221–206 BC) is difficult.

A further problem with the theorem that identical objects are assumed to be contemporaneous is that of defining what is identical. Inevitably, this determination will be subjective. When molds or other instruments allowing repeated, identical production have not been used, how much of the natural variation of hand production falls within the definition of “identical”? In practice, as new positively dated information becomes available, the eye learns to distinguish slight differences of form in objects that were previously accepted as falling within the same “identical” type. Are these new distinctions necessarily significant?

Finally, the determination of the “identical” begs the question of how we define contemporaneity. I have adopted the practice of designating chronological categories according to the positive dates from which they are extrapolated. Except in the case of *hu* 25, for which two positively dated examples produce a range of dates (ca. 119–103 BC), this manner of designating date gives the impression of a punctuality that may initially be misleading. Because the date assigned to an object is not necessarily the date assigned to the context in which it is found, we may make some conjectures about the possible duration of production or circulation for some object forms.

Can we assume that all objects change form at the same chronological rate? Clearly not, since we would not anticipate styles of architecture, for instance, to change as quickly as the form of a lamp. A narrow chronology is desirable not only for greater precision, but also to provide cultural context to changes that take place over greater lengths of time. Accordingly, the problem centers on discovering which dated material changes the most rapidly in the most consistent fashion. This is largely a matter of repeated trial and error, attempting classification and discarding material that proves, in the light of positively dated data, to change at a different speed. I have concluded that vessel forms are more reliable for chronological purposes than are weapons, tools, or ornaments. Within the broad category of vessels, however, many types do not change rapidly or consistently enough for my purposes: for instance, bowls, ladles, cups, and platters all exist in a number of variations, but cannot be used for narrow dating. Ultimately, I have relied on three formal classes: *hu* and other recipients for liquid, generally

characterized by a relatively narrow body with a pronounced neck; *guan* and other pots used for food presentation or storage, whether liquid or solid, generally with a broad body and no neck; and *ding* and other three-legged pots used for serving or preparing food. Because the use of any vessel class does not appear to have been strictly defined during the Han, each category includes forms that may not be strictly classified as such. As an example, *guan* 105 is a *fu* (cooking pot), but because of its overall form, I have included it with *guan*. These three broad categories, therefore, constitute the basis of my chronological guide and of the accompanying analysis.

The positive dates assigned to vessel forms in the present typologies depend on dated inscriptions on the vessels themselves and on the dated tombs in which vessels without such inscriptions are found. If the date of death or burial is known, that date can be applied for practical purposes to the objects within the tomb (as always, in the absence of information to the contrary). Since we have no reason to assume that only relatively new objects were buried with the dead, dating from entombment may well lead to objects being dated too late. This is particularly obvious in wealthy tombs, when burial goods may represent the accumulated wealth of years, as is demonstrable, for instance, at Mancheng (Hebei), where several objects are date inscribed, and the tomb of the King of Nanyue (Xianggangshan [Guangzhou Municipality, Guangdong]), as well as more modest tombs containing pre-Han objects (see Table 4.7). Conversely, dating burial on the basis of the objects within the grave may naturally lead to tombs being dated too early. Nonetheless, the tomb at first appears the perfect context in establishing an object chronology because it is presumably a closed context. At the same time, double or multiple burials are common in the Han, yet for the most part, we have no basis for assuming the sacrifice or second inhumation of one or more of the dead.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, then, the tomb was reopened for the deposit of additional bodies.<sup>4</sup> A memorial inscribed on a *guan* from Shaogou (Luoyang Municipality, Henan), M1037:11, positively dated to 170 AD, attests to the creation of a new tomb for the deceased.<sup>5</sup> It is unclear whether this implies reburial or simply stresses the idea that burial is taking place in a tomb created specially for the deceased. Unless the deceased was long-lived, identification of the donor-memorialist as the great-grandson of the deceased suggests reburial. There may perhaps have been other occasions for legitimately reentering a tomb. At the highest levels of Han society, if the emperor did indeed begin construction of his tomb shortly after accession to the throne, we may imagine that he also spent a number of years collecting the objects to be interred with him.<sup>6</sup> If so, it follows that the context of the tomb spans time, rather than representing a punctual moment. In all of these cases, it thus becomes clear that the tomb does not, in fact, necessarily offer a closed chronological context. In the case of multiple burials, can we tell which burial we are dating?

If vessels within the tomb seem to date to more than one period within the Han, we may suppose that the different chronological groups correspond to the interment of different individuals. On the other hand, the burial of heirlooms, both Han and pre-Han, is not uncommon and does not seem to be reserved for the highest social classes.

#### POSITIVE DATES

Positive dates themselves can be uncertain, primarily in two cases. The first of these occurs when a date is provided by the object or tomb, with or without an accompanying name for the owner or the deceased, but this date cannot be interpreted unambiguously. The second occurs when derivation of a date depends on the correct identification of the owner or the deceased. In this case, either this person is unnamed and identity is assumed from the supposed status and geographic location, generally of the tomb, or, alternatively, the individual in question is indeed named, but may or may not also figure in the dynastic histories. This last point is key to establishing a positive date when the tomb yields no date-inscribed material; this in itself presents difficulties on many levels. Because each class in my chronology depends on a positive date (with the exception of those classes whose date is made later by the presence of coinage<sup>7</sup>), the problems surrounding many positive dates potentially affect much of the analysis. For each such date used in the construction of my typologies, I have provided a summary of the nature of the date and any related problems of interpretation in the Chronological Listing of Sites. Without repeating that information here, a number of problems bear additional discussion. These issues are usually widely recognized but need to be borne in mind, particularly since they must be resolved at least provisionally to allow any analysis, even though any resolution must be subjective.

Objects of any kind inscribed with the date of production or construction provide at least a clear *terminus post quem*, assuming that the date itself is clearly understood. In general, dates that include an era name are unequivocal. As is well known, era names were instituted by Wudi (r. 140–87 BC). Preceding emperors used either a continuous numbering of years from the time of their accession (Gaozu, Huidi, and the Empress Dowager Lü) or interrupted this counting to begin a second or third series of consecutive numbers, referred to as “Middle” or “Late” periods (Wendi, accession 179 BC, initial year of Late Period in 163 BC; Jingdi, accession 156 BC, initial year of Middle Period in 149 BC, initial year of Late Period in 143 BC). Initial periods had no special designation. Ambiguity is increased in inscriptions, as the current emperor cannot be named. Obviously, it becomes difficult to interpret any inscribed date from this period, which does not include a Celestial Stems year, unless the year is 13 through 16. Of pre-Wudi emperors, only Wendi’s initial period extended

so long. However, although Wudi adopted the practice of era names, he did so retroactively, well into his reign.

The precise year in which the era name was first adopted is itself unclear. Following the *Shiji* annals of Wudi, I note the submission of a memorial to the emperor suggesting that division of reign years into generically numbered series should be replaced by the designation of era names. The memorial recommends retroactive use of *jianyuan* (建元) and *yuanguang* (元光), with *yuanshou* (元狩) to be the current era.<sup>8</sup> The difficulty with the record of the memorial (whose text is summarized, rather than quoted) is its omission of the *yuanshou* era, which occurs between *yuanguang* and *yuanshou*. An attempt to reconstruct the date of this memorial by tallying the year of Wudi’s reign under which it is recorded is undoubtedly misleading. Although the memorial seems to be noted in Wudi’s thirteenth year (i.e., 128 BC, the initial year of the *yuanshou* [元朔] era), which could imply that the term *yuanshou* should be *yuanshuo*, Sima Qian’s indication of dates in the first part of Wudi’s reign is vague. In terms of the sequence of events, the capture (*shou* [狩]) of a horned animal, commemorated in the *yuanshou* era name, is documented prior to the record of the era-name memorial.<sup>9</sup> It therefore appears most likely that the memorial was submitted in what became the initial year of the *yuanshou* era (122 BC, the nineteenth year of Wudi’s reign); the *Shiji* thus erroneously omits to mention the *yuanshuo* era. Accordingly, the first nineteen years of Wudi’s reign would have been designated contemporaneously only by number. Reference to years 13 through 16 could therefore apply to Wendi or Wudi, while years 17 through 19 naturally could fall only under Wudi.<sup>10</sup>

Once the era name is in use, even though it subsequently could be changed retroactively, it provides a reasonably secure identification of the year. Exceptions to this may be found in those era names repeated in the immediately post-Han period. For instance, the *yuanyuan* (元元) era occurs in both the Eastern Han and the (Liu) Song. The tomb at Cangshan (Shandong), constructed in the initial year of that era, may therefore date either to AD 151 or to AD 424. Had the tomb’s inscription included the day in terms of its Celestial Stem number (*wushen* [戊申] for the former, *renzi* [壬子] for the latter), this ambiguity would have been resolved without subjective analysis of the tomb and its contents.

Dates given as numbered years with no other designation may also be counted in terms of a local, rather than national, calendar. Which calendar was used is generally a matter of speculation, unless the numbered year exceeds the length of the pre-era-named imperial reigns. The Mancheng (Hebei) excavation report persuasively suggests that enfeoffed lords could refer to time in terms of their years in office, as the dynastic histories do when noting events relative to a given king or marquis.<sup>11</sup> In the case of the Mancheng tombs, a number of objects from both M1 and M2 are inscribed

according to the formula “Privy Treasury of Zhongshan, object type, volume, weight, year of production or of acquisition,” with years extending from 32–39. The inscription on one of a pair of *fanghu* (方壺), M1:4326, serves as a typical example:

Privy Treasury of Zhongshan, one bronze *fanghu*; volume four *dou*; weight fifteen *jin*, eight *liang*; first [of series]; year 34; purchased in Luoyang by Gentleman-of-the-Household Liu (*Zhongshan neifu tongfang yi, rong si dou, zhong shiwu jin ba liang, di yi, sasi nian, zhonglang Liu shi Luoyang* [中山内府銅鈔一, 容四斗, 重十五斤八兩, 第一, 卅四年, 中郎柳市雒陽]).<sup>12</sup>

Because no pre-era name period extends to thirty-odd years, circumstances confirm that the Mancheng dates of this type must be given relative to the local calendar. In addition, since no other local king reigned at least thirty-nine years, we may safely assume that the inscriptions refer to the reign of Liu Sheng, King Jing of Zhongshan (r. 154–113 BC); years 32–39 would thus be the equivalent of 123–116 BC. The language of the inscription itself, specifying that the object in question was made or acquired for the private treasury of the kingdom, suggests that the date given will be in local terms, although this need not be the case. As a working hypothesis, however, it seems reasonable to interpret inscriptions constructed in this manner as following a local calendar.

Shuanggudui (Fuyang, Anhui) M1 and M2 yielded several objects inscribed in this manner, extending from “the initial year” to “year 11.” For instance, one of the lacquered eared cups (*erbei* [耳杯]) from M1 notes: “Year 11, Marquis of Ruyin, cup, volume one and a half *sheng*, made for the treasury by Sixth Artisan Yi (*Shiyi nian Ruyin hou bei rong yi sheng ban ku ji gong Yi zao* [十一年女陰侯杯容一升半庫己工意造]).”<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, because three of the four marquis of Ruyin remained in office more than eleven years, association of the inscription with a local calendar does not help identify the date in question. The initial year could be 201, 164, or 133 BC, with year 11 falling in 191, 154, or 123 BC. (The authors of the excavation report interpret these inscriptions in terms of a national calendar.)

The same problem occurs with objects inscribed as belonging to the household of Yangxin, excavated from Mancheng (Hebei) M2 and from the burial goods pit associated with an unnamed tomb near Maoling (Xianyang Municipality, Shaanxi). The form of these inscriptions suggests that a local calendar relating to the fief of Yangxin was used; as with Shuanggudui, however, no external confirmation is available, and more than one fief-holder fits the information provided by the inscriptions themselves.

Mancheng M2:4035, the often-reproduced gilded bronze lamp in the form of a kneeling woman, carries a number of inscriptions beginning with “Yangxin,” including one noting the year as 7; other inscriptions on the lamp note transfer to the Changxin Palace, no year noted. The excavation report

identifies Yangxin as either of two marquis of this name, Liu Jie, enfeoffed by Wendi in the initial year of his reign (179 BC), or Liu Zhongyi, the son and heir of Jie, who succeeded to the marquise in 165 BC. Accordingly, year 7 would refer either to 173 BC or to 159 BC.<sup>14</sup> Year 7, according to the national calendar during the time of the Yangxin marquise, would fall either in 173 BC (Wendi’s initial period) or 157 BC (year 7 of Wendi’s later period). The fief was dissolved in 151 BC, thus excluding year 7 of Jingdi’s initial period (150 BC).

The Mancheng excavation report does not consider the potential ownership of the lamp by a later holder of the Yangxin title, Wudi’s (older) sister. In virtually every reference to this princess, both the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu* name her by the title of her first husband’s fief, Pingyang. Only an introductory comment in the *Hanshu* biography of her second husband, the general Wei Qing, enfeoffed as the Marquis of Changping, and annotations citing Ru Chun (fl. AD 221–265) identify her by the title Yangxin.<sup>15</sup> Although we may assume that the princess may have been given the title sometime during Jingdi’s reign or perhaps the initial years of Wudi, there is in fact no indication of when she received this title or, indeed, of when precisely she married the Marquis of Pingyang.<sup>16</sup> It is therefore impossible to extrapolate dates based on her investiture. For the Mancheng M2:4035 lamp, therefore, possible attribution to Princess Yangxin extends the year 7 date on the lamp from 173 BC into the reign of Wudi. Further precision is impossible.

In the case of the burial goods pit near the unnamed tomb at Maoling, attribution of the Yangxin-inscribed articles is similarly difficult. The problem of identification of the Yangxin in question on the basis of the inscriptions alone is the same as that encountered with the Mancheng lamp; inscribed years (as currently published) range from 3 to 6, which does not distinguish one generation of marquis (or princess) from another, as both the first and second marquis held the post for fourteen years and the princess’ tenure cannot be determined. As currently published, the burial goods pit provides little more contextual information. Yuan Anzhi suggests that one phrase in the inscription on a double-boiler K1:006, in particular, adds credence to an attribution of these objects to Princess Yangxin.<sup>17</sup> He reads the phrase *feng zhu* in the line “*wu nian feng zhu mai Handan*” (五年奉主買邯鄲) as an official title referring to the princess (*gongzhu* [公主] abbreviated as *zhu* [主]). Following Yuan’s suggestion, this line could be rendered more clearly as “in year 5, purchased at Handan and presented to the princess.” However, this phrase could also be read as a standard record: “in year 5, Feng managed [this] purchase at Handan,” with *zhu* as a verb following the name (*Feng*) of the official in question. Because this phraseology is indeed standard, I see no reason to interpret the inscription as referring to a princess.<sup>18</sup> The location of the pit in itself lends some credence to a Wudi-era attribution, if we assume that burials near Wudi’s tomb at Maoling would belong to individuals favored by him. Such an

assumption implies that, in choosing this area for his tomb, Wudi selected terrain on which no earlier tombs had been constructed or, at least, on which no earlier tombs remained,<sup>19</sup> as well as on which no tomb could subsequently be built without his authorization. Such exclusive rights to the land surrounding an imperial tomb may well have been established, but are difficult to demonstrate objectively. If we extrapolate from information provided in the deeds of purchase of burial plots for more modest graves,<sup>20</sup> we may safely assume that selection of land for Maoling included specifications for the area of the land parcel involved; the size of this parcel is open to question. Beyond this, until all tombs in the area have been excavated and attributed, we can only speculate. Until the objects from the burial goods pit are fully published and the associated tomb excavated, any conclusion regarding the identity of the deceased remains indeterminate.

In many cases, as with Yangxin, when we suspect the use of a local calendar in a given inscription, identifying the owner of the object in question obviously becomes central. Further complicating matters, the owner of objects found in the context of a tomb may or may not be the deceased. While Mancheng M2 provides a firm context for the M2:4035 lamp, which demonstrably passed through at least two other households (Yangxin and the Changxin Palace) before arriving in Zhongshan, other tombs do not offer such clarity. For instance, a fragmented lacquered box (M1:281) from Dabaotai (Beijing Municipality) bears an inscribed date of “*bingchen* (丙辰) day in the fifth month of year 24.”<sup>21</sup> No pre-*era* named imperial reign extended to twenty-four years, thereby implying that the M1:281 date cannot have been recorded according to the national calendar. Because excavators assume that this tomb belongs to a local king with a *terminus post quem*, determined by the presence in the tomb of *wushu* coins that they date to ca. 118 BC, “year 24” is interpreted as referring either to the reign of Liu Dan, King La of Yan (r. 117–80 BC) or Liu Jian, King Qing of Guangling (r. 73–45 BC). Accordingly, “year 24” would correspond either to 94 BC or to 50 BC. The excavators of Dabaotai exclude Liu Dan from consideration, citing the *Shuijing zhu* as locating his tomb at Liangshan. Liangshan is associated with the modern Shijingshan, just west of the southwestern corner of Beijing, while Dabaotai falls within the area of Fengtai, south of the southwestern corner of Beijing.<sup>22</sup> Whether or not the text of the *Shuijing* may be taken as evidence, I have provisionally adopted the excavators’ attribution of Dabaotai M1 to Liu Jian because the coins from this tomb appear to me to date not only to ca. 118 BC but also as late as ca. 73 BC.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, there is nothing in the M1:281 inscription itself to indicate that this box belonged to a local king. Indeed, the dedication of the box to a “deserving official”<sup>24</sup> suggests a gift to a (non-royal) civil servant. Further, the contextual evidence provided by the tomb itself and cited by the excavation report in support of a

royal attribution (burial structure, use of a jade burial suit) is, to my mind, open to other interpretations.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, if we admit the possibility that tombs that provide no identification or date of death for the deceased, like Dabaotai, may not have belonged to the nobility or at least to officials, we lose the text-based positive date that depends on identification of the deceased with the men whose lives are recorded, to some extent, in the Han dynastic histories. The tendency among Chinese archaeologists to associate archaeological data with textual history,<sup>26</sup> and particularly to equate luxury with nobility rather than simply with wealth, independent of any government association, becomes necessary in order to achieve a positive date for the tomb. Surviving Han texts focus almost exclusively on men in government, particularly a small number of men of note, usually meaning of influence. Wealth certainly is textually documented, especially for the early regional kings, the later Eastern Han eunuchs and imperial favorites, or maternal relatives. However, even limiting ourselves to textual documentation, the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* also include a chapter of biographies of wealthy men who were not part of these government circles<sup>27</sup> (although some were subsequently recognized by the government, as in the case of Wang Sun[da]qing, named Chief Director of Markets in the Capital by Wang Mang<sup>28</sup>). Importantly, a number of the nongovernmental wealthy lived in the capital region, including in the vicinity of imperial tombs: the Du family at Anling (tomb of Huidi) and, later in the Western Han, Fan Jia at Duling (tomb of Xuandi), Zhi Gang at Maoling (tomb of Wudi), and the Ru and Ju families at Pingling (tomb of Zhaodi).<sup>29</sup> With wealth reputedly in the range of 50 million coins for Fan Jia<sup>30</sup> as an example, we may expect that these men built proportionately wealthy tombs; if their tombs were constructed in the area where these men lived, then these wealthy tombs would have been in the vicinity of imperial tombs. For this reason, we cannot take for granted either that wealth was displayed only by government-recognized individuals or that wealthy burials in the neighborhood of imperial burials belonged only to imperial relatives or favorites. The same situation undoubtedly existed in the provinces, in areas where the population and resources could produce and support such wealth.

A number of passages from Han texts relating to burial rituals are often cited as evidence of sumptuary law which, if enforced, would have restricted conspicuous consumption and regulated it according to officially sanctioned status. Accordingly, those who gained wealth through commercial activity of various kinds but who did not hold office (including a kingship or marquise) would be excluded from display. If this interpretation of the texts were valid, then at least certain prescribed marks of status found in tombs would preclude ownership by those outside the governmental hierarchy (or by lower orders within that hierarchy). Nonetheless, we have no reason *a priori* to assume that narrow interpretation or extensive enforcement

of prescription was followed. The texts in question touch on four areas, all of which are attested in the archaeological data: the *huangchang ticou* (黃腸題湊) tomb, lacquered coffins, jade burial suits, and official seals.

The third part of the *Hou Hanshu* treatise on ritual refers to using stone to create a *huangchang ticou* “chamber of ease” (*bianfang* [便房], i.e., tomb), but does not stipulate those entitled to such a construction.<sup>31</sup> The precise meaning of the term *huangchang ticou* has been unclear at least since Su Lin glossed *huangchang* as referring to the heart of the wood and *ti* as *tou* (“head”) and *cou* as “to face inward.”<sup>32</sup> However, in the light of recent excavations, Chinese archaeologists have come to interpret the terms as a reinforcing wall (*ticou*) made of beams cut from the inner core of the tree (*huangchang*). The term is usually applied to a specific structure, typified by Dabaotai (Beijing Municipality) M1: a central burial chamber, surrounded by layers of corridors which may be divided into chambers, but which all fall within a square floor plan. At least the inner chambers are surrounded by a reinforcing wall through which the entrance ramp passes.<sup>33</sup> When this structure is made of wood, the reinforcing wall is built of lengths of wood stacked transversely around the tomb, which is essentially a box structure. The *huangchang ticou* also occurs in stone, as at Beizhuang (Dingxian, Hebei) M1, where a stone protective wall surrounds a brick and stone architectonic tomb.<sup>34</sup> Within my corpus of dated tombs, the *huangchang ticou* occurs only six times, including Dabaotai M1.<sup>35</sup> The Dabaotai excavation report, as well as that of Xiangbizui (Changsha Municipality, Hunan), maintain that the structure was the prerogative of royalty.<sup>36</sup> Four of my dated *huangchang ticou* tombs include jade burial suits, opening the possibility of correlation between structure and rank.<sup>37</sup> However, one *huangchang ticou* tomb without a burial suit, the tomb of Lord Feng, Grand Administrator of Yuping (Tanghe, Nanyang Municipality, Henan),<sup>38</sup> identifies the deceased by name and rank, and provides the date of burial. Although Feng was not a member of the aristocracy, he was salaried at 2,000 *shi* (石),<sup>39</sup> placing him in the upper ranks of government officials. Such an identification of a man buried in a *huangchang ticou* suggests that this structure, at least, was not restricted to the aristocracy. The *huangchang ticou* as we understand it thus cannot be used to determine class affiliation.

“According to previous practice,” as noted in the third part of the *Hou Hanshu* treatise on ritual, camphor-wood coffins lacquered red<sup>40</sup> with cloud décor were used for regional kings, princesses, and Honorable Ladies; black-lacquered camphor-wood coffins, for dukes and Specially Advanced (*te jin*, 特通); officials with salaries under 2,000 *shi* per year and marquis used lacquered coffins.<sup>41</sup> Further, the same treatise recognizes tradition allotting to the emperor a jade suit threaded with gold, made by the Artisans of the Eastern Garden (*dong yuan jiang* [東園匠]).<sup>42</sup> Newly-enfeoffed regional kings and marquis, Senior Princesses, and Senior Honorable Ladies were allowed

jade suits with silver threading, while other levels of princesses and Honorable Ladies, and already-enfeoffed regional kings and marquis were accorded jade suits with copper threading.<sup>43</sup>

Although we cannot address the question of the type of wood used for coffins, we may readily dismiss the *Hou Hanshu* remarks on the use of lacquered coffins, since coffins throughout the Han were often lacquered red on the inside and black on the outside, demonstrating that there was no ritual requirement to use one or the other of these colors; a single grave might also include both black and red coffins in a nested series. The use of the colored lacquer coffin is indeed so common that we cannot reasonably suppose it was regulated, other than by wealth (affordability). In contrast, the use of burial suits, whether of jade or (unmentioned by the texts) stone or glass, is a more difficult matter; here, the text of the *Hou Hanshu* is today generally taken literally. Of the nineteen dated tombs in my study that yielded a burial suit (jade, stone, glass),<sup>44</sup> eight offer no direct evidence linking the deceased in some way to the aristocracy, whether as a regional king, marquis, wife/concubine thereof, or in some other capacity (as at Baonüduan [Hanjiang, Yangzhou Municipality, Jiangsu]).<sup>45</sup> The evidence of a ninth, Beiguan (Huaiyang, Henan) M1, is ambiguous: excavators have taken the Lord An of “Lord An’s eternal home” (*Anjun shou bi* [安君壽壁]) as a shortened form of Marquis Anshouting (Liu Chong, subsequently King Qing of Chen), on the grounds that this is the only Eastern Han nobleman whose title includes the word “An.”<sup>46</sup> This identification, while possible, seems to me forced. We have no reason, except the burial of the deceased in a jade suit, to assume that *jun* (君, lord) refers to an enfeoffment, rather than being a courtesy title.

The eight cases with no direct evidence of an aristocratic burial are not without their ambiguity, as well. The tomb of Mo Shu (Hanjiang, Yangzhou Municipality, Jiangsu), with a glass burial suit, may be that of an aristocrat’s wife or concubine if the term *qie* (妾, wife/concubine) was employed only by these classes as, for example, at Mawangdui (Changsha Municipality, Hunan) M1, the tomb of the *qie* Xin Zhui, rather than being shared by the unenfeoffed wealthy.<sup>47</sup> Further, little remains in either Dongquanhe (Laiwu, Shandong) or Songzhuang (Mengjin Municipality, Henan) to support any analysis. Nonetheless, in virtually every case, excavators assume the suit itself to imply some degree of aristocratic lineage.<sup>48</sup> From the dynastic histories, we know that jade suits and other burial goods could be given as a token of special favor by the emperor, as in the examples of Huo Guang, one of a triumvirate regency named by Wudi for his successor who continued to exercise singular power in central government until his death in 68 BC during the reign of Xuandi,<sup>49</sup> and Dong Xian, beloved of Aidi, who committed suicide in 1 BC.<sup>50</sup> However, because both of these men had been enfeoffed – although the entitlement from their respective marquisates differed widely<sup>51</sup> – presentation of a jade burial suit does not violate the stipulations of the *Hou Hanshu*. In an

archaeological context, the stone suit of Jingshan (Yishui, Shandong) presents us with reasonable evidence that, in practical terms, interment in a jade, stone, or glass burial suit was restricted by wealth, not by class. Jingshan is attributable to Xu Shu, named on a bronze seal with loop top (*Xu Shu zhi yin* [徐術之印]).<sup>52</sup> Both the seal and the structure of the tomb are modest (meaning that in themselves they give no indication of particular rank or degree of wealth); on the basis of excavated data, therefore, we have no reason to suppose that Xu belonged to the aristocracy or held a high administrative position. His name does not occur in the dynastic histories.<sup>53</sup> No evidence supports the notion that his burial suit may have been an imperial gift (although this is possible). We must therefore acknowledge that, apart from the presumed cost of such a suit,<sup>54</sup> the burial suit in itself does not allow class attribution of the deceased.

Details of the *Hou Hanshu* text are readily refuted: the suit in Dingxian (Hebei) M40 is bound with gold, as are those of Mancheng (Hebei) M1 and M2. Rather than being reserved for the emperor, gold threading was therefore employed at least by some regional kings and their wives. Was this in defiance of sumptuary law or custom, or perhaps by special imperial decree? Or does the *Hou Hanshu* reflect customs of a different time? In support of this last notion, the early-middle first century AD *Han jiuyi* allows gold threading for the jade suits of regional kings, as well as for the emperor.<sup>55</sup> Whatever may have been the case, we have evidence only that the description of the *Hou Hanshu* cannot be taken literally as a guide to interpreting archaeological finds.<sup>56</sup>

It is likely that some form of sumptuary law must have existed during the Han and would accordingly have regulated burial; any such laws would presumably have been difficult, if not impossible, to enforce. Mu-chou Poo refers to the case of Wei Buhai, the Marquis of Wuyuan,<sup>57</sup> dismissed from his marquise in 142 BC for violating burial laws. The episode is presented only as a note in the *Hanshu* table of meritorious officials originally enfeoffed during the first years of the dynasty; the nature of the laws violated is unclear. It is conceivable that sumptuary laws were not, in fact, involved. It is further possible that the charges were brought for political reasons and do not represent routine enforcement of law. A more detailed example is provided by the case of the eunuch Zhao Zhong, who, in or around AD 153, was investigated by Zhu Mu, the Inspector of Jizhou, for having a jade burial suit, fine jades, and models of servants made for his father's burial.<sup>58</sup> Although the *Hou Hanshu* claims that these items were made improperly (*jian* [僭], "to usurp"), Zhu Mu had already made clear his opposition to eunuchs as a class.<sup>59</sup> Given the rivalry between eunuchs and literati for power in government and the bias of the *Hou Hanshu* against eunuchs in general, Zhu Mu's investigation appears politically, and not legally, motivated. Again, we do not know to what extent, if any, Zhao's provisions for his father's burial violated law.<sup>60</sup>

The same discrepancies between received texts and archaeological data exist with official seals. Again, according to the *Hou Hanshu* Treatise on Ritual, the seals of newly-enfeoffed regional kings and marquis, Senior Princesses, and Senior Honorable Ladies are to be identified by the term *xi* (璽).<sup>61</sup> While the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* are silent on the matter of protocol for jade suits and lacquered coffins, the *Hanshu* provides a description of the seal and seal cords of many of the government officials whose positions are catalogued (*juan* 19A<sup>62</sup>). The highest ranks were given gold seals with purple cords; officials paid at rates equivalent to 2,000 *shi* or more, with some exceptions, had silver seals with blue-green cords; officials salaried at above the equivalent to 600 *shi* generally had bronze seals with black cords, while those above the equivalent of 200 *shi* had bronze seals usually with yellow cords.<sup>63</sup> In addition, the second part of the *Han jiuyi* states that "the emperor has six seals (*xi*), all of white jade with a dragon-tiger top"<sup>64</sup>; "The empress' jade seal is called a *xi*, like the emperor's; the empress has a jade seal with a gold dragon-tiger top"<sup>65</sup>; and "Chancellors, marquis, and generals use gold seals with purple cords. Officials salaried at fully 2,000 *shi* and 2,000 *shi* use silver seals with green-blue cords. All of these [seals] have a tortoise top."<sup>66</sup> Further, we learn from the same source that "the Crown Prince has a gold seal with a tortoise top; this seal is referred to in its inscription as a *zhang* [章]. For lower ranks down to officials of 200 *shi*, [the *zhang*] is the ordinary official seal."<sup>67</sup> The *Han jiuyi buyi* (A) adds that "The seals of regional kings are gold with a camel top; in inscription, they are referred to as *xi*."<sup>68</sup>

With regard to chancellors' seals, we may assume that the *Han jiuyi*, like *Hanshu* *juan* 19A,<sup>69</sup> applies to chancellors in the central administration (*chengxiang* [丞相] or *xiangguo* [相國]<sup>70</sup>). Although chancellors in regional kingdoms (*chengxiang*) were always appointed by the emperor, the *Shiji* notes a modification of title from *chengxiang* to *xiang* (相) and the concomitant reduction of status demonstrated by use of a silver seal, instead of gold.<sup>71</sup> Part of a centralized restriction of the authority of regional kings after their rebellion in 154 BC, these changes apparently were not enacted until 144 BC, when a number of official titles within the central government were also altered.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, archaeological data allows us readily to refute the *Han jiuyi* description of the seals of regional kings as bearing a camel top. Numerous examples of camel-topped seals have been found, in bronze, with inscriptions identifying the bearers as foreign officials belonging to the northern non-Chinese polities of the Xiongnu, Wuhuan, or Xianbei,<sup>73</sup> but not with the names of Chinese regional kings. Indeed, another passage of the *Han jiuyi* notes that "the seal of the Xiongnu Chanyu is gold with a camel top and is called a *zhang*."<sup>74</sup> This is not to say that all seals given to the northern non-Chinese bore a camel top,<sup>75</sup> but that the camel top does indeed appear to be associated with seals given to the northern non-Chinese. Apart from these discrepancies, we might expect textual evidence to be accurate

in the matter of official seals since these would have been distributed with the office and hence would have been centrally controlled. Notably, compilation of the *Hanshu* and the *Han jiuyi* was essentially contemporaneous, with Ban Gu, as primary author of the former, living AD 32–92 and Wei Hong active circa AD 25–57.

Accordingly, we would expect the seal of a Grand Commandant (*taiwei* [太尉]) to be gold, according to the *Hanshu*; since the Grand Commandant was one of the Three Excellencies, we would expect him to be entitled to a tortoise top, according to the *Han jiuyi*. Seals belonging to this office have been found in silver and in bronze, with a tortoise top, and in bronze with a loop top.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, the *Hanshu* lists generals as receiving gold seals with purple cords, even when their salaries were only 1,000 *shi*, which should have placed them in the ranks of those with silver seals and blue-green cords.<sup>77</sup> The *Han jiuyi* likewise notes gold seals with purple ribbons and indicates the use of a tortoise top on the seal. Examples have been found of gold, silver, and bronze seals with tortoise tops and a gilded bronze seal whose top is not described, all inscribed with a general's title.<sup>78</sup> A bronze, loop-top seal has also been found.<sup>79</sup> As with the official seals of Grand Commandants cited here, archaeological data demonstrates variety of form and material, rather than uniformity. These examples, however, do not disprove the notion of textual descriptions as sumptuary law, since no such law would have been broken if an official had used a seal more modest than that to which he was entitled. It is therefore significant that the seals of low-level officials salaried at about 200 to 600 *shi* have been found, in bronze, with a tortoise top. Examples include a butcher, a company captain, a captain of guards, and a prefecture chief.<sup>80</sup> Again, this is not to say that all seals belonging to these offices had a tortoise top. The fact that some did means that we cannot read the surviving textual descriptions of seals too literally. As with jade burial suits and lacquered coffins, surviving texts seem to provide general descriptions and perhaps a simplified, idealized guide to custom, but not a record of sumptuary law.

Theoretically, officially issued seals of office could have been centrally controlled, although burial of these seals indicates that they were not necessarily returned when a man left office and, hence, that in some ways they escaped centralized control.<sup>81</sup> In addition, such seals were at times reproduced for burial or other private use. With seals made for personal use, we cannot expect greater conformity to textual descriptions than is attested among official seals. It would presumably have been virtually impossible to enforce any sumptuary law in the area of private seals. Within archaeological documentation, distinction between seals prepared for use in government and imitations made for private use depends in general on the inscription itself or, in some cases, on quality. For instance, seals bearing an official title and a given name are generally assumed to have been produced for private use: examples include a bronze

tortoise-top seal inscribed “Li Feng, cognomen (*zì*) Jun You, Chief of the Private Palace Storehouse” (*zhongsifu zhang Li Feng zì Jun You* [中私府長李封字君游])<sup>82</sup> and a bronze loop-top seal, “Zhang Sai, Deputy General” (*pi jiangjun Zhang Sai* [裨將軍張賽]).<sup>83</sup> The Li Feng seal, viewed as a hybrid of the official (imitated) and the private, provides further evidence that the historical texts cannot be taken literally. Assuming that the Chief of the Private Palace Storehouse received a salary similar to that of the Chief of the Private Storehouse (*sifu zhang* [私府長]) at 600 *shi*,<sup>84</sup> the *Han jiuyi* would not allow for such a low-level official having a tortoise-top seal. Clearly, such a top cannot be taken as evidence of a high government-recognized rank. Particularly regarding privately produced seals, the choice of metal and of seal top is more likely to be dictated by the finances of the individual than by rank.

In terms of quality as a mark of private seals, we find seals with no inscription, those whose inscription has not been completed, and those bearing purely propitious inscriptions. An example of incomplete inscription is provided by Taolou (Xuzhou Municipality, Jiangsu) M1:29, a silver seal with tortoise top bearing an official title, “seal of the lord marquis” (*junhou zhi yin* [君侯之印]).<sup>85</sup> According to the excavation report, the upper portion of the final character had not been finished and would not print clearly. Excavators therefore concluded that the seal was produced for burial.<sup>86</sup> Uninscribed seals found in tombs likewise would seem to indicate that production was not finished before burial. Examples are found in Ganquan (Hanjiang, Yangzhou Municipality, Jiangsu) M2 (carnelian, tiger top), Guangzhou (Guangdong) M1010 and M1097 (jade), M1066 and M3029 (both bronze, loop-top), Luobowan (Guixian, Guangxi) M1 and M2 (jade), Mancheng (Hebei) M1 (two, both jade, dragon-tiger top), Wafenyuan (Jingsha Municipality, Hubei) M1 (bronze, tiger top), and Yaozhuang (Hanjiang, Yangzhou Municipality, Jiangsu) M101 (gilded bronze, deer-like top; bronze, tortoise top).<sup>87</sup> The jade seal with tortoise top from Sekiganri ([originally Taedonggangmyôn,] Panyori, P'yongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea) M9, inscribed “Long life and health” (*yongshou kangning* [永壽康寧]),<sup>88</sup> illustrates private seals inscribed only with propitious expressions, rather than name or rank.

These private seals further illustrate the need for caution with reference to descriptions provided by historical texts. Specifically, apart from imperial gift, as Wudi's creation in or around 122–121 BC of the ceremonial position of General of the Way of Heaven (*tiandao jiangjun* [天道將軍]) with a jade seal,<sup>89</sup> textual sources mention jade seals as the prerogative of the emperor and empress. This perception is reinforced by the use of a jade seal by the rebels Ma Mian, who declared himself the Yellow Emperor in AD 146,<sup>90</sup> and Gai Deng, who termed himself Supreme Emperor (*taishang huangdi* [太上皇帝]) in AD 165,<sup>91</sup> although self-proclaimed emperors did not require jade



seals to reinforce their claims.<sup>92</sup> Clearly, jade was used by others as well, including those who, as far as can be ascertained, were of little or no rank (i.e., Guangzhou M1010). The same applies to the tiger (or dragon-tiger) top. Although found in Mancheng M1, belonging to Liu Sheng, King Jing of Zhongshan, and Ganquan M2, attributed to Liu Jing, King Si of Guangling, the presence of the tiger on an uninscribed seal from Wafenyuan M1 indicates that the tiger or dragon-tiger top was not in practice reserved for the aristocracy.

These observations on seals and burial suits undermine one of the major criteria for assigning Ganquan (Hanjiang, Yangzhou Municipality, Jiangsu) M2 to royalty. We likewise lose the basis for the positive dates attributed to Dabaotai (Beijing Municipality), Beiguan (Huaiyang, Henan) M1, and Dingxian (Hebei) M43. I have provisionally accepted the excavators' attributions for these sites because, on balance, these identifications seem possible; I cannot ignore the fact that, without them, I would not be able to assign a date to objects now classified accordingly (i.e., ca. 45 BC, ca. AD 67, ca. AD 174, hinging on Dabaotai M1, Ganquan M2, and Dingxian M43, respectively). These classes, obviously, are therefore particularly subject to revision. Because no vessels are published for Beiguan, a change of date for the tomb has no further effect on my chronologies.

However, I have not accepted all such attributions. For instance, the excavators of Bao'anshan (Yongcheng Municipality, Henan) M1 and M2 identify these as the tombs of King Xiao of Liang (M1) and his consort (M2).<sup>93</sup> Evidence for this is based on a seal reading "[Burial] park of the Queen of Liang (*Liang hou yuan* [梁后园])" and an earthenware roof tile with the legend "Xiao [burial] park (*Xiao yuan* [孝园]),"<sup>94</sup> both found in a burial goods pit dug into the top of Bao'anshan M2 and thus associated by archaeologists with that tomb. Additional earthenware roof tiles bearing the same inscription and/or "[Burial] park of Xiao of Liang (*Liang Xiao yuan* [梁孝园])" have also been found in the remains of a memorial hall above the site.<sup>95</sup> For the excavators, the royal association of the tombs is further underscored by fragments of a jade burial suit in Bao'anshan M2, robbed in antiquity.<sup>96</sup> Although the roof tiles would seem connected to King Xiao, and despite the ambiguity of the seal – which provides only the rank of the queen, not her name – I find it difficult to associate these items with Bao'anshan M2. The latter is a cave tomb with internal structures finished in stone blocks and consists of more than thirty rooms.<sup>97</sup> Why would there be need for an external burial goods pit? In contrast, Bao'anshan M3, slightly north of M2, is a pit grave<sup>98</sup> and could well be associated with a separate burial goods pit. In this case, the association of the evidence with a specific individual appears unconvincing to me. In addition, I find no reason to assume that Bao'anshan M1 is a king's tomb. The Bao'anshan burials illustrate a further problem with positive attribution when no name or date is inscribed on the tomb or on objects within the tomb: unless the deceased was not only

male, but in the case of royal families, the primary male (i.e., the king), the dynastic histories are unlikely to provide documentation of any kind. Although female consorts may be mentioned, their date of death is rarely given.<sup>99</sup>

The problem of identification by association is made more complex when we come to individuals identified by name, but not date, in burial inscriptions or seals when these names do in fact occur in the dynastic histories. The occupants of Shaogou (Luoyang Municipality, Henan) M114 and Yuemiao (Huayin, Shaanxi) M1 are each identified by seals found in the tomb.<sup>100</sup> In each case, the name on the seal corresponds to a name in the dynastic histories. The Shaogou excavation report identifies the Guo Gong of M114 with the man whose biography appears in the *Hou Hanshu*; from a long line of officials, he, like his father, was recognized as specializing in the interpretation of law, and as such at one time served as Commandant of Justice.<sup>101</sup> The *Hou Hanshu* notes that he died in office in AD 94.<sup>102</sup> There is nothing beyond the bronze loop-top seal in Shaogou M114 to aid attribution. Although I have provisionally accepted the view that the Guo Gong of the seal and the *Hou Hanshu* are the same, the latter is said to be from Yangdi (or Yangzhe) in Yingchuan prefecture.<sup>103</sup> In today's terms, this would be located approximately at Yuxian (Henan), at some distance to the southeast of Luoyang. If the body of the *Hou Hanshu* Guo Gong had been returned home for burial, then he would not in fact be the man in Shaogou M114. From this standpoint, the identification of the latter remains tenuous. In the case of Yuemiao M1, we have both a private seal ("Seal of Liu Qi [*Liu Qi zhi yin* 劉崎之印]) and an official one ("Seal of the Minister over the Masses [*situ zhi yinzhang* 司徒之印章]).<sup>104</sup> Together with the location of the tomb in Huayin (Shaanxi), of which the corresponding figure in the *Hou Hanshu* is said to have been a native,<sup>105</sup> we have a reasonably secure identification. Unfortunately, however, the *Hou Hanshu* does not provide a date of death for the minister. Archaeologists assume that he died shortly after his retirement in AD 135;<sup>106</sup> I have adopted this as the date for his burial, although it is clearly only a *terminus post quem*.

In contrast, the excavators of the Qin and Han cemetery of Pingshuo (Shuoxian, Shanxi) identify the Wang Long named on a private seal in gilded bronze with a top in the form of a winged tiger (GM51:7) with the Wang Long related to Wang Mang, who died in AD 22 in battle in Shandong with the Red Eyebrows.<sup>107</sup> Apart from coincidence of name, the reasons for such an association are unclear. Geographically, there seems to be no connection between Wang Mang's family home and the location of the Pingshuo cemetery or, indeed, territory associated with the rise of the Red Eyebrows rebellion. Wang Mang's family is said to have originated in Dongpingling in Ji'nan, in present-day northern Shandong; a generation later during Wudi, at least part of the family moved to Suli, Yuancheng in Wei commandery, corresponding to modern

southern Hebei and part of northern Henan.<sup>108</sup> Coincidentally, the *Hou Hanshu* documents another Wang Long (written with the same characters), a native of Yunyang county in what is now southeastern Shaanxi, known for his literary work, who also lived during the reign of Wang Mang.<sup>109</sup> Given that the name is demonstrably not unique, and in the absence of any supporting evidence, we must assume that the Wang Long of Pinghuo GM51 is otherwise unknown. Other Pinghuo tombs have likewise yielded seals of individuals with the surname Wang, including some of whom have first names documented among Wang Mang's relations: Wang Zhu (5M1) and Wang Guang (3M1). In these two cases, the site excavators have not associated the deceased with the textually documented men of the same name.<sup>110</sup> At present, there seems to be no reason to interpret any of these names as anything more than coincidence. Therefore, I have not accepted the attributions or the attendant positive dates.

There are cases where the seals found in a tomb are known not to name the master of the tomb. A loop-top bronze seal in Taolou (Xuzhou Municipality, Jiangsu) M1, reading "Father Song of ?Dancheng" (?*Dancheng Song fu* [? character unreproducible, pronunciation uncertain, 城宋父]), is recognized as Warring States in date (ca. 475–221 BC).<sup>111</sup> More ambiguous is the silver tortoise-top seal inscribed Liu Zhu, reportedly found in Guishan (Tongshan, Xuzhou Municipality, Jiangsu) M2.<sup>112</sup> Attribution of the tomb to Liu Zhu (劉注), King Xiang of Chu (楚王襄), who died 117 BC,<sup>113</sup> is obviated by the tomb's *wushu* (五銖) coins, circa 87–74 BC. In this case, the seal does not identify the deceased. It remains possible that either the coins or the seal, or both, are intrusive, although neither has been identified as such. Conversely, the tomb could conceivably have held multiple burials, one of whom could have been Liu Zhu, with other individuals buried later. However, this is purely speculation. Within current evidence, there is no reason to assume that the tomb belonged to any king and no way to clarify the significance of the seal. The *wushu* determine the date (*terminus post quem*).

There are other cases where seals do not identify the deceased. Seal impressions appear as marks of inspection or other functions related to burial, as in the Seal of the Bailiff of the Household (*jia sefu yin* [家嗇夫印]) in Luobowan (Guixian, Guangxi) M2 and the (Prefect) Invocator of Zhongshan (*cisi [ling] 祠祀[令]*) of Mancheng (Hebei) M2.<sup>114</sup> Such inspection may also be represented by the seal itself, as in the case of the loop-top bronze seal of the Grand Provisioner (*taiguan zhi yin* [太官之印]) found in annex pit 16 of the tomb of Jingdi (Yangling [Xi'an Municipality, Shaanxi]) and of the [Prefect] Invocator of Chu (*Chu cisi [ling] 楚祠祀[令]*) on a seal from Shizishan (Xuzhou Municipality, Jiangsu).<sup>115</sup> Under these circumstances, we may well be wrong to assume that the Seal of the Inspector of the Office of Offerings (*siguan jian yin* [食官監印]) found in the burial off the entrance ramp

of Shizishan (Xuzhou Municipality, Jiangsu)<sup>116</sup> identifies the individual with whom it was buried.

The multiplicity of seals and seal imprints belonging to different offices that was found in Shizishan (Xuzhou Municipality, Jiangsu), as well as in the currently undatable tomb of Beidongshan (Xuzhou Municipality, Jiangsu),<sup>117</sup> leads me to accept a royal attribution for these tombs. In neither case is a king's seal reported. Although these seals give an initial impression of vassal or official fealty, the relationships to which the seals attest seem to be more complex than that of direct authority. Most of the counties named in the seals as part of official titles originally (i.e., pre-154 BC) did fall under the suzerainty of the Han king of Chu; however, some belonged under the jurisdiction of Pei, adjacent to but not under the control of Chu.<sup>118</sup> This suggests that officials from a wide area either attended the funeral or sent seals or other tokens simply as marks of respect, with no implication of fealty. From this perspective, counties once part of Chu could be represented in these burials even if these areas were no longer under the authority of the kingdom. The reduction of Chu territory in 154 BC thus need not inform our interpretation of the seals.

There may well be other tombs whose seals similarly reflect something other than identification of the deceased that have not yet been identified. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, however, we must assume a direct relationship between the seal and the deceased. The situation with regard to memorial inscriptions is similar, although less complex. The incorporation of Han stones, including memorials, into later tombs is well documented at sites such as Songshan (Jiaxiang, Shandong),<sup>119</sup> a tomb in Nanyang (Henan) that utilizes stones from the AD 170 tomb of Xu Aqu,<sup>120</sup> and at Feicheng (Shandong), which includes stone from the AD 83 burial of the father of Zhang Wensi.<sup>121</sup> More problematic is the appearance in some tombs of freestanding stone memorial inscriptions. In Nancaizhuang (Yanshi, Luoyang Municipality, Henan) M3, an inscribed stone memorializes the teacher Fei Zhi, who died AD 169, also mentioning five of his disciples. This stone was placed inside the tomb on a stone stand, the top of which was carved to represent three eared cups (*erbei*) on round saucers.<sup>122</sup> The treatment of the stand suggests an altar honoring those named in the memorial. Its placement in the tomb seems in keeping with a primary burial. Nonetheless, Nancaizhuang M3 contained a number of bodies (skeletons fragmented and bones scattered throughout the tomb). Which, if any, of these individuals was Fei Zhi and whether or not the burial included his disciples, as the site excavators speculate,<sup>123</sup> is open to question. I have assumed that Fei Zhi was among those buried here and that, therefore, the date of AD 169 given in the memorial does apply. If, on the other hand, the memorial was placed in someone else's tomb, out of sentiment or as a curiosity, the date assigned