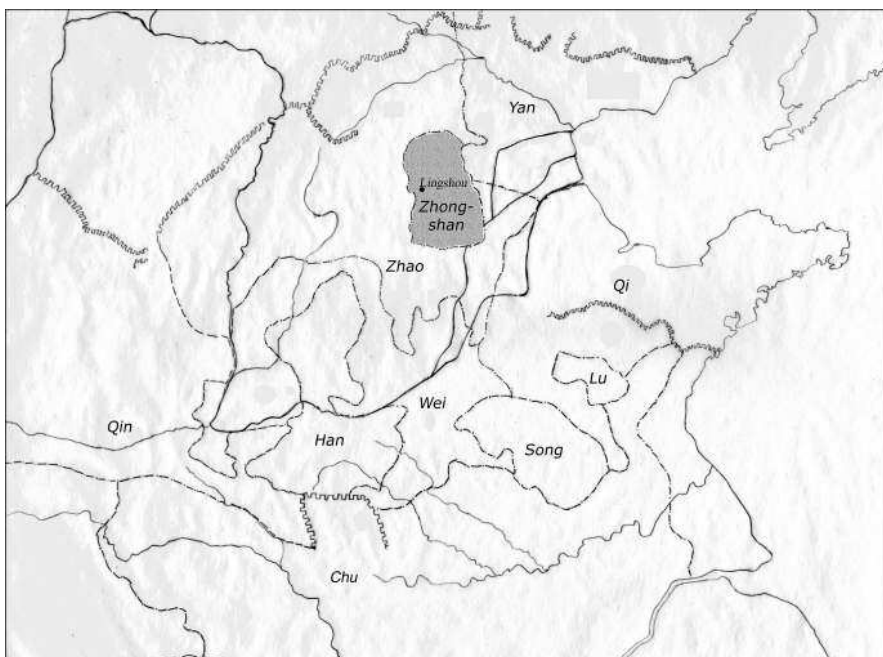


## INTRODUCTION

THE ZHONGSHAN 中山 (MAP 0.1) STATE OF THE WARRING STATES Period (476–221 BCE) was a small but potent state known only in sparse historical texts, some of which suggest that the Zhongshan was established by a “non-Zhou 周,”<sup>1</sup> “non-Huaxia 華夏”<sup>2</sup> group from the north. The Tang dynasty commentaries on the *Shiji* 史記 by Sima Zhen and Zhang Shoujie suggest that the state of Zhongshan was the continuation of the earlier Xianyu 鮮虞 founded by a group of the Di 狄 peoples called the Bai Di 白狄 or “White Di.”<sup>3</sup> In his preface to a book on Zhongshan by the Qing Dynasty scholar Wang Xianqian (1842–1917), the scholar and reformist politician Guo Songtao (1818–1891) marveled at Zhongshan’s ability to survive in the midst of powerful warring states through clever diplomatic maneuvers. Guo states that “in the rises and falls of the warring states, Zhongshan seems to be the unnoticed hub and linchpin.”<sup>4</sup> This statement points out the perceived significance of Zhongshan in balancing the power relations among states of the middle Warring States Period. Zhongshan’s significance in the multistate politics of the period can also be seen from the fact that it is the only small state to which the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 dedicated a whole chapter along with the seven largest states. In his own preface, the author Wang Xianqian also praised Zhongshan for its resilience and military might as a small state that was constantly threatened, frequently attacked, and sometimes conquered by the larger states but always managed to recover. One of the Zhongshan kings even successfully

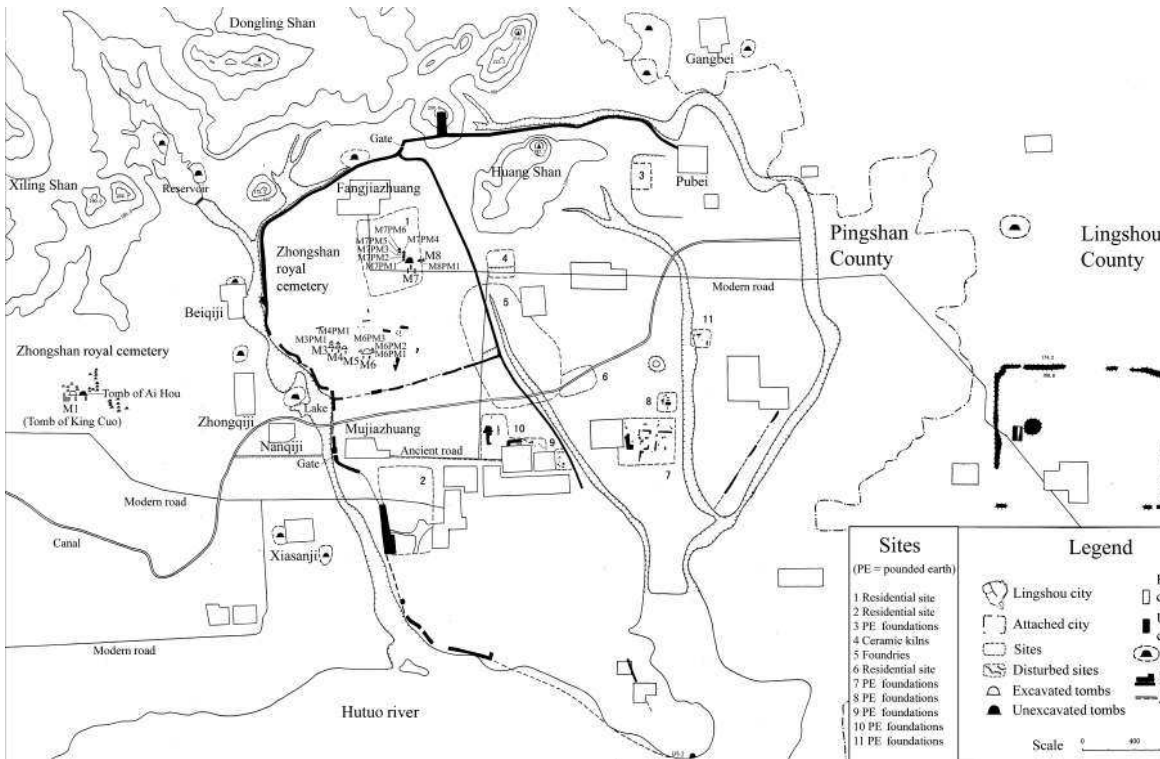


MAP 0.1. The state of Zhongshan (Chung-shan) during the Warring States Period around 350 BCE.

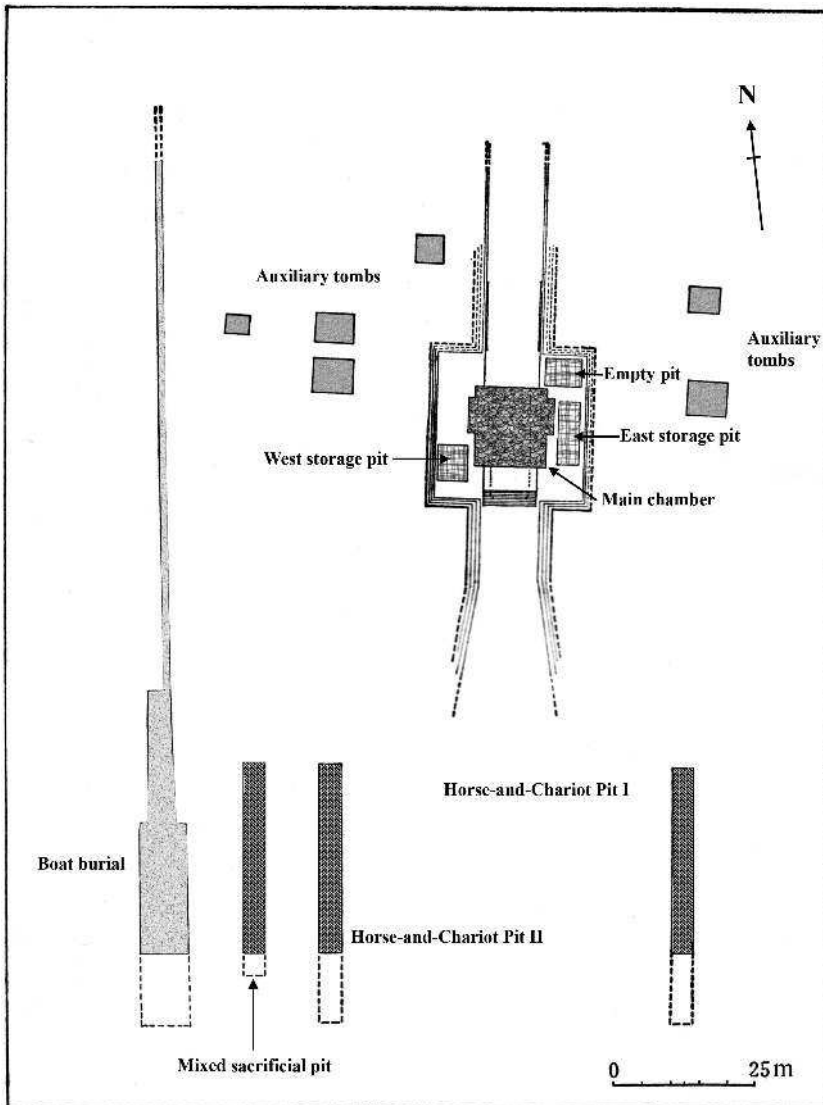
acquired the title of *wang*, previously reserved for the Zhou king, along with rulers of the seven largest states.<sup>5</sup>

An exciting chapter on the study of Zhongshan came about in the late 1970s, when the excavation of the tombs of King Cuo (d. c. 313 BCE) and his father King Cheng<sup>6</sup> in Pingshan 平山 County, Hebei 河北 Province brought to light thousands of artifacts left by this enigmatic kingdom. These tombs are not only the first archaeological sites identified with the Zhongshan, but also the richest find from the highest strata of society from all states during the fourth century BCE. In the ensuing years archaeologists also located the Zhongshan capital, Lingshou 靈壽, one mile to the east of King Cuo's mausoleum. Recent archaeological work on this ancient city has revealed a rich array of remains, including foundations of palace structures, bronze and ceramic production areas, marketplaces, and cemeteries inside and outside the city walls, which have revolutionized our knowledge on this mysterious kingdom and cast new light on the art and politics of China during the fourth century BCE (Map 0.2).<sup>7</sup>

The tombs of King Cuo (M1) (Map 0.3) and King Cheng (M6) are the largest in scale and the richest in furnishings among the Zhongshan tombs unearthed so far. Although their main burial chambers had both been looted, their storage chambers remained intact and yielded a large number of offerings which became a rich source of information about Zhongshan in its heyday. Mortuary practices and ritual vessels found in these royal tombs are



MAP 0.2. The Zhongshan capital, Lingshou, and the Zhongshan royal cemeteries. Based on Hebeisheng Wenwu Yanjiusuo Figure 2.



MAP 0.3. Ground plan of King Cuo's tomb complex. Based on Hebeisheng Wenwu Yanjiusuo, *Cuo mu: Zhanguo Zhongshan guo guowang zhi mu* (*Tomb of Cuo, the King of the Zhongshan State in the Warring States Period*) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1995), Figure 5.

predominantly homogeneous with those of the surrounding states that evolved from the regional states established by the Zhou court.<sup>8</sup> But many artifacts, especially luxury objects for court display, exhibit novelty and sophistication in style, technique, and iconography that are unique to Zhongshan. In addition, a few Zhongshan objects and mortuary practices resemble those preferred by pastoral peoples on the northern frontier of early dynastic China.<sup>9</sup> Thus the non-Huaxia identity of Zhongshan suggested by traditional textual sources, and the predominantly Huaxia-style material and mortuary culture shown

through archaeological remains, present a discrepancy that demands explanation. As a result, those who believe in the Di origin of Zhongshan have examined Zhongshan archaeological remains through the lens of a supposed “sinicized minority,”<sup>10</sup> and interpreted Zhongshan funerary practices in light of the texts on Zhou rites compiled during the Warring States Period and later. On the contrary, those who consider Zhongshan a Huaxia state read those materials as reflections of Zhou tradition tinted with elements from non-Huaxia northern customs. Although the uniqueness of Zhongshan artifacts is recognized and occasionally discussed in iconographic, stylistic, or technical terms, few studies have analyzed these remains within their broad historical and archaeological contexts, and the dynamic social–political relations manifested and mediated by these fantastic objects are yet to be investigated.

#### PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THIS BOOK

The Warring States Period acquired its name from the title of a historical text: the *Zhanguo ce*, literally “the strategies of the warring states.” Transforming from the Shang (c. 1650–c. 1045 BCE) and Zhou (c. 1045–256 BCE) periods with a lineage-based sociopolitical structure to the Qin (221–206 BCE) and Han (202 BCE–220 CE) empires characterized by highly centralized governments with complex bureaucratic structures and sometimes a meritocracy, this period witnessed profound sociopolitical transformation, economic development, and intellectual ferment. These economic and sociopolitical transformations shaped Chinese society for the following 2,000 years, and the impact of this period reaches down to the present day.<sup>11</sup> Another feature that marked this period is the constant struggles among these rivaling political entities of various sizes. The Confucian scholar Liu Xiang (79–78 BCE), the compiler of the *Zhanguo ce*, voiced a condemnation in the book’s preface against the rulers and the general political culture of this period. He claimed that the rulers of the Warring States Period “renounced courteousness but honored warfare, rejected benevolence and justice, and used improper means for the sole end of achieving power.”<sup>12</sup> Liu Xiang’s characterization of this period provides his readers a moral lens through which this work should be viewed. Liu Xiang was right that acquiring and maintaining more power was the central agenda for rulers of the Warring States Period, but he failed to point out that the inclination of those rulers toward more power was both a natural desire and a necessity imposed by the political climate of the time: ensnared in the inextricable interstate warfare for expansion and annexation, the survival of a state and its ruling house depended on the amount of power and resources under the ruler’s control. Under this historical zeitgeist, the hypothesis of my research is that the production and use of artifacts by the rulers and the social elite were imprinted with this obsession with political power, and that material objects not only bear

witness to these political struggles but also helped negotiate and mediate political relations and cultural boundaries.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role played by material objects, such as court luxuries, ritual objects, and mortuary objects, in the political life of the Zhongshan state. The Zhongshan artifacts had undoubtedly been an integral part of court activities as well as ancestral and mortuary rituals that are essential to the survival and operation of Zhongshan as a state. On this level of investigation, material objects can be viewed as emblems or symbols of political power. When analyzed on a finer scale, these artifacts prove to have served as social agents that mediated social and political relations and actions in at least two aspects. On the one hand, these artifacts facilitated the process of constructing cultural identities for the Zhongshan rulers that were beneficial to the state in both internal and external political relations. On the other hand, Zhongshan artifacts, along with their inscriptions, often acted as carriers or reminders of political messages that aimed at legitimizing and strengthening political power in times of transition and crisis. Both the construction and the use of artifacts and the bronze inscriptions and their political rhetoric will be analyzed in relation to power and identity in China in the third century BCE.

This book will also chart the changes in material culture in Zhongshan during the Eastern Zhou period, and compare Zhongshan with neighboring regions. The aim of this research is not to identify the visual expressions of Zhongshan's sinicization, but to reveal how artifacts participated in the social practices of the period through their subjects, styles, and uses. Instead of trying to assign the Zhongshan remains to one side of a dichotomous conceptual framework formed by the "Huaxia" and the peripheral pastoralist "Rong-Di", I will treat Zhongshan as an individual political entity and culture defined by the specific historical and political circumstances both received by the Zhongshan rulers and shaped by their responses. In particular, this book investigates how the stylistic traditions, functions, and techniques of production of Zhongshan artifacts are related to the construction of distinct cultural and political identities for the Zhongshan rulers, and how material culture helped visualize and perpetuate power in Zhongshan society and on the interstate level. In other words, this research will interpret the Zhongshan artifacts in the light of the people who commissioned and used them, focusing on the way the official bronze industry was used by Zhongshan rulers in statecraft and in the construction of cultural identity. Instead of looking at bronze artifacts from mortuary contexts as passive indicators of cultural identity, cultural interaction, and social status, I argue that Zhongshan bronze artifacts were used creatively by their patrons in the assertion, negotiation, and communication of identity and power in their political and personal lives.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTERS

Through analyzing Zhongshan material culture in the context of politics and power relations of the time, this work demonstrates that Zhongshan rulers, such as the innovative King Cuo, used artifacts of various types as visual messages to declare and strengthen their power within their own state and in relation to others, to negotiate an independent cultural identity, and to create a political space for the survival of a minor state surrounded by more powerful ones. Through the construction of his mausoleum and the artifacts buried with him, King Cuo portrayed himself as an ambitious, capable, and revolutionary king of the Zhongshan state. In his last years King Cuo used monuments, artifacts, and rituals to commemorate his political achievements, and to express, or even attempt to control, how he should be commemorated by the living. The observable cultural changes in Zhongshan material culture and mortuary practice prefigure the formative process and the final emergence of the unified Qin and Han empires constituted with diverse peoples and cultural traditions, and King Cuo's politically charged programs of visual display foreshadow the self-aggrandizing monumental projects of later emperors.

In order to put the discussion of Zhongshan material culture and political power in a broader historical context, Chapter One introduces the historical circumstances of the Warring States Period in which Zhongshan existed. It also reviews the studies and controversies in Chinese historiography concerning Zhongshan's origin, royal lineage, and ethnic and cultural identity. The second half of the chapter provides a critical analysis of previous approaches to the interpretation of material remains of this period, especially concerning issues related to ethnic identity and the relationship between textual sources and material remains. In contrast to previous studies, the goal of this book is to explain material culture from the state of Zhongshan as agents of political power and social order.

Chapter Two shifts our attention to archaeological remains and starts with an investigation of the Zhongshan capital city, Lingshou, located in Pingshan County, Hebei Province (occupied between c.380 BCE and c.296 BCE). The remains within the city walls, only partially excavated, include palatial, residential, manufacturing, commercial, and military sites, in addition to the royal cemetery in its northwest portion. This discussion reflects on the productive and commercial activities within the capital and the government's role in these activities, and examines what these discoveries suggest about Zhongshan statecraft in relation to the geopolitics of this area during the middle Warring States Period.

The building of the Zhongshan capital, Lingshou, serves as a direct context in which the next discussion is laid out: a diachronic comparison of the 125 tombs in the cemeteries around Lingshou as well as dozens of tombs scattered

within Zhongshan territory beyond the capital area. This analysis indicates that Zhongshan tombs experienced major changes in structure and furnishings after the city was built. Through analyzing chronological changes between tombs of different periods, as well as variations among contemporaneous tombs in terms of tomb structure, body arrangement, and grave goods, this part of the chapter addresses whether and how these factors reflect social distinctions, such as cultural affiliation, social status, and occupation (e.g. warriors and merchants). This discussion helps illustrate how King Cuo drew upon and transformed past traditions to declare his unique status and identity, which will be addressed in the following chapters.

Chapter Three analyzes the hybrid mortuary practices and grave goods from the tombs of the Zhongshan kings, and puts the discussion of Zhongshan artifacts in a broader ritual context. First, it examines the animal-related mortuary rituals practiced at King Cuo's burial complex. While horse-and-chariot burials were based on traditions of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, rituals practiced by the northern pastoralists were also represented, such as burying bones of cattle and sheep. The unique hybrid nature of mortuary ritual parallels that of Cuo's artifacts discussed later in this chapter. Second, this chapter examines the distributional pattern of artifacts in King Cuo's burial complex in order to map the positioning of artifacts of different cultural and artistic traditions within the spatial framework upon which Cuo's tomb was built. Bronze ritual vessels, musical instruments, and jade ornaments of the Zhou tradition were separated spatially from artifacts affiliated with artistic traditions of the northern groups. Finally, this chapter interprets the stylistic diversity of Zhongshan bronzes by looking at the impact of trade, migration, and other forms of cultural contact on Zhongshan artifacts in relation to politics and cultural identity. It also calls for caution in conflating complicated hybrid cultural and art-historical phenomena into a monolithic cultural entity.

Chapter Four investigates the political significance of stylistic innovations during King Cuo's reign. It starts with a comparison between the tomb of King Cuo of Zhongshan (M1) and the tomb of another Zhongshan ruler (M6), probably his father, King Cheng, as well as a tomb of an unidentified member of the Zhongshan royalty (M3). The comparison focuses on differences in the content and style of grave goods in these tombs and views these differences in the context of political events that took place during King Cuo's reign, mainly his acquisition of the title of *wang*, or king. I analyze the bronze and jade artifacts as a means of visual communication with a strong political overtone, and view the more extravagant styles and innovative iconography and design of Cuo's bronzes as a visual display that was intended to signify the unprecedented political authority of King Cuo.

A diachronic analysis of the type and style of the bronze artifacts found in the tomb of King Cuo further suggests the political significance of the stylistic





0.1. The largest *ding* (XK: 1) found in the west storage chamber of King Cuo's tomb (M1). Height 51.5 cm, mouth diameter 42 cm, maximum diameter 65.8 cm, weight 60 kg. Bronze with iron legs. After Hebeisheng Wenwu Yanjiusuo, *Cuo mu: Zhongshan guo guowang zhi mu* (*Tomb of Cuo, the King of the Zhongshan State in the Warring States Period*) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1995), Plate 3.

choices he made. A stylistic comparison of bronze artifacts based on their years of production reveals that their style changed dramatically during the fourteenth year of King Cuo's reign (314 BCE), and my analysis of the broader historical context suggests that this change was triggered by Zhongshan's military success in the same year against the state of Yan, a regional state established by the Zhou. Their distinctive stylistic preference declared his political, and perhaps cultural, identity and his prestige as being on par with that of other powerful states, and confirmed his authority within the state.

Chapter Five deals with the role bronzes and their inscriptions played in Zhongshan statecraft and politics. The three long commemorative inscriptions on the bronze ritual vessels (Figs. 0.1–0.3) from Cuo's tomb are complex in meaning and purpose and can sustain detailed rhetorical analysis. My reading of these inscriptions suggests that the lord–subject relationship between the king and his chancellor was critical to the survival of this state, and King Cuo was concerned with the loyalty of his chancellor and intended to secure the throne for his heir through these inscriptions. Their strong Confucian overtones and political rhetoric reveal that the king used these inscriptions to assert claims of cultural and political legitimacy to rule the state. These ritual bronzes were made and displayed on ceremonial occasions in order to maintain the internal political order and to sustain the survival of the state.

Both historical literature and bronze inscriptions suggest that Confucian thought played an important role in the official ideology of the state of Zhongshan. Some historians even attributed the destruction of Zhongshan to its Confucian policies. However, checking the rhetoric against events of the time betrays that the Zhongshan rulers did not follow Confucian ideals and policies faithfully. Instead, my reading of the bronze inscriptions suggests that



0.2. The bronze square *hu* (XK: 15) found in the west storage chamber of Cuo's tomb: a. full view, height 63 cm, maximum diameter 35 cm, weight 28.72 kg; b. detail of inscriptions. Photos by Xiaolong Wu.



0.3. Round *hu* of Ci (DK: 6) found in the east storage chamber of Cuo's tomb. Height 44.9 cm, mouth diameter 14.6 cm, maximum diameter 31.2 cm, weight 13.7 kg. Photo by Xiaolong Wu.