

shown hoeing, not ploughing. More importantly, as I emphasized to Nylan when she contacted me about this, the woman is stark naked (not simply “bare-breasted,” as Nylan describes her in the book), and it is highly unlikely, for both moral and practical reasons, that women would have routinely worked in the fields without any clothes. The image begs to be interpreted symbolically, and the very large tree overspreading her probably has a role to play in the iconography as well. Ironically, Nylan concludes this chapter with a homily about *naïveté* in the interpretation of visual evidence: “Visual rhetoric is no less difficult to interpret than literary rhetoric, though many think its messages are self-explanatory” (p. 295, before recommending specific studies to counter “the perils of such naïveté”).

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With the exception of a handful of contributors who do not engage in polemics and simply present the state of their field concisely and judiciously, the authors and editors of *China's Early Empires* seem not to have been content to produce a book that would stand the test of time, but aimed instead to obliterate all competing scholarship. Such aggression is distasteful and counterproductive. Some scholars see their peers as allies in a shared enterprise; others see them as competitors. In a world where fewer and fewer people comprehend, let alone appreciate, what we do, we might wish to cooperate more in our common cause of understanding the past.

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The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs. By Wu Hung. London: Reaktion Books, 2010. Pp. 272. £33.00.

Until very recently, archaeology in China was essentially funerary archaeology. Tombs by ten thousands, of all periods, from prehistory to the last dynasty, have been excavated for more than sixty years throughout the whole country. It is only natural that archaeologists and historians now try to set this enormous amount of data in order, to find clues to understand its meaning. In other words, it is time now for syntheses on what tombs tell us about funerary practices and art within a civilization which has devoted so much energy to managing death and the otherworld. Most of the syntheses actually published deal with a long period or a recurrent theme, but few of them aspire to treat all the aspects of funerary art and almost all the periods. This

is the purpose of the present book. We must say that the author is certainly, outside China, in a unique position to venture to undertake such a difficult task, and this for different reasons, first because of his mastery of Chinese sources, second for the long familiarity his previous works on the subject have given him, and finally for his talent for synthesis and ideas.

The Art of the Yellow Springs is divided into three main chapters, devoted respectively to the spatiality (pp. 17–84), the materiality (pp. 85–148), and the temporality (pp. 149–217). These three “movements” are framed by an introduction (pp. 7–16) and a coda (pp. 218–33). At the end are the references (pp. 234–54), the bibliography (pp. 255–63), and an index (pp. 264–72) with three entries (a general, periods, and locations index).

From the Introduction, Wu Hung explains his subject. The Yellow Springs refers to the final destination of all human beings after death and is the imagined location of innumerable graves which usually implies a constructed architectural space containing mortuary structures, grave furnishings, and above-ground landmarks. The author also defines his aim: the book studies the tomb as a spatial entity, as a whole, the goal being “to uncover the underlying logic of a tomb’s design, decoration and furnishing, and to interpret a tomb as an embodiment of social relations, history and memory, cosmology and religious beliefs” (p. 9).

Chapter One, on spatiality, discusses the various symbolic environments constructed inside a tomb, conceived as an underground household or microcosm. Wu retraces the evolution of the “casket grave” (= vertical pit grave, *guo mu* 槨墓), the emergence of the “chamber grave” (*shi mu* 室墓), that is to say, a construction developed horizontally. He tries to explain the transformation from one solution to the other by the crucial changes in the ancestral worship, the concept of the soul, the idea of the afterlife, and the formation of an underworld bureaucracy. The author puts forward here interpretations he has already proposed in several previous publications.

Wu then decodes the symbolic space created inside a chamber grave; the mural decoration evoking the celestial realm on the ceiling and earthly scenes on the four walls. He explains the absence of the land of the Yellow Springs by the fact (a personal interpretation) that a tomb aimed to provide comfort and security and that the underworld deities must only protect the dead and not judge and punish him. Following this interpretation, the tomb was conceived, and that as early as the Warring States period, as the posthumous “happy home” of the dead, situated in the land of the Yellow Springs. This “happy home” was evoked by murals which, after the second century C.E., were constantly updated with contemporary images and references.

In this chapter Wu introduces the different and well-known representations of heaven on the ceiling of the tombs: celestial charts, symbols, omens, images of paradise. One of the ideas he develops here (pp. 57–58) is that Buddhist and Daoist images enriched indigenous representations of immortal paradise but never developed into an independent Buddhist or Daoist programme in funerary art. It is certainly true,

but I think that the Five Dynasties and Liao tombs show an accretion of Buddhist and Daoist elements which not only enriched but also transformed the funerary programme developed since the Later Han.

The end of the chapter is devoted to the representations of the dead. Wu shows very convincingly that from the Han period at least, two methods were used to evoke the dead. The first solution was to create an empty place, the “spirit seat” (*ling zuo* 靈坐) of the tomb occupant; it took sometimes the shape of a platform or “altar” constructed in the front chamber, with sacrificial vessels and pottery models on it which framed the “spirit seat.” The alternative method which was conceived by the early Later Han was to paint a portrait of the deceased.

Chapter Two, on materiality, considers how and why certain materials, media, shapes, and colours were selected for tomb architecture and furnishing, and how particular means were developed to transform the physical body of the dead. The idea is that the materiality of mortuary goods is inseparable from mortuary architecture and decoration, all these elements interacting and supplementing each other to complete the function and symbolism of a tomb.

A large place in this chapter is devoted to the introduction and development of *mingqi* 明器 in the tombs especially from Eastern Zhou to the Han, with a very good synthesis on the methods used in antiquity to provide the spirit vessels in bronze with a distinct “ghostly” quality (pp. 93–96). Here tomb figurines are studied from several points of view, through their role, the “tableau” they constitute, the framing they offer to the spirit seat of the deceased, the question of miniaturization, and the notion of verisimilitude. A separate section is devoted to the lead or tin silhouette figures created as a “double” of the deceased to gain release from underworld culpability, as well as to the later Daoist practice of fashioning a stone tomb statue (*shizhen* 石真) intended as a stand-in for the mortal body of the living person it portrays, freeing the person from death.

The second part of this chapter deals with the preservation and transformation of the body, especially with the use of burial jades from the Neolithic to the Han period. Excellent are the pages (pp. 133–37) devoted to the jade shrouds (“jade bodies” in Wu Hung terminology) and to the new methods developed to transform and restore the body of the dead in post Han times, after cremation was popularized (pp. 139–48). One of the new burial customs that Wu studies is the use of manikins invented by Han Chinese living under Liao rule.

Chapter Three, on temporality, “shows how spaces, objects and images work together to evoke various temporalities such as past, future or eternity, and to generate a sense of movement inside a sealed space” (p. 15). It means that the decorated Chinese tomb would synthesize multiple times, a cosmic/mythic time, a “lived time,” a historical time, into a complex interplay.

The cosmic/mythic time evokes the images of the universe; be they abstract or figurative, they reveal the essential correlative patterns of the universe. Especially

clear and convincing is the section devoted to the evolution and popularization of the “twelve calendrical animals” images in tomb decoration from Han to Five Dynasties. About the “lived time,” represented by the personal belongings of the dead, Wu develops the idea that these objects (*shengqi* 生器), which are the traces buried inside the tomb of a vanished past, ensure that this past will not be entirely wiped out; they become for the dead a means of “rebirth” in a different time. The historical time is represented by images of ancient figures, simulated archaic forms, and posthumous biographies (stone epitaphs), all representations intrinsically social and political. The author in this section stresses the importance of “returning to the ancient” (*fugu* 復古) in Chinese funerary art (I would add in Chinese art in general) and the fact that the attempt to historicize mortuary rites and grave goods was linked to this archaistic tendency.

The final section discusses various kinds of “journeys” depicted in the tomb. In Wu’s view, the numerous images of horses and chariots from the Eastern Han onward depict a bi-partite journey, a funerary procession to the grave followed by an imaginary tour in the afterlife with the aim of reaching immortal paradise. In this astute interpretation, the shift between the two stages would have been realized by changing the chariots’ orientation from facing inside to facing outside. The author here again develops readings he has already proposed in previous publications.¹

Wu links also several devices of post Han tombs with the soul’s ascension to the land of immortality, first the tall facades of Gansu Wei-Jin tombs, and later on the passageway transformed into a picture gallery of several rich tombs in North China after 534 C.E. This passageway with its images of journey between the world of living and the world of the dead will be inherited and developed further in the aristocratic tombs of the Tang dynasty.

The book ends with a coda which portrays three important and well-known tombs from different periods. Two of them date from the Western Han, the Mawangdui 馬王堆 tomb 1 (shortly after 168 B.C.E., Hunan) and the Mancheng 滿城 tomb 1 (113 B.C.E., Hebei); the third tomb, of Zhang Wenzao 張文藻 and his wife at Xuanhua 宣化, Hebei, was built in 1093 C.E. under the Liao.

This brilliant synthesis is stimulating. Intended for a large audience, it is written in a pleasant style, and is very well and profusely illustrated. The numerous notes refer to the excavation reports or to the works used by the author. The documentation brought into play is rich and rather complete. Let us note, as minor shortcomings, the absence of Chinese characters as well as some approximations, errors and misprints, especially in the notes and in the legends of the illustrations, but also in the text.

¹ See, for instance, Wu Hung’s article on Cangshan 蒼山 tomb: “Beyond the ‘Great Boundary’: Funerary Narrative in the Cangshan Tomb,” in *Boundaries in China*, ed. John Hay (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), pp. 81–104.

More important, the methodological and hermeneutic choices of the work deserve some remarks. As he says at the beginning of his coda, Wu Hung has chosen a conceptual approach and emphasizes what he views “as the fundamental logic of traditional Chinese tombs” (p. 219). A primary question remains as to whether we can generalize about the funerary practices and tombs of a period through the tombs that the author analyzes, which are, most of them, exceptional or unique. To say it in another way, is it not dangerous to choose some exceptional tombs, endowed with a very rich iconography and supplemented by inscriptions, such as Cangshan for example, and to generalize from what they say or what we understand of it? It is running the risk of taking an unusual case for the norm. Another method, of course less glamorous, would consist in a study based on statistical analysis, taking much more into consideration the regional cultural variations and the differentiations in social status. In a word, it seems to me dangerous to build an interpretation out of one single occurrence.²

The second problem too is linked with the conceptual approach. It seems to me very dangerous to impose an abstract schema, an interpretation grid or classification headings on facts which are forced into this schema.³ In many cases, the inability to wait before giving an interpretation, the propensity for imposing a logic and a vision which maybe were not what the ancients conceived, however intelligent it may appear at first glance, is likely to confuse, instead of increasing the understanding of ancient realities.

Wu is inclined to systematize, interpret in a univocal way, to affirm as a well established truth what is fairly often only an hypothesis (always clever and well thought out). But, in real life, things are much more blurred, elusive, ambivalent and also inconsistent. I understand that it is often impossible to provide evidence for one’s own view or reading, but a “maybe” or a “perhaps” has the immense advantage, in addition to prudence, to leave the reader room for his own imagination.

These few reservations will, I hope, allow the reader who is not a specialist of Chinese funerary art to adopt with a pinch of salt some of the very interesting theories

² To take one example, the analysis of the funerary procession chariots and the identification of the three chariots at Yi’nan 沂南 and at Dabaotai 大葆台 as being “the leading carriage, the soul carriage, and a hearse” (pp. 199–201) would have been much more solid and convincing if it were supported by a statistical study of the processions pictured in a great number of Han tombs.

³ I shall only give one example: Wu Hung (pp. 120–21) explains through a single evolution the articulated figurines in the fourth century B.C.E. Chu, the Mawangdui dressed figurines, the originally dressed earthenware manikins from the Yangling Mausoleum 陽陵博物館 of Emperor Jing 景帝 (r. 156–141 B.C.E.) and the Nüwa 女媧 myth. I am not sure that the result will be a clearer explanation of these data.

which are proposed in this book. As several of the previous works by Wu Hung, this one enriches our vision of the tomb in traditional China, which, as the author says in his coda, “retained a central position in artistic imagination and creation, producing infinite variations of architectural structures, pictorial programs, and installations of objects in the realm of the Yellow Springs” (p. 233).

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The Price of Rice: Market Integration in Eighteenth-Century China. By Sui-wai Cheung. Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2008. Pp. xviii + 220. \$55.00.

清代物價史研究在二十世紀中葉起步以來，其焦點之一便是「市場整合」(market integration) 問題，包括清代中國是否已經形成全國性市場、市場功能發達到何種程度、國家對市場整合採取了怎樣的政策等。張瑞威 (Sui-wai Cheung) 教授新著《米價：十八世紀中國的市場整合》是一部將糧價資料和記述史料結合起來、分析清代中國「市場整合」中若干重要問題的大作。

在題為「運輸、經濟成長及市場整合」(Transport, Economic Growth, and Market Integration) 的序論中，著者對既往的清代市場研究加以評論，概括地提出本書的基本論點：長距離交易雖是經濟成長的關鍵，但除非有國家的干預，否則難以發展。清代中國最重要的長距離交易路線是施堅雅 (G. William Skinner) 所指出的“T”型運輸線，即東西方向的長江路線，以及南北方向的大運河和東南沿海航路，而結合兩者的交叉點為長江下游流域。本書第一章和第二章以大運河的物資流通為主題，第三章到第五章以長江流域的米糧貿易為主題。各章探討的具體問題雖有不同，但貫穿本書的目標是，重新考察清代中國市場整合的程度和實際情況，以及國家政策對長距離交易發展和市場整合進展所發揮的作用。

在第一章「運河的運輸與市場整合的範圍」(Canal Transport and the Scope of Market Integration) 中，著者從兩方面來討論國家的漕運制度和大運河商品流通之間的關係。一方面，政府為了彌補漕船旗丁的薪水不足，允許他們搭載一定體積以下的私貨。因為這些私貨不需要繳納關稅，所以富裕的商人也私下參與這項交易，對攜帶物品的限制也逐漸放寬，終於呈現出「京師百物仰給漕艘夾帶」的狀況。在此意