

Excavation of the Yuyang Tomb of the Western Han Dynasty at Wangchengpo, Changsha, Hunan

Changsha Municipal Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and Changsha Bamboo Slips Museum

Abstract

In 1993, archaeologists carried out a rescue excavation to the Yuyang Tomb situated to the west of Xianjia Lake in Changsha City, Hunan. The graveyard covers an area of more than 1ha. Surrounding the main burial pit were three outer burial pits arranged to the east, west, and south into a triangular plan. The main body is a vertical rock pit tomb with a ramp passage and wooden coffins. It is in a 甲-shaped plan with a length of 37m, composed of an earth mound, a tomb passage, and a tomb chamber. The burial style was *ticou* – the tomb chamber was enclosed by piles of heartwood logs. Although the tomb had been looted several times, a lot of grave goods were unearthed. There were a variety of lacquer wares of especially fine quality. The characters Yuyang 漁陽 (which might be the name of the tomb occupant or the name of a county of the Western Han Dynasty) were found on several lacquer wares. The tomb occupant might have been certain imperial princess of the early Western Han, who was married to a vassal king of the Changsha Kingdom for political reasons.

Keywords: Royal tombs–Western Han Dynasty; Yuyang Tomb (Wangchengpo, Changsha, Hunan)

The general situation

The Yuyang Tomb of the Western Han Dynasty is situated on the western side of Xianjia Lake, about 2.5km to the west of the Xiang River, and 2km northwest of Rongwan Town. Lying in front of a hill and facing the lake, the terrain where the tomb is located is open and broad. The lake separates this tomb from other two Western Han royal tombs found on the Doubi Hill and the Xiangbizui Hill, 2km away. From February to July of 1993, the archaeological team organized by Changsha Municipal Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and Changsha Municipal Commission for Preservation of Ancient Monuments excavated this tomb.

The graveyard covers over 1ha on the top of a hill, 71.2m above sea level. Three pits were found to the south, east, and west of the tomb, laid out in a triangular shape. The main tomb, 37m long in total, features a long ramp passage, a vertical pit cut out of the bedrock, and

burial chambers in which wooden coffins are found. Its orientation is 287°. The tomb had a tumulus atop. The original height of the tumulus was 5m, more than half of which had been removed by bulldozers before the excavation. The backfill was the smashed shale rubbles quarried from the original pit. The rammed layers of the backfill differ in thickness from 30 to 40cm. The archaeologists found three looting tunnels, which were dug in the Han and Tang Dynasty respectively.

The access ramp is located in the center of the west side of the burial pit. The ramp is 21.02m long with a slope of 18°. The opening of the ramp is 6m wide, but the bottom of the ramp is only 3.3m wide, since the ramp walls were built slanting inward. A platform was built on each side of the ramp. The platforms are 1.3 to 1.4m wide. Each of the platforms has four equally spaced square postholes that might have related to devices for lowering items into the tomb or to structures above the ground.

Inside on the east part of the access ramp, which was 2m to the west of the burial pit, was a pair of figurines with wide-open arms kneeling on a bamboo mat (Figures 1 and 2). The figurines are 88cm high, and 60 to 66cm thick, with the stretch from one hand to the other measuring 172 to 184cm. The torsos were made of clay with wooden cores and the heads and limbs were wood. The heads have two square-shaped holes on top that were used for inserting deer antlers. The antlers were found on the ground next to the figurines. The bamboo mat is 73–80cm long, 61–68cm wide, and 1–5cm thick. It was set firmly on top of two wooden poles.

The south part of the rectangular burial pit has been destroyed, but the north and east parts are preserved. Around the pit is a platform of the same width as the platforms on the two sides of the ramp. The walls of the pit were built slanting inward continuously. The pit opening above this platform measures 15.98m long by 13.30m wide; at the bottom of the platform the pit measures 12.78 to 13.10m long by 10.55 to 10.63m wide; and the very bottom of the burial pit measures 11.60 by 9.76m. The pit is 10m deep. On the bottom are two parallel troughs laid out east to west and used for two ground beams underneath the pit. The troughs are 8.26 to 8.40m long, 40 to 60cm wide, and 24 to 30cm deep (Figure 1).

The original soil was used as backfill; the rammed layers measure from 30 to 40cm in thickness. The diameter of the rammer would be 8 to 9cm seen from the traces left on the earth layers. Around the outer coffin chamber, archaeologists found first a layer of dark grey mud 10 to 30cm thick, then a layer of charcoal 35 to 50cm thick, and then backfill.

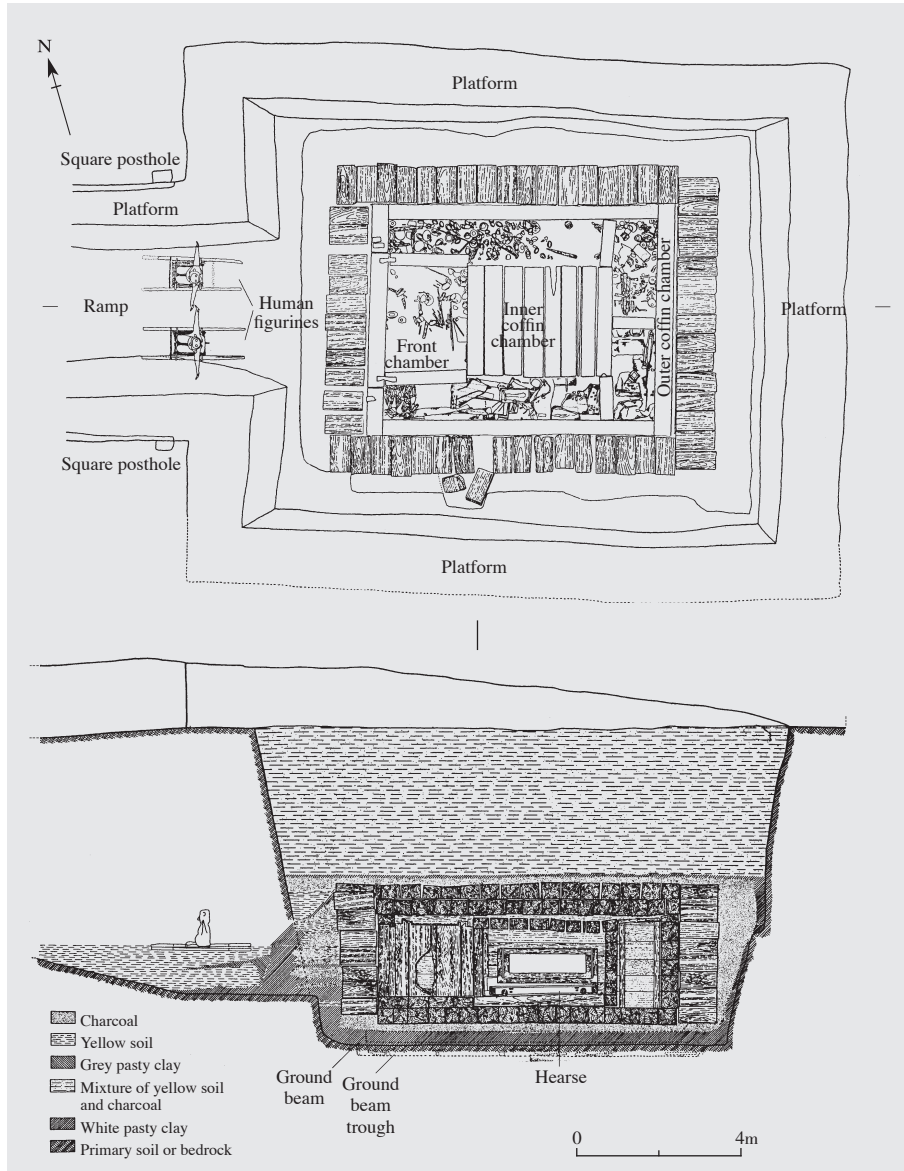


Figure 1 The plan and section of Yuyang tomb.



Figure 2 The human figurines at the east part of the access ramp (W-E).

The rectangular-shaped outer coffin chamber is 7.4m long, 5.7m wide and 3m high. It consists of two ground beams, four wooden walls, the wooden floor, the wooden roof, a door, and storage compartments (Figure 3).

The two ground beams were used as a foundation for the outer coffin chamber. The one on the south measures 7.86m long, 52cm wide, and 28 to 46cm thick, while the one on the north is 8.08m long, 53cm wide, and 28 to 46cm thick. They were enclosed in grey mud.

The four walls of outer coffin chamber were made of stacked up wooden planks. The door is opened on the west wall. On each side of the door are six layers of wooden planks. The planks are 1.16 to 1.18m long, 39cm wide, and 25–44cm thick. Location and sequential numbers are carved on the exterior of each plank.

The south, north, and east walls are all built up with six wood planks, which are 5.7 to 7.93m long, 42cm wide, and 26 to 42cm thick. Location and sequential numbers are carved into some of them.

The floor consists of 17 planks, laid in north-south direction on top of the two ground beams. The floor planks are 5.6 to 5.7m long, 35 to 50cm wide, and 38 to 42cm thick. They are fastened together by notched joints. Characters indicating location and sequential numbers were found on the planks.

The door of the outer coffin chamber is 2.28m high, 2.48m wide, and 2 to 4cm thick. The doorframe consists of the lintel, two jambs and the doorsill; the jambs are fitted to the doorsill with mortise and tenon and the lintel is fitted to the jambs with plain miter joints. The door has two leaves, each of which was made of three boards fastened together with blind dowels. A threshold was found, measuring 2.54m long in the front, 2.86m long in the back, 50cm wide and 28cm high.

The roof (cover) has also seventeen planks, laid west to east. The planks are 5.66 to 5.73m long, 33 to 44cm wide, and 38 to 42cm thick. Like the planks in other sections of the coffin chamber, they bore carved location and

sequential numbers.

The front chamber is the space between the outer and inner coffin chambers. Two doors on its north and south sides connect it to the storage chambers. The floor of the front chamber is made of four planks measuring 2.82 to 2.85m long, 15 to 50cm wide, and 24 to 28cm thick.

The rectangular inner coffin chamber measures 3.47m long, 2.7m wide and 2.16m high. It consists of the floor, the walls, the door and the roof.

The floor is made of seven planks laid in east-west direction. They measure 3.46 to 3.47m long, 2.7m wide and 30 to 32cm thick. The character meaning “south” is carved on the first plank in the south.

The east, south and north walls are all made of wood planks placed one on top of another. Remains of red lacquer were found on their interior sides. Lap joints at the corners hold the planks together. There are five planks on each wall, measuring 2.7 to 3.27m long, 29 to 34cm wide, and 23 to 36cm thick. The bottom three planks bear numbers on their exterior sides.

The inner coffin chamber door is 2m high, 2.68m wide, and 0.2 to 0.4m wide. Behind the doorframe are two door jambs on each side. The two door leaves are made of two boards each, interlocked by notched joints. No threshold was found.

The roof is constructed of eight planks laid in north-south direction. The planks are 2.69 to 2.97m long, 8 to 48cm wide and 27 to 29cm thick.

The rectangular-shaped coffins were nested closely and placed at the back of the inner coffin chamber. The lid of the outer coffin had been removed by robbers who left it on the ground.

The outer coffin measures 2.42m long, 1.06m wide and 1.01m high.

The inner coffin is 2.14m long, 0.74m wide, and 0.575m high. The coffin lid is slightly flared. The coffin floorboard is 24cm thick; the rest coffin boards are 14cm thick.

The interior of the inner coffin was painted using red lacquer, and the exterior was painted using black lacquer and decorated with red color designs featuring dragon, phoenix, and cloud patterns. Most of the patterns are nearly unidentifiable. The burial position of the tomb occupant cannot be determined as no skeleton was present.

The hearse was found underneath the double coffin. It is a wooden rectangular frame with wheels. The frame is 2.56m long, 1.1m wide and 0.22m high.

The space in the outer coffin chamber not occupied by the front chamber and inner coffin chamber was used for storage purposes. Such storage chambers are known as “treasuries.” Three treasury chambers are located to the south, north, and east of the outer coffin chamber and forming a Π-shaped plan. The southern and northern



Figure 3 Full-view of the grave after the outer coffin chamber roof removed (NW-SE).

treasuries have doors opening to the front chamber and to the eastern treasury. A door inside the eastern treasury divided that treasury into two chambers. All of these spaces are rectangular in shape. The southern treasury is 5.26m long and 0.8 to 1.1m wide; the northern treasury is 5.24m long and 0.8 to 1.16m wide; and the eastern treasury is 4.95m long and 1.1m wide. Grave goods were found in all three treasuries.

The door of the southern treasury is 2m high and 1.05m wide. The lintel is 1.05m long, 0.25m wide and 1.02m thick. Two thick boards were found on top of the lintel.

The door of the northern treasury is 1.88m high and 1.1m wide. No door leaves are found. The lintel is 0.7m long, 27cm high, and 15cm thick. A thick board was found on the top of the lintel with the carved inscription meaning “north.”

The door of the eastern treasury is 2.17m high and 1m wide. Characters carved behind the doorjamb have been illegible.

The *ticou* (lit. “stacked ends”, wooden wall built with squared off heartwood logs in header bond style and only the tree rings can be seen) is very well preserved – almost intact. It is made of *nanmu* (*phoebe zhennan*). It is built surrounding the outer coffin chamber on all four sides. Seven layers of *nanmu* heartwood logs on one side sealed the coffin chamber door; on each of the other three sides are found eight layers of logs and the numbers of the logs in these layers are roughly the same.

On the eastern *ticou*, the first layer was composed of 15 logs. The second to eighth layers consisted of 16 logs each. The timbers are 0.89 to 0.98m long, 20 to 49cm wide, and 38 to 48cm thick. The southern *ticou* has seventeen logs in each of its eight layers. The logs are 0.8 to 0.99m long, 38 to 48cm wide, and 38 to 47cm thick. The northern *ticou* has seventeen logs in the first layer, and eighteen logs each from layer two to layer eight. The logs are 0.8 to 0.99m log, 38 to 50cm wide, and 38 to

47cm thick.

The western *ticou* is divided into two sections by the outer coffin chamber entrance. Each of the seven layers has three planks. These planks are 0.9 to 0.96m long, 39 to 49cm wide and 39 to 49cm thick. On the north section of the western *ticou*, an inscription on the first log reads: “Yuyang 丙陽 *ticou* is one *chi* and eight *cun* wide”.

The *ticou* that seals the door was laid in east-west direction. The first layer has five logs, and the second to seventh layer have seven each. The logs are 0.86 to 0.97m long, 30 to 50cm wide, and 32 to 46cm thick.

The total number of logs on the eastern *ticou* is 127, on the southern, 136, on the north, 143 and on the west, 48. 47 logs were used in the *ticou* sealing the entrance on the west. In total, 601 squared-off logs are used to build the *ticou* in this tomb.

Outer burial pits

The outer burial pits on the east, west, and south sides of the Yuyang Tomb are vertical pits excavated into

the bedrock. The openings of all the three pits were damaged.

Pit No. 1 (WC1) is located 260m to the southeast of the Yuyang Tomb. It is 9.35m long, 2.45m wide, and the remaining depth is 0.6m. Its orientation is 336°. Unearthed artifacts included grey pottery wares baked at low temperature and impressed hard pottery wares baked at high temperature.

Pit No. 2 (WC2) is located 200m to the northwest of the ramp passage to the main tomb. The pit is 11.6m long, 4.5m wide and 2m deep. Its orientation is 40°. On its flat bottom, in each of the four corners, archaeologists found square postholes. Based on the already decayed grave goods, archaeologists believe that the pit was used as a chariot and horse pit.

Pit No. 3 (WC3) is located 240m to the south of the main tomb. The rectangular-shaped pit is 11.6m long, 4.5m wide and 2m deep. Its orientation is 300°. All the grave goods found in three piles were pottery animal figurines, including oxen, pigs, sheep, dogs, a chicken, turtles, and snakes.

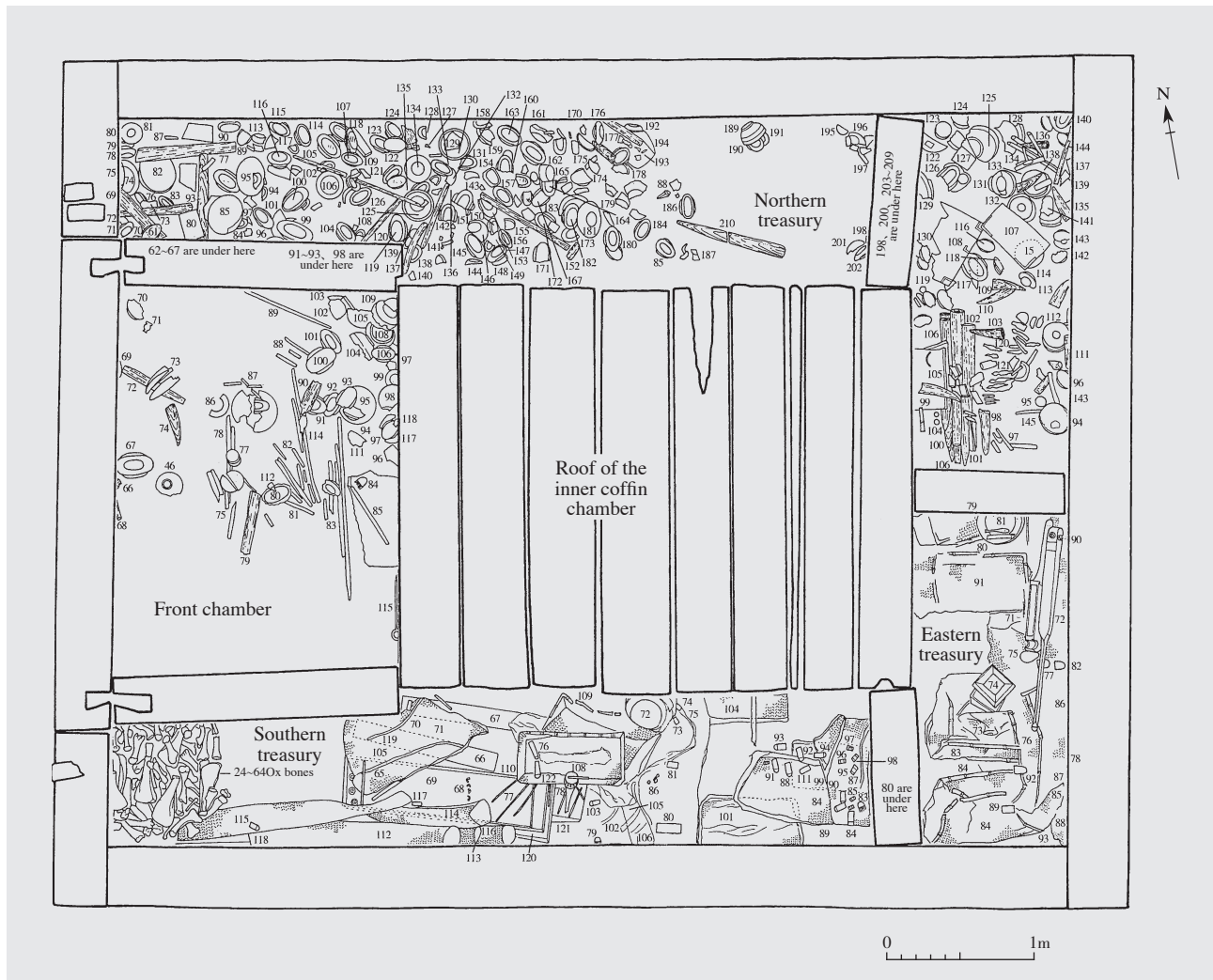


Figure 4 The distribution of the grave goods in the front chamber and the treasuries (the second layer).

Grave goods

Grave goods were found in the front chamber (A), in the north (B), east (C) and south (D) treasuries, and inside the coffin (E). Individual catalogue numbers were assigned based on the original location of each artifact (Figure 4). Here is the introduction to some important ones of grave goods found in this tomb.

1. Gold objects. 33 gold button-shaped ornaments (E:51 to E:83) were found inside the coffin. They typically took a hemispheric shape with a pattern of three-layered flower petals on the surface. At the center of the bottom of the concave interior is a horizontal bar. The diameters of the button-shaped ornaments vary from 0.7 to 0.9cm. The total weight is 69.5g (Figure 5).

2. Jade objects. In total, more than 40 jade objects were found scattered around the inner coffin chamber, on top of the inner coffin lid, and inside the inner coffin. 23 objects have been restored from the fragments. Among them are *bi*-discs and rings. One ring was restored from three fragments (E:11, E:40 and E:43). It is decorated with four hornless dragons intertwined head-to-tail. Four holes on the edge of the ring are arranged symmetrically. The diameter of the ring is 17.1cm. Another ring, 18.9cm in diameter and decorated with grain pattern on both sides, is restored from two pieces (A:84 and E:24). One *bi*-disc was restored from two pieces (E:44 and E:45). Two kinds of decorations – a “*puwen* (basketry pattern)” in the inner zone and entwined stylized dragons on the outer zone – are separated by a ring of thin cord pattern. Its diameter is 25.7cm (Figure 6).

3. Lacquer and wooden wares. Lacquer wares include round cosmetic cases, boxes, eared-cups, basins, *yi* 匱-pourers, *zhi* 卮-wine vessels, *yu* 盂-washbowls, armrests, ink-stone cases, seats, *se* 瑟-zithers, *zhu* 筑-musical instruments, *liubo* boards, dice, ivory carvings, rhino horn carvings, figurines and so on.

a. Cosmetic cases. One rectangular wooden cosmetic case (A:50) had been damaged. The exterior is black and the interior is red. It is covered with patterns of entwined clouds and triangles. The case is 84cm long, 50.6cm wide and 14.6cm high (Figure 7:3).

Another wooden cosmetic case (D:72) is double-tiered with silver curbs. Inside the case are six smaller cases. The lid of outer case is decorated with a silver “persimmon calyx” quatrefoil in the top center, and on the body and rim are five silver curbs. The diameter of the lid is 32cm and the total height of the case is 17.2cm. The smaller cases are also decorated with silver persimmon calyxes and silver curbs. All of them are black and decorated with clouds, phoenixes, and geometric patterns (Figure 8).

Four Lids. Sample C:79 has a slightly flared surface. Black in color inside and out, the lid is decorated with red cloud, phoenix, and geometric patterns. Its diameter is 30.5cm and height is 8.8cm (Figures 7:2 and 9). Another sample (B:348) has the same decoration (Figures 7:1).

b. A cup set (C:184). The wooden cup set consists of



Figure 5 Gold button-shaped ornaments (E:51 to E:83).

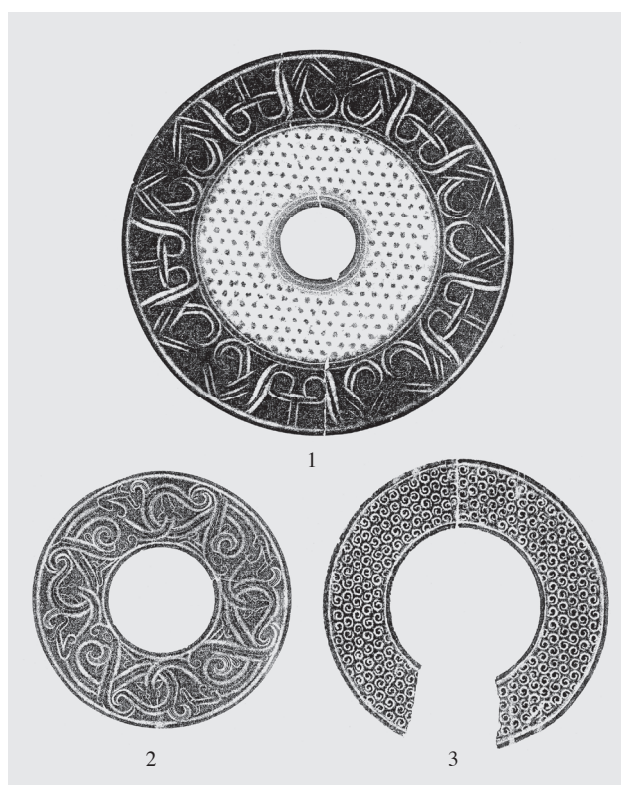


Figure 6 Jade *bi*-discs and rings.

1. *Bi*-disc (restored from E:44 and E:45); 2. ring (restored from E:11, E:40 and E:43); 3. ring (restored from A:48 and E:24)

an oval-shaped case containing ten small *erbei* (lit. “eared cup”, shallow oval wine cup with two crescent-shaped handles). The black exterior of the case is painted with red clouds, waves, and diamond-shaped patterns. Its interior is red. The case is 22.9cm long, 18.5cm wide and 13.3cm high. The black lacquered eared cups have patterns of phoenixes, waves, and clouds in red (Figures 10 and 11:1).

c. A round case (A:70). The round wooden case has a black exterior with red cloud and zigzag patterns; the

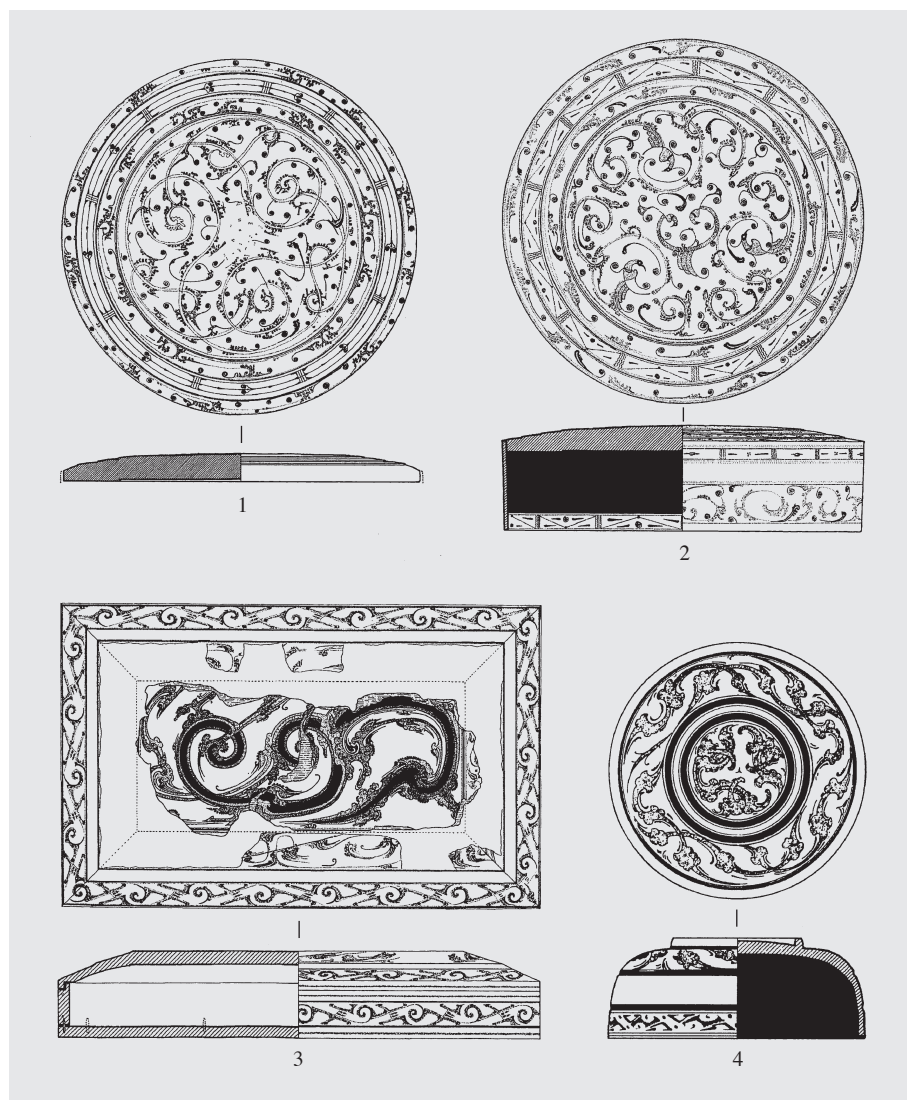


Figure 7 Lacquer wares.

1 and 2. lids (B:348 and C:79); 3. rectangular *lian*-cosmetic case (A:50); 4. round case lid (A:70)

interior is red. The diameter is 22cm and the height is 18.4cm (Figures 7:4 and 12).

d. Eared cups. There are over 2500 lacquered wood oval-shaped eared cups found in this tomb. All of them have black exteriors and red interiors. On the exterior are painted red phoenix and cloud patterns, and on the rim and handles are geometric patterns of triangles and zigzags. On the bottoms, the awl-incised characters “Yuyang 漁陽” are often seen (Figures 13–15).

e. Plates. A total of 180 plates are found, which are made of lacquered wood or dry-lacquer technique. All the dry-lacquer ones are fully black, while the wooden ones are red inside and black outside. In the center of the plates are red painted phoenixes and cloud patterns. On the bottoms, the awl-incised characters “Yuyang 漁陽” are often seen (Figures 11:4 and 16).

f. Basins. Two basins with wide edges and flat bottoms

are found; one of them (B:702-1) is made of dry-lacquer technique and the other (B:702-2), lacquered wood. They are decorated with awl-incised cloud and phoenix designs and geometric and curling patterns. B:702-1 is 9.8cm high with a diameter of 41.6cm and B:702-2 is 9.4cm high with a diameter of 45.5cm (Figures 17:1 and 17:2).

g. *Yi*-pourers. The twelve wooden *yi*-pourers are flat-bottomed with a straight spout. They are decorated with phoenix and cloud patterns. Sample B:194 is 32cm long and 9cm high (Figures 11:3 and 18).

h. *Zhi*-wine vessels. There are more than 170 pieces of *zhi*-wine vessels found in this tomb. All of them are in cylindrical shape with ring handles; they have black exteriors and red interiors. Sample B:67 has a diameter of 10.3cm and a height of 9.4cm and is decorated with cloud patterns. Sample A:39 is larger, with a diameter of 15.4cm and a height of 15.3cm (Figures 11:2, 11:5, 19 and 20).

i. *Yu*-washbowls. In total 125 *yu*-washbowls are found. The washbowl has a wide rim and ring foot. On the surface are red painted phoenix, cloud, and geometric patterns. On the bottom, the needle-incised

characters “Yuyang 漁陽” are often seen. The diameters of the basins vary from 26 to 28.8cm, and the heights range from 8 to 9.2cm (Figure 21).

j. Armrests. A total of three wooden arm rests of two types are found. Two of them are rectangular in shape, with short hooped legs. Sample D:66 is 92.8cm long, 11.8cm wide and 9cm high. The other (B:385) is Π -shaped; it is 63cm long, 11.2cm wide, and 36.5cm high (Figures 17:3, 17:4).

k. Ink-stone case (C:74). The square-shaped case has a chamfered top; a round ink-stone was kept inside. The case is 19.5cm long, 18.5cm wide and 12.4cm high (Figure 22).

l. Seat (C:73). The oval-shaped wooden seat has a square mortise in the middle, which is jointed with an hourglass-shaped base. It is 34.6cm long, 14.8cm wide and 12cm high (Figure 23).

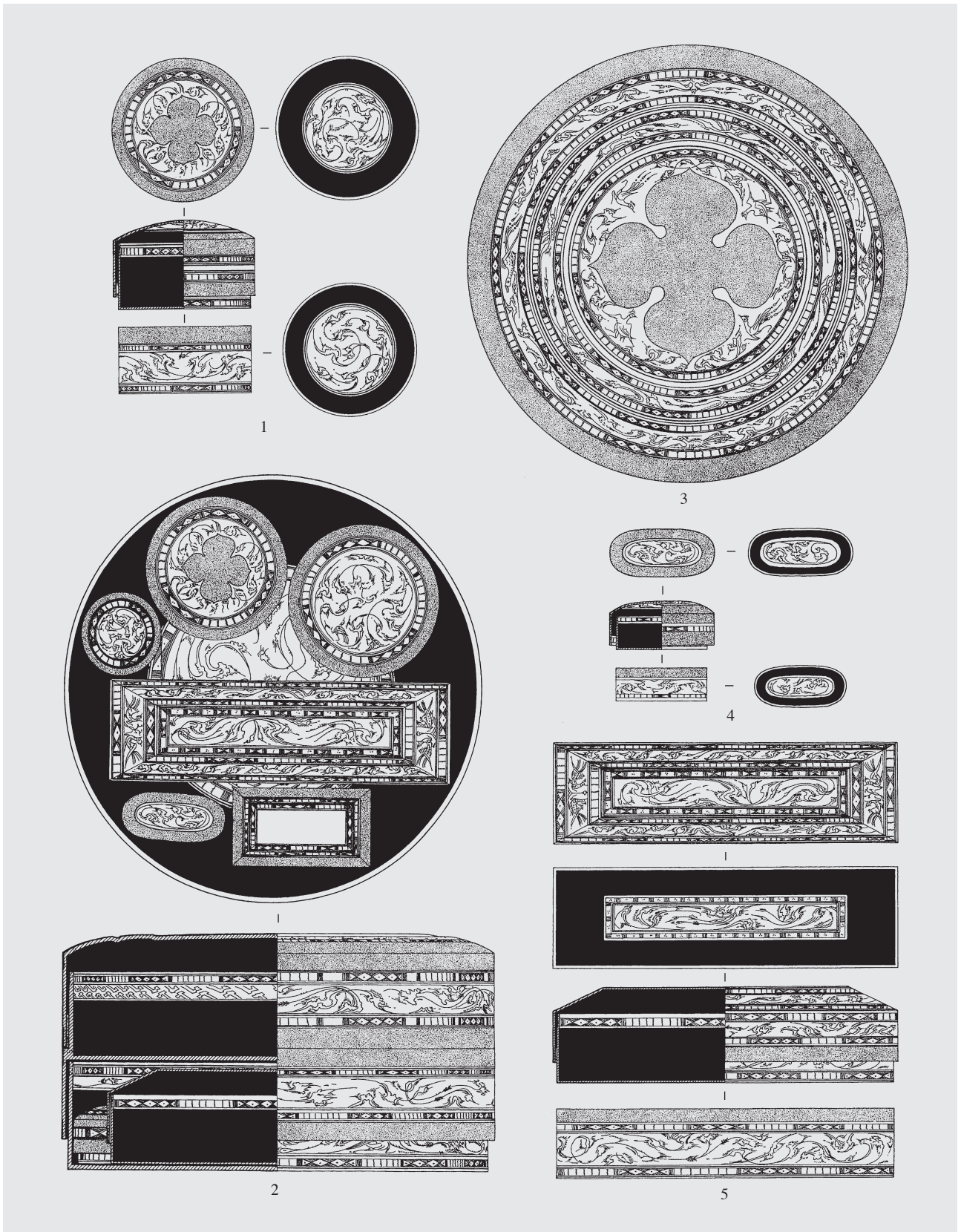


Figure 8 Double-tiered *lian*-cosmetic case (D:72) and the smaller cases in it.

1. Small round case; 2. the body of the *lian*-cosmetic case; 3. the lid of the *lian*-cosmetic case; 4. small oval case; 5. small rectangular case

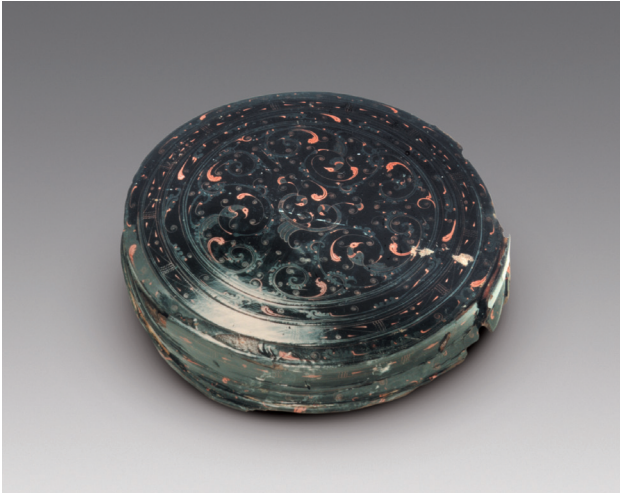


Figure 9 Lacquered lid (C:79).



Figure 10 The cup set and the case (C:184).

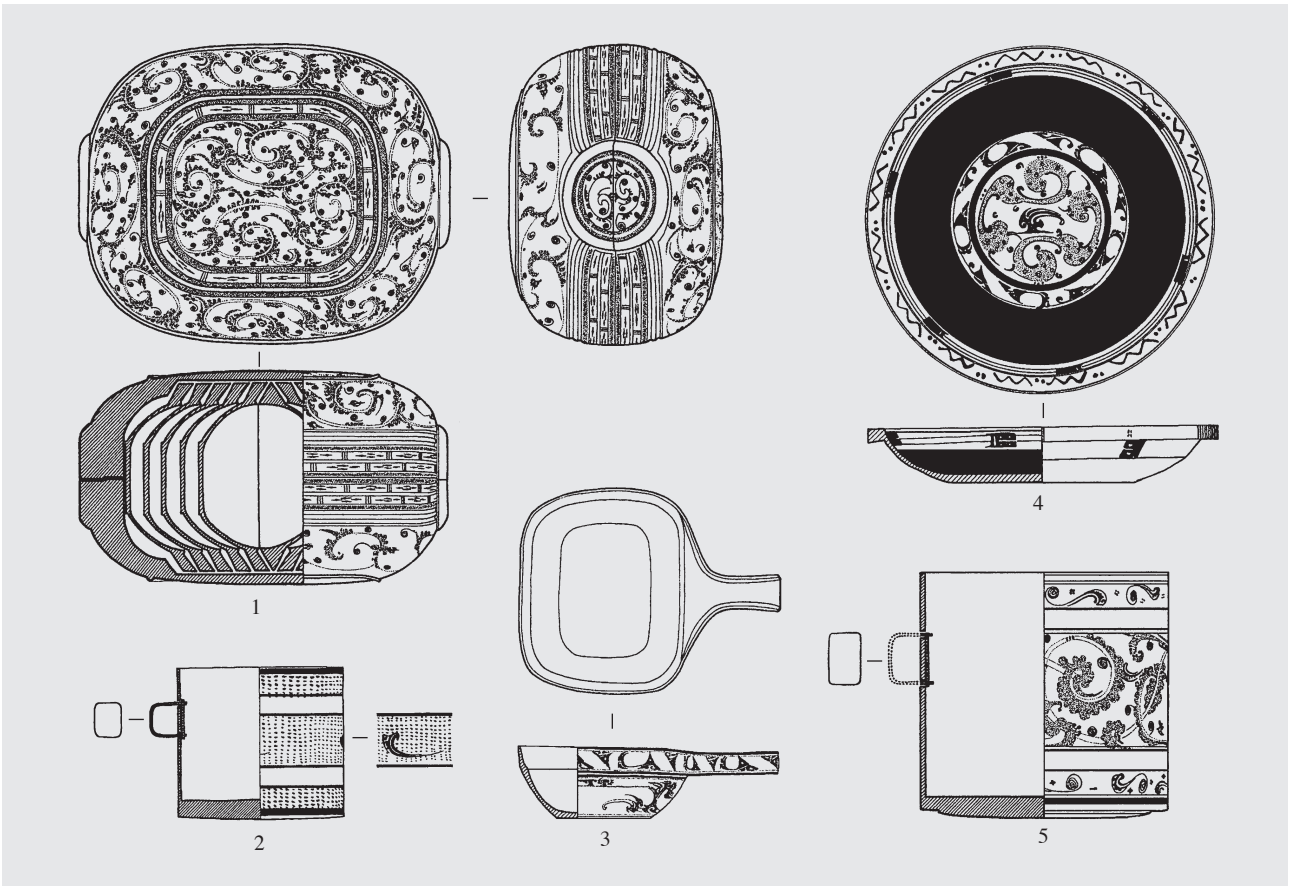


Figure 11 Lacquer wares.

1. the encased cup set (C:184); 2. *zhi*-wine vessel, type I (B:67); 3. *yi*-pourer (B:194); 4. plate, type II (C:86-1); 5. *zhi*-wine vessel, type II (A:39)

m. *Se* 瑟 -zithers. Four rectangular wooden zithers are all similar in shape. Two have plain surfaces; the other two are ornamented. Sample D:120 has 25 strings and four frets. Around the rim are inlaid openwork designs of

animals and geometric patterns. In the center is a dragon design inlaid with turquoise. This zither is 124.4cm long, 41.6cm wide and 11.6cm high (Figures 24:1 and 25). Sample D:121 is decorated with curling cloud patterns. It

is 123.6cm long, 39.6cm wide and 10.2cm high (Figure 24:2).

n. *Zhu* 筑 -musical instruments (a hybrid of percussion and stringed musical instruments). Each of the three of them is carved out of a single piece of wood. A *zhu* has a hollow body with a thin board stuck to the bottom. The sound box is slightly flared on both sides. On C:71, the exterior of the sound box displays a shallowly carved flying dragon painted red. This *zhu* is 93.5cm long, 8.4cm wide and 13cm high. Sample D:107 has a black exterior. It is 117.4cm long, 7.2cm wide and 16cm high. Sample C:71 is 141cm long, 8.2cm wide, and 16cm high (Figures 24:3, 24:4, 26 and 27).

o. *Liubo* boards. Two square *liubo* game boards are found in this tomb. Sample C:108 is 42.2 by 42.2cm, and 4cm high.

p. Dice. Two dices are found in the tomb (C:34 and C:104). The octadecahedron wooden dices are lacquered black with carved and red painted characters in seal script. The numbers “one” to “sixteen” are carved one each on sixteen of the eighteen faces. The remaining two faces bear the inscriptions “*jiu lai* 酒來 (wine comes)” and “*you* 駢 (meaning unknown)”. Their diameters are both 5.2cm (Figure 28).

q. Standing figurines. The 118 figurines are all carved out of single wood blocks. Sample E:27 is 79.2cm tall and 15cm wide.

4. In addition there are several ivory and rhino horn artifacts, most of them damaged. The ivories are 75 to 94cm long, and the rhino horn pieces are 21 to 24cm long.

5. Wooden tablets, tags and a clay seal case. Over 100 wooden tablets, tags and a clay seal case are found in this tomb. One wooden tablet (E:47), which is 17cm long (Figure 29), has four lines of characters written with ink in the *lishu* (clerical script) style: “The gifts from His Majesty: three blue jade *bi*-discs, eleven bolts of purple *zeng* (silk fabric), nine bolts of fragrant silk (陛下所以贈物 / 青璧三, 紺繒 / 十一匹, 薰繒九 / 匹).” Wooden tablet C:34-1, which is 9.7cm long (Figure 30), has nine lines of writing: “Plain silk, unlined white damask silk jackets, fourty-five (pieces);

lined dark damask silk skirts and silk garments, four sets; red-lined dark damask loincloth, two; white damask skirts, two; jacquard woven skirt, one; white damask, plain silk skirts, six; skirts made of plain silk, silk and unlined plain



Figure 12 The round case (A:70).

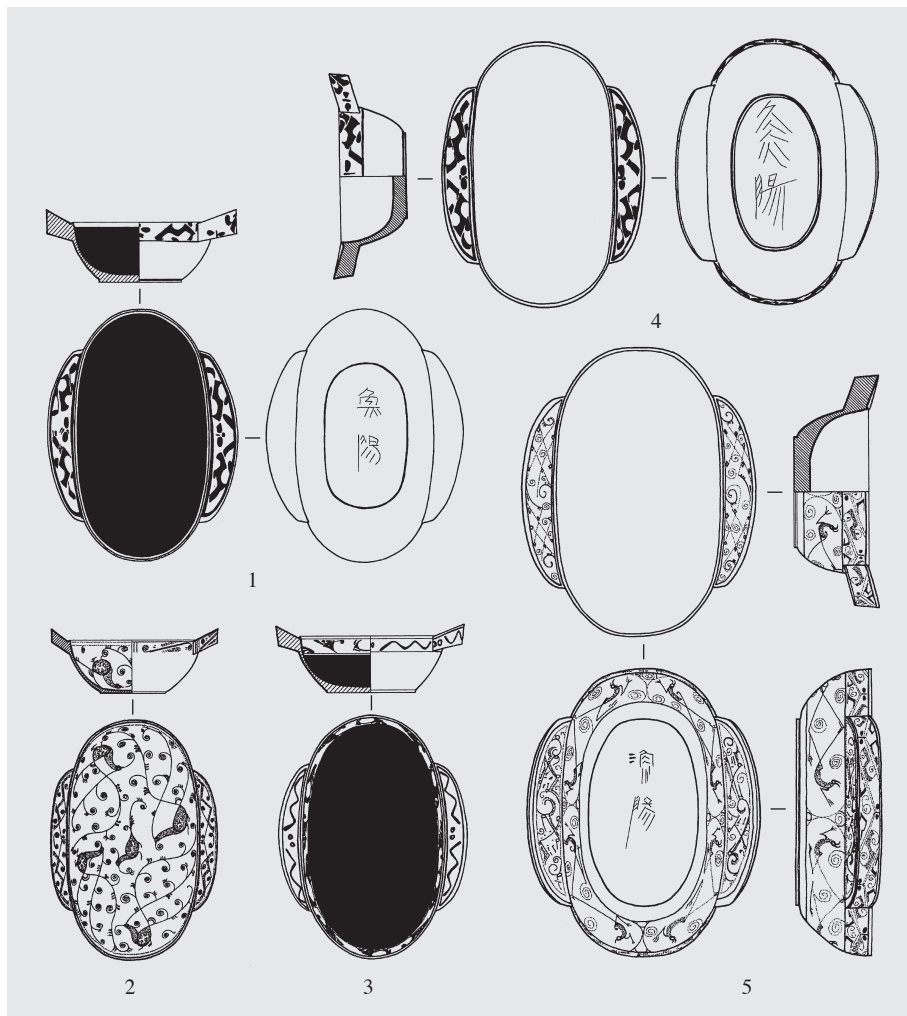


Figure 13 Lacquered eared cups.

1 and 4. type III (B:689-2 and B:689-1); 2. type I (C:184:1); 3. type IV (B:646-1); 5. type II (B:704-1)



Figure 14 Eared cup, type II (B:704-1).



Figure 15 Eared cup, type IV (B:689-6).



Figure 16 Lacquered plate, type II (C:86-1).

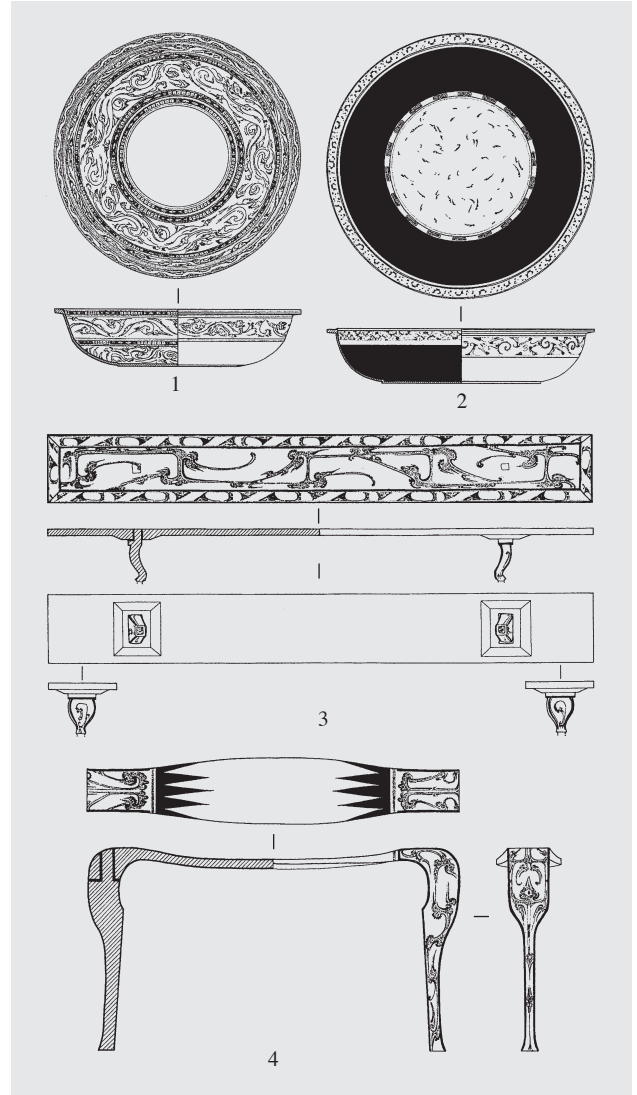


Figure 17 Lacquer wares.

1 and 2. basins (B:702-1 and B:702-2); 3. armrest, type I (D:66); 4. armrest, type II (B:385)



Figure 18 Lacquered yi-pourer (B:194).



Figure 19 Lacquered *zhi*-wine vessel, type I (B:67).



Figure 20 Lacquered *zhi*-wine vessel, type II (A:39).



Figure 22 Lacquered ink-stone case (C:74).

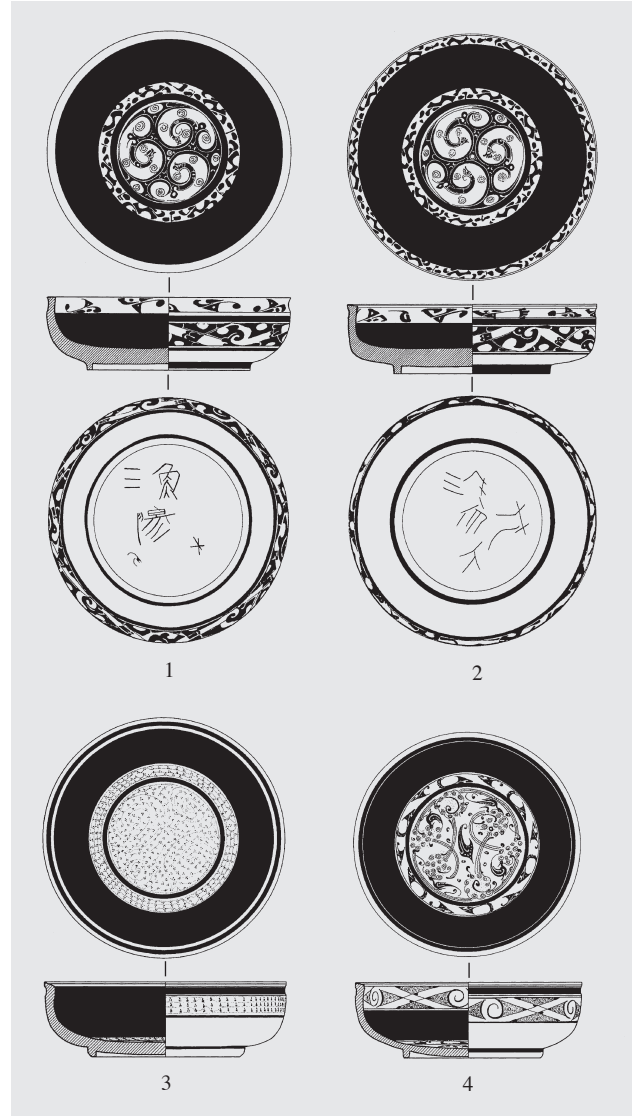


Figure 21 Lacquered *yu*-washbowls.

1 and 2. type I (A:95 and B:75); 3 and 4. type II (B:85 and B:59-1)



Figure 23 Lacquered seat (C:73).

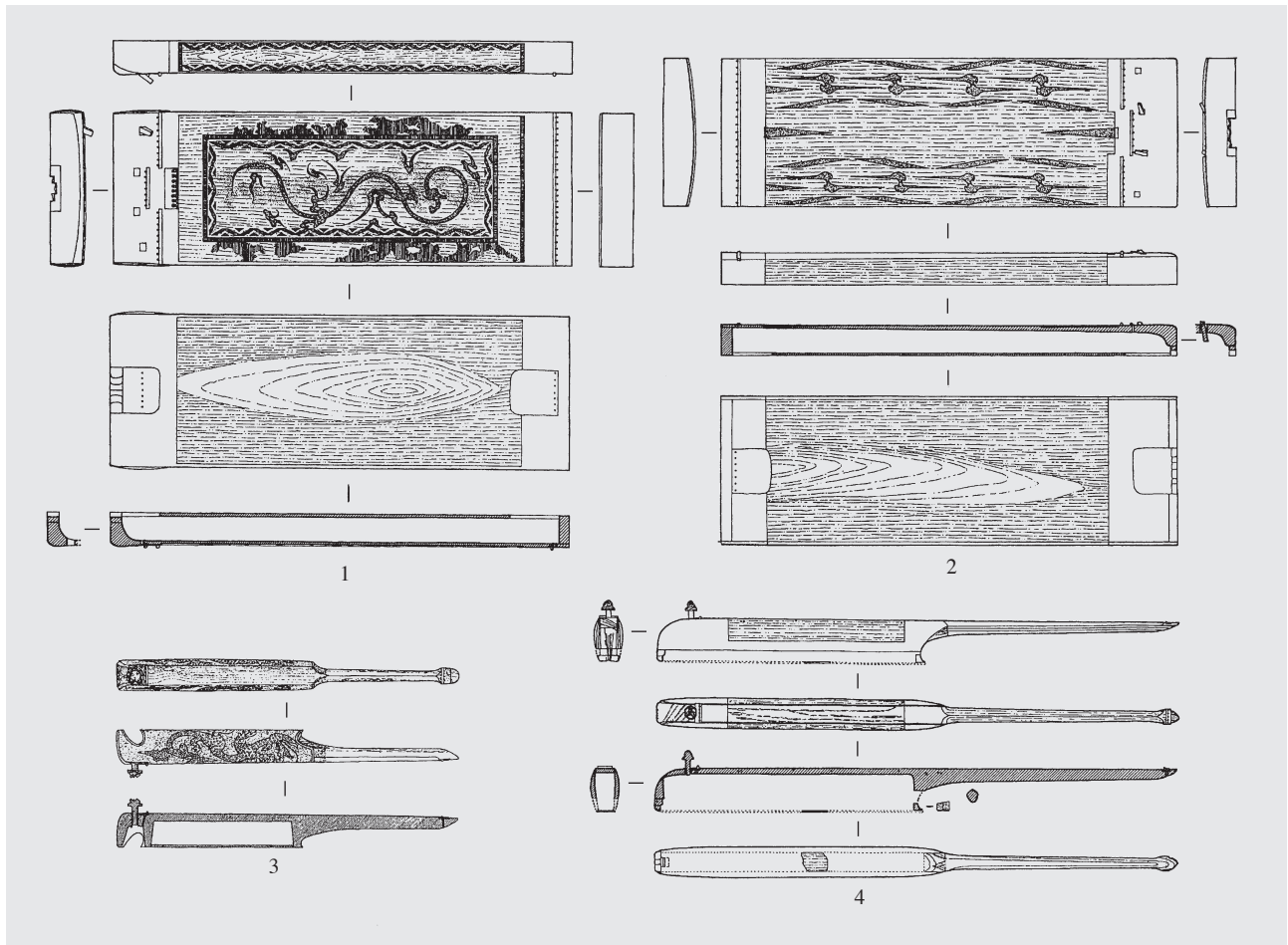


Figure 24 Musical instruments.

1 and 2. *se*-zithers (D:120 and D:121); 3 and 4. *zhu*-musical instruments (C:71 and C:72)



Figure 25 *Se*-zither (D:120).



Figure 26 *Zhu*-musical instrument (C:71).

silk, sixty-six; X (smeared) made of plain cloth, plain silk and silk, twenty; plain straight skirts, seven; silk floss filled silk underwear, one: a total of one hundred and fifty-five items. Checked. The eleventh (素練, 白綺绪布禪襦 卅五, 青綺 / 複裯裙, 練禪前裘四, 青 / 綺, 紅複要衣二, 白綺禪紗 / 裙二, 緹合裙一, 白綺, 素禪裯 / 裙六, 練, 帛, 素禪裙六十六, 布 / 素, 練, 帛禪口廿, 素禪裯直裙 / 七,

帛綿蔽膝一. 凡百五十五. 故. / 第十一.)”

Tags. Sample C:V5, which is 5.9cm long (Figure 31), has the written in black ink: “*ren qian* (unknown), five pieces [人潛 (璿) 五枚].”

The wooden clay seal box (D:98), which is 5cm long, 3cm wide and 1.2cm high, still has the clay seal in it. On the clay seal the four characters “*Changsha hou fu* 长沙



Figure 27 Zhu-musical instrument (D:107).



Figure 28 Lacquered wooden dices (C:34 and C:104).



Figure 29 Wooden tablet (E:47).



Figure 30 Wooden tablet (C:34-1).



Figure 31 Wooden tag (C:V5).

后府 (Changsha vassal queen's mansion)" are impressed in *zhuan* (seal script) style.

7. Potteries, including ritual vessels, vessels for daily use and animal figurines.

Conclusion

Despite having been robbed for three times, the Yuyang Tomb is still fairly intact. Archaeologists found over 3000 pieces of artifacts at the site. The tomb was built with the *ticou* system, which consists of several chambers referred to by historic literatures as the “*zigong* 梓宫 (coffins made of catalpa)”, “*bianfang* 便房 (living room),” *huangchang ticou* 黄肠题凑 and “*外藏椁* (outer storage chambers).” During the Han Dynasty, the use of this burial system was restricted to emperors and princes. Based on the unearthed seals inscribed “*Changsha hou fu*” and the wooden tablets inscribed “gifts from His Majesty” and “the

king bestowed,” we can compare the Yuyang tomb to Cao Zhuan's tomb at Doubi Hill and the No. 1 Western Han tomb at Xiangbizui, both located nearby, and conclude that the Yuyang Tomb belonged to a vassal queen of the Wu clan's Changsha Kingdom who lived and died during the early Western Han (206–157 BCE). Many lacquer wares bear the characters “Yuyang.” According to Han custom, a name inscribed on grave goods is understood as closely associated with the tomb occupant. Some scholars speculate that the occupant was a princess from the Han court, who for political reasons married certain vassal king of Changsha, and that Yuyang was the name of her estate. Since inscriptions and other materials provide no definitive date for the Yuyang Tomb, comparison of the artifacts found within it to the dated Western Han tombs and artifacts provides the only method to determine the date of the Yuyang tomb. The style and form of the pottery and lacquer objects from the Yuyang tomb are similar

to those found in No. 1 and No. 3 tombs at Mawangdui, and in the tomb of Wu Yang, the Yuanling Marquis. The *Hanshu* (the Book of Han) records that in the fifth year of Emperor Gaozu (202 BCE), the emperor “reassigned Wu Rui, the King of Hengshan, to Changsha to become King of Changsha. His capital was at Linxiang.” In 157 BCE, the kingdom disappeared and its territories were returned to the imperial realm because the passed away king had no heir. Historical sources suggest that the Yuyang tomb can be dated to no earlier than the reign of Emperor Wendi (179–157 BCE) and no later than the early years of the reign of Emperor Jingdi (157–141 BCE).

It is worth mentioning that more than 20 musical instruments were found in the Yuyang tomb, including real instruments as well as models. They included the *se-zither*, *zhu*, *zheng-zither*, panpipes and chime stones. Particularly notable are the three relatively well-preserved five-stringed *zhu*-hybrid of percussion and stringed instruments. These are all important archaeological discoveries.

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Postscript

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