

# The excavation of the mound tombs of the Han Dynasty at Nanping Town, Changde City, Hunan in 2010–2011

## Changde Museum

**Keywords:** Burial mounds (funerary structures)–Han Dynasty; family cemeteries; Nanping (Changde, Hunan).

## Abstract

In 2010 and 2011, the Archaeology Department of Changde Museum excavated five mounds of a family cemetery of the Han Dynasty, from which 22 earthen shaft pit tombs were recovered. Among these mounds, one contained only one tomb, the occupant of which was the *cheng* (deputy magistrate) of Chanling District, Wuling Commandery of the Western Han Dynasty; the other mounds all contained multiple tombs, which were the family cemeteries. All of the tombs were buried in the artificial earthen mounds, each of which was divided into graveyards built of gray clay to arrange the tombs. All of the tombs had wooden receptacles. Different mounds showed different family burial customs, which were joint tombs of couples in the same grave and joint tombs of couples in separate graves. The grave goods included bronzes, iron objects, jades, pottery wares, celadon wares, talc objects, glass objects, etc., 658 pieces (sets) in total. The seals unearthed from these tombs showed that their occupants were local officials living in the mid Western Han through the Xin (Wang Mang Interregnum) and early Eastern Han Dynasties.

## A brief introduction of the cemeteries

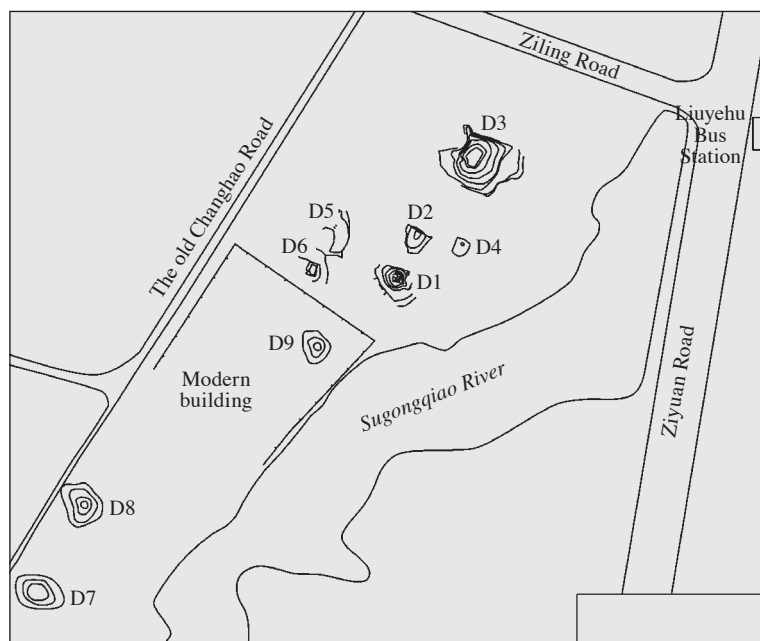
Nanping is located to the north of Changde City seat, Hunan Province, lying 2.5km to the north of Linyuan City Site of the Warring-States Period to the Han Dynasty. In March 2010 through June 2011, the Archaeology Department of Changde Museum conducted there the excavation of five mounds (numbered as D1 through D3, D7 and D8), among which D1 and D3 are in a good condition on the whole while D7 and D8 had been damaged by recent construction works. The five mounds are distributed roughly in two parallel rows in north-south orientation. D1 is situated in the middle, 70m to the northwest of the Sugongqiao River, 40m to the southwest of D2, 120m apart from D3, and 360m to the northeast of D8 (Figure 1). All these mounds contain earthen pit tombs, which total 22; they differ from each other in the formation processes of the mounds and artificial earthen terraces and in the number of the tombs inside each mound.

## Structure of the mounds and artificial earthen terraces

1. Mound D1 had been looted many times before the present excavation, but its original shape was roughly preserved intact in a circular plan. It measures 32m in diameter at the bottom and 4.8m in height and stands independently, containing only one tomb. The mound and artificial earthen terrace consist of nine layers altogether.

The first layer is the surface soil, measuring 5–120cm in thickness. The fifth layer is grayish-yellow soil mixed with pale gray soil. The structure is firm, and the tomb D1M2 is opened beneath this layer. Such soil occurred also in the north and east of the earlier-built artificial earthen terrace. It must be the first layer of the mound piled up after the entombment. The thickness of this layer measures 5–95cm. The sixth layer must be the first layer of the artificial earthen terrace. It is 5–120cm thick. The seventh to ninth layers are the second to fourth layers of the artificial earthen terrace. Beneath the ninth layer is the primary soil (Figure 2).

2. Mound D2 has an irregular semicircular plan. It measures 37m in maximum bottom diameter and 4m in height, and contains several tombs. Its stratigraphy has become indistinct owing to the intrusion of a brick-



**Figure 1** General plan of the excavated mounds.

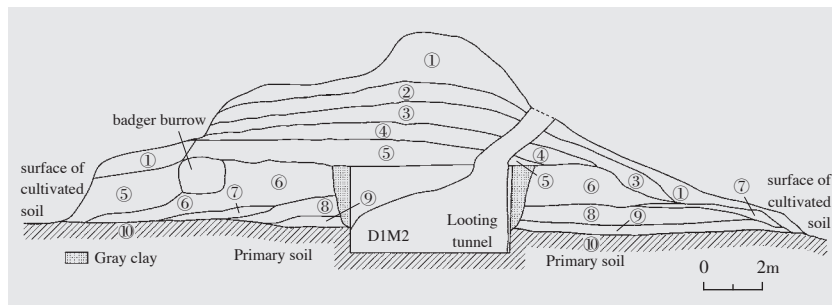
chamber tomb and the damage of long-time cultivation, but the lower part of the artificial earthen terrace can be divided into three layers. The terrace height could not be measured; and whether in the terrace there were light gray clay-filled graveyard borders (zhaoyu 兆域) is unclear. Outside the terrace are traces of drains built of semi-cylindrical and flat tiles.

3. Mound D3 comes first in the scale of building, the clearness of building structure, the number of remaining tombs, the condition of preservation, and the richness of unearthed objects. It is also quite well known as to the date of its building, as well as the names and statues of the occupants. It has a roughly round plan, and measures 50m in bottom diameter, 18m in summit diameter, about 7m in the height from the primary soil to the top and about 4000sq m in the total area of the cemetery (Figures 3 and 4).

Inner and outer drainage system. In the southwestern and southeastern corners, there remain two ponds that might have resulted from the earth quarrying for building the mound. In the south, west and north of the periphery, excavation revealed drain ditches built of semi-cylindrical tiles and flat tiles decorated with thick cord pattern and pebbles. The southern ditch slopes down from the west to the east and leads to the pond in the southeastern corner. Surrounded by the ditches, the whole mound became a closed cemetery. In the middle of this area, a covered trunk drain ditch (D3G1) runs from the west to the east and intrudes into the primary soil. Thus the covered and open ditches form a complete drainage system for the cemetery.

The outer drains. They are distributed in the southern, western and northern periphery of mound D3; the eastern situation is unclear owing to disturbance. The discovered ditches differ in width and depth. Among them three are in the west, and two in the south and north respectively.

The three western ditches (D3G2-4) run roughly parallel from the northeast to the southwest. D3G2 is shaped like an elongate rectangle and measures 1.4m wide at the top, 0.5m wide at bottom, and 0.6–0.8m in depth. The walls and bottom are built of pebbles and semi-cylindrical and flat tiles. Judged by its building material and the condition of ditch D3G1, D3G2 was originally



**Figure 2** Structure of mound D1 and section of tomb D1M2.

1. Surface soil; 2. Yellowish mottled soil; 3. Yellow mottled soil; 4. Grayish-yellow mottled soil; 5. Light gray and grayish-yellow soil; 6. Dark grayish-brown and grayish yellowish-brown soil; 7. Livid grayish-brown soil; 8. Yellowish-gray and grayish-brown soil; 9. Light grayish-brown and yellowish-gray soil.



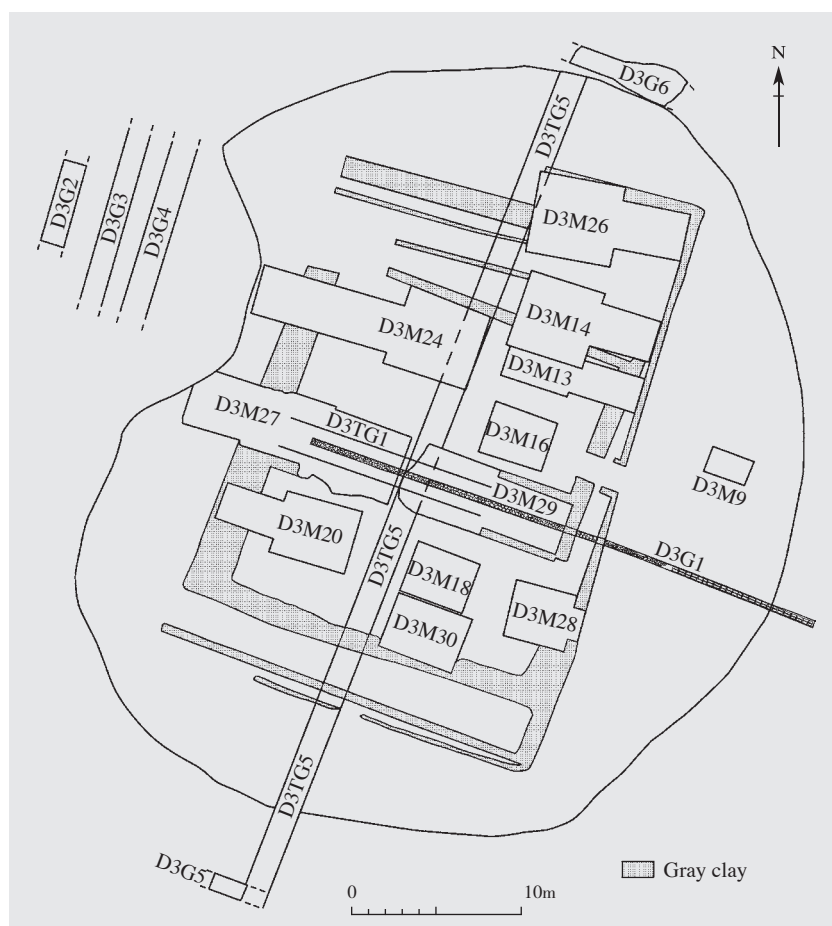
**Figure 3** Artificial earthen terrace and tombs in mound D3 (SW-NE).

built as a covered ditch. It stretches from the south down to the north with a slope of about  $4^{\circ}$ .

D3G3 and D3G4 are open ditches built after the abandonment of D3G2. D3G3 is 1.3m wide and 0.35m deep; D3G4 measures 1.55m wide and 0.4m deep.

The southern ditch (D3G5) lies at the south of the mound. It is long and narrow, has a U-shaped bottom and stretches downward from the west to the east with a slope of  $4^{\circ}$ . The top width measures 1.05m wide and the depth, 0.5m.

The northern ditch (D3G6) lies at the north of the mound. The mouth is irregular in shape with the western



**Figure 4** Distribution of the tombs, drain ditches and gray clay-filled graveyard borders in Mound D3.

section narrower than the eastern one, and the bottom is U-shaped. The width measures 1.2–2.3m, the depth 0.45–1.45m. The inside contains a few semi-cylindrical and flat tiles and light gray bricks.

The inner covered ditch (D3G1) stretches in the middle of the mound, passing through the center of the main grave D3M27 and that of tomb D3M29, intruding the primary soil in a west-east direction and leading to the outside of the mound. It is built of pebbles and semi-cylindrical and flat tiles, and measures 31.2m in length, 0.4–0.5m in width and 0.9–1.6m in depth. The west section measures 18.3m in length and is entirely built of two courses of pebbles 8–25cm in size. The middle section is built of flat tiles and measures 2.4m in length. In the eastern part, a 2.3m long section is built of two courses of edge-to-edge laid semi-cylindrical tiles. This covered ditch must have been accomplished before the building of the artificial earthen terrace but after the locating and planning of the cemetery. It stretches downward from the west to the east with a slope of about 4°.

In the tomb D3M27 there is another draining facility, which attaches to the ditch D3G1. This is a square pebble-built cesspool, which forms a  $\Phi$ -shaped plan together

with the covered trunk ditch.

Inner artificial earthen terrace and light gray clay-filled graveyard borders. In the course of building the artificial earthen terrace, light gray clay-filled graveyard borders (*zhao* 兆域) were built up in the mound. There were at least 10 borders in east-west orientation, and three ones in north-south orientation are extant. They are varied in width, the wider measure 1–2.5m; the narrower 0.2–0.5m. These borders were built simultaneously with the ground-leveling for the mound bottom and the building of the artificial earthen terraces. Seen from the cross-section, the light gray clay layers sandwich yellow soil layers. In height, all the gray clay-filled graveyard borders are identical with the artificial earthen terrace. During the excavation, when the grave opening was revealed with the removing of the earthen mound, the gray clay-filled graveyard borders were also brought to light.

Artificial earthen terraces. In the mound D3, the structure of the mound above the grave opening has not been made clear, but within a height of 1.7–2m, the artificially piled soil from the grave opening to the primary soil surface can be divided into four layers, which consist of several sub-layers each. It shows that a relatively

high plot was chosen and leveled. Then in the middle area, a covered trunk ditch was built of pebbles, semi-cylindrical tiles and flat tiles with a west-east slope. Upon these works the artificial earthen terrace was begun to be built, the main grave location was located beforehand. When the main tomb occupant was to be buried, the grave was lined with wooden frame, in which light gray clay was filled in, and the building of the grave opening and passage followed closely. For the other burials, the interment should be carried out by digging their graves in the already finished artificial earthen terrace. The grave depth was decided according to the need. Some tomb bottoms were higher than the terrace bottom, while the other reached a depth of 0.4–3.5cm of the primary soil (Figure 5).

4. Mound D7 was damaged for many times, so its height and whether there have been outer covered drainages have become unfathomable mysteries. It measures 2m in remaining height. After removing the upper disturbed layer, the remained part of the original mound has a length of 24m, a width of 18m and a height of 0.85m. As known through a trial sectioning, the remaining earthen terrace consists of three layers. Traces



of gray clay-filled graveyard borders were also found. In structure they are almost exactly the same as those under the mound D3.

5. Mound D8 had been occupied by villagers' dwellings before excavation. No data about its height and the inside covered drainage can be gathered. Before excavation it had a height of 1.5m. The revealed remains measure 26m in diameter at the largest place and 0.82m in height. In structure D8 is roughly the same as the other mounds.

### Tombs in the artificial earthen terraces within the mounds

In the mound D1, an earthen pit tomb (D1M2) was discovered to have been furnished with a shaft passage. This is the only one-mound one-tomb barrow among the excavated cemeteries. It is located in the center of the mound with the tomb passage furnished in the south in the orientation of 210°.

Mound D2 was discovered to contain two earthen pit tombs (D2M7 and D2M11) and a brick-chamber tomb (D2M1) of the early Eastern Han Dynasty. Judged by D2M1's location in the center of the existing mound, the original tombs in mound D2 must have been partly damaged.

Mound D3 was discovered to cover 12 earthen pit tombs. D3M9 is located to the east of the gray clay-filled graveyard border, while the rest 11 tombs are roughly arranged in two rows in north-south direction; eight of them had a tomb passage. The west row has three tombs (D3M24, D3M27 and D3M20 forming a north-south row), whose passages point to the west. D3M24 has long ramp passage; D3M27 has a ramp-and-vertical passage, and D3M20 has a vertical shaft passage. In the east, nine tombs are lined from the north to south. Of them five have passages, all pointing to the east. In this mound only D3M13 have been intruded by D3M14 (Figure 4).

The eight tombs with passage have an entrance sealing structure each. It is built up by fitting gray clay and located between the passage and the grave. The thickness measures 0.2–0.3m, the height is identical with that of the grave top, and the length is generally the same as the width of the wall-lined grave. The entrance seal stretches into the grave by 0.7–1.5m. In the building course, the light gray clay of the entrance seal was piled up simultaneously with the refilling of the grave, so part of the fills of the two spaces were alternately superimposed upon each other. Most of the entrance seals are built of light gray clay and yellow soil, only in D3M24 there remains a light gray clay entrance seal built upon



Figure 5 Distribution of the tombs in mound D3 (Top is south).

blackish-gray brick wall 1.2 high.

The receptacles in the 12 graves of this mound are all wood-structured. Tomb D3M27 and D3M24 contain nested double chamber and double coffin; D3M29 and D3M26 are both furnished with a double chamber and a single coffin; the rest eight tombs are each furnished with a single chamber and a single coffin. Judged by the traces of the wooden furniture and the position of the grave goods, the tomb occupants are buried with the head pointing to the west, at an orientation of about 285°.

Apart from D3M9, the stratigraphical position of whose opening is unknown because it has been damaged before the excavation, the graves were all opened in the same layer. In a good many cases, when the grave opening was defined, the gray clay-filled graveyard borders were used as borders between tombs. Sometimes, as the width of the grave exceeded the distance between the original graveyard borders, the involved border(s) had to be dug away for enlarging the space. That is why generally no intrusion relationship happened between tombs, although they were close to each other. The only exception was one pair of tombs; their intrusion might have been caused by the fact that the tomb occupants were a married couple, who were entombed at different times as a joint burial under the same mound but in separate graves. The 12 tombs differ from each other in bottom depth.

The tomb (D3M27) in the center of the mound is that of Liao Fu, the *langzhongling* (郎中令, chamberlain for



**Figure 6** Tombs in mound D8 (N–S).

attendants) of the Changsha Feudatory Kingdom, who was entombed probably between 118–104 BCE. By the end of the Xin Dynasty (Wang Mang Interregnum), at least 12 tombs were built in this mound.

Mound D7 contains three tombs (D7M3–M5). The traces of the burial receptacles showed that each of them must have been a married couple's joint burial in the same mound and the same grave.

Mound D8 contains four tombs (D8M2–M4 and M7). D8M3 is the main tomb in this mound. A long shaft passage stretches out from its southern side, and the whole grave is in a 凸-shaped plan (Figure 6). Among the grave goods is a bronze seal with turtle-shaped knob and the inscription “Zhao Xuanyou's Seal 赵玄友印.” It indicates that the name of the tomb occupant was Zhao Xuanyou. The traces of the burial receptacle show that this tomb must have been the joint burial of Zhao and his wife in the same mound and the same grave.

The presently reported 22 tombs in five mounds yielded 658 pieces/sets of articles in total. There are common pottery and hard pottery wares, brown-glazed hard pottery wares, celadon wares, bronzes, iron objects, lacquered wooden objects, jades, talc artifacts, glassware, etc. Below will be a description of tomb D3M27 and the grave goods unearthed from there.

### D3M27

1. The tomb structure. This is a rectangular earthen pit grave with a ramp-and-shaft passage in a “凸”-shaped general plan and an orientation of 280°. The opening is 5m below the top of the mound and measures 5.5m long and 4.2–4.7m wide; the bottom 5.2m long, 3.6m wide and 2.6m deep. The southern and eastern walls are built of irregularly filled gray soil, which evidences that this tomb was built in accordance with the early practice “leaving

blanks for graves while building the burial terrace.”

The tomb passage is located at the west and consists of a ramp and a vertical shaft, which total a length of 7.6m. The ramp measures 4.4m in length, 2.62m in mouth width and 2.46m in bottom width, and has a slope of 17°; the shaft is 3.2m long, 2.63m wide for the mouth and 2.3m wide for the bottom, and as deep as the grave bottom. The entrance sealing structure is built between the grave and the shaft passage. It is as wide as the grave, measuring 4.2–4.7m, and has a thickness of 0.25–0.8m and a height of about 2.6m. The building material is gray soil and gray clay that were alternately filled up course upon course. The gray soil was mixed with some yellow soil. The alternation of the yellow soil containing courses

with the gray clay ones indicates that the entrance sealing structure must have been built simultaneously with the grave fills.

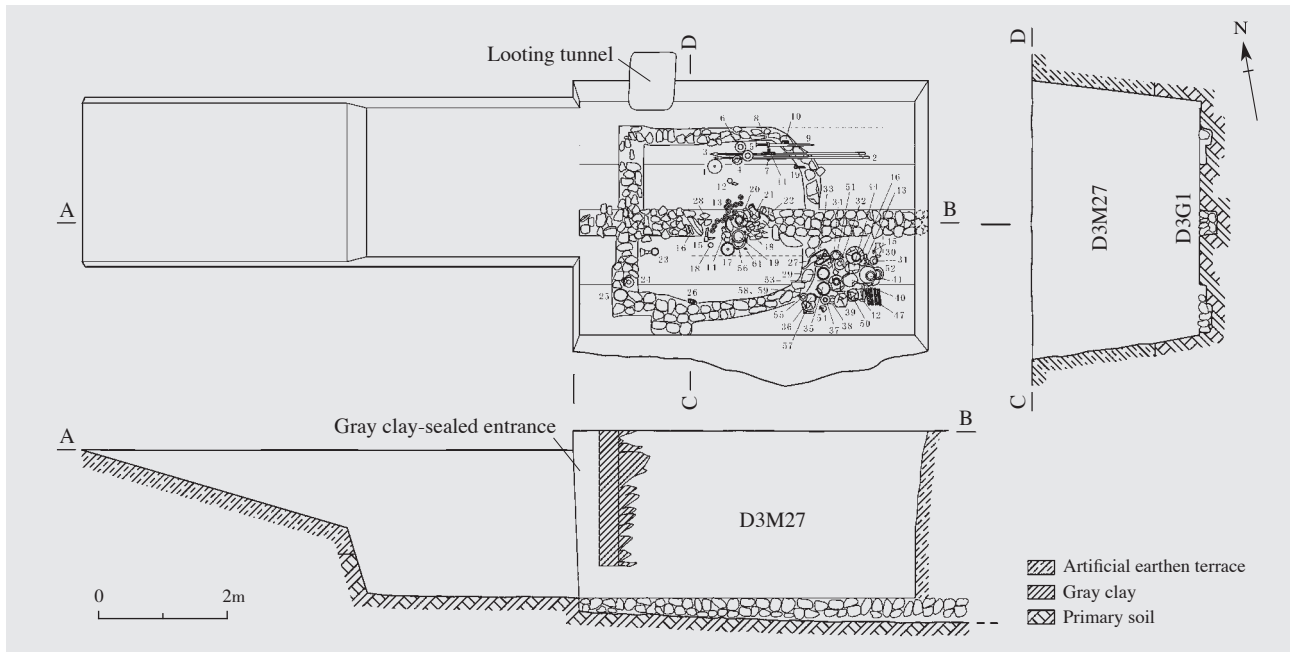
The burial receptacles are clearly shown by the remaining traces. The black lacquer peels on the grave bottom show that there was a double coffin chamber. The outer part is about 1.2m high, but the length and width are indiscernible. The red and black lacquer peels in the north of the grave bottom cover an area of 3 × 1.96m. Its size tells that there must have been at least two coffins. The burial position of the tomb occupant is unknown because the skeleton has rotten away.

In the middle of the grave, a covered trunk drain ditch (D3G1) passes through the grave bottom from west to east and then through the mound D3M29, and finally stretches out of the mound. In the range of the two tombs, this trunk drain is built of pebbles that form two or three courses as the bottom and top. It measures 0.4–0.5m in width and has an eastward slope of about 4°. In the grave bottom, there is a square pebble trough-shaped drainage, forming a Φ-shaped plan together with the passing-over trunk drain. This is the only case of this type of drainage facility among the Nanping mounded cemeteries.

On the grave bottom, there are two joist grooves, either measuring 5.2m in length, 0.3m in width and 0.1–0.2m in depth. The earthen fill in the grave is roughly the same as that in the mound; the earth was quarried outside the cemetery. On the grave bottom are some charcoal and white clay, the latter is 5–15cm thick. In the northwestern corner of the tomb, there remains a looting tunnel, which, however, did not reach the grave (Figures 7 and 8).

2. Unearthed objects, 59 pieces/sets in total. They are made of common pottery, hard pottery, celadon, bronze, iron, talc, clay, glass, etc.

12 pottery wares are unearthed. In type there are the *ding*-tripod, pot, *fang*-square wine jar, stove and well



**Figure 7** Plan and sections of tomb M27 in mound D3.

1 and 28. Talc *bi*-discs; 2 and 3. Bronze spearheads; 4–6. Glass *bi*-discs; 7. Talc seal; 8. Bronze seal; 9. bronze sword; 10. Glass *wei*-sword scabbard slide; 11. Bronze *wuzhu* coin; 12. Iron coffin nail ring; 13. Clay simulated gold bullion; 14 and 48. Celadon pots; 15 and 16. Iron halberds; 17. Grass-leaf pattern bronze mirror; 18 and 20. Bronze pots; 19 and 56. Bronze *ding*-tripods; 21 and 22. Bronze *fang*-square wine jars; 23. Talc lamp; 24. Pottery censer; 25. Bronze *xi*-basin; 26. Bronze crossbow trigger mechanism; 27. Talc ladle; 29. Talc box; 30 and 31. Talc pots; 32. Iron *fu*-cauldron; 33. Pottery stove model; 34, 38, 44 and 57. Pottery pots; 35 and 51. Pottery *ding*-tripods; 36. Pottery well model; 37, 39–41, 46, 50, 52 and 53. Hard pottery jars; 42 and 43. Pottery *fang*-square wine jars; 45. Gilt bronze ring; 47. Clay *wuzhu* coin; 49. Bronze knife with ring-shaped pommel; 54. Gilt bronze ornamental plate; 55. Pottery wine warmer; 58 and 59. Gilt bronze capped nails.

models, wine warmer and censer.

The *ding*-tripods, two pieces. They are gray clay wares and are identical in form and size. Either has a curved lid with three perforated erect knobs. The mouth is contract, the belly curved, the bottom round and cabriole legs. Below the rim are symmetrically-attached ears. On the belly is a circle of sunken bowstring pattern. D3M27:35 measures 18.4cm in mouth diameter and 19.6cm in total height (Figures 9:5 and 10).

Pots, four pieces. They are roughly the same in form and size. Each has a curved lid. The body consists of a dish-shaped mouth, a contract neck, a swollen belly, two symmetrically attached doorknocker-shaped handles and a ring foot. The rim, shoulders and belly bear two rings of sunken bowstring pattern each, which sandwich four registers of red-painted double-line triangular patterns. D3M27:38 has a mouth diameter of 12cm and a full height of 35.6cm (Figures 9:2 and 11).

Two *fang*-square wine jars. They are gray clay ware and are the same in shape and size. The lid is shaped like a truncated pyramid; the mouth is slightly flared, the neck contract, the belly deep and curved, and the foot square. On the upper belly are stamped symmetrical doorknocker-

shaped handles. D3M27:42 measures 10.4cm in mouth diameter and 40.4cm in height (Figures 9:4 and 12).

The stove model, one piece (D3M27:33). The top is rectangular and has two cooking holes with a small-sized pottery *fu*-cauldron and a *zeng*-steamer respectively. On the front wall are two semicircular over-ground fire doors; the rear wall is a broad and thick blocking board, which bears two triangular ridges for symbolizing the flues. The whole model measures 22.4cm in length, 12.4cm in width and 12cm in total height (Figures 9:3 and 13).

The well model, one piece (D3M27:36). It has a flared rim, a contract neck, a bending belly and a flat bottom. The upper belly is decorated with double-line diagonal lattice pattern. On the rim are two perforations for installing the well shelter. The inside contains a water-drawing jar. The mouth diameter measures 13.2cm, and the height 12cm (Figures 9:7 and 14).

The wine warmer, one piece (D3M27:55). It is a gray clay ware with a curved lid, a contract mouth, a flat belly and three conical feet. Both the solid spout and long handle are damaged. On the obverse of the handle remains diagonal lattice pattern. The mouth diameter measures 6.6cm; the height 11.4cm (Figure 9:8).





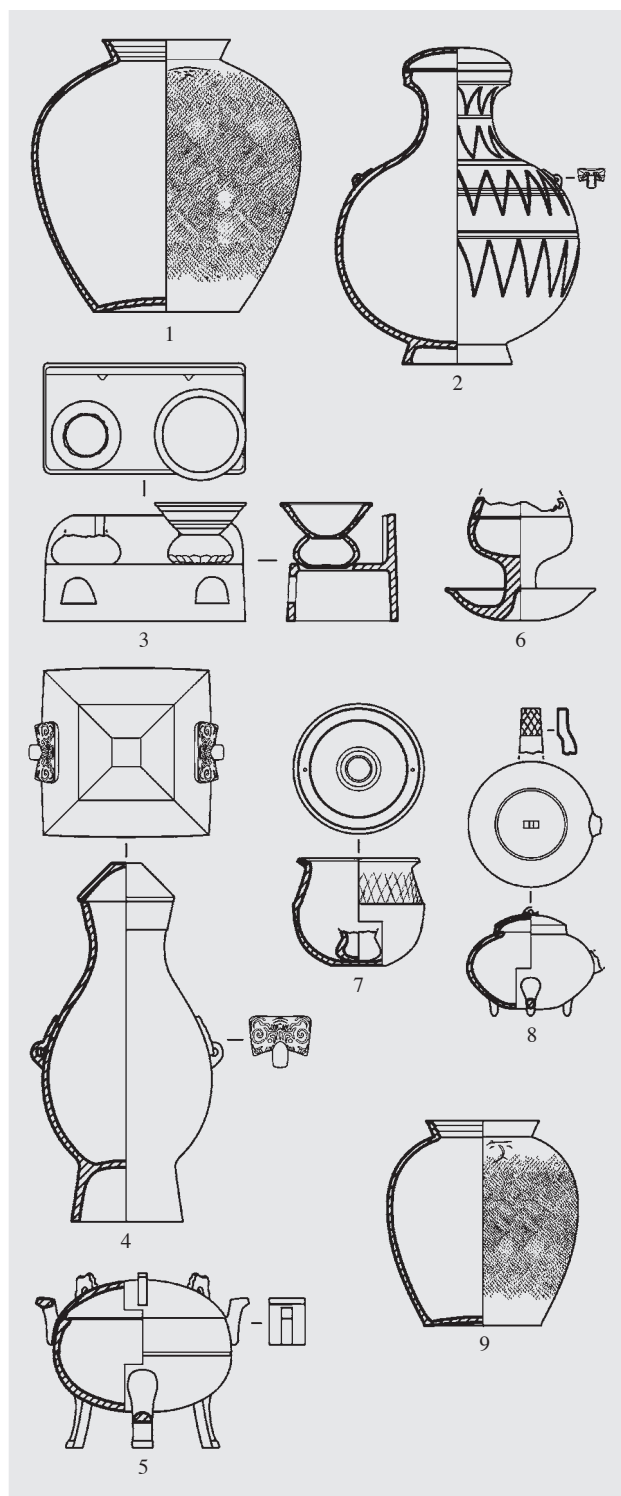
**Figure 8** Tombs M27 and M29 and drain G1 in mound D3 (W-E).

The censer, one piece (D3M27:24). It belongs to gray clay ware and consists of a lid, a burning bowl, a handle and an ash tray. The lid is shaped like undulating peaks, the bowl has a contract mouth and a curved belly, the handle is short and hollow, and the ash tray has a flared mouth and a slanting belly. The mouth diameter measures 10.8cm; the ash tray diameter 16.4cm, and the remaining height 13.8cm (Figure 9:6).

The hard pottery jars, eight pieces. In shape they are roughly the same; in size there are two types. The shoulders and the belly are decorated with impressed coarse checkers, the body is grayish white in color. The shoulders bear incised characters or marks, which are probably the surname “Li 李” for seven pieces and the number “qi 七 (seven or the seventh)” for the other piece.

The large-sized hard pottery jars, two pieces. They belong to hard sandy wares and are the same in shape and size. The body is decorated with checker design from the neck to the lower belly. D3M27:41 has a flared mouth, a contract neck, rounded shoulder, a swelling belly and a concave bottom. The mouth diameter is 14cm, the height 30.6cm (Figure 9:1).

The medium-sized jar, six pieces, all belonging to hard



**Figure 9** Artifacts from tomb M27 in mound D3.

1. Large hard pottery jar (D3M27:41); 2. Pottery pot (D3M27:38); 3. Pottery stove model (D3M27:33); 4. Pottery *fang*-square wine jar (D3M27:42); 5. Pottery *ding*-tripod (D3M27:35); 6. Pottery censer (D3M27:24); 7. Pottery well model (D3M27:36); 8. Pottery wine warmer (D3M27:55); 9. Medium-sized hard pottery jar (D3M27:37).



**Figure 10** Pottery *ding*-tripod (D3M27:35).



**Figure 12** Pottery *fang*-square wine jar (D3M27:42).

sandy ware. They are roughly the same in shape and size. D3M27:37 is light gray and has a flared mouth, a contract neck, swelling shoulder, a curved belly and a concave bottom. The mouth diameter measures 12.4cm, the height 23cm (Figure 9:9).

The celadon pots, two pieces. They are the same in shape and size. D3M27:14 has a flared mouth, a thick neck, a swollen belly and a concave bottom. The shoulders bear two symmetrical rings that are shaped like door-knockers with animal mask design and embossed pattern. The rim, shoulders and belly are each adorned with several circles of concave bow-string pattern. The



**Figure 11** Pottery pot (D3M27:38).



**Figure 13** Pottery stove model (D3M27:33).

neck bears fine dense wave design; the handles have leaf vein pattern. The body is celadon-glazed from the rim to the upper belly, some spots bear traces of shifting glaze. The lower belly and bottom are dark red. The body is hard and short of hygroscopic power. In shape and glaze they obviously differ from usual hard pottery and brown-glazed hard pottery. The mouth diameter is 16.6cm; the height 46.6cm (Figure 15).

The bronzes number 17 pieces/sets. They belong to the mirror, *ding*-tripod, pot, *fang*-square wine jar, *xi*-basin, sword, spearhead, knife with ring-shaped pommel, crossbow, gilt ring, stud and decorated plate and some





Figure 14 Pottery well model (D3M27:36).

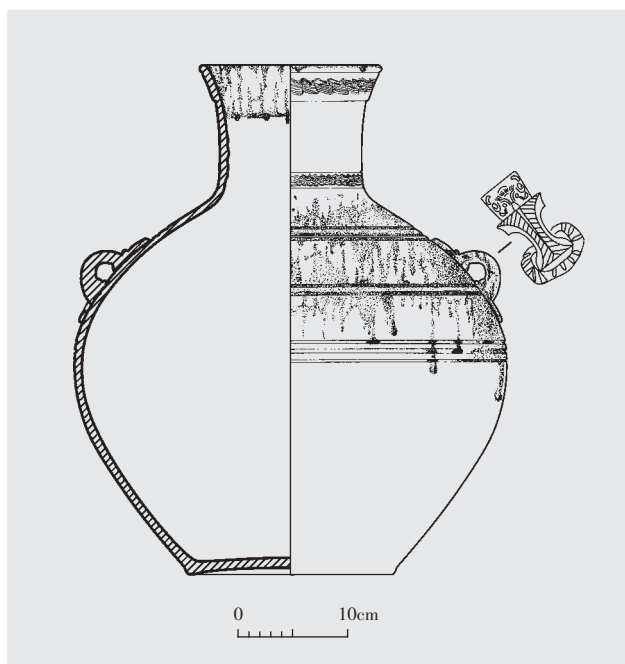


Figure 15 Celadon pot (D3M27:14).

other types.

*Ding*-tripods, two pieces. One is severely damaged. D3M27:19 has a curved lid with three perforated erect ears. The contract mouth is snugly fitted in the lid rim, the belly is flat, the bottom is round and the body is supported with three short cabriole legs that are semicircular in section. On the outer wall are two erect rectangular handles. The mouth diameter measures 11.6cm; the full height 12.6cm (Figures 16:2 and 17).

Pot, two pieces. They are roughly the same in shape and size. D3M27:20 has a slightly curved lid with a ring knob at the center. The mouth is a little flared, the neck contract, the belly swelling and the ring foot short. On

the lower belly is a ring of wide belt; on the shoulder are two symmetrical doorknocker-shaped rings. The mouth diameter measures 7.2cm and the total height 19.2cm (Figures 16:1 and 18).

*Fang*-square wine jars, two pieces, which are identical in shape and size. Either has a truncated pyramidal lid with a ring knob. The mouth is slightly flared, the neck contract, the belly swelling, and the square foot. On the shoulder are two symmetrical bridge-shaped knobs with hanging rings. D3M27:21 measures 6.2cm in mouth side length and 19.4 in full height (Figures 16:4 and 19).

*Xi*-basin, one piece (D3M27:25). It has been badly damaged.

Sword, one piece (D3M27:9). It was discovered beside the tomb occupant's left hand, in association with a talc seal and some *wuzhu* coins. It has a trumpet-shaped pommel, a long narrow hilt and an 𠂔-shaped hand guard. The blade bears a ridge on each side and has a rhombic cross-section. Within the pommel are multiple concentric circles. The weapon measures 72cm in remaining length and 2.6cm in guard width (Figure 16:7).

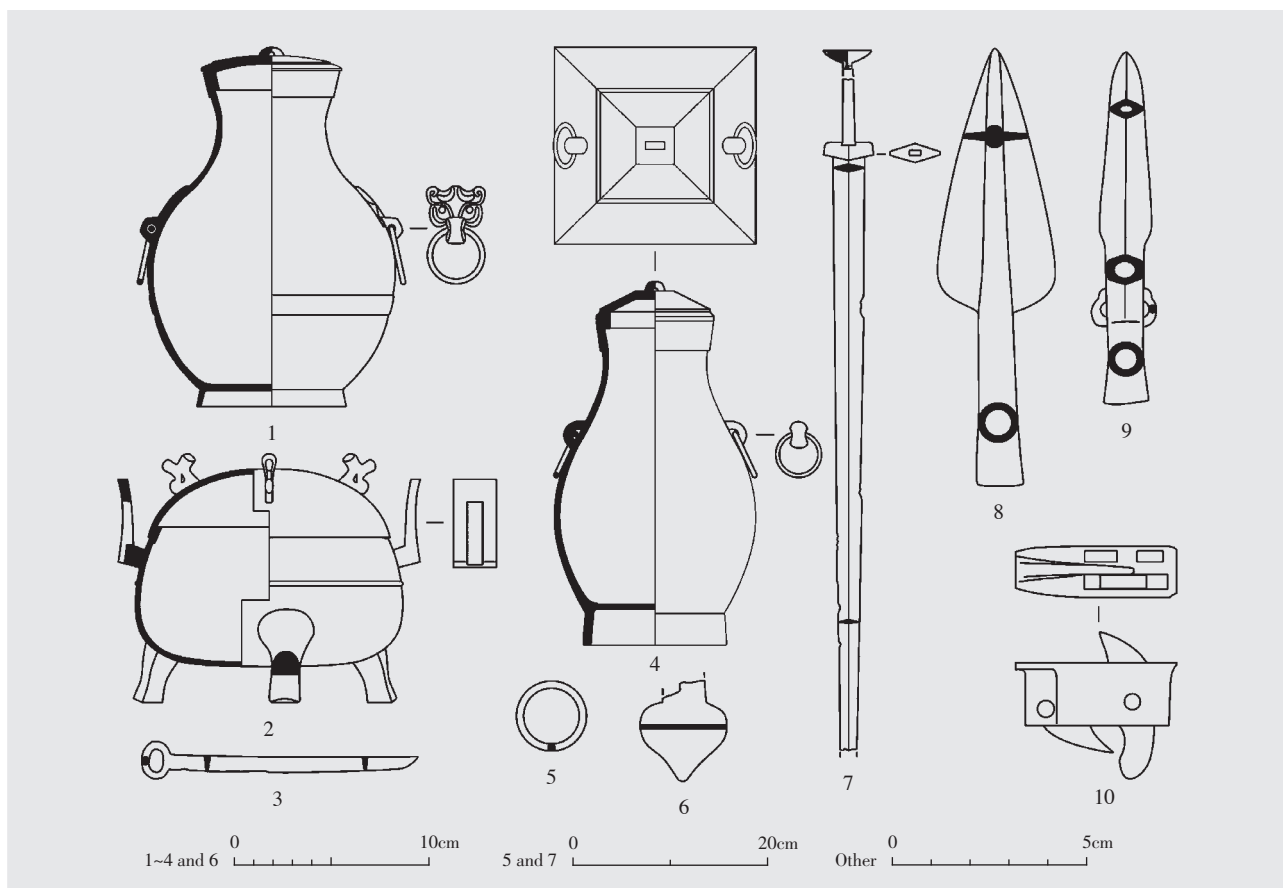
The spearheads, two pieces. Originally either has a wooden shaft and a bronze ferrule and measures 240cm in total length, but the shafts have rotten, and the ferrules are also badly rust-eaten. D3M27:2 has a long oval socket with a flared mouth and two loops. The blade is long narrow and has a rhombic ridge flanked by two shallow fullers. The whole spearhead is 18.1cm long (Figures 16:9 and 20). D3M27:3 has a long round socket with a flared mouth. The blade is shaped like a pointed leaf. The full length measures 22.2cm (Figures 16:8 and 21).

The knife with ring-shaped pommel, one piece (D3M27:49). It was discovered beside the tomb occupant's right hand. The cutting-edge is on one side; the back is straight, the tip is slanting, and the hilt is ended with an oval ring-shaped pommel. The whole object is 28.5cm long (Figure 16:3).

The crossbow trigger mechanism, one piece (D3M27:26). It was yielded from the side compartment of the wooden coffin chamber and has badly rusted. The whole mechanism consists of a *guo* (housing), a *wangshan* (sight), a pair of *ya* (tumbler) and the pins. The two ends of the housing varied in width. On the top of the housing is a bolt groove. The sight bears no graduation. The length measures 4.1cm (Figure 16:10).

Seal, one piece (D3M27:8). This is a personal seal. It was discovered at the tomb occupant's waist, beneath the sword, in association with the talc official seal *Changsha Langzhongling* 长沙郎中令. The knob is semi-cylindrical, the obverse is square and bears the inscription "*Liao Fu siyin* 廖福私印 (Liao Fu's Personal Seal)". The inscription is in seal script style, strokes even, skillful and regular, and so this work is a splendid sample among the personal seals of the Han Dynasty known to date. The dimensions are  $1.7 \times 1.7 \times 1.5$ cm (Figure 22).

Mirror, one piece (D3M27:17). It is a grass-leaf design mirror. The body is flat and circular; the reverse bears semispherical knob on a stylized quatrefoil base. Around



**Figure 16** Bronzes from tomb D3M27.

1. Pot (D3M27:20); 2. *Ding*-tripod (D3M27:19); 3. Knife with ring-shaped pommel (D3M27:49); 4. *Fang*-square wine jar (D3M27:21); 5. Gilt bronze ring (D3M27:45); 6. Gilt bronze ornamental plate (D3M27:54); 7. Sword (D3M27:9); 8 and 9. Spearhead (D3M27:3 and D3M27:2); 10. Crossbow trigger mechanism (D3M27:26).



**Figure 17** Bronze *ding*-tripod (D3M27:19).



**Figure 18** Bronze pot (D3M27:20).



**Figure 19** Bronze *fang*-square wine jar (D3M27:21).



**Figure 20** Bronze spearhead (D3M27:2).



**Figure 21** Bronze spearhead (D3M27:3).



**Figure 22** Bronze seal (D3M27:8).

the base is a four-boss pattern, which is surrounded by a decorative circle formed of alternate TLV and eight sets of symmetrical grass-leaf patterns. Between the circles of boss and TLV patterns are stylized mythical animals in bas-relief. On the rim are 16 linked arches. The diameter is 16.2cm, the rim thickness 0.4cm, and the weight 331g (Figure 23).

Besides, there are two gilt bronze rings, two bronze studs and two bronze ornamental plates. Each type is uniform in shape and size. Ring D3M27:45 measures 1.8cm in diameter (Figure 16:5). Four iron objects were found, which are halberd (Figure 24:7), *fu*-cauldron and coffin ring.

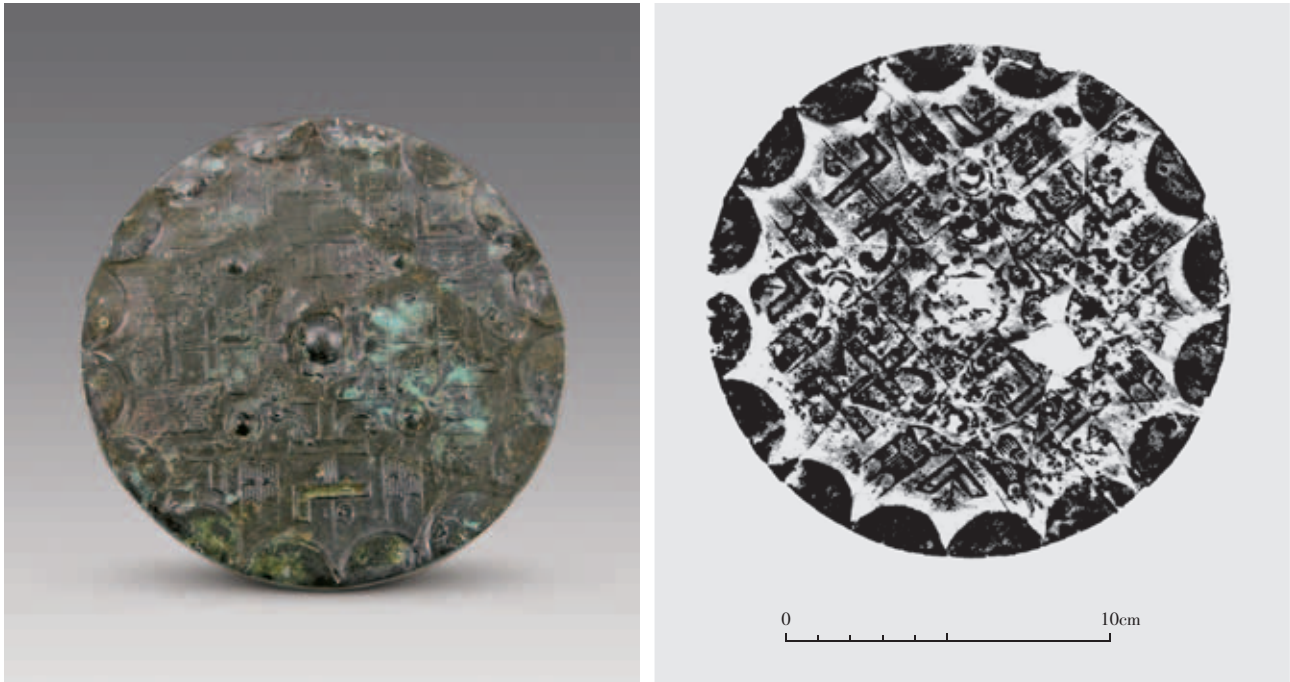
Eight talc objects were unearthed, namely two *bi*-discs, two pots, a box, a lamp, a ladle and a seal (Figure 24).

The talc seal (D3M27:7) was found beneath the sword at the tomb occupant's waist. It is a cube. Both the obverse and reverse are sunken text "*Changsha langzhongling yin* 长沙郎中令印 (the seal of the chamberlain for attendants of Changsha Feudatory Kingdom)". This is an exquisite work among the seals of the Han Dynasty known to date. There is a hole 0.4cm in diameter passing through the middle of the seal. Each side measures 2.9cm, and the height 1.4cm (Figure 25).

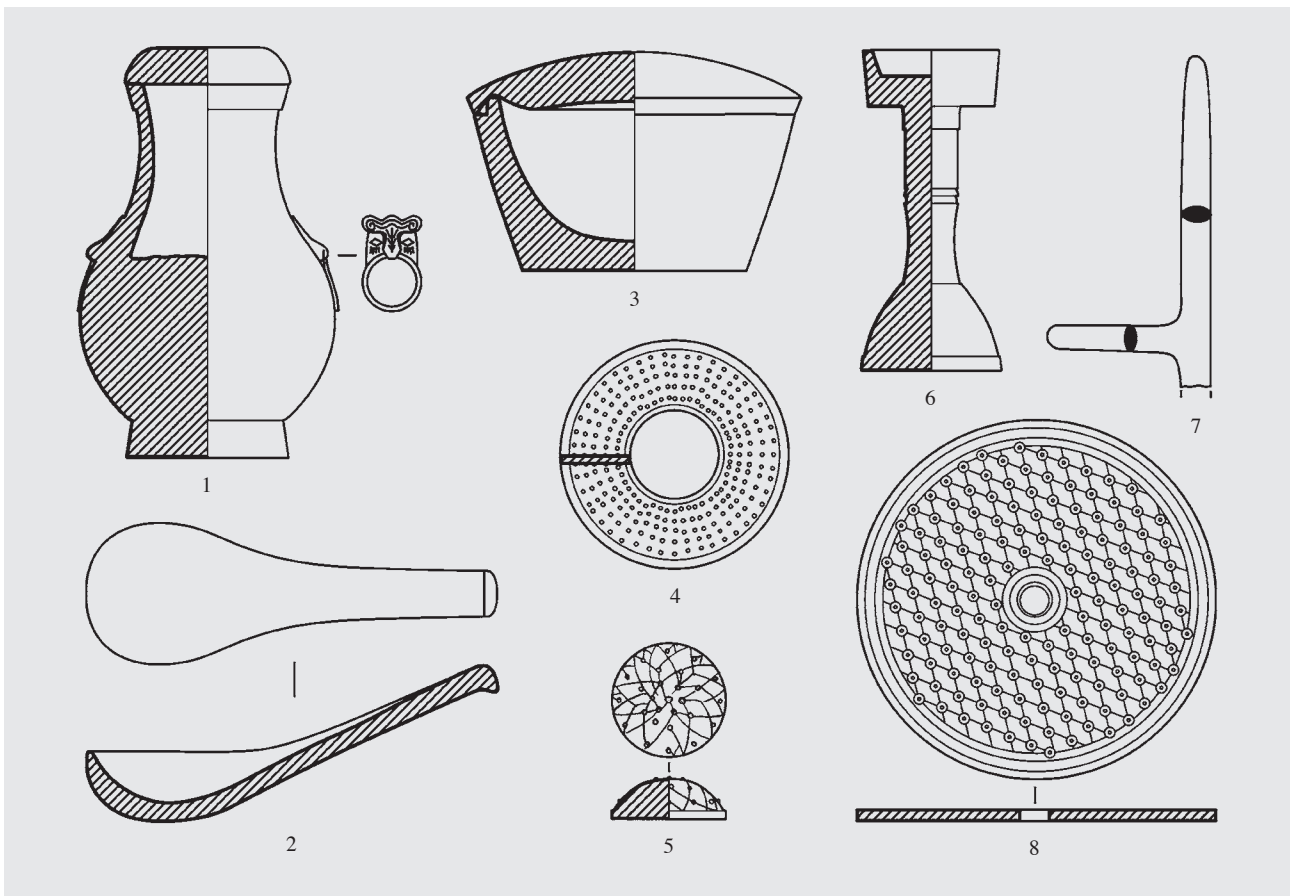
The other finds belong to the bronze *wuzhu* coins, clay *wuzhu* coins, "gold bullion" made of clay, glass *bi*-disc and glass *wei*-sword scabbard slide, etc. The bronze *wuzhu* coins number several dozens and tightly adhered together when unearthed.

The clay *wuzhu* coins total several thousands. They





**Figure 23** Bronze mirror (D3M27:17).



**Figure 24** Objects from tomb D3M27.

1. Talc pot (D3M27:30); 2. Talc ladle (D3M27:27); 3. Talc box (D3M27:29); 4. Glass *bi*-disc (D3M27:4); 5. Clay simulated gold bullion (D3M27:13); 6. Talc lamp (D3M27:23); 7. Iron halberd (D3M27:15); 8. Talc *bi*-disc (D3M27:1).



Figure 25 Talc seal (D3M27:7).



Figure 26 Clay *wuzhu* coin (D3M27:47).

were unearthed from pottery jars and pots in the wooden coffin chamber. D3M27:47 is a gray clay coin made of mold-impressing. The character “*wu* 五” in the legend is written with the two strokes in the middle forming a peculiar cross, while the character “*zhu* 銖” is simplified. The diameter measures 2.3cm (Figure 26).

The “gold bullion” made of clay total several dozens. They are identical in shape and size. All are coated with white pottery slip. The top is semispherical, and the bottom flat. All “bullion” are entirely decorated with small round studs and incised marks. D3M27:13 measures 6cm in diameter (Figure 24:5).

Three glass *bi*-discs were unearthed, all lying on the tomb occupant’s chest and remaining in a poor condition. They are identical in shape and size. D3M27:4 is adorned with raised grain pattern on both sides. The diameter measures 12.4cm; the thickness 0.6cm (Figure 24:4). They are made of lead-barium glass.

## Conclusions

1. The Nanping mounded tombs are distributed only in an area of about 20sq km to the north of the site of Linyuan District of the Han Dynasty. Originally there may have been over one hundred burial mounds arranged closely and orderly. These mounds are surrounded by the burials of the same period, which are distributed at Guanxi in the periphery of Hefu Hill to the west, on Huangtu Hill and Baihe Hill belonging to Taiyang Mountain to the north, and on Deshan Hill to the east. Those burials are all vertical earthen shaft pit tombs.

2. The dates of these burial mounds are clear. The earliest cemeteries of burial mounds appeared in the mid Western Han and were replaced by that of brick-chamber tombs in the Xin and Eastern Han Dynasties.

3. The mounds and artificial earthen terraces show distinctive features in structure. Their construction was well designed beforehand. Each mound was enclosed with drain ditches; such facilities were also built in large-sized mounds; and at the same time these drain ditches

functioned as borders among the families’ cemeteries. The artificial earthen terraces were all built of earth quarried from nearby. The tombs were built in terraces with the opening unexceptionally on the terrace surface but the depth varied; some graves even intruded into the primary soil. All mounds were built after interment; no reopening was done for later burials. While the artificial earthen terrace got higher, the gray clay-filled graveyard borders were simultaneously built up of purer light gray clay. These clay borders were mixed with the grayish-yellow soil of the mounds. Generally a position for the central chief grave was kept. To prepare for the chief tomb occupant’s entombment, the grave was trimmed beforehand, and its walls were lined with light gray clay using formwork (sometimes a small amount of yellow soil was sandwiched in between).

4. The tombs are distinctive in shape and structure. Among the mounded tombs of the Han Dynasty known to date, there are one-mound one-pit tombs and one-mound multiple-pit ones. For example, Mound D1 is an independent burial mound with a single grave, whose occupant is the *cheng* (丞, deputy magistrate) of Chanling District, Wuling Commandery of the Western Han Dynasty, and D3 is a burial mound of the tombs of 12 family members of Liao Fu, the *langzhongling* (郎中令, chamberlain for attendants) of the Changsha Feudatory Kingdom, and Liao Hong.

Among the 22 earthen pit tombs in the five mounds, there are 13 graves furnished with passage, 11 of which have vertical shaft ones, one (D3M24) has a long ramp, and one (D3M27) has a ramp-and-shaft passage. Each passage-furnished grave generally has a light gray clay-built entrance-sealing structure between the passage and the grave; the only exception is D3M24, where the entrance-sealing structure is built of geometric pattern blackish gray bricks in the lower part and light gray clay in the upper part. All “entrance-sealing structures” are deepened forward into the grave by 0.3–1.4m.

All graves contain wooden receptacles. The better conditions are discovered in D8M7, D8M2 and D3M24,

among which the last one is the best: with a double coffin chamber and a dugout coffin remaining in situ. The original statuses of the rest 19 tombs' furniture can be inferred by the traces on the grave bottom. Seven tombs have double coffin chamber: D3M24 probably contains double coffin and D8M3 affirmatively contains double coffin; the other five tombs contain one coffin. 11 tombs have single coffin chamber: four tombs (D7M3, D7M4, D7M5 and D8M4) contain double coffin; seven tombs contain single coffin and one tomb (D2M7) contains only a coffin without coffin chamber.

In burial positions, among the five mounds the single-mound single-tomb D1 is unknown owing to the serious looting. Mound D2 contains two tombs of single burial. In the mound D3, the 12 tombs are all single burials; the pairs of D3M27-D3M29 and D3M14-D3M13 might belong to the same-mound separate-grave joint burial. In D7 and D8, each of the five well-preserved tombs contains a married couple's same-mound same-grave burial.

5. Generally, the grave goods unearthed from Nanping Cemetery in Changde show no obvious difference from their counterparts recorded in the earthen pit tombs within the nearby mountainous area of the same time, except for the glass wares and bronzes that are yielded from some high-ranking tombs exhibiting typical styles of the Lingnan Region.

6. To date, 126 mounded tombs have been excavated at Nanping Cemetery in total, among which at least eight mounds are that of family cemeteries, the occupants of which are members of the families of the magistrate of Tancheng 譚成 District, *cheng* (丞, deputy magistrate) of Chanling 孱陵 District and Liao Fu, the *langzhongling* (郎中令, chamberlain for attendants) of the Changsha Feudatory Kingdom, Zhao Xuanyou and other officials. Besides, there are numerous mounded cemeteries of the families whose members' names and official posts are unknown yet.

The excavation of the mound tombs at Nanping Town in Changde, especially that of the family cemeteries provided a batch of data with clear chronological features, tomb occupants' names and identities and tomb forms for the studies of the Qin-Han period mound burials in China and even in the whole East Asia, as well as new evidence for researching this type of burials in other regions.

### Postscript

The original report written by Chaobin Long 龙朝彬 was published in *Kaogu* 考古 (Archaeology) 2014.1:37–52 with 33 illustrations. The abridged version is prepared by the author and translated into English by Runxian Mo 莫润先.