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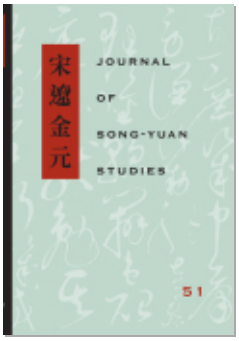

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"Nomadic" Underworlds in the Western Capital of the Liao

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A dominant mode of research in the field of Chinese funerary art focuses on the construction of grand narratives around ancestral worship and the afterlife. While such an approach has mapped out significant patterns in the conceptions of death and funerary rituals, it has left lacunae in our knowledge of variegated local practices. This issue is especially pertinent to the middle period (9th–14th centuries), which is marked by expanded social mobility and ethnic influx, both of which had a lasting impact on the cultural landscape of later periods. The existing scholarship on funerary art of the middle period has relied mainly on what is generally deemed orthodox "Chinese" tradition according to ethnicity—from philosophy to protocol to geomancy—rather than the *relations* between what are considered "Chinese" and "non-Chinese" practices. Tomb-making in the territories of the states founded by northern ethnic groups, such as the Liao 遼 (916–1125), Jin 金 (1115–1234), and Yuan 元 (1271–1368) dynasties, has been examined with an eye towards parallels rather than intersections, be they "Chinese vs. Khitan" or "Chinese vs. Mongol."

The basic material for this article was first presented at the Fifth International Conference on Ancient Tomb Art (Beijing, 2017), which has yielded a short article, entitled "Muzang yishu de diyuxing: yi Liao dai Xijing de sangzang wenhua wei li" 墓葬艺术的地域性: 以辽代西京的丧葬文化为例, in *Gudai muzang meishu yanjiu* 古代墓葬美术研究 5, edited by Wu Hung, Zhu Qingsheng, and Zheng Yan (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, forthcoming in 2022). My gratitude is due to the audience members at the conference for their helpful comments and questions; I am particularly grateful to Li Qingquan for his enthusiasm for this project and productive suggestions at that early stage. Having completed the article under extreme constraints caused by the pandemic, I feel especially thankful to many colleagues and friends for their unbounded intellectual generosity. For the current article, Christopher Heuer, Jinping Wang, and Peggy Wang carefully read the manuscript at different stages and offered invaluable suggestions. Thanks are also due to anonymous reviewers of the JSYS for their constructive feedback. Zhou Xuesong at Datong Municipal Museum kindly helped me retrieve scattered information on some of the Museum collection. Zhang Biao assisted me with image reproduction with efficiency and care. Finally, I am grateful for Douglas Skonicki's thorough editorial support. Any errors that remain are my own.

Consider a quick example: the so-called *fangmu* 仿木 method in tomb-making, based on the idea of making the interior of a tomb imitate timber architecture in pictorial, sculptural, or mixed mediums.[1] Distinguished from simple imitations of wooden architecture in stone and bricks that date back to as early as the Eastern Han period (25–220 CE), far more sophisticated and full-fledged representations of timber architectural parts began to occupy tombs constructed during the middle-period. Because the earliest known example of this particular type of wood-imitation has been traced to metropolitan areas in the Tang 唐 (618–907),[2] and because its components largely resemble Tang architecture, scholars have assumed that any "*fangmu*" adornment found in Liao tombs would indicate the "Chinese" ethnicity of the tomb occupants.[3] However, a *fangmu*-style tomb in regions occupied by people of

1. For a brief overview of the method, see Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中国社会科学院考古研究所 ed., *Xin Zhongguo de kaogu faxian he yanjiu* 新中国的考古发现和研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1984), 597–613. Ellen Johnston Laing's early study on interior adornment of middle-period tombs offers several significant observations related to the "*fangmu*" method. See Laing, "Patterns and Problems in Later Chinese Tomb Decoration," *Journal of Oriental Studies*, vol. 16, nos. 1–2 (1978): 3–20. For an in-depth discussion of the historical development of the method and its role in tombs of the Central Plains, see Wei-cheng Lin, "Underground Wooden Architecture in Brick: A Changed Perspective from Life to Death in 10th through 13th Century China," *Archives of Asian Art* 61 (2011): 3–36.

2. One of the earliest extant tombs of this kind, especially one made entirely of bricks, is that of Yang Ren 楊釰 (d. 879), located in Xuanhua, Hebei province. See Liu Haiwen 刘海文 et al., "Hebei Xuanhua jinian Tang mu fajue jianbao" 河北宣化纪年唐墓发掘简报,' *Wenwu* 文物 7 (2008): 25, fig. 3.

3. In such a narrative, any tombs that belong to ethnically Khitan are explained as "sinicized" and the "Han" 漢 is assumed as an ahistorical, essential category of "the Chinese," conflating the concepts of the Han and the Chinese. For example, see Shao Haibo 邵海波, Wu Jing 吴敬, "Liaodai Qidanren yu Jindai nüzhenren hanhua guocheng de duibi yanjiu—yi lingmu cailiao wei xiansuo de kaoguxue guancha" 辽代契丹人与金代女真人汉化过程的对比研究——以陵墓材料为线索的考古学观察, *Caoyuan wenwu* 草原文物 (formerly *Neimenggu wenwu kagu*) 2 (2011): 67. For helpful discussions of the Han as an ethnic category and its entanglement with the concept "Chinese," see Thomas Mullaney ed., *Critical Han Studies* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2012).

Nicolas Tackett's recent discussion of the mortuary cultures in North China presents a more detailed classification of grave goods and burials into several sets of categories based on their formal features, yielding finer pairs of cultural dyads such as "North China" vs. "Khitan" types, or "Old Khitan" vs. "New Khitan" types. While the granular categorization is certainly helpful for recognizing previously dismissed complexity of the burial types and goods in geographical terms, what constitutes "Khitan" or "Chinese" remains open to question. What, for example, makes the "New Khitan type" still "Khitan," and where in the "Hybrid" realm does it stand?

various ethnic origins cannot simply be determined as a marker of "Chinese" identity. At a moment when a region is inhabited by more than one ethnic group, the *fangmu*-type begins to embody cultural formations that are "always already hybrid and in process."[4] Indeed, some Khitans adopted the timber-imitation adornment in their tomb constructions as early as the first quarter of the tenth century; this suggests that the use of the method would have become a *cultural* marker that had already assimilated the original "ethnic" identity associated with the method.[5] As is the case with the basic constructionist perspective in many areas of cultural studies (gender and race, most prominently), such a recognition never simply erases any potentially existing biological distinctions. Rather than presupposing any ethnographic distinction as the governing marker of the cultural identity of an individual, it recognizes the organic nature of culture that is always in the process of being constantly renewed and becoming something else: the idea of culture as act rather than

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If the ethnic category of Khitan can be presented as a *cultural* category, as treated in Tackett's approach, the questions of when and how the ethnic category could qualify as cultural are left unanswered. See Tackett, "Mortuary Cultures across the Chinese-Steppe Divide" and "Tomb Analysis and Cultural Difference," in *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 211–45, 285–90. One of the potential ways to tackle this challenging issue is to redirect the focus of the question from how the people would have categorized certain burial goods or tomb types in their "minds" (p.236) in ethno-culturally distinct terms to what kinds of values—functional, aesthetic, or ritual—would have made the choice of the so-called "hybrid" tombs possible. Of course, this is an issue that many scholars are still grappling with, including this author, and it would be more productive to acknowledge the limitation of existing conceptual frames and remain critical as we strive to achieve more sound interpretations.

4. Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval Hindu-Muslim Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 9. Homi Bhabha's classic discussion of the "Third Space" is a useful reminder of the process in which two or more cultures in political hierarchy encounter and coexist in a single geographic stage. See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 53–6. The conceptual frame of "cultural identity" in the case of middle-period Chinese history has been proven extremely productive by Naomi Standen's illuminating work on the frontier in tenth-century China. Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

5. For an early example, see the case of Baoshan 宝山 Tomb No. 1 in Chifeng 赤峰, Inner Mongolia (ca. 923). Ji Xiaoguang 齐晓光 et al., "Neimenggu Chifeng Baoshan Liao bihua mu fajue jianbao" 内蒙古赤峰宝山辽壁画墓发掘简报, *Wenwu* 1 (1998): 73–95; and Wu Hong 巫鸿 (Wu Hung), Li Qingquan 李清泉, *Baoshan Liao mu: cailiao yu shidu* 宝山辽墓: 材料与释读 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2013), especially 164–67.

something given.[6] In such a framework, certain material productions—be it architectural style, crafting skill, or pictorial technique—initially adopted or dominantly used by a certain ethnic group are not reduced to the exclusivity of their identity.[7]

Any analytical model considering ethnic dichotomy retains a functional value as a basic organizing tool for researchers. But a significant limitation of the approach is evident: a historical narrative based on such a model is susceptible to the ideological inclinations of the social and political elites whose voices are the most dominant.[8] In this sense, attempts to draw a concrete picture of middle-period regional culture are potentially obfuscated by the hegemonic voice that often mutes unofficial others. This applies even to the case of archaeological material retrieved from burial sites and tombs; as researchers, we often assume that things unearthed from the ground speak of a less-mediated historical reality than one transmitted via aboveground sources. In the modern practice of historical studies of the Liao culture that utilize archaeological material, epitaphs or any inscriptions found in tombs are commonly thrusted before us as if they are the birthmark of the deceased.

6. I use "culture" in an etic sense throughout this article as the contemporary English dictionary defines, rather than as a historicized concept, i.e., an equivalent to *wen* 文 to refer to "civilized" or "cultured" in Confucian terms that had been built up as such by the middle period. For a succinct summary of the shift in the Chinese conception of the "barbarian" as the opposite of the civilized during the so-called Tang-Song transition in historiography, see Shaoyun Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians: Redrawing Ethnic Boundaries in Tang and Song China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 3–4.

7. The same approach is extended to the way that the term "Khitan" is used in this study. Keen on the culture's constitutive relations to people and place, I use the term in this article mainly to delineate the very relations, rather than essentializing the ethnic identity of individuals who were involved in designing, sponsoring, or making tombs and burial objects. How to define the "Khitan" in the Liao empire has been explored for decades by scholars of Liao art and culture; this article has benefited tremendously from such scholarship. For example, the discussion between Nancy S. Steinhardt and Dieter Kuhn on the "Liao" architecture has revealed a set of significant questions for further reflection. See Kuhn, "Liao Architecture: Qidan Innovations and Han-Chinese Traditions?" *T'oung Pao* (Second Series) 86, Fasc. 4/5 (2000): 325–62; Nancy S. Steinhardt, "A Response to Dieter Kuhn, 'Liao Architecture: Qidan Innovations and Han-Chinese Traditions?'" *T'oung Pao* (Second Series), 87, Fasc. 4/5 (2001): 456–62.

8. Pamela Crossley's insight into the historical category of the "Khitan" operating as de facto aristocracy in the case of Jizhou 薊州, rather than as an ethnic identity, urges us to look beneath the surface of the dominant narrative and terminology in historical texts. See Pamela Crossley, "Outside In: Power, Identity, and the Han Lineage of Jizhou," in *Perspectives on the Liao* (theme volume), Valerie Hansen and François Louis ed., *JSYS* 43 (2013): 51–89.

Accordingly, the cultural identity of the deceased is readily pigeonholed into either Khitan or Chinese, hence "Khitan tomb" or "Chinese tomb." Yet in the end, the "earth" doesn't gift us an unmediated viewpoint; as with a text, we must position the land itself as a kind of discourse, a spatial web of people and culture.

Attentive to the cultural geography, this article looks into how a consistent pattern in the making of funerary monuments from the tenth to the twelfth centuries speaks to cultural practices that transcend ethnic categories. I focus on a corpus of archaeological data culled from Datong 大同, Shanxi province,[9] which served as the Western Capital (*xijing* 西京) in the Liao dynasty after 1044, and continued its status as a capital in the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). Examining material traces of the funerary culture in Datong provides a revealing case in which the loaded question of "cultural identity" can be teased out without being distracted by the reductive mark of ethnicity. Existing studies of the ethnic distribution in Liao territory tend to focus on the political and social elite (e.g., officials who served the Liao court and were recorded in official histories or in the epitaphs found in their tombs).[10] Thus, our knowledge of the ethnic composition of the overall population in a given region is extremely limited, including that of Datong. In fact, a majority of the tombs discovered in Datong built during this time period did not yield any inscriptions that identify the deceased, and, accordingly, we know very little about the composition of local demographics. Most excavated tombs in Datong belong to those of non-literati local elites.[11] Their level of relative

9. I have identified about 24 tombs dated to the Liao period excavated in Datong (see Appendix, Nos. 27–51), which includes all reported sites that yielded formal archaeological reports. Most of them are burials in chamber style, with a couple of exceptions of much simpler vertical pit-type graves. In terms of the geographic range, I included the burials within present-day Datong and its outskirts (*jiao* 郊) as identified in the archaeological reports.

10. Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967); Nicolas Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* .

11. Here I use the term "non-literati" local elite to distinguish the group from those traditionally identified as the local elite, i.e., the social group conventionally referred to as "literati" or *shi* 士 that has been the primary subject of Song-Yuan intellectual and social history over the past several decades. Of course, "non-literati" is by no means a historical category that was in use during the middle period, nor do I assume its clear-cut distinction from the so-called literati. I employ the term "non-literati" here not as a definitive social category but as an analytical tool for revealing and portraying richer layers of the cultural field than what has been previously understood as a unitary elite culture. For further discussion, see Jeehee Hong, "Changing Roles of

lavishness (being adorned with murals and/or the use of a version of the so-called *fangmu* method) is consistent with that of local elites such as affluent farmers or merchants in other cities in the Liao territory.[12] In fact, the relative homogeneity in the level of elaborateness of the tombs in Datong not only helps to narrow down the social standing of their occupants, but also works as an important methodological intervention in dealing with the ongoing question of cultural identity. Short of an "option" to reductively determine whether tombs are inertly "Chinese" or "Khitan" based on textual sources, we are led to a historical situation in which a regional community of similar means built funerary monuments based on a shared local environment—visual, material, and ritual—that may well have been inhabited by more than one culture. Exploring this hypothetical realm is the concern of what follows.

The pivotal arena in this realm was the boundary between the living and the dead. My discussion focuses on how the residents of Datong configured

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the Tomb Portrait: Burial Practices and Ancestral Worship of Non-Literati Elite in North China (1000–1400)," *JSYS* 44 (2014): 203–64.

One of the most illustrious cases of such "non-literati elite" was a successful merchant in Shuozhou 朔州 named Zhang Gongyi 張公義. Zhang was homeless during the Liao-Song-Jin wars in the 1120s, but became a wealthy merchant through selling goods in several prefectures in north China afterward. He became an influential local elite, especially by sponsoring religious activities through a local Buddhist institution. See Zhao Zihua 趙子華, "Da Jinguo Shuozhou Shunyijun lushisi xibeixiang houshujie qinghejun Zhanggong muzhi" 大金國朔州順義軍錄事司西北廂侯殊街清河郡張公墓誌, *Sanjin shike daquan: Shuozhoushi shuochengqu* 三晉石刻大全: 朔州市朔城區 (Taiyuan: Sanjin chubanshe, 2017), *juan* shang, 97. The original source was discussed by Jinping Wang in *Proceedings for North China as Part of the Inner Asian System, 10th-15th Centuries* (unpublished, December 9–11, 2019), 220. Special thanks to Jinping Wang for sharing the source.

12. The tomb (982) of Xu Congyun 許從贇 and his wife, a certain Kang 康, is a revealing case. Xu was the military governor (*jiedushi* 節度使) of Datong, as identified by an epitaph found in the tomb. Tellingly, the scale, structure, and general level of adornment in the interior correspond to several other excavated tombs in the area. This confirms that occupants of those tombs whose identities are unknown would have shared the same level of economic and cultural resources, hence they can be comfortably categorized as non-literati local elite even though the majority of them seem to have held no offices. See Wang Yintian 王银田 et al., "Shanxi Datong shi Liaodai jun jiedushi Xu Congyun fufu bihua mu" 山西大同市辽代军节度使许从赟夫妇壁画墓, *Kaogu* 考古 8 (2005): 34–47. That a majority of excavated tombs in this region belong to non-literati elite also corresponds to the general pattern in the development of adorned tombs in north China as well as in the Central Plains during the middle period. For cases in the Central Plains, see Hong Zhixi 洪知希 (Jeehee Hong), "'Hengzai' zhong de zangyi: Song Yuan shiqi zhongyuan muzang de yili shijian"「恒在」中的葬仪: 宋元时期中原墓葬的仪礼时间, in Wu Hong, Zhu Qingsheng 朱青生, Zheng Yan 郑岩 eds., *Gudai muzang meishu yanjiu* 古代墓葬美术研究, vol. 3 (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2015), 196–226.

the spaces of—and for—the deceased. Recognizing a loosely synecdochical relationship between the coffin and the tomb as a container of the body in physical and metaphorical terms, this inquiry pays close attention to the specific form of the containers chosen by the makers and sponsors of the burials. What made their form culturally distinctive was Datong's extended "experience," both diachronic and synchronic, as a host of various peoples of nomadic origins as well as the Chinese. By attending to the operations of the space within and around such receptacles, this approach offers the opportunity to move beyond a limited focus upon subjects (especially elite actants), opening out to a broader discourse on actions, process, and history.

Datong in the longue durée

Datong's historical trajectory consists of interactions between sedentary and nomadic cultures prior to the middle period.[13] The precise composition of the population in Datong during the Liao remains unclear; data on the migration of ethnically Chinese elites remains murky.[14] There is no evidence that a mass relocation of Han Chinese in and out of Datong occurred during or between the two major relocations of Chinese under the Liao regime in the early- to mid-tenth century.[15] Unlike the other four capitals of the Liao, where connections to the elites in Hedong 河東 and Hebei 河北 are comparatively clear, the composition of the population in Datong is largely untraceable through both transmitted and excavated textual records.

One of the main reasons for this may derive from Datong's geographic situation; it lies at a frontier at once distant from and close to the steppes. It was a remote enough site for a single ruling regime from a certain ethnic group

13. Here I am proposing an extended temporal frame. The term *longue durée* is obviously borrowed from Fernand Braudel's seminal work, and I use it in the way that Braudel originally conceptualized. Its capacity to bring in geographical, demographical, and climatological aspects along with memories and archaeological traces of human lives makes it particularly apt for framing the case under discussion. See Fernand Braudel, trans. by Sarah Matthews, *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

14. For an overall picture of the movement of population crossing frontier, see Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, 187–210.

15. Unlike the cases of other capitals, there are only sporadic accounts of state-forced relocation of captives from the Western Capital, all of which occurred in 916. See Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "State-Forced Relocations in China, 900–1300," in *State Power in China, 900–1325*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Paul Jakov Smith (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016): 309–18, especially Table 9.2 on 314.

to dominate, yet at the same time accessible to nomadic peoples. The demographic landscape does, in fact, become clearer when we turn to a longer span of time. Datong was a part of Yunzhou 雲州, which also covered present-day Shuozhou 朔州, during the Tang.[16] Upon the fall of the Tang, it came under the governance of the Shatuo 沙陀-Turk-based Later Tang 後唐 (923–937) for about three decades until it fell into the territory of the Khitan-based Liao in 936 as the core land of the so-called *shanhou* 山後 region in the Sixteen Prefectures of Yan-Yun (燕雲十六州).[17] Since then, Datong remained a Liao military base (*zhen* 鎮), until it was renamed Datong fu 大同府 and made Western Capital of the Liao in 1044.[18] The region was populated by several ethnic groups,[19] in effect a contact zone of multiple communities at various levels of society and varying degrees of cultural adaptations. The area's historical mode of cultural accommodation is traceable back to the fourth century, when the seat of the Tuoba 拓拔 (a branch of Xianbei 鮮卑)-based Wei 魏 (soon to refer itself as Northern Wei 北魏) moved from Shengle 盛樂, its first capital near Horinger, Inner Mongolia, to Datong, their second capital (then named Pingcheng 平城), in 398. By the time the Northern Wei moved its capital again to Luoyang 洛陽 in 493, Datong had established itself as a political and cultural center in the north. There was substantial contact between a large number of newcomers and local residents in Datong; the

16. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (Scripta Sinica Database 中央研究院漢籍電子文獻資料庫), 39. 999–1008.

17. This was a result of the coup orchestrated by Shi Jingtang's 石敬瑭 (892–942) alliance with the Liao in the attack of the Later Tang 後唐. Shi Jingtang, who subsequently founded the Later Jin 後晉, was then forced to yield Datong to the Liao. See Tuotuo 脫脫 et al, *Liao shi* 遼史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 4. 44–5; and Li Mingfei 李鳴飞, "'Shanhou' zai lishi shang de bianhua," 「山后」在历史上的变化 *Shaanxi ligong xueyuan xuebao* 陕西理工学院学报 1 (2007): 35–39.

18. Following the Chanyuan Peace Treaty (Chanyuan zhi meng 澶淵之盟), the Yunzhou area began to develop quickly, especially after 1044 when Datong became the Western Capital. See Tuotuo et al., *Liao shi*, 41. 505–6. The geographical details of Datong and its surrounding areas were described by a Song official. See *Beifan dili* 北蕃地理, in *Qidan jiaotong shiliao qi zhong* 契丹交通史料七種, ed. Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮 et al. (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1972), 9–12.

19. The Shatuo Turks themselves were composed of subtribes of multiple origins, a fact which seems to have been unclear to writers of historical accounts on Shi Jingtang's ancestry. It should be noted that what was known as the Shatuo was an extraction from several clans of Turkic tribes. For origins of the Shatuo Turks around the tenth century, see Maddalena Barenghi, "Representations of Descent: Origin and Migration Stories of the Ninth- and Tenth-century Turkic Shatuo," *Asia Major*. 3d ser. Vol. 32, no. 1 (2019): 53–86.

Northern Wei's series of forced migrations of their subjects to Datong involved not only large groups of officials, artisans, and entertainers from the Hebei area, but also other northern captives from northern frontiers.[20] A century of ethno-cultural commingling at an unprecedented scale undoubtedly left an enduring imprint on the lives of regional communities.

Datong's position in the trajectory of Tuoba-Xianbei state-building is suggestive of a potential mode of cultural appropriation. The Khitans originated from a branch of the Xianbei people and coexisted with the Northern Wei around the fourth century.[21] Regardless of the contemporary Chinese (including Tang and Song) understanding of their origins,[22] the Khitans who established the Liao also had a firm association with Inner Mongolia as their "homeland," hence sharing with the Tuoba-Xianbei the basic pattern of itinerant living. Datong, then, can be seen as a political seat of two nomadic tribes who moved into China over five centuries.[23] That the Khitan Liao were likely not self-conscious of such a parallel is irrelevant here, since the historical connection engaged by the present paper is not leveled at an individual political entity or a specific ruling elite. Rather, it is interested in the cultural practices discursively shared by the communities of the region. Seen in the long arc of local history, Datong was conditioned to provide a space for cultural accommodation among peoples of various origins. What follows are traces of such experiences.

20. Wei Shou 魏收 et al., *Wei shu* 魏書, 60. 1341 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974). For the Northern Wei's extensive relocation campaigns, see An Jiesheng 安介生, *Shanxi yimin shi* 山西移民史 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1999), 109–78. For discussions on the dynamic cultural landscape of Pingcheng, see Shing Müller, "The Nomads of the Fifth Century: The Tuoba Xianbei," in *Nomads, Traders and Holy Men Along China's Silk Road*, ed. Judith Lerner and Annette L. Juliano (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 33–44; and Wen-yi Huang, "Captives, Deserters, and Exiles: Control of Migrant Mobility in the Northern Wei Period (386–534 CE)," *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 80, no. 1 (2021): 129–43.

21. Denis Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, "The Liao," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 6, Alien Regime and Border States, 907–1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 44.

22. Denis Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, "The Liao," 45.

23. Although this subject goes beyond the scope of this paper, suffice it to say that once the nomadic-based state set its foot in the north, its cultural legacy never disappeared and continued to exist, ready to be appropriated and accommodated by ever evolving Chinese and other northern nomadic groups. The Tuoba's influence on Tang culture and politics, for example, is traceable in the area of linguistics as well. For concrete examples of certain Chinese terms' affinity with the Tuoba Xianbei language, see Sanping Chen, "A-Gan Revisited—The Tuoba's Cultural and Political Heritage," *Journal of Asian History*, vol. 30, no. 1 (1996): 46–78.

"Housing" the Body

Throughout the tenth- to the thirteenth centuries, cremation was the most common method of burial among local elites in Datong.[24] Remains would be enshrined in a container of ceramic or stone, and then placed on a built-in funerary platform inside the tomb.[25] In terms of the tomb itself, people with means built single-chamber tombs made of bricks. Judging from reported cases, the majority of residents in Datong seem to have chosen this manner of bodily treatment over a newer, more complex way of preparing and enshrining the body: the so-called "mannequin" type, wherein cremated remains are placed in a wooden receptacle sculpted in the shape of the body and face of the deceased (Figure 1, p. 245).[26] Towards the late Liao period, this new type began to occupy the tombs of local elites in the Guihuazhou 歸化州 and Youzhou 幽州 regions, especially modern-day Xuanhua 宣化 and Beijing 北京, as well as Inner Mongolia.[27] Such a practice coexisted with the simpler and older cremation method that was dominant in Datong. The surnames of the tomb occupants whose remains were placed inside the mannequin-like objects are of a certain kind of Chinese descent who intermarried with Khitan

24. By the tenth century, cremation had been well introduced in China and was widely practiced among lay Buddhists in the Northern Song as well as the Liao. For discussions of cremation from Song to Yuan, see Xu Pingfang 徐苹芳, "Song Yuan muzang zhong de huozang" 宋元墓葬中的火葬, *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 文物參考資料 9 (1956): 21–26; Patricia B. Ebrey, "Cremation in Song China," *American Historical Review* 95. 2 (1990): 406–28; Xu Jijun 徐吉軍, "Lun Song dai huozang de shengxing ji qi yuanyin" 論宋代火葬的盛行及其原因, *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究 3 (1992): 74–82; and Christina Han, "Cremation and Body Burning," *Journal of Chinese Studies* (中國文化研究所學報) 55 (2012): 1–22.

25. For examples preserved in decent condition, see Jia Xia 贾霞, "Cong Liaodai liuliguan fenxi Datong diqu zangshi tezheng" 从辽代琉璃棺分析大同地区葬式特征, *Wenwu tiandi* 文物天地 9 (2020): 41–4; Zhang Bingren 张秉仁 et al., "Shanxi Datong Wohuwan sizuo Liaodai bihua mu" 山西大同臥虎湾四座辽代壁画墓, *Kaogu* 8 (1963): 432–36, 7–9; Cao Chenming 曹臣明 et al., "Shanxi Datong shi dongjiao Majiabao Liao mu," 山西大同市东郊马家堡辽墓, *Kaogu* 11 (2005): 93–96; and Liu Junxi 刘俊喜 et al., "Datong Hepingshe Liao Jin muqun fajue jianbao" 大同和平社辽金墓群发掘简报, *Wenwu shijie* 文物世界 5 (2018): 3–7.

26. Hsueh-man Shen, "Body Matters: Manikin Burials in the Liao Tombs of Xuanhua, Hebei Province," *Artibus Asiae* 65.1 (2005): 99–141; Li Qingquan, "Zhenrong ouxiang yu duojiaoxing muzang" 眞容偶像与多角形墓葬, in Li Qingquan, *Xuanhua Liao mu: muzang yishu yu Liaodai shehui* 宣化辽墓: 墓葬艺术与辽代社会 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008): 262–332; and Wu Hung, *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 142–48.

27. See Tuotuo, *Liao shi*, 40. 493–504; and Yu Wei 余蔚, *Zhongguo xingzheng quhua tongshi Liao Jin juan* 中國行政區劃通史遼金卷 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2017), 338–44.

elites. Their direct contact with the Khitan aristocrats might suggest that this new method of bodily treatment for burial was a result of their cultural and social interaction.[28] When it comes to interpreting the material of "hybridity" as such, however, we are still comfortable with giving one culture authority over the other, i.e., the Chinese. Admittedly this tendency can be justified in many ways, but it comes with persistent limitations. Not only does it still risk the tautological dichotomy (i.e., ethnicity determining culture determining ethnicity) but also shuns the larger issue of regional distinction. Multiple factors would have made certain regions more receptive to newer funerary practices; at the same time, ethno-cultural conventions within Buddhist material culture varied by region as well.

How would cremation have been conceived by the preparers of these burials? The general tendency in understanding the relationship between cremation and ethno-cultural identity in Liao funerary practice is to regard the presence of cremated remains in tombs as a marker of "Chineseness."[29] When we consider that the people of the Liao at various levels of society had embraced Buddhism, it seems unreasonable to equate the ashes of a cremated body in Liao tombs to some notion of Chineseness.[30] For example, the making

28. Families of the Liu 劉, the Han 韓, the Ma 馬, the Zhang 張 and the Cheng 呈 intermarried members of Khitan elite. For a succinct example, see Zhang Xiande 张先得, "Beijing shi Daxingxian Liaodai Ma Zhiwen fuqi hezang mu" 北京市大兴县辽代马直温夫妻合葬墓, *Wenwu* 12 (1980): 35. In the case of the Xuanhua Tomb No. 7, the epitaph recounts that the occupant's (Zhang Shiqing 張世卿) granddaughter-in-law was a certain "Yelü 耶律." See Chen Shu 陳述 ed., *Quan Liao wen* 全遼文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju: 1982), 327. The direct contact between the two elite groups through marriage—one with Khitan surnames and the other with Chinese surnames—raises a meaningful question regarding the "cultural identity" of such a novel enterprise as the mannequin-type body; it further exposes the problematic practice of essentializing a "body" (in both living and dead form in this case) that is already a hybrid.

29. Xu Jijun, "Lun Song dai huozang de shengxing ji qi yuanyin;" Li Yiyou 李逸友, "Lüelun Liaodai qidan yu hanren muzang de tezheng he fenqi" 略论辽代契丹与汉人墓葬的特征和分期, *Zhongguo kaoguhui di liu ci lunwen ji* 中国考古会第六次论文集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1990), 187–96; and Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation*, 231–32.

30. Of course, this is not to claim that Buddhism was the exclusive cause of the widespread practice of cremation in China especially since the tenth century. As Patricia Ebrey has noted, both transmitted texts and archaeological material attest that the Buddhist connection was not the only or primary source for cremation during the middle period. See Ebrey, "Cremation in Song China." It is also worth emphasizing that various types of burial practices coexisted in the Liao. In addition to the studies on the mannequin burial cited above, see Hiromi Kinoshita, "Burial Practices of the Liao (907–1125) Khitan Elite: A Reflection on Hybrid Culture." (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 2006).

of funerary "mannequins" containing cremated bodies may be considered an extension of a way that the corpse was treated by medieval nomadic people who were identified as the Khitans; by the seventh century, cremating the collected bones of the deceased was recognized as a well-known method of Khitan funerary culture even to Tang historians.[31] Because cremation had been thus known to and practiced by both the Chinese and the Khitans by the tenth century, there is no reason to interpret the cremated remains found in tombs within the Liao territory as an indicator of Chineseness.

On the other hand, enshrining the cremated body in the tomb must not have been controversial among lay Buddhists, despite the fact that making a tomb itself was an unorthodox funerary practice in Buddhism.[32] A negotiation like this had been tried and accepted ever since Buddhism reached China. Treating cremated ashes like a corpse had become common by the tenth century, which established a conceptual ground for Buddhist followers to adopt various forms of containers for cremated remains to be placed in burial chambers.[33]

For classical overviews of Liao Buddhism, see Kazuharu Kamio 神尾弌春, *Kittan bukkyō bunkashi kō* 契丹仏教文化史考 (Dairen [Dalian]: Manshū bunka kyōkai, 1937) (reprinted in Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1982); Nogami Shunjō 野上俊靜, *Ryō Kin no Bukkyō* 遼金の佛教 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1953). For more recent studies, see Jesse D. Sloane, "Contending States and Religious Orders in North China and in East Asian Context, 906–1260." (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2010), especially Chapters 3 and 4; and Fujiwara Takato, 藤原崇人, *Kittan bukkyōshi no kenkyū* 契丹仏教史の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2015).

31. Li Yanshou 李延壽 (mid 7th c.), "Qidan zhuan 契丹傳," *Bei shi* 北史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 94. 3128. Wang Yun 王惲 (1227–1304), describing the overwhelming popularity of cremation in the Central Capital (Zhongdu 中都, present-day Beijing) of the Yuan, recounts that by his time cremation was believed to have derived from Khitan practice. See Wang Yun, *Qiujian ji* 秋澗集, in *Siku quanshu* electronic edition (hereafter *SKQS*), 1201: 84. 219–25. Archaeological remains also attest to the Khitan's familiarity with cremation. See Zhang Baizhong 张柏忠 et al., "Neimenggu Zhelimumeng faxian de jizuo Qidan mu" 内蒙古哲里木盟发现的几座契丹墓, *Kaogu* 2 (1984): 153–56; and Zhang Baizhong, "Qidan zaoqi wenhua tansuo" 契丹早期文化探索, *Kaogu* 2 (1984): 183–86.

32. For various aspects in adaptation and appropriation of Buddhist doctrines and practices in medieval China, see Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); and John Kieschnick and Meir Shahar eds., *India in the Chinese Imagination: Myth, Religion, and Thought* (University of Pennsylvania Press: 2014). For an early mode of negotiation between traditional funerary art and Buddhist practice in China, see Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries AD)," *Artibus Asiae* 47. 3–4 (1986): 263–352.

33. See Xu Pingfang 徐苹芳, "Zhongguo sheli taji kaoshu" 中国舍利塔基考述, *Chuantong*

Figure 2. Funerary urn. From Wohuwan 臥虎灣 Tomb No. 7, Datong. Ceramic. H 28.5; dia. 32 cm. Late 11th– early 12th century. Datong Municipal Museum. Photograph by author.

In Datong funerary culture, such containers were made mainly in three distinctive forms, each conveying particular ethno-cultural and religious connotations. The most traditional and simplest type among the three was a ceramic jar, which had been used as a container for bodily remains in China since early medieval times (Figure 2).[34] Whereas the generic form of this first type did not give any specific meaning to what was contained, and vice versa, two other types were formulated in close conversation with the significance of the cremated remains. The second type was in the form of a coffin; it follows a standard form of Chinese sarcophagi, composed of four slabs, a lid, and a base, in a top-heavy trapezoid shape (Figure 3, p. 245).[35] While the form itself derives from a type of sarcophagus that began to appear in the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, the altered functionality as a receptacle of cremated, rather than bodily, remains, resonates with later Buddhist appropriation; during

wenhua yu xiandaihua 传统文化与现代化 4 (1994): 59–74; Hsueh-man Shen, "Realizing the Buddha's 'Dharma' Body During the Mofa Period: A Study of Liao Buddhist Relic Deposits," *Artibus Asiae* 61.2 (2001): 263–303; and Sonya S. Lee, *Surviving Nirvana: Death of the Buddha in Chinese Visual Culture*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010).

34. For examples discovered in Datong, see Zhang Bingren, "Shanxi Datong Wohuwan si zuo Liaodai bihua mu;" Liu Junxi et al., "Datong Hepingshe Liao Jin mu jun fajue jianbao," 3–7. For early medieval examples of funerary urns and their funerary contexts, see Stanley K. Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 71–101.

35. "Shanxi Datong shi dongjiao Majiabao Liao mu," 93–96; Liu Junxi et al., "Datong Hepingshe Liao Jin mu jun fajue jianbao," 3–7; and Jia Xia, "Cong Liaodai liuliguan fenxi Datong diqu zangshi tezheng," 41–44.

Figure 4. *Qionglu*-shaped cremation container. From Yiyuan 醫院 Liao tomb. Earthenware. H 30 × dia. 32 cm. Mid-late Liao. Datong Municipal Museum. Photograph by author.

Figure 5. *Qionglu*-shaped cremation container. From Hadayingge 哈达英格 Liao tomb. Earthenware. H 26 × dia. 31cm. Chifeng, Inner Mongolia. Chifeng Municipal Museum. Photograph by author.

the Tang, Buddhist communities adopted this form for making reliquaries to deposit relics and cremated remains in pagoda burials.[36]

The third type of cremation container is the most unusual in terms of the form's seeming irrelevance to the mortuary context. These containers take the shape of a trellis tent, composed of a circular base, encircling "walls" with or without a door, and a ceiling with a flat top, undoubtedly based on a nomadic tent (Figure 4).[37] Commonly referred to as *qionglu* 穹廬, *zhanzhang* 氈帳, or *baizizhang* 百子帳 in early and middle-period sources,[38] the form

36. For examples of coffin-shaped reliquaries in various mediums, see Shaanxisheng kaogu yanjiusuo 陝西省考古研究所, *Famensi kaogu fajue baogao* 法门寺考古发掘报告, 2 Vols. (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007).

37. No excavation report has been published for the tomb in which this container was discovered. For unknown reasons, a few other containers of this type that I have seen in storage warehouses and museums have drawn little attention from archaeologists, and thus they have not yielded a systematic report. For an example of *qionglu*-type containers found in Inner Mongolia, see (Figure 5). Also see Jin Yongtian 金永田, "Liao Shangjing chengzhi fujin fosi yizhi ji huozang mu" 辽上京城址附近佛寺遗址及火葬墓, *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 內蒙古文物考古 00 (1984): 94–97; plates on p. 8.

38. The word *qionglu* had long been used to refer to the vaulted tent-like architectural structure used by nomads in the Inner Asian steppes by the middle period, and it also referred to the houses in which the Khitans lived. For example, see Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Scripta Sinica Database 中央研究院漢籍電子文獻資料庫), 110. 2879–2920; and Ye Longli 葉隆禮,

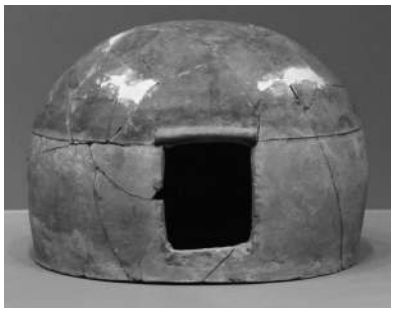

Figure 6. Model of a trellis tent. From Yanbei shiyuan 鴈北師院 Northern Wei tomb complex, Datong. Earthenware. H 18.2 × dia. 24.6 cm. Datong Municial Museum. Photograph by author.

references the most basic architecture that various nomadic people used for their everyday living.[39]

In contrast to the conventionality of the coffin-shaped receptacle that closely follows an established form of reliquary, the tent-shaped container conspicuously conveys a culturally idiosyncratic characteristic. In fact, making a model of the trellis tent for tomb furnishing already appeared in Datong under the regime of the Northern Wei (Figure 6). While the two cases share the normative architectural form developed through a nomadic lifestyle, their functions in the funerary context differ significantly: the Northern Wei objects did not include any bodily remains.[40] As a miniaturized model intended to resemble a real object in the world of the living, yet without functionality, the type of miniature tents found in Northern Wei tombs were designed to fulfill the

"Qidanguo chuxing benmo" 契丹國出興本末, *Qitanguo zhi* 契丹國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 3.

The term *baizizhang* began to be used in historical records on the Xianbei-based Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 (Azha Khaganate). For example, see Yao Silian 姚思廉, *Liang shu* 梁書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 54. 810; Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯, *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 59. 1026. Its etymology would have been a Xianbei word referring to a trellis tent and the term became much more commonly used during the Tang. See Wu Yugui 吳玉貴, "Bai Juyi 'zhanzhang shi' suo jian Tangdai hufeng" 白居易 '氈帳詩' 所見唐代胡風, *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 5 (1999): 405–6. It is noteworthy that the Tuyuhun language belongs to Para-Mongolic, which is also the case with the Khitan language. See Alexander Vovin, "Some Notes on the Tuyuhun (吐谷渾) Language: In the Footsteps of Paul Pelliot," *Journal of Sino-Western Communications* 7.2 (2015): 158–66.

39. For detailed descriptions of the trellis tent, see Bai Juyi, "Qing zhanzhang ershi yun" 青毡帳二十韵, in Zhu Jincheng 朱金城 collated, *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao* 白居易集箋校 (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), vol. 4, 2134–35.

40. For example, see Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo 大同市考古研究所, *Datong Yanbei shiyuan Bei Wei muqun* 大同雁北师院北魏墓群 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), 67–68; color plate 42.

role of *mingqi* 明器 (or spirit articles) destined to accompany the soul of the deceased.[41] By keeping the interior empty only to be occupied by the invisible soul, these Northern Wei objects were configured in a similar way to the model houses that had been occupying tombs since the Han dynasty; those models were typically made in imitation of timber architecture (Figure 7), p. 246.[42] Embracing the quintessential nomadic built environment familiar to the Tuoba-Xianbei, they replaced the form of the Chinese architecture, while keeping its ritual function intact.

The Liao containers defined their relationship to the deceased differently by shrouding the physical remains of the body. Negating the cremated ashes as lifeless remains, the choice of the *qionglu* shape for the containers alludes to the *living* state of the deceased. Oxymoronic as it may sound, the creation of the living space for the cremated corpse is what distinguishes this type of ash-container as the most complex among all three types of receptacles. Recall that the relationship between the container and the contained in the case of the sarcophagus-shaped receptacles was tightly formed around the concept and reality of death; a real coffin was supposed to hold the physical remains of the dead, and the coffin form of the miniature receptacle fulfilled that task. That relationship, in the case of tent-shaped containers, was defined differently, as a *qionglu* tent was meant to be occupied by living bodies in flesh and blood. Holding burnt bodies instead, they were conceived of as a material metaphor for a "house" for the dead, hence reshaping the ontological

41. For the concept and practice of *mingqi*, see Wu Hong (Wu Hung), "'Mingqi' de lilun he shijian—Zhanguo shiqi liyi meishu zhong de guannianhua qingxiang" 明器的理论和实践: 战国时期礼仪美术中的观念化倾向, *Wenwu* 6 (2006): 72–81.

42. Most of the excavated tombs that yielded such burial objects belonged to Northern Wei aristocrats who were familiar with the conventions of Chinese funerary art. While they were innovative about creating new forms of burial, most distinctively the house-shaped sarcophagus, they were keen on adopting elements in the basic form of Chinese tomb making. See Wang Kelin 王克林, "Bei Qi Kudihuiluo mu" 北齐库狄迴洛墓, *Kaogu xuebao*, no. 3 (1979): 377–402; Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Datong Bei Wei Song Shaozu mu fajue jianbao" 大同北魏宋绍祖墓发掘简报, *Wenwu* 7 (2001): 19–39; and Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 陕西省考古研究所, "Xi'an faxian de Bei Zhou An Jia mu" 西安发现的北周安伽墓, *Wenwu* 1 (2001): 4–26.

For the classical definition and practice of *mingqi*-making in early and medieval China, see Wu Hong, "'Mingqi' de lilun he shijian"; and Bonnie Cheng, "Functional and Nonfunctional Realism: Imagined Spaces for the Dead in Northern Dynasties China," in *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture*, ed. Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton (Chichester, West Sussex, UK; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 77–80.

status of the cremated bodies. While acting as a funerary urn, the tent-shaped container thus served to transform the limited physical space into a symbolic, microcosmic dwelling for the dead.

The conception of the interior of a coffin as a living space for the deceased had existed since antiquity; the term *zigong* 梓宮, for example, which referred to the inner coffin (*guan* 棺) of an emperor, was already in use by the Eastern Han period.[43] In that context, the interior space of the coffin was envisioned as a dwelling site for the dead, in a way that would set free the finite physicality of the body.[44] This was not unique to early Chinese conceptions of a coffin either, as it was tangibly rendered in some Roman sarcophagi, for instance. In the case of the so-called Simpelveld sarcophagus, a crafted set of furniture in relief adorns all four walls of the interior, complete with the presence of its occupier herself in reclining pose largely in proportion to the miniaturized interior (Figure 8).[45] What essentially distinguishes the tent-shaped container of the Liao from these older, cross-cultural practices, however, is that its external form turned the otherwise sepulchral space into a site of daily living. By taking the appearance of a nomadic tent used in the everyday experience of the living, the idea of unceasing life infuses the receptacle made to hold the remains of the dead.

Might this manifest the erasure of boundaries between this and other worlds in any way? Or could it simply be the result of the negotiation between two cultural practices in the face of death? That receptacles containing cremated bodies were crafted at all, and that they were securely placed in a tomb space (rather than scattered or abandoned), show how the sponsors and makers of the cremation containers acknowledged boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead. For reasons to be discussed below, it is more likely that

43. *Zigong* refers to a palace made of catalpa wood; catalpa was a designated material for making coffins for the Son of Heaven. See *Liji* 禮記, "Dangong shang" 檀弓上, *Sibu congkan* electronic edition; and Ban Gu 班固, "Huo Guang zhuan" 霍光傳, in *Han shu* 漢書 (Scripta Sinica Database 中央研究院漢籍電子文獻資料庫), 68. 2948.

44. For example, Fan Ye 范曄, citing the *Fengsu tong* 風俗通, annotates that the term *gong* 宮 is used because it was the place in which the emperor *dwelled* when alive. See Fan Ye, "Mingdi ji" 明帝紀, in *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Scripta Sinica Database 中央研究院漢籍電子文獻資料庫), 10. 96.

45. See M. C. Galestin, "The Simpelveld Sarcophagus: A Unique Monument in a Provincial Roman Context," in *Die Maastrichter Akten des 5. Internationalen Kolloguiums über das provincialrömische Kunstschaffen - im Rahmen des CSIR*, ed. T. A. S. M. Panhuysen (Maastricht: Stichting Willem Goossens, 2001): 63–76.

Figure 8. Simpelveld Sarcophagus (two views). H 105 × L 240 cm. Late 2nd–early 3rd century. Sandstone. Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden. Photographs courtesy of National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden.

certain kinds of cultural negotiation intervened in the otherwise "orthodox" customs of bodily treatment in the funerary context (cremation itself was not unorthodox for both the Khitans and the Chinese by the tenth century, as pointed out above). The unusual form of the receptacles and the altered ontology of the cremated body urge us to ask which aspect of the trellis tent led the sponsors and makers to adopt it. An anthropologically sound suggestion might be that the occupant of such a tent-shaped cremation container belonged to the nomadic tradition, given the symbolic weight of "home" as the most intimate space for an individual. Rather than prematurely determin-

ing the ownership of the container's cultural production, however, I want to further consider a broader landscape for local dwellings, both for the dead and for the living.

The *qionglu* tent itself was undoubtedly the basic form of housing essential for the nomadic lifestyle. This directs us back to the *longue durée* of Datong as an intermittent residence for various tribes from the Inner Asian steppes (including Tuoba-Xianbei, Tujue 突厥, Uyghur, and Shatuo) as well as the Khitans. The question of whether trellis tents coexisted in Datong with timber buildings and thatched dwellings (two common architectural forms of housing in agricultural regions in north China) remains unanswered. While textual sources are silent about the details of the built environment as such, what archaeological materials have revealed is symptomatic of the mingling between nomadic and Chinese conventions. The coexistence of the coffin-shaped and tent-shaped containers in the Datong area is suggestive of cultural diversity and even tolerance among the locals. In this context, Datong may be envisioned as a "region" whose boundaries were fluid and whose dwellers, both people and things, engaged in multiple cultural encounters. To borrow an insightful exposition of the concept of region by George Miller and Philip Johnson-Laird:

> The region of a thing can be thought of as a rather indeterminate penumbra surrounding it. The advantage of region over place as perceptual predicate is that regions can overlap even though things cannot. Thus, two things whose regions overlap can be seen in spatial relation to each other.[46]

In the next section, I will argue that the relationship between "things" and the regions to which they belong is mutually constitutive, rather than definable by causality. What has been uncovered so far in the case of the cremation containers lets us see a glimpse of the "penumbra" surrounding the region from which certain inspiration derived—from motif to form. These overlapping spaces of cultural encounter will be examined in the realm of the tomb, which is at once the thing (as architecture) and the region (as the margin of this world).

46. George A. Miller and Philip N. Johnson-Laird, *Language and Perception* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1976), 59.

"Housing" the Tomb

In contrast to the diversity of cremation receptacles that reference both Chinese and nomadic lifestyles, the architectural space in which those containers were placed reveals striking uniformity. The floor foundation of almost all excavated Datong tombs dated to the 10th–12th centuries is round-shaped. They are generally simple single-chamber tombs made of bricks stacked on a circular foundation along the encircling wall, and finished with a gradually narrowing arched ceiling (Figure 9).[47] Tang-period tombs built before the tenth century in Datong vary in their shapes, and they were sometimes fashioned only to accommodate a coffin or body.[48] (See Appendix, Nos. 1–25) Contemporaneous tombs in other areas in North China also take on various shapes, showing no such uniformity as in Datong.[49] Such distinctiveness in

47. For one of the earliest tombs of this type excavated in Datong, see Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Hunyuan Tang mu fajue jianbao" 山西大同浑源唐墓发觉简报, *Wenwu shijie* 5 (2011): 11–15.

48. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong xin faxian de si zuo Tang mu" 山西大同新发现的4座唐墓, *Wenwu* 4 (2006): 35–46; Hua Yang 华阳, "Lun Shanxi diqu Tangdai zhuanmu xingzhi" 论山西地区唐代砖墓形制, *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社会科学战线 12 (2011): 121–23; Shanxi Yungang guwu baoyangsuo qinglizu 山西雲崗古物保養所清理組, "Shanxi Datong shi xinanjiao Tang, Liao, Jin mu qingli jianbao" 山西大同市西南郊唐、遼、金墓清理簡報 *Kaogu tongxun* 考古通訊 6 (1958): 29; and Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Datong Nanguan Tang mu" 大同南关唐墓, *Wenwu* 7 (2001): 53.

49. The quality of tomb construction and burial objects found in these excavated Tang tombs suggests that the occupants of the tombs would have been commoners of modest means. For surveys of the development of tombs found in Liao territories, see Wang Qiuhua 王秋华, "Liaodai muzang fenqu yu fenqi de chutan" 辽代墓葬分区与分期的初探, *Liaoning daxue xuebao* 55. 3 (1982): 43–96; Li Yiyou, " Lüelun Liaodai qidan yu hanren muzang de tezheng he fenqi," 187–96; Liu Wei 劉未, "Liao dai Hanren muzang yanjiu" 遼代漢人墓葬研究, *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 443–82. Liu Wei, "Liaodai Qidan muzang yanjiu" 辽代契丹墓葬研究, *Kaogu* 4 (2009): 497–546. Note that these surveys are based on the strictly dichotomous framing of "Khitan vs. Chinese." Liu Wei's recent monograph presents an improved survey by incorporating social status into its agenda. See Liu Wei, *Liaodai muzang de kaoguxue yanjiu* 辽代墓葬的考古学研究 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2016).

For an extensive database of middle-period burials, see Nicolas Tackett's electronic database, *Tang Song Liao muzang shujuku* 唐宋遼墓葬數據庫 (link is external) (1.0版) (Database of Tang, Song, and Liao Tombs, version 1.0), available on http://ntackett.com. For a searchable database of middle-period tombs (with the content of burial goods, tomb structure, tomb occupants, as well as each tomb's location in an interactive map), see *Liao Song Jin muzang ziliaoku* 遼宋金墓葬資料庫 (Middle Period Chinese Tombs), available on https://middleperiodchinesetombs.tw. This is an ongoing project led by Hsu Ya-hwei 許雅惠 and her team of graduate students, housed in National Taiwan University, Taipei.

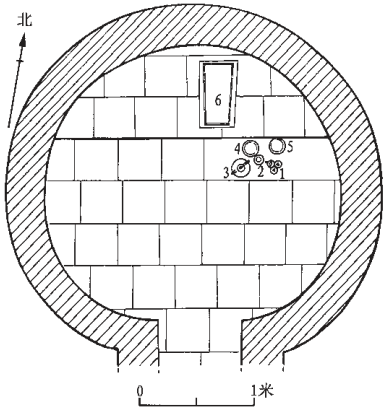

Figure 9. Typical shape of Liao tombs in Datong. Majiabao 馬家堡 Tomb. Cao Chenming et al., "Shanxi Datong shi dongjiao Majiabao Liao mu," *Kaogu*, no. 11 (2005): 93.

temporal and geographical distributions of the round tombs highlights a strong local tradition of funerary culture in Datong from the early tenth century, which continued into the late Liao period. Of course, tombs with a circular foundation had existed in other places in China at different social levels.[50] Unlike in Datong, however, they coexisted with ones built upon polygonal foundations.[51] Some of the tombs, especially those with hexagonal and octagonal forms, may have certain connections to the circular ones, but direct inspirations for choosing the shape of the tomb foundation are generally difficult to pin down.[52]

50. Among dated tombs, see Sichuan daxue lishi wenhua xueyuan kaoguxi 四川大学历史文化学院考古系 et al., "Luoyang Yichuan Hou Jin Sun Fan mu fajue jianbao" 洛阳伊川后晋孙璠墓发掘简报, *Wenwu* 6 (2007): 9–15; and Luoyang shi di er wenwu gongzuodui 洛阳市第二文物工作队 ed., *Fu Bi jiazu muzhi yanjiu lunwenji* 富弼家族墓志研究论文集 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 2010).

51. There are a few imperial and aristocratic tombs of the tenth century composed of circular foundations of various scale. As will be discussed below, they are relevant to the round tombs in Datong in terms of their cultural origins, although they were much more elaborate and grander. For example, see Chengdu shi wenwu guanlichu 成都市文物管理处, "Hou Shu Meng Zhixiang mu yu Fuqingchang gongzhu muzhiming 后蜀孟知祥墓与福庆长公主墓志銘," *Wenwu* 3 (1982): 15–20; Beijing shi wenwu gongzuodui 北京市文物工作队, "Beijing nanjiao Liao Zhao Dejun mu" 北京南郊辽赵德钧墓, *Kaogu* 5 (1962): 246–53.

52. Notably, areas in and near the Southern Capital as well as in the Supreme Capital, yielded several tombs in hexagonal or octagonal shape, which has been interpreted by some scholars as a development influenced by Buddhist visual culture, especially pagoda-making. See, for example, Li Qingquan, *Xuanhua Liao mu*, 294–332. In the case of round tombs, such a possibility is tenuous; most pagodas made during the Tang and middle period are in the shape of a square or polygonal. The only known and surviving round pagoda is the funerary pagoda of Chan 禪

The remarkable consistency in the configuration of both the burial foundation and overall form in Datong alludes to a kind of cultural source that would have been appealing to the local residents in their tomb making. Indeed, the shaping of the ground plan for tombs, especially that of commoners, was neither a simple matter of practicality, nor a completely thought-out architectural manifestation of ideology or philosophy—be it social, religious, or political. Of the many things that distinguish tomb-making from other types of architecture, the most crucial is its tendency to respect convention and downplay innovation; unconventional elements in any given time period and place developed rather gradually. By the middle period, tomb-making had become firmly established as a quintessential mechanism for ancestral worship and the backbone of a continuous society in this region. As such, the building of circular tombs in Datong for more than a century marks this as a site of contestation between innovation and convention in the funerary context.[53] While the form itself already existed before and remained available as an option, a question should be posed on its novelty in a relative sense: What made the locals adopt the new form *for them*?

The mode of appropriation observed in the tent-like urns would be a good place to begin gauging any level of ethno-cultural inspiration here. It was its external appearance that metaphorized the container into a home for the cremated body. In the case of tomb-building, the choice of the round form largely echoes the formal configuration of a *qionglu*-tent, yet with a fundamental distinction in the conception of the interior. Unlike the notional world created within the container in miniature, the particular shaping of the tomb as architecture embodied the spatial experience of the living. An insight into such spatial experience can be seen when we turn to a set of comparative examples that left clearer traces of the maker's intention in designing funer-

master Fanzhou 泛舟 in Baoguo 保國 Monastery, Yuncheng 運城, Shanxi province (ca. 822). In this case, the simplest and most reasonable interpretation for the iconography of the shape is its Indic origin; many medieval reliquaries take a similar form, which is a cylindrical container topped with an adorned *chattri*. For the basic form of, and documents on, the Fanzhou pagoda, see Gu Tiefu 顾铁符, "Tang Fanzhou chanshi ta" 唐泛舟禅师塔, *Wenwu* 3 (1963): 50–52.

53. The orthopraxy in funerary practice reveals significant patterns in the tension between convention and innovation. For a seminal discussion on this issue, see James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988). Also see Donald S. Sutton, "Ritual, Cultural Standardization, and Orthopraxy in China: Reconsidering James L. Watson's Ideas", *Modern China* 33. 1 (2007): 3–21; and James L. Watson, "Response: Orthopraxy Revisited," *Modern China* 33. 1 (2007): 154–58.

ary architecture. Because an impetus to any innovation is best captured in the ways in which seemingly unsuitable material is altered to approximate a desired form, paying close attention to the process of alteration is crucial.

A case in point is a pattern of burial practices of the Khitan elite in the Supreme Capital (Shangjing 上京) in Inner Mongolia. One of the earliest types of burial among the Liao elite in the region involved the building of a wooden structure just a bit smaller than the tomb itself in which the body was placed; in some cases, the body was enshrined within a small-scale wooden shrine.[54] Functioning at once as an inner frame of the tomb and an outer coffin,[55] such a structure was roughly round (Figure 10).[56] That the framing of the burial vault of the early Liao period took a nearly circular shape is note-

54. Han Renxin 韩仁信, "Tumuhuzhu shan Liao mu jiuji fushi xiaozhang ji Liaodai zangsu juyu" 图木胡柱山辽墓九脊覆尸小帐及辽代葬俗举隅, *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 1 (1996): 82–86; and Chifeng shi bowuguan 赤峰市博物馆 et al., "Chifeng shi Halahaigou Liao mu qingli baogao" 赤峰市哈喇海沟辽墓清理报告, *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 3 (2008): 10–16. Note that the earliest tombs, not caskets, found in Inner Mongolia also took a rectangular shape. For a brief survey of dated tombs whose occupants were identified as being of Khitan descent, see Li Yiyou, "Lüelun Liaodai qidan yu hanren muzang de tezheng he fenqi," 190. For a comprehensive report focusing on aristocratic and imperial tombs within the Liao territory, see Zheng Chengyan 郑承燕, Neimenggu bowuguan eds., *Liaodai guizu sangzang zhidu yanjiu* 辽代贵族丧葬制度研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2014).

55. A case of cultural adaptation, such a practice and its intended function do not need to be pigeonholed into a Chinese equivalent of the outer coffin, *guo* 槨, which is the way most archaeological reports put it. The aspect of the architectural layering here, not the form itself, is reminiscent of the earlier patterns of appropriation in funerary art in Datong and other northern regions that were occupied by nomadic states in medieval times. See Wu Hung, "A Case of Cultural Interaction: House-shaped Sarcophagi of the Northern Dynasties," *Orientations* 3. 5 (2002): 34–41.

56. Such structures are polygonal, and include hexagonal, octagonal, and decagonal forms, all of which are oriented towards a circle. For example, see Neimenggu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo et al., "Baiyinhanshan Liaodai Han shi jiazu mudi fajue baogao" 白音罕山辽代韩氏家族墓地发掘报告, *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu*, no. 2 (2002): 19–42, especially 22, 26, 33; "Aohanqi Yangshan 1–3 hao Liao mu qingli jianbao" 敖汉旗羊山 1–3 号辽墓清理简报, *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 1 (1999): 5; "Aohan qijia Liao mu," *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 1 (1999): 48–49; Balin youqi bowuguan 巴林右旗博物館, "Liao Qingling you you zhongyao faxian" 遼慶陵又有重要發現, *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 2 (2000): 2; Wengniu teqi wenhuaguan 翁牛特旗文化馆 et al., "Neimenggu Jiefang yingzi Liao mu fajue jianbao 内蒙古解放营子辽墓发掘简报," *Kaogu* 4 (1979): 330–34, and plate 2; and Hsueh-man Shen, *Gilded Splendor: Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907–1125)* (New York: Asia Society, 2006), 193. The authors of the last two references on the tomb found in Ongniud Banner (Wengniu teqi 翁牛特旗) note the resemblance of the wooden structure to a trellis tent. I have not been able to acquire reproductions of any earlier material, and therefore I use a later case from Wulanbasumu 烏蘭坝蘇木 (Figure 10) as an example here.

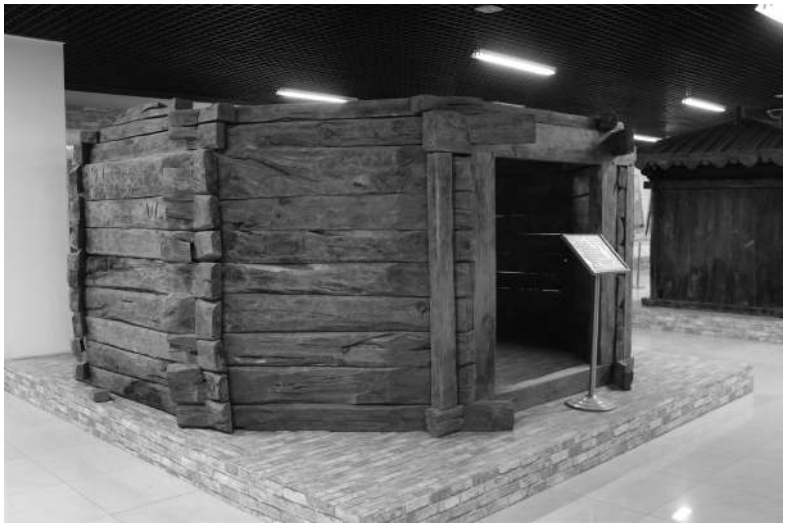

Figure 10. Wood funerary structure (roof not shown). Wulanbasumu 烏蘭坝蘇木, Balin zuoqi 巴林左旗, Inner Mongolia. Mid-late Liao. Chifeng Cultural Relics Management Office. Inner Mongolia. Photograph by author.

worthy, especially when it was not a choice of convenience. Making a round form out of timber required cutting more pieces of timber of shorter length, rounding their edges, and adjusting them along a curvilinear angle in order to smooth out the otherwise sharp corners; this without question required more time, labor, and skill than crafting a square- or rectangular shape out of the same material. Making a round burial structure was thus clearly a value-driven action, which would have been based on an experience that was meaningful to the Khitan elite.

This effort to simulate spatial form was extended to actual tomb-making as well. Several tombs of Khitan aristocrats and members of the Liao royal family in the Supreme Capital, the Central Capital (Zhongjing 中京, present-day Chifeng 赤峰) and the Southern Capital were built on circular foundations, some of which included the type of wooden structure discussed above.[57]

57. It should be noted that all known wooden structures were found in tombs built on the round ground plan, but not all the round tombs included this type of wooden structure; in other words, there are a greater number of tombs with circular foundations than the number of these structures that have been discovered. The contexts in which such a structure was chosen for certain burials remain unstudied and deserves further inquiry. For a concise introduction to

Coexisting with the historically more common rectangular (or square) shape, roughly half of excavated tombs of the early- to middle Liao (ca. 916–1060) share the round form for their main burial chambers.[58] For example, the foundation of all chambers in the well-known tomb of the princess of the Chen 陳 State and her husband, Xiao Shaoju 蕭紹矩, excavated in Zhelimumeng 哲里木盟, Inner Mongolia (ca. 1018), is circlular (Figure 11).[59] Even if the royal family members had access to knowledge about the standard structure of imperial burial in the Central Plains by then, which was consistently composed of rectangular chambers regardless of the scale of the tomb, they chose to make each burial chamber circular.[60] Notably, the general layout of these imperial tombs in the early- to mid- eleventh century echoes the ways in which the imperial tent would be placed, encircled by smaller tents, each of which was occupied by a team of guards in a seasonal mobile camp (*nabo*

Liao imperial tombs, see Nancy S. Steinhardt, *Liao Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

58. For periodization of the tombs belonging to the Khitan elite, see Zheng Chengyan, Neimenggu bowuguan ed., *Liaodai guizu sangzang zhidu yanjiu*, 100–10.

59. Sun Jianhua 孙建华 et al., *Da Liao gongzhu—Chenguo gongzhu mu fajue jishi* 大辽公主: 陈国公主墓发掘纪实 (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 2008). This spatial logic is shared in Qingling 慶陵, in Balin youqi 巴林右旗; every chamber is round-shaped and connected by corridors. See Tamura Jitsuzō 田村実造, Kobayashi Yukio 小林行雄, *Keiryō: higashi mongoria ni okeru Ryōdai teiōryō to sono hekiga ni kansuru kōkogakuteki chōsa hōkoku 1* 慶陵: 東モンゴリアにおける遼代帝王陵とその壁畫に關する考古學的調査報告 1 (Tokyo: Zauhō Kankōkai, 1953). The other common shape for imperial tombs found in Inner Mongolia was an octagon. Given the motivation for making polygonal wooden inner frames within the tomb discussed above, the case of octagonal chambers in these tombs could be considered as based on a similar inspiration as for round-shaped chambers.

Several tombs of Liao aristocrats of similar status share the general structure consisting of a large main (rear) chamber with multiple small (side) chambers; while some of the side chambers are shaped in rectangular form, the main chambers in this group of burials are uniformly round. For example, see Aohanqi wenwu guanlisuo 敖汉旗文物管理所, "Neimenggu Aohanqi Shazigou, Dahenggou Liao mu" 内蒙古敖汉旗沙子沟、大横沟辽墓, *Kaogu* 10 (1987): 889–904; Liaoning sheng bowuguan wenwu gongzuodui 辽宁省博物馆文物工作队, "Liaodai Yelü Yanning mu fajue jianbao" 辽代耶律延宁墓发掘简报, *Wenwu* 7 (1980): 18–21; Neimenggu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 内蒙古文物考古研究所, "Balin youqi Chuangjingou 5 hao Liao mu fajue jianbao" 巴林右旗床金沟 5 号辽墓发掘简报, *Wenwu* 3 (2002): 51–64.

60. Because those who were associated with the court at the Supreme Capital, such as eunuchs, officials, religious leaders and entertainers, were mostly immigrants from the Shanxi and Hebei areas (primarily *bing* 并, *fen* 汾, *you* 幽, and *ji* 薊), Liao officials and royal family members were well exposed to the standard form of tomb-making in the Central Plains, especially that used in the tenth century. See Ye Longli, *Qidan guozhi*, 25. 266.

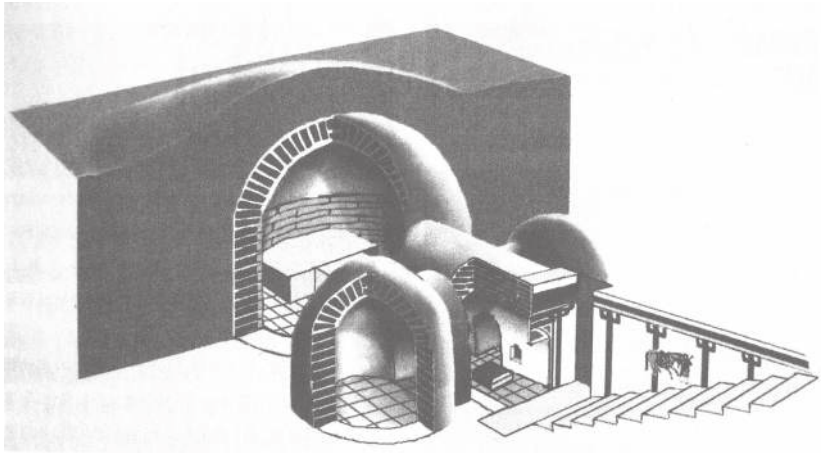

Figure 11. Reconstruction of the tomb of the Princess of the Chen State and her husband Xiao Shaoju. Zhang Xuefeng 张学锋, *Zhongguo muzang shi* 中国墓葬史, (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2009), vol. 2, 452.

捺鉢) composed of trellis tents as described in the *Liao shi* 遼史.[61] Liao imperial offices in the capitals were also composed of tent clusters, and each office was endowed with a formal name generally resembling Chinese-style office names. For example, in the Central Capital, such tents were named "Shengfang dian 省方殿," "Qingshou dian 慶壽殿," and so on.[62] Notably, such a layout is most prominently featured in the tomb of Zhao Dejun 趙德鈞 (ca. 958), a military governor of the early Liao (Figure 12).[63] Given his background as a former military officer of the Later Jin 後晉 (936–947) who surrendered to the Liao, and who resided and died in the Southern Capital, which was the hub of active interactions between the Khitan and Chinese cultures, it is possible that the design of Zhao's tomb was based on the built environment with which Zhao was most familiar. Furthermore, the tomb opens to the east, rather than the south, following the typical orientation of the doors in a nomadic tent, and resonating with the auspicious direction

61. Tuotuo, *Liao shi*, 32. 375. On the practice of *nabo*, see Fu Lehuan 傅樂煥, "Liao dai sishi nabo kao wu pian" 遼代四時捺鉢考五篇, in Fu Lehuan, *Liao shi congkao* 遼史叢考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1984), 36–172.

62. Song Shou 宋綬, *Song Shou xingcheng lu* 宋綬行程錄, in *Qidan jiaotong shiliao qi zhong* 契丹交通史料七種, ed. Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮 et al., 62.

63. Although the conceit behind such an exaggerated form is not recorded anywhere, it is reminiscent of the deployment of the *nabo* mobile camp. For an archaeological report of Zhao's tomb, see Beijing shi wenwu gongzuo dui, "Beijing nanjiao Liao Zhao Dejun mu," 246–53.

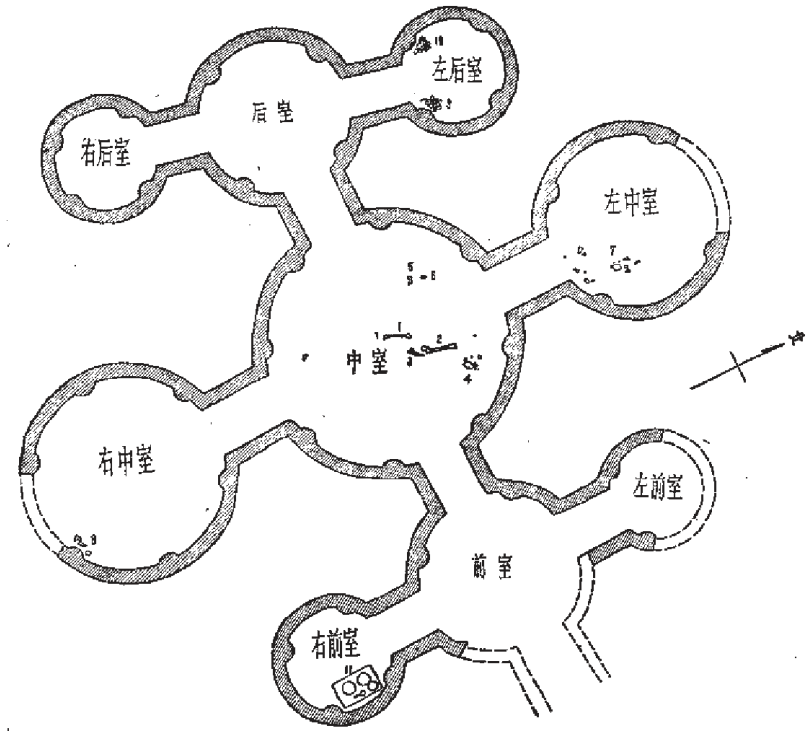

Figure 12. Floor plan of the tomb of Zhao Dejun. Beijing. Ca. 958. Beijing shi wenwu gongzuodui, "Beijing nanjiao Liao Zhao Dejun mu," *Kaogu*, no. 5 (1962): 247.

preferred by the Khitans.[64] The circular shape in tomb-making would thus have derived from the visual and spatial experience of the everyday world serving as the "foundational" form—literally, as its building foundation, and metaphorically, as a functioning architecture for daily activities.[65]

64. Several historical accounts on Khitan customs ascribe such a preference to the orientation of the sunrise and sun-worship (*guiri* 貴日 or *bairi* 拜日), hence their practice of east-oriented rituals (*jidongfang* 祭東方). For example, see Tuotuo, *Liao shi*, 45.712; Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Wudai shi*, 72.888.

65. An intriguingly similar case of an imperial tomb in an unlikely distant region in Sichuan further suggests that such an inspiration may not have been limited to the Khitans, but was more broadly shared among other nomadic tribes from the Inner Asian steppes. The case in point is the mausoleum of Meng Zhixiang 孟知祥 (874–934) in Later Shu 後蜀 (934–965). The burial shows the same structural principle of a large circlular main chamber surrounded by smaller circlular chambers. That Meng's political stance had been built upon his position in Later Tang,

The cases of imperial and aristocratic tombs in politically more central capitals allow us to recognize an important source for designing round tombs in Datong. How such an architectural inspiration—shaped through daily experience—was actually crafted by local builders emerges as an equally significant issue. This question has rarely been addressed in existing studies on ethno-cultural components in funerary art. However, it is necessary to recognize that the materialization of an idea or inspiration needs to be mediated and realized by creating hands. In a region like Datong, which did not leave much of a textual footprint on migration or ethnic composition in the middle period, attempting to answer this basic question becomes even more difficult. Regardless, an important point to remember in terms of the roles of creating hands is that they were also a part of the local community, just as the sponsors of the tombs were. All craftsmen and artisans had to work with, or (at least) conform to, the tomb sponsor's ideas or plans, regardless of the two parties' ethno-cultural backgrounds which, we should recall, may well have been different. In other words, neither the sponsor nor the craftsman of a tomb exclusively got to have the last word on its cultural characteristics, and the finished structure was the material result of their negotiation, if not collaboration.

From the Domestic to the Liminal

Such negotiation was at play at various levels in the actual building and embellishment of tombs. While the morphology of the tomb foundation echoes the form of a trellis tent familiar to the locals, the choice and organization of motifs of paintings on the interior walls are far more complex. In general, representations on the tomb's interior walls shape a specific kind of—and often multilayered—space within the architecture itself, and Liao tombs in Datong were no exception. In contrast to the consistently unified foundation shape, the ways in which the surface of the tomb walls were adorned show changing patterns in the mode of representation within a period of about two centuries. The shift reveals how the idea of the tomb as "home" gradually gave way to an unspecificied liminal space that was divorced from the tent-like body.

The interior walls of both early and later tombs are generally ornamented with the so-called wood-imitation method (*fangmu*), including brackets and

the Shatuo-Turk-based state, may have affected the design of his mausoleum. For an archaeological report, see Chengdu shi wenwu guanlichu, "Hou Shu Meng Zhixiang mu yu Fuqingchang gongzhu muzhiming," 15–20.

columns. However, the manner in which figures and events were depicted across the wall surface, segmented by elements of the imitated architectonics, reveals notable differences over time. In the following, I analyze two types of tombs from the early and later periods of the Liao that showcase those differences. The first type is represented by the murals in the tomb of Xu Congyun 許從贇 and a certain Kang 康, Xu's wife (ca. 976), and the second type by Dongfengli 東風里 Tomb No. 1. The first type honored the wall surface as a continuous architectural whole featuring pictorial motifs rooted in historical time and domestic space. The second type, by contrast, treated the interior walls as a pictorial plane in the fullest sense, and also included motifs that belong to timeless and undefined realms.

In the tomb of Xu Congyun and his wife, the choice of the pictorial motifs and their arrangement are marked by strong continuity in time and space (Figure 13).[66] Flanking a painted false gate as the focal point on the main (north) wall (Figure 14, p. 246) are female attendants standing beside a free-standing hanger (left) (Figure 15, p. 247) and another group of female attendants preparing for a tea ritual (Figure 16, p. 247).[67] As a common motif found in tomb murals in north China during the middle period, the appearance of a clothes or towel hanger in a funerary narrative like this one metonymically signifies the ritual of "washing and donning" the deceased (*xi* 襲).[68] Such a

66. Wang Yintian et al., "Shanxi Datong shi Liaodai jun jiedushi Xu Congyun fufu bihua mu." For a similar example, see the murals in the Zhoujiadian 周家店 tomb in Wang Yintian et al., "Shanxi Datong shi Liao mu de fajue" 山西大同市辽墓的发掘, *Kaogu* 8 (2007): 34–44.

67. For the preparation of tea in the funerary context, see Hsueh-man Shen, "Body Matters," 133–34; and Li Qingquan, *Xuanhua Liao mu*, 177–200.

68. Different versions of these motifs appear in numerous other contemporaneous tombs with particular emphasis on the preparations of the bath and the funerary bed. For a discussion of a case in the Central Plains, see Hong Zhixi (Jeehee Hong), "'Hengzai' zhong de zangyi: Song Yuan shiqi zhongyuan muzang de yili shijian," 196–226. The "*xi*" is a ritual that involves the washing and donning of the body in which "an attendant screens the inner chamber with curtains and sets up a bed (or couch) for the body" 以帷障臥內, 侍者設床, "moves the body to the bed . . . and covers it with a funerary blanket" 遷尸於床上 . . . 覆之以衾, "lays out the burial clothes" 陳襲衣裳, and "enters with the hot bathwater" 侍者以沐浴湯入. Sima Guang 司馬光, *Sima shi Shuyi* 司馬氏書儀, *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 edition, vol. 1040 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 49–51. These details are essentially derived from the *Yili* 儀禮, but they were adopted in the *Shuyi*, and later in Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) *Jiali* 家禮 in a more concise and condensed form. That late 10th-century tombs display this motif speaks to the common practice of this ritual segment in northern funerals, which explains why Sima Guang included and explained it in his manual for both literati and commoners. An example of this can be seen in the tomb of Xu Congyun and his wife.

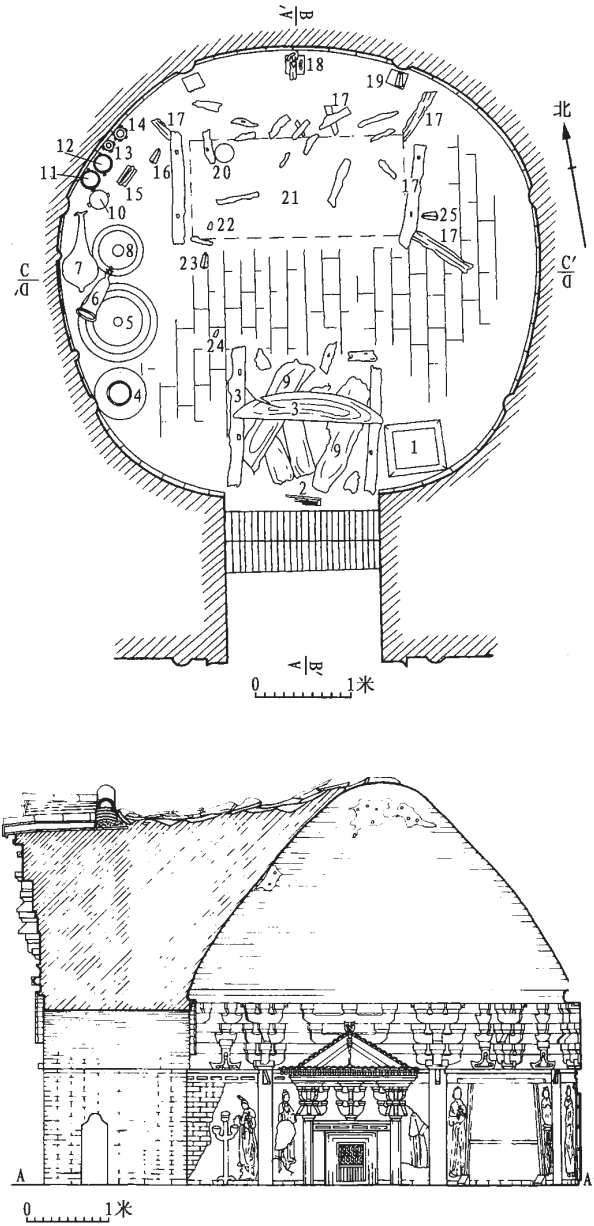

Figure 13. Floor plan and elevation drawing of the Xu Congyun 許從贇 couple's tomb. Datong. Early Liao, late 10th century. (ca. 958–976). Wang Yintian et al., "Shanxi Datong shi Liao dai jun jiedushi Xu Congyun fufu bihuamu," *Kaogu*, no. 8 (2005): 707.

Figure 17. Line drawing of a mural depicting the 襲 *xi* ritual. East wall. Gaocun 高村 Song Tomb. Dengfeng, Henan. Late 11th century. Re-drawn after Li Yang 李扬 in Zhengzhou shi kaogu yanjiusuo 郑州市考古研究所, "Dengfeng Gaocun bihua mu qingli jianbao" 登封高村壁画墓清理简报, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物, 2004.5, p. 6, fig. 5.

motif functions as a series of selected moments in a ritual dedicated to the deceased. They are symbolically present on the image on the north wall, likely behind the painted gate, flanked by the officials standing near the gate with their hands clasped before their chests as a gesture of respect. Such themes also appear in several other tombs in Liao territories, as well as in the Central Plains during the Song, which tend to share the same degree of elaborateness (Figure 17).[69] The occupants of these tombs thus seem to have had common knowledge of basic funerary praxis appropriated from classical ritual manuals, which had undergone various degrees of adaptation by the tenth century.

While there is no question that the sponsors' cultural background would have affected the choice of the ritual motif, how such knowledge was pictorially

69. See the west wall of the tomb of Han Yi 韩佚 (ca. 995) in Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo 北京市文物研究所, *Beijing diqu Liao Jin muzang bihua baohu yanjiu* 北京地区辽金墓葬壁画保护研究 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2008), 7; murals in the Jiangou 箭沟 tomb, in Zhengzhou shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 郑州市文物考古研究所, *Zhengzhou Song Jin bihua mu* 郑州宋金壁画墓 (Kexue chubanshe, 2005), 136–58; Zhengzhou shi kaogu yanjiusuo 郑州市考古研究所, "Dengfeng Gaocun bihua mu qingli jianbao" 登封高村壁画墓清理简报, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 4 (2005): 4–12; and Jinan shi bowuguan 济南市博物馆 et al., "Jinan shi Song Jin zhuandiao bihua mu" 济南市宋金砖雕壁画墓, *Wenwu* 8 (2008): 33–54.

expressed on tomb walls is an entirely different matter. In this representational mode, time is continuous, as is space: there is the beginning and the end of the funeral, all of which unfold in a single domestic space. In other words, the pictorial plane on the wall surface appears as a continuous sphere where a successive set of events occur. Needless to say, the painters could have rendered the same set of events differently by specifying a distinctive spatial background to each scene; using disparate settings would have negated the physical limitation of the walls that form the inner layer of the tomb. Instead, they chose a pictorial mode that allowed a spatiotemporal continuum which corresponded to the finite yet uninterrupted wall surface.

The sense of continuity in the spatiotemporal setting staged on the wall surface was sometimes extended to the real world outside. On the walls of another early Liao tomb excavated in Datong are depicted several servants of the deceased with their names inscribed in ink (Figure 18, p. 248). The earthiness of their names such as "Niuge 牛哥" or "Daxizi 大喜子" is appropriate for house servants, hinting at the maker's effort to fashion a plausible domestic sphere evocative of the life of the deceased.[70] Whether or not they were indeed actual individuals, such an attempt unveils a sense of the lived experience, creating a virtual world seamlessly incorporated into the tomb architecture.

Furthermore, it was not only the painted scenes that speak to the spatial continuity of domestic space within the tomb. Excavated tombs that were built between the late tenth century and early eleventh century in Datong share a particular kind of adornment that stages furniture and other domestic objects, such as a lamp or cloth hanger, in a way that replicates domestic space in a descriptive and seamless manner.[71] One might argue that any tomb space would basically be envisioned as a "home" for the dead.[72] But there

70. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong jichechang Liaodai bihua mu" 山西大同机车厂辽代壁画墓, *Wenwu* 10 (2006): 72–77.

71. Such technique of adorning the wall surface in a tomb with studded furniture and built-in architectonic elements primarily in brick blocks was not new; the above-mentioned tomb of Yang Ren (d. 879) in Xuanhua is one of the earliest examples. For an overview of the technique, see Ellen Johnston Laing, "Patterns and Problems in Later Chinese Tomb Decoration," 3–20. What is noteworthy here is the ways in which such technique was applied in these early Liao tombs in Datong to enhance the sense of seamlessly continuous space.

72. Of course, the tomb as the deceased's "home" is a cross-cultural idea. Even within the boundaries of this general conception, however, the interior space of a tomb had to be imagined differently in accordance with each tomb's complexity as a potential medium through which various ideas on the afterworld were expressed. From its inception in ancient China, the idea of the

is a fundamental difference between conceptualizing the *idea* of home as a metaphor for making the tomb interior and emulating the spatial logic and lived experience derived from domestic life.

A brief comparison with near contemporary tombs in the Central Plains makes this distinction evident. Each of the oft-cited Baisha 白沙 Tombs Nos. 2 and 3 bears a portrait of the deceased couple on the southwest wall (Figure 19a, p. 248), simulated windows on the northeast and northwest walls, and another simulated gate on the north wall (Figure 19b). The funerary portrait of the deceased alludes to a ritual practice that was supposed to be conducted in an aboveground *yingtang* 影堂 (image hall).[73] Here, all the architectonic parts and furniture are deployed in accordance with the given hexagonal shape of the floor foundation. Rather than reflecting a functioning domestic spatial setting, the interior space is abstract and symbolic. The tomb interior, then, was conceived of not as a whole space based on the actual home, but as a place of symbolic dwelling. In contrast, the continuity created on the wall surface of the early tombs in Datong suggests the possibility that the persistence of a round tomb foundation went hand in hand with the conception of the tomb interior as a kind of domestic space.

A different pictorial scheme is detected in several excavated tombs in Datong built during the mid- to late Liao period (see Appendix, nos. 36–41, 46–48); they present a collage of scenes within a single pictorial plane that are often temporally and spatially disjunctive. In Dongfengli 東風里 Tomb No. 1,[74] one of the best-preserved burials of this second type (Figure 20), the main (north) wall displays an image of a large bed in the center (Figure 21, p. 249). It is unoccupied by any figure, and instead the presence is implied by the sight of a pillow, a blanket (or cloth), and a mirror—a conventional way of indicating the soul of the deceased.[75] Standing in front of the bed stand are a basin and

tomb as a home was not a unified concept. See Wu Hung, "Art in its Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 17 (1992): 111–44. For a shifting conceptualization of the tomb space during the middle period, see Jeehee Hong, *Theater of the Dead*, especially pp. 136–45.

73. Jeehee Hong, "Changing Roles of the Tomb Portrait: Burial Practices and Ancestral Worship of Non-Literati Elite in North China (1000–1400)," *JSYS* 44 (2014): 203–64.

74. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Dongfengli Liaodai bihua mu fajue jianbao" 山西大同东风里辽代壁画墓发掘简报, *Wenwu* 10 (2013): 43–54.

75. For a discussion of the so-called *lingwei* 靈位, or spirit seat, see Wu Hung. *The Art of the Yellow Springs*, 64–170. For a representative example from the tenth century, see Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 河北省文物研究所 et al., *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu* 五代王处直墓 (Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), color plates 18–20, 23–25.

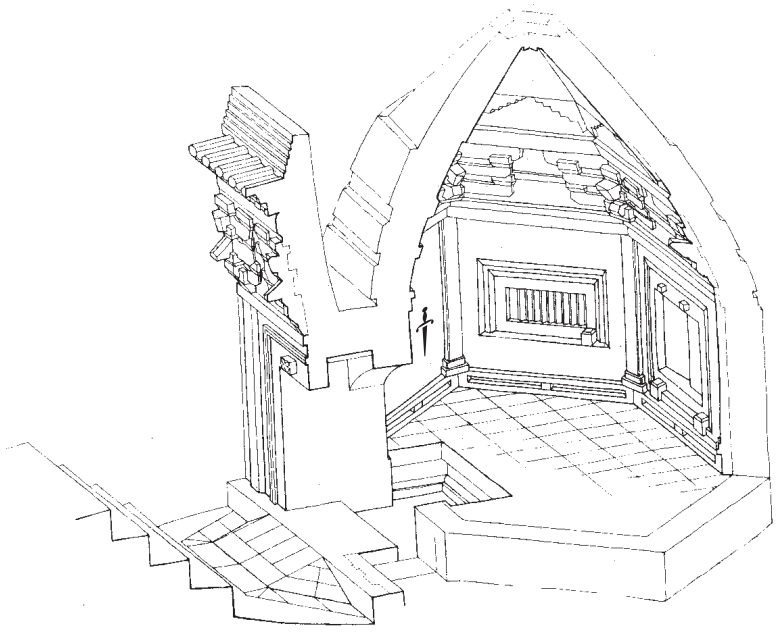

Figure 19b. Cutaway reconstruction viewed from the southeast, showing the tomb chamber's north wall on the right. Baisha Song Tomb No. 2. Baisha, Henan province. Late 11th–early 12th century. After Su Bai, *Baisha Song mu*, 67. Dagger † indicates location of portrait on SW wall.

a cloth hanger. And, on either side of the bed is a group of attendants holding tea cups. The scene portrays a version of the common motifs for depicting the funerary process: it presents the two originally separate rituals discussed above, i.e., the "washing and donning" (*xi*) and tea offering, combined as one. It is clearly set in a domestic space, most likely the inner chamber of a house (*qin* 寢), as indicated by the presence of large screens set behind the bed, as well as the bed itself. As such, the image on the main wall presents a scene of funerary rites staged in a domestic space.

In comparison, painted on the west wall of this tomb are two distinct images within a single pictorial field. On the right side is a hearse chariot pulled by a camel and a horse, with their grooms standing by. But within the same pictorial plane, demarcated by thick brown frames indicative of a free-standing screen, there are also painted scenes of farming in much smaller scale (Figure 22, p. 249).[76] While the two disparate motifs are supposed to be set outdoors,

76. The use of frames of a painted screen had become a common pictorial tactic in funerary

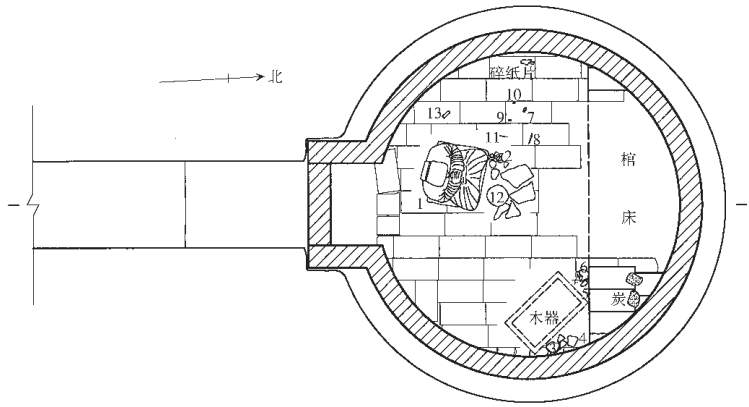

Figure 20. Floor plan of Dongfengli Tomb No. 1, Datong. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Dongfengli Liao dai bihuamu fajue jianbao," *Wenwu*, no. 10 (2013): 4.

they do not share a unitary space, as indicated by the contrasting scale and the heterogeneous content of the activities. The spatial discordance marked in a single pictorial plane is further highlighted on the east wall (Figure 23, p. 250). Surrounded by a painted frame resembling a screen as a solo scene, the left half of this wall is occupied by an image of several male attendants in formal attire standing by the empty bed depicted on the main (north) wall. Each figure carries a distinct object, e.g, a *paiban* 拍板 instrument, trays of tea cups and fruits, and so on. Below them are shown paraphernalia related to tea and wine as well as containers. The motif in this part of the east wall thus can be understood in conjunction with the motif depicted on the main (north) wall discussed above in which the figures are engaging in the ritual process. The spatiotemporal setting on the other half of this framed wall, however, abruptly deviates from the concrete funerary event (Figure 24, p. 251). From top to bottom, a series of symbolic objects is depicted without any pictorial relevance to one another: a lotus flower, a horse saddle (*an* 鞍) as a visual pun of "peace" (i.e., a homophone of *an* 安), a vase brimming with what appears to be some sort of treasure, a white reclining deer surrounded

art by the mid-Tang period. See Zheng Yan 郑岩, "Yazai 'huakuang' shang de bijian: shilun muzang bihua yu chuantong huihuashi de guanlian" 压在'画框'上的笔尖—试论墓葬壁画与传统绘画史的关联, *Xin meishu* 新美术 1 (2009): 39–51. The major difference between the Tang precedents and the cases of the late Liao tombs in Datong here is that the Tang examples were not fully incorporated into the larger framing of architectonics (as in *fangmu* method, even at a rudimentary level) that would foreground the overall spatial order of the virtual space.

by floating ingots and other treasures, auspicious fauna and flora, and symbols of wealth. A short poem written within a cartouche on the right side of the saddle verbally summarizes the unambiguous wish for the deceased's longevity in the afterworld.[77] As such, the designated pictorial field framed by the painted edges of a wood screen, doubly demarcated by painted columns in the fashion of the wood-imitation design, presents two heterogeneous sets of time and space at once: one rooted in historical time and in the domestic arena, and the other timeless and in an undefined realm.

The makers of the murals in this second type of tomb thus treated the interior walls as a full "canvas" that defied the physical condition of the architectural framing on which it was set. Such a mode is sharply distinct from the paintings in earlier tombs of the first type, such as the one occupied by Xu Congyun and his wife, which honored the wall surface as a continuous architectural whole. Of course, these two pictorial modes are common in mural-making in tomb art throughout history. Attending to their relationship to the foundational form discussed above, however, we come to recognize the historical significance of their shift within two centuries when their round architectural form remained unaltered. The changing conception of the wall surface as a pictorial plane here turns out to be a key to understanding how the tomb makers and sponsors of the early and later Liao in Datong envisioned the roles of the tomb space differently.

The point is best articulated when we review the basic process through which a tomb was constructed.[78] Once a chamber was dug out in the circular shape, its walls were built up with bricks, and its surface plastered with white pigment. From here, the first order of business for the makers was to render architectonics in the so-called *fangmu* manner. Columns, windows, doors, and brackets would be rendered either pictorially or in relief before any figures would be drawn; logically, even the painted frames of a screen would be added after this step. At this stage of tomb-making, an ontological link between the wall surface of the interior and the tomb as its architectural

77. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Dongfengli Liaodai bihua mu fajue jianbao," 48–49.

78. Recognizing the primacy of foundation-shaping is vital here. Unlike the habitual analysis of building process in which every step in architectural construction is assumed to bear equal significance and be organically interconnected with one another, in the actual first step in the tomb-making process, there was a certain degree of independence from what was to follow in subsequent steps of creation.

"shell"—the receptacle of the deceased and other funerary objects—begins to be made. In the first mode discussed above, e.g., the tomb of Xu Congyun and his wife, the spatiotemporal context of the featured events was rendered in accordance to the architectural fixture of the tomb walls. This strengthened the integrity of the tomb as *architecture* by acknowledging the ontological wholeness of the tomb as the "host" of what would become an alternate reality enlivened by pictorial narratives. In the second mode, the makers' dismissal of the architectural framing as the *spatial* unit signified that there was little consideration of the said connection between the fictive world created in the pictorial space and the architectural body in which it was based.

The overall shift in the representational mode as such helps us to understand the changing roles of image-making for the tomb space as well as the conception of tomb-making itself in Datong. Despite the ostensibly "Chinese" content in the motif (from the form of the clothes hanger to the metonymically rendered funerary rites), every pictorial element in the early tombs was deployed in a way that conformed to the idea of a real-world house—specifically one in the shape of a trellis tent. The sense of spatial continuity and domesticity infused throughout the pictorial program is deeply reminiscent of the functioning residential space typically found in a nomadic tent (Figure 25). Unlike typical domestic architecture in most urban areas in traditional China, a trellis tent was a single-room structure in which spaces for particular domestic activities, such as sleeping or cooking, were deployed in continuous and linear manner along the surface of interior walls. In the later mode, conversely, the makers' choice to display disparate motifs rather than composing a single narrative suggests that later residents in Datong no longer conceived of the tomb as architecture that virtually functioned like a house. That is, they no longer embraced the image-bearing wall's organic relationship to the medium, i.e., the tomb itself. Instead, they broke free from the confinement of the medium, as it were. This change must be considered in conjunction with what it meant for the makers of early tombs to maintain a holistic idea of the tomb in the first place as a "house" for the deceased.

Given that some tomb occupants of the early Liao tombs in Datong must have been "Chinese" (or of sedentary culture, more accurately), such as Xu Congyun and his wife, a question arises: how might the nomadic built environment have been available to them—as a sight or site, or both? Although no textual record provides a definite answer, recalling an earlier mode of interaction between the sedentary and nomadic cultures sheds light on this

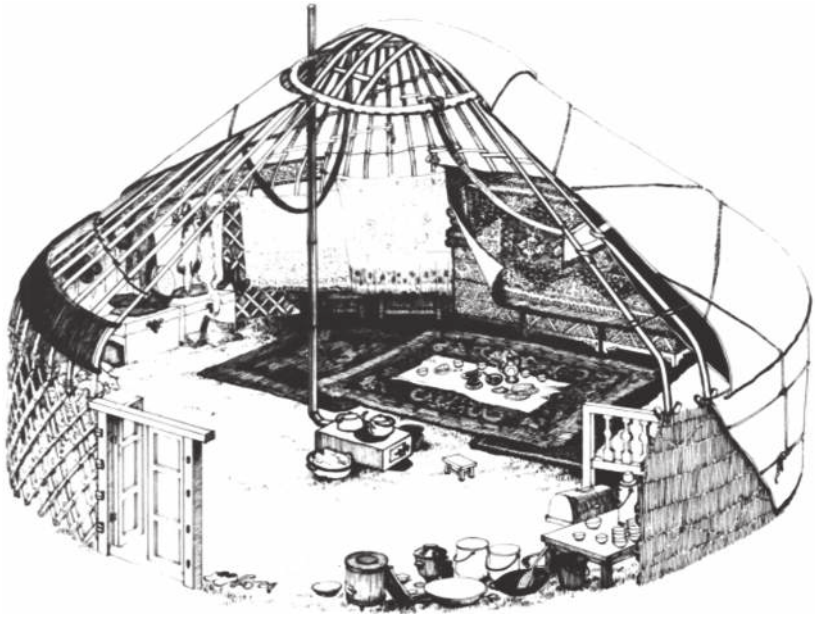

Figure 25. Interior view of a typical yurt. Drawing based on a contemporary Kazakh dwelling in Xinjiang). Chen Zhendong 陈震东, "Xinjiang qu Hasakezu zhanfang 新疆区哈萨克族毡房," in Wang Zhili 汪之力, chief ed., *Zhongguo chuantong minju jianzhu* 中国传统民居建筑 (Jinan: Shandong kexue jishu chubanshe, 1994), 110.

issue. In a series of poems on his experience in the trellis tent that he owned,[79] the Tang poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) described how this form's cozy interior sheltered him from the freezing snow and wintry air outside. Bai often analogized such conditions to his feelings about aging, hardship in life, or the meditative condition that the tent created.[80] Bai was clearly conscious of the tent's northern origin, and he sometimes invoked images of warfare and the movement of people across the northern borders. Such imagery may or may not have been based on his personal experience, but they were described in the poems as if they were "memories" wrapped up in the tent he brought to

79. For a collection of the tent-related poems by Bai Juyi and the so-called *hufeng* 胡風 in metropolitan areas in the Tang, see Wu Yugui, "Bai Juyi 'zhanzhang shi' suo jian Tangdai hufeng," 401–20.

80. Among the fourteen poems collected by Wu Yugui, "Qing zhanzhang ershi yun 青毡帐二十韵" is especially rich. See Bai Juyi, "Qing zhanzhang ershi yun," in *Bai Juyi ji jianxiao* 白居易集笺校 (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 4:31.2134–35.

his house garden in Luoyang.[81] That a member of the Tang elite like Bai was immersed in experiencing the interior space of a trellis tent may be seen as a peculiar case of a poet's interest in exotic culture.[82] Yet equally significant is the fact that the elite living in the Central Plains had firsthand access to a trellis tent, and remained open to experiencing it as both a sight and site of steppe culture. Given Bai's highly celebrated status as a poet, it is unsurprising that his poems on the tent were also widely read by Song literati in the twelfth century.[83]

Other transmitted textual sources also demonstrate that right around the time when the Tang empire began to dissolve, material objects from the nomadic living environment such as *qionglu* tents were available to, and appropriated by, individuals who did not have first-hand experience with the northern steppes. For example, a poem by Gao Pian 高駢 (fl. 879–887), the military governor of Huainan 淮南, Anhui province, celebrates a trellis tent that was gifted by his colleague Li Keju 李可舉 (fl. 863–885), then the military governor of Youzhou 幽州.[84] Given that Li Keju's father (i.e., Li Maoxun 李茂勳) was originally from the Uyghur Khaganate (Abusi 阿布思 tribe),[85] Li's gifting of this tent to Gao would have been based on his relative familiarity with the trellis tent itself.[86] Li's choice of a trellis tent as a present to his colleague may simply be seen as a kind of statement about his origins. And yet, Gao Pian as the receiver of the gift projects in the poem a more

81. To Bai, the tent seems to have been a medium through which his longing for certain places or conditions, both real and imaginary, could be triggered. Although any specific experiences that could have been the causes of such longing are never indicated, the mode of reminiscence is effectively built up by the stark juxtaposition between two worlds: the dark, cold, and wintry exterior and the cozy, warm, and comfortable interior—the realm of retirement and transcendence away from the realities of life.

82. Ishida Mikinosuke 石田幹之助, *"Tōdai hoku shina ni okeru ichi izoku* 唐代北支那に於ける一異俗," *Tōshi sōshō* 唐史叢鈔 (Tokyo: Kaname Shobō, 1948), 144–55; Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1963), 29; and Wu Yugui, "Bai Juyi 'zhanzhang shi' suo jian Tangdai hufeng."

83. See Cheng Dachang's 程大昌 (1123–1195) comment on Bai's poem. Cheng Dachang, "Baizi zhang 百子帳," *Yanfan lu* 演繁露, ed. Ji yun 紀昀, in *SKQS*, 852:13.181–82.

84. Gao Pian, "Youzhou Li Keju dawang yi shou" 幽州李可舉大王一首, in Choe Chi-won 崔致遠 (b. 857), *Kyewon pilgyung jip* 桂苑筆耕集 (886), *Haishan xian guan congshu* 海山仙館叢書 edition (vol. 51), ed. Pan Shicheng 潘仕成 (1849), 10. 13a.

85. For Li Keju's military activities, see *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Scripta Sinica Database 中央研究院漢籍電子文獻資料庫), 180. 4680–81.

86. See Ouyang Xiu, "Li Maoxun zhuan" 李茂勳傳, in *Xin Tang shu*, (Scripta Sinica Database 中央研究院漢籍電子文獻資料庫), 137. 5983.

nuanced imagery and perception of the tent as an object bearing an almost organic quality to its changing environment. The *qionglu* dazzled Gao's eyes with its "marvelous patterns of the desert" and astonished his ears with "the miscellaneous sounds from the Yangtze and Huai rivers."[87] Gao thus characterized the tent as a piece of mobile architecture that harbored the wondrous sights and sounds it encountered throughout its journey from the desert to the Central Plains. In other words, when the trellis tent was unfolded and assembled, the "experiences" from its original habitat and subsequent travels fascinated someone like Gao who lived in a region with sedentary culture.

The elite's episodic yet telling impressions of *qionglu* tents in the mid- to late ninth century help us to envision a potential mode through which sources about nomadic living would have been accessible to those who did not have direct contact with nomadic peoples and their built environment. This type of access would have existed in Datong, given the region's long history as a zone in which multiple ethno-cultural communities coexisted.

The visual and material culture of the trellis tent endowed early Liao residents of Datong with a sensibility towards maintaining the interior space as a continuous whole. Those who were familiar with the nomadic lifestyle, including actual lived experiences in a tent, would have fully embraced that mode of tomb-making. To them, the trellis tent would have been naturally perceived as a home; as such, it befitted the final abode of their loved ones or themselves. Those associated with the stationary, non-nomadic culture, meanwhile, may have shared the sentiments of the late Tang elite discussed above. Their knowledge of, and indirect experience with, the nomadic tent as a space of domestic life would have allowed them to maintain a sense of wholeness within the interior space of the round-shaped tomb. This explains how it became possible for the culturally "mismatching" pictorial motifs derived from classical ritual and visual codes to be arranged in a way to maintain the spatial logic of the interior world within the trellis tent.

Tomb-making is in part an act of commemoration, yet not simply in the narrow sense of remembering the dead. It is a process in which the environment shared by the living and the dead at some point of their lives is selectively evoked in a visual and spatial form that was meaningful for them.[88] As such,

87. "莫不銜沙漠之奇模, 駭江淮之衆聽." Gao Pian, "Youzhou Li Keju dawang yi shou," in *Kyewon pilgyung jip*, 10. 13a.

88. I use "remembering" in a sense that Pierre Nora conceptualized in defining "realms

what the residents of Datong chose to remember and register in the mortuary space matters, regardless of their ethnic identities or the amount of time they lived in the city. To borrow Maurice Halbwachs's framework, when a community replaces another, mnemonics (or images of memory) associated with the displaced community—originally incompatible with the incoming group—become part of new conceptual reformulations contrived by the newcomer.[89] At the level of commoners, which groups were perceived as newly dominant and replaced is itself a question in the case of Datong and the other capitals of the Liao. But the role of collective memory as proposed by Halbwachs is relevant. When tombs as a mnemonic site were created in certain new ways, inspired by a cultural element originally external to that creating culture, the "memoryscape" of the creating culture would become a component of the new culture.

The shift in the mode of representation observed in later Liao tombs in Datong (that is, the abandonment of the continuity in the interior space of the tomb itself as architecture) suggests that the locals' familiarity with and/or interests in the nomadic tent as home in an architecturally holistic sense would have dissipated towards the twelfth century. Indeed, the idea of the tomb as a space-holder for the deceased dissolved in the latter half of the twelfth century, coinciding with the Jin's control of the region. A telling contrast between two contemporaneous cases highlights the transitional moment in the conception of the tomb space. Theses tombs were built only a few years apart, yet one group marks the declining mode of tomb-making in the region

of memory (*lieux de mémoire*)." See Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," in Pierre Nora (under the direction of), trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, with a foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1–20. In Nora's framework, a realm of memory is a multireferential domain that brings on various cultural discourses and practices of remembrance; it is in constant negotiation with diverse social needs. While Nora's conceptualization reinforces a temporal distinction between pre-modern times and the modern era of the nation state, the term holds a broad capacity as a conceptual tool for understanding the tomb as a site of remembrance across concrete built environments of the everyday world and the ritualized realm of the dead and the living. For a detailed discussion of Nora's *lieux de mémoire* and other central concepts, see Nancy Wood, "Memory's Remains: Les *lieux de mémoire*," *History and Memory*, vol. 6 (1994): 123–51.

89. Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925) (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 1976). See Chapter 3 (La construction de passé), esp. 109–11, and Chapter 4 (La localisation du souvenirs).

while the other the newer mode that took its place. A group of three tombs belonging to a certain Lü 呂 clan (Zhoujiadian 周家店 Tomb Nos. 11, 12, and 14, ca. 1164) have a circular foundation, just like most earlier tombs in the region, yet much simpler in that the entire burial is a vertical pit rather than a chamber with an entrance (Figure 26).[90] Because an earlier tomb found in the vicinity (Zhoujiadian 周家店 Tomb No. 15, ca. 1109: Table, No. 31) still takes the typical form of Liao tombs in Datong (round foundation, single-chamber), and because no other tomb of the Jin period with a round foundation has been found in this area, it is clear that this group of tombs bears only a vestige of the tent-like tombs that were already extinct by then. The other set of tombs reveals a new trend. The earliest dated tomb built after the Jurchen-Jin's occupation of the area, Yunda 雲大 Tomb No. 2, has a near-square foundation (ca. 1157–1159).[91] The owner of the tomb was a man named Chen Qing 陳慶 who was a "long-term resident of Datong (久居大同府人)."[92] While Chen's tomb showcases the adoption of a new shape of tomb by someone who was considered a local, a slightly later tomb (1161) that belonged to a man named Xu Gui 徐龜 (b.1093) shows that this new form of tomb was also adopted by an immigrant to Datong. Xu's tomb has a square foundation with all four walls sumptuously painted with familiar motifs such as preparation for a tea ritual and for

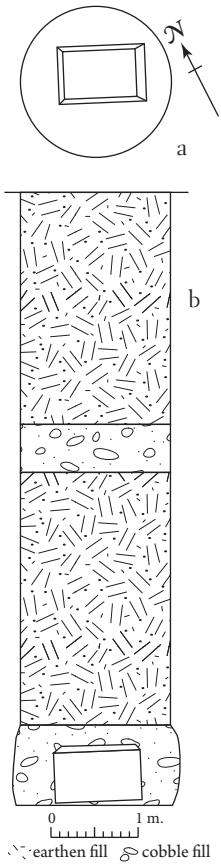

Figure 26. Plan (a) and section (b) of Shilipu Tomb No. 12. 1164. Jin dynasty. Datong. Re-drawn by David W. Goodrich after Shanxi Yungang guwu baoyangsuo qinglizu, "Shanxi Datong shi xinanjiao Tang, Liao, Jin mu qingli jianbao," *Kaogu tongxun*, no. 6 (1958): 35, fig. 7.

90. "Shanxi Datong shi xinanjiao Tang, Liao, Jin mu qingli jianbao" 山西大同市西南郊唐、遼、金墓清理簡報 *Kaogu tongxun* 6 (1958): 35. Also see Table, no. 54–57.

91. According to Chen's epitaph, Chen died in 1157. When his wife, a certain Li 李, died in 1159, they were buried in this tomb together. *Kaogu xuebao* 4 (1992): 520.

92. See the transcription of the epitaph in *Kaogu xuebao* 4 (1992): 520.

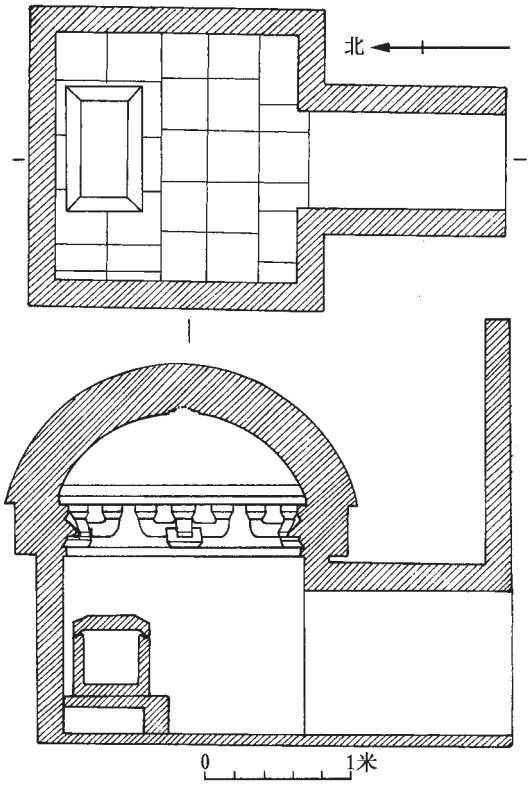

Figure 27. Floor plan (top) and elevation drawing (bottom). Xu Gui's tomb, Datong. 1161. Jin dynasty. Datong shi bowuguan, "Shanxi Datong shi Jindai Xu Gui mu," *Kaogu*, no. 9 (2004): 52.

the deceased's departure (Figures 27, 28, p. 251).[93] The arrangement of the pictorial motifs, which corresponds to the spatial segmentation of the interior walls, suggests that any trace of the mismatched relationship between the content of the mural and the architectural logic has completely dissolved at this point. According to an inscription found in the tomb, Xu was originally from western Inner Mongolia,[94] but moved to Datong after "warfare" (兵火), which most likely refers to the Liao-Jin war in Datong in 1122.[95] He died

93. Datong shi bowuguan 大同市博物館, "Shanxi Datong shi Jindai Xu Gui mu," 山西大同市金代徐龜墓, *Kaogu* 9 (2004): 51–57.

94. The inscription carved on the surface of the stone container for Xu's cremated remains states that Xu was originally from Tiande 天德, which is present-day Wulate qianqi 烏拉特前旗 in western Inner Mongolia. See Datong shi bowuguan, "Shanxi Datong shi Jindai Xu Gui mu," plate 3 (p.53) and footnote 1 (p.57). For the location of Tiande, see Yu Wei, *Zhongguo xingzheng quhua tongshi: Liao Jin juan*, 338; 368–69.

95. Datong shi bowuguan, "Shanxi Datong shi Jindai Xu Gui mu," 57, footnote 2.

in Datong in 1161. The timeline given in this biographical account suggests that Xu was in his late 20s or early 30s when he migrated to Datong. Taken together, the cases of Chen Qing and Xu Gui suggest that the non-traditional shape of the tomb foundation, which had not been practiced for more than a century, was embraced by both long-term residents and newcomers in the area.

Potential impetuses for individual residents of Datong to follow the uniform tomb-making style are too variable to pin down. However, the very fact that whoever settled and resided in Datong conformed to a distinctive pattern of creating their final resting places is itself suggestive of the existence of a strong "regional" culture, which was not necessarily dictated by their ethno-cultural backgrounds.

Tombs as a Palimpsest of Regional Culture

In this article, I have attempted to lay out the multiplicity of cultural engagements in Datong with a focus on the built environment surrounding funerary practices. The findings from this inquiry, based on burial goods and spaces, defy the assumption that one ethnic group asserted dominance over the other. In the case of the cremation container, multiple forms of receptacles coexisted. But, more importantly, each form defined what it contained differently, thereby revealing the coexistence, too, of different perspectives on the netherworld. The coffin-shaped container maintained the whereabouts of the deceased's soul in an unspecified afterworld, following the older Chinese convention, whereas the *qionglu*-shaped receptacle metaphorized the remains of the cremated body into a living one, alluding to its itinerant afterlife, yet always being at "home."

The case of tomb-making reveals a dynamic interaction and tension between the two cultural sources, changing over time. The unusually consistent appearance of the circular tomb foundation, evoking the general form of a trellis tent, attests to the presence of the nomadic lifestyle as a cultural source. A closer look at the interior adornment, especially found in murals, reveals that the visual and spatial cue of the tent in tomb-making gradually gave way to a new burial space inside the burial chamber. While originally conforming to the idea of a continuous interior space based on the model of a nomadic tent, later tombs ceased to reference that model. Instead, they let the tomb turn into a zone of conceptually expandable space not confined by the physicality

of the tomb as a piece of fixed architecture. It is abundantly clear that these modes of representation at various levels of tomb-making cannot be reduced to the product of the ethnic background of the makers and/or the sponsors, either as the "Chinese" or the "Khitan." From the creating hands to the approving eyes of those involved in tomb-making, the ethno-cultural elements found in the resulting images and spaces were always in play, always ready for appropriation and reappropriation.

The recognition of the spatial and conceptual plurality in tomb-making serves as a rare opportunity to understand a particular way in which the two systems were negotiated and made to work, perhaps reflecting the ways that the *lives* of the residents would have intersected. Without further repeating the points discussed above, I would like to end this article by emphasizing the methodological potential of *spatializing* cultural legacies—something that many scholars have pioneered in various contexts. This has the potential to be particularly productive in approaching cultural histories involving multiple ethnic groups. Zeroing in on a geographical unit whose history can be cast in a longer (or shorter) frame of time than what dynastic changes dictate (or ethnic hegemony, for that matter), a regional approach can act as a palimpsest of cultural practices by multiple groups of actants and their collective memories. The ground is laid then for new boundaries of knowledge.[96] As a methodological suggestion, this approach finds deeper resonance with the broader issue of how peoples in different regions in the middle period may have conceptualized their afterworlds in close dialogue with their built and unbuilt environments.

96. Michel de Certeau's reflection on spatiality as process is helpful here: ". . . The determination of space is dual and operational, and, in a problematics of enunciation, related to an 'interlocutory' process." See de Certeau, trans. by Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1984), 126.

Appendix: List of tombs excavated in the Datong Area (approximately 7th–12th centuries)

NO.	SITE	PERIOD	CHAMBER SHAPE	REFERENCES	OCCUPANT'S NAME	BODY/CREMATION
1	Zhoujiadian 周家店 Tomb No. 7	Early Tang	Irregular	*KGTX* 1958.6	n/a	Body
2	Yanghepo 陽和坡 Tomb No. 5	Early Tang	Near circle	*KGTX* 1958.6	n/a	Body
3	Nanguan 南關 Tang Tomb No. 1 (of 15)	Tang	Near rectangular	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
4	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 2	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
5	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 3	Tang	Arched square	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Not recorded
6	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 4	Tang	Narrow trapezoid	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
7	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 5	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
8	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 6	Tang	Near rectangular	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
9	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 7	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
10	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 8	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
11	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 9	Tang	Near rectangular	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
12	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 10	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
13	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 11	Tang	Irregular trapezoid	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
14	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 12	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
15	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 13	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
16	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 14	Mid/ late Tang (ca. 805)	Near rectangular	*WW* 2001.7	Certain Cao 曹氏	Body
17	Nanguan Tang Tomb No. 15	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*WW* 2001.7	n/a	Body
18	Dongfengli 東風里 Tang Tombs (3)	Tang	Unclear (unrecorded)	*ZGWWDTJ* shang 上:158 (B2), zhong 中:76	n/a	n/a

NO.	SITE	PERIOD	CHAMBER SHAPE	REFERENCES	OCCUPANT'S NAME	BODY/CREMATION
19	Zhenhua nanjie 振華南街 Tang Tomb	Tang	Rectangle	*WW* 1998.11	n/a	Body
20	04M1	Mid-Late Tang	Trapezoid	*WW* 2006.4	n/a	Body
21	04M2	Late Tang	Trapezoid	*WW* 2006.4	n/a	Body
22	04M3	Mid-Late Tang	Trapezoid	*WW* 2006.4	n/a	Body
23	04M4	Late Tang	Trapezoid	*WW* 2006.4	n/a	Body
24	Datong Xinanjiao 西南郊 Tang Tomb No. 7	Tang	Irregular	*KGTX* 1958.6	n/a	Body
25	Hunyuan 渾源 Tomb No. 1	Late Tang	Circle	*WWSJ* 2011.5	n/a	Body
26	2014DTSJM1	Five Dynasties (911-913)	Square	*WW* 2016.4	Certain Jia 賈	Body
27	Hunyuan 渾源 Tang Tomb	Late Tang – Early Liao	Circle	*WWSJ* 2011.5	n/a	Body
28	Xu Congyun 許從贇 Couple's Tomb	Early Liao, 982	Circle	KG 2005.8	Xu Congyun, Mme. Kang 康	Cremation
29	Zhoujiadian 周家店 Liao Tomb No. 9	Liao	Unclear (unrecorded)	*KGTX* 1958.6	Mme. Ma 馬	Cremation
30	Zhoujiadian Liao Tomb No.10	Liao	Unclear (unrecorded)	*KGTX* 1958.6	Mme. Chen 陳	Cremation
31	Zhoujiadian Liao Tomb No. 15	Liao, 1109	Circle	*KGTX* 1958.6	Mme. Guo 郭氏	Cremation
32	Zhoujiadian Tomb (1974 discovery)	Early Liao	Circle [Mural: Model 1]	KG 2007.8	n/a	Cremation
33	Datong "Jichechang 機車廠" Liao Tomb	Early Liao	Circle [Mural: Mode 1]	*WW* 2006.10	n/a	Unrecorded
34	Wufacun 五法村 Liao Tomb	Early Liao	Circle [Mural: Mode 1]	KG 2007.8	n/a	Cremation
35	"Hepingshe 和平社" Liao Tomb M14	Early Liao	Circle	*WWSJ* 2018.5	n/a	Cremation

NO.	SITE	PERIOD	CHAMBER SHAPE	REFERENCES	OCCUPANT'S NAME	BODY/CREMATION
36	Wohuwan 臥虎灣 Liao Tomb No. 4	Liao	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	KG 1963.8	n/a	Cremation
37	Wohuwan Liao Tomb No. 5	Liao, 1093	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	KG 1963.8	n/a	Cremation
38	Wohuwan Liao Tomb No. 6	Liao	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	KG 1963.8		Cremation
39	Shilipu 十里舖 Liao Tomb No. 27	Liao, 1st quarter 12th century	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	KG 1960.10	n/a	Cremation
40	Shilipu Liao Tomb No. No. 28	Liao, 1st quarter 12th century	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	KG 1960.10	n/a	Unrecorded
41	Xintianbaocun 新添堡村 Tomb No. 29	Liao (1119)	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	KG 1960.10	Liu Chengzhu 劉承逐	Cremation
42	Nanguan Liao Tomb No. 1	Liao	Circle	KG 2007.8	n/a	Cremation
43	Nanguan Liao Tomb No. 3	Liao	Square, vertical pit (not chamber)	KG 2007.8	n/a	Cremation
44	Xihuanlu 西環路 Liao Tomb No. 1	Liao	Circle	WW 2015.12	n/a	Cremation
45	Wohuwan Liao Tomb No. 1	Late Liao	Circle [Mural: damaged]	KG 1960.10	n/a	Cremation
46	Wohuwan Liao Tomb No. 2	Late Liao	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]]	KG 1960.10	n/a	Cremation
47	Dongfengli Liao Tomb No. 1	Late Liao	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	WW 2013.10	n/a	Cremation
48	"Hepingshe" Liao Tomb No. 45	Late Liao	Circle [Mural: Mode 2]	*WWSJ* 2018.5	n/a	Cremation
49	"Hepingshe" Liao Tomb No. 29	Late Liao	Irregular trapezoid	*WWSJ* 2018.5	n/a	Cremation
50	Majiabao 馬家堡 Liao Tomb	Late Liao	Circle	KG 2005.11	n/a	Cremation
51	"Hepingshe" Liao Tomb No. 47	Late Liao/ Early Jin	Rectangle	*WWSJ* 2018.5	n/a	Cremation
52	Yunda 雲大 Tomb No. 1	Jin	Near square	KGXB 1992.4	n/a	Cremation

NO.	SITE	PERIOD	CHAMBER SHAPE	REFERENCES	OCCUPANT'S NAME	BODY/CREMATION
53	Yunda Tomb No. 2	Jin (1157)	Near square	KGXB 1992.4	Chen Qing 陳慶	Cremation
54	Xu Gui's 徐龜 Tomb	Jin, 1161	Square	KG 2004.9	Xu Gui 徐龜	Cremation
55	Zhoujiadian Jin Tomb No. 11	Jin, 1164	Cylindrical pit (not chamber)	*KGTX* 1958.6	Certain Lü 呂	Cremation
56	Zhoujiadian Jin Tomb No. 12	Jin, 1164	Cylindrical pit (not chamber)	*KGTX* 1958.6	Certain Lü 呂	Cremation
57	Zhoujiadian Jin Tomb No. 13	Jin	Cylindrical pit (not chamber)	*KGTX* 1958.6	n/a	Cremation
58	Zhoujiadian Jin Tomb No. 14	Jin, 1164	Cylindrical pit (not chamber)	*KGTX* 1958.6	Certain Lü 呂	Cremation
59	Wohuwan Jin Tomb	Jin	Octagon	KG 1961.11	n/a	Body
60	"Jiang Siyeye" 蔣四爺爺 Jin Tomb	1197	Unclear	WW 2016.11	Certain (4th grandfather) Jiang 蔣	Cremation

REFERENCES:

KG *Kaogu* 考古
KGTX *Kaogu tongxun* 考古通訊
KGXB *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報
WW *Wenwu* 文物
WWSJ *Wenwu shijie* 文物世界
ZGWWDTJ *Zhongguo wenwu ditu ji* (*Shanxi*) 中國文物地圖集 (山西). 3 Vols.

Figure 1. "Mannequin"-type receptacle of cremated body found in Xuanhua Tomb No. 1 in Site II, Hebei province. Detail. Wood. Late 11th–early 12th century. Xuanhua Cultural Relics Management Office. Photograph by author.

Figure 3. Sarcophagus-shaped cremation container. From Majiabao 馬家堡 Tomb, Datong. Ceramic. H 51 × L 62 cm. Mid-late Liao. Datong Municipal Museum. Photograph by author.

Figure 7. Model of timber architecture. Earthenware. H 26.5 × L 27 cm. Northern Wei. Datong. Datong Municipal Museum. Photograph by author.

Figure 14. Mural on north wall in Xu Congyun couple's tomb.

Figure 15. Mural on northwest wall in Xu Congyun couple's tomb.

Figure 16. Mural on northeast wall in Xu Congyun couple's tomb. Wang Yintian et al., "Shanxi Datong shi Liao dai jun jiedushi Xu Congyun fufu bihuamu," *Kaogu*, no. 8 (2005). Color plates 4.2; 5.1; 4.1.

Figure 18. "Niuge" (L) and "Daxizi" (R). Qichechang Liao Tomb. Northwest wall. Datong. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong jichechang Liao dai bihua mu," *Wenwu*, no. 10 (2006): color plate 3.

Figure 19a. Representation of the deceased (with attendants). Southwest wall. Baisha Tomb No. 2. Baisha, Henan province. Late 11th–early 12th century. After Su Bai, *Baisha Song mu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1957), plate 9 (mural).

Figure 21. Painting on north wall. Dongfengli Tomb No. 1, Datong. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Dongfengli Liao dai bihuamu fajue jianbao": color plate 2.

Figure 22. Painting on west wall. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Dongfengli Liao dai bihuamu fajue jianbao": color plate 1.

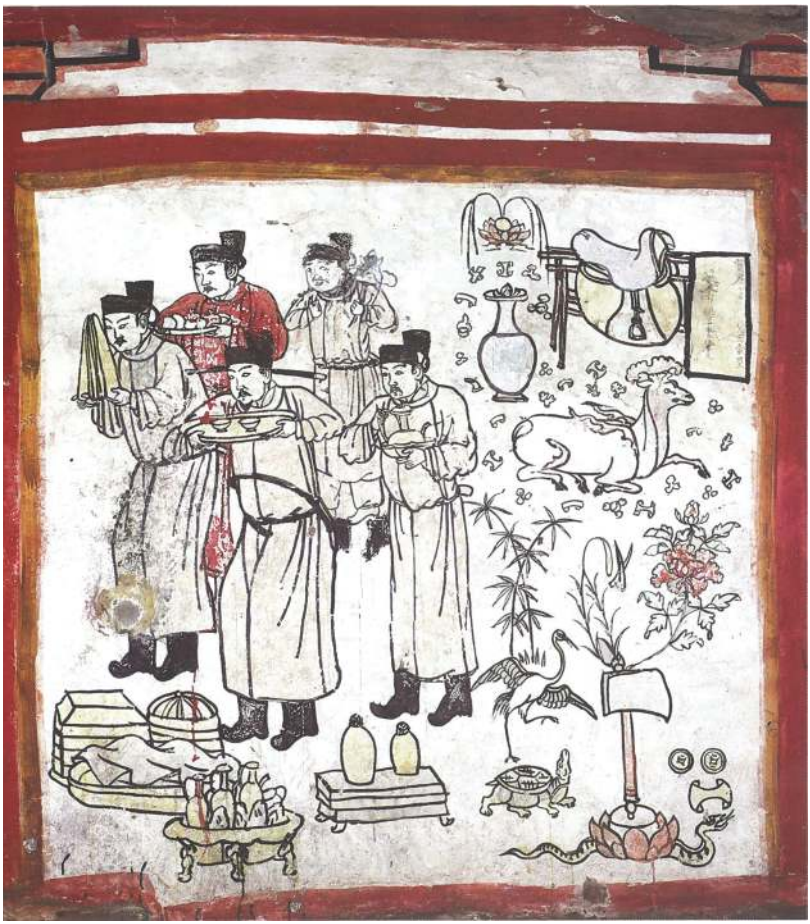

Figure 23. Painting on east wall. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Dongfengli Liao dai bihuamu fajue jianbao": 49.

Figure 24. Details of Fig. 23. Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shanxi Datong Dongfengli Liao dai bihuamu fajue jianbao": 50.

Figure 28. Painting on west wall. Xu Gui's tomb. 1161. Jin dynasty. Datong. Datong shi bowuguan, "Shanxi Datong shi Jin dai Xu Gui mu": Color plate 1.