

these were usually provided with small niches at the sides for the accommodation of funerary images and the like.⁴ Considering that the same enclosures also hold tombs of the simpler type, there is no reason to attach chronological significance to this variation in the plan. In three of the tombs examined, Ast. ii. 2; vi. 1, 4, the walls of the chamber bore roughly executed paintings representing possessions and pleasures such as the soul of the dead there buried was obviously desired to enjoy in a transmundane existence. In other tombs the back wall of the chamber was occupied by a hanging of painted silk. In the tombs i. 2, 6 and v. 2, which had been disturbed and consequently left open to the access of air for some time, only the scantiest indications of such hangings had survived. In ix. 2, however, the only intact tomb, the hanging was still in its place and shows, as now recovered, Ast. ix. 2. 054 (Pl. CIX), the figures of Fu-hsi and his consort Nü-wa in embrace, with their lower serpentine bodies entwined.⁵

There is every reason to assume that in all tombs the dead were originally placed within coffins, in conformity with those Chinese notions concerning the dwelling proper for the body which appear to have been strongly held throughout the historical period.⁶ But only in the undisturbed tomb ix. 2 were the coffins of its three occupants found as originally deposited. In a few others scanty remains of coffins had been left behind by the plunderers; in all the rest they had taken care to carry away all the wood of the coffins, so useful as fuel in a tract where timber is very scarce. The coffins of ix. 2 were of simple construction, fastened only with wooden nails,⁷ and had sheets of silk and cotton canvas spread over them, supplemented in the case of the principal burial by a painted silk showing Fu-hsi and Nü-wa. Before recording observations concerning the treatment of the bodies as buried it is important to note that in all the tombs, with one or two exceptions where the contents had suffered very badly, two or three bodies were found. This is fully explained by the fact, referred to in the funerary inscription of Ast. v. 1 and discussed by M. Maspero in a special note, that it was a ritual obligation to bury the wife in the same tomb as the husband.⁸ In ix. 2 the two smaller coffins undoubtedly housed women; in the other instances also one, or where three bodies were found in the same tomb two of them, had the appearance of being those of females.

Turning to the bodies themselves, it is noteworthy that in several cases where they were fairly well preserved, such as in i. 6; ix. 1; ix. 2. a, b, there was clear evidence that the dead had not been laid out, the legs being left just as they were when death rigor occurred. The hands of most of these bodies which were not too badly damaged held Vajra-shaped pieces of wood, which had been originally covered with torn fabrics.⁹ Observations of special interest relate to the dressing of the dead. As outside coverings shrouds of plain silk and cotton were placed over the bodies; these were found on practically all the corpses that had not undergone too much stripping or battering.¹⁰ In these cases it was observed that the outer shroud of silk had been painted, where it covered the front portion of the head, with the representation of two faces in profile, on a scale less than life-size.¹¹ In respect of the clothing of the dead beneath these shrouds two different types of treatment can clearly be distinguished. The more frequent offers a special archaeological interest. It consisted of wrapping around the body rag-like pieces of miscellaneous fabrics, mostly silks, whether plain, coloured or figured, and cottons; these in some cases could still be clearly

Bodies placed in coffins.

Shrouding of bodies.

⁴ See tombs Ast. i. 7, 8; iii. 1, 2, 4-5; vii. 2; x. 1.

⁵ See also Maspero, *B.E.F.E.O.*, xv. pp. 60 sq., where the recurrence of the same figures similarly posed in reliefs of Han tombs is noted.

⁶ Cf. De Groot, *Religious System*, i. pp. 280 sqq.

⁷ See *ibid.*, i. pp. 285 sqq.

⁸ Cf. M. Maspero's remarks in App. A; also De Groot, *loc. cit.*, ii. pp. 800 sqq.

⁹ See above, ii. pp. 649, 666, concerning i. 6; v. 2; ix. 1, 2.

¹⁰ See notes above, ii. pp. 645 sq., 651, 658, 662 sq., 665 sq., on i. 1, 3; ii. 2; v. 1; vii. 1, 2; viii. 1; ix. 1, 2.

¹¹ See above, ii. pp. 648 sq., 658, 663 for i. 5, 6; v. 1; viii. 7; ix. 1. The case of v. 1 seems to suggest that these faces might have been meant to belong to representations of Fu-hsi and Nü-wa.