



EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
LECTURE SERIES

Reconsidering the Significance of Chu Antlered Sculptures: A Regional Perspective

Cortney E. Chaffin · University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



Scholarly studies on the function and significance of Chu antlered sculptures, traditionally referred to as *zhenmushou* 镇墓兽, or “protecting tomb beasts,” have focused on the images as a widespread category of Chu sculpture, including three-dimensional bronze bases (tenuously associated with deer antlers), lacquered wooden antler stands, and fully representational sculptural images of antlered and tongued hybrid creatures. The latter category is especially complex and includes a wide regional variety of representations of antlered and tongued hybrid creatures excavated from tombs from across the vast Chu kingdom in modern-day Henan, Hubei, and Hunan provinces. This study argues for an alternative approach to understanding the meaning of these distinctive and diverse images, one that is sensitive to both their temporal and stylistic evolutions, as well their regional and archaeological contexts. Specifically, this paper will examine sculptures excavated in the Hanxi region of modern-day Hubei province, where the majority of these images have been excavated, with the hope of lending new insight to our understanding of the meaning of these powerful images.

April 23, 2021
4:30–6:30pm EST

Seminar Co-Chairs:

Jue Guo, Barnard College, Columbia University
Glenda Chao, Ursinus College

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