

STONE STATUES AT THE ROYAL TOMB OF KING SŎNGDŎK (聖德王): THE BEGINNING OF ROYAL FUNERARY SCULPTURE IN THE SILLA DYNASTY

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Stone statues created for royal funerary sites first appear in the Unified Silla period (668–935) at the royal tomb of King Sŏngdŏk and symbolize the beginning of a funerary sculptural tradition that would later develop, albeit in a limited manner, into a uniquely Silla aesthetic. The stone statues can be categorized into two types. The first includes statues of military officials called *mugwansang* (武官像) while the second group is made up of statues of warriors called *muinsang* (武人像). However, only the first type can be found at the Sŏngdŏk burial site. The statues of military officials in the Silla dynasty are distinguishable by a number of characteristics such as the presence of armor, hidden hands and the presence of a sword. From a combined examination of historical records, contemporary stonework and contextual considerations, it can be concluded that the stone statues of the royal tombs were not produced simultaneously with the construction of the burial site as is generally believed. Rather, these stone statues were later additions commissioned by the successors of the buried individuals. The motivation prompting the production of these stone statues was dominantly political in nature but could be attributed to several reasons that were specific to each ruler's circumstances. Furthermore, the observed parallels between the Sŏngdŏk statues of military officials and their Tang dynasty equivalents suggest that the Korean tradition of funerary stone sculpture can trace its beginning to Chinese influence. However, the differences between the statues of each respective culture also signify that the Silla dynasty implemented its own aesthetic and eventually developed its own style though the production of such sculpture remained extremely restricted.

Keywords: King Sŏngdŏk, Silla dynasty, royal tomb, funerary stone statues, statues of military officials, *mugwansang* (武官像)

In the city of modern-day Kyŏngju one can find numerous royal tombs dating back to the Silla dynasty. These burial mounds are well-known for the large scale

on which they were built. However, from an art historical perspective it is the sculptures found at these sites rather than the tombs' impressive size that is of particular interest.¹ These sculptures include stone statues and lion sculptures as well as carved reliefs of the twelve zodiac animal deities typically found on the stone surrounding the burial mound. Of these, the most notable are the stone statues placed at the entrance to the royal tombs that can be categorized into two broad types. The first group called *mugwansang* (武官像) includes statues of military officials that have a crown upon their heads, armor worn over a uniform and a long sword held with both hands. Markedly different from the former, the second group known as *muinsang* (武人像) is made up of warrior statues that feature roughly modeled faces and hold a club in their hands.² Both types are equally deserving of our interest, but the latter group is especially important because the warrior statues are not a shared product of East Asia but rather, a sculptural group unique to the royal tombs of the Silla dynasty. However, at the burial site of King Söngdök (聖德王 r. 702–736), the first royal tomb of the Silla dynasty to have stone statues erected at its entrance, the warrior type is not present, and it seems only a pair of statues of military officials were produced for the site.

Although the stone statues found at the tombs of Silla dynasty kings are representative of royal funerary sculpture, not all of the period's tombs still house such statues. Of the extant thirty-eight tombs, stone statues have survived at only four sites.³ The tombs fortunate enough to possess the surviving statues belong to the following historical figures: King Söngdök, King Wönsöng (元聖王 r. 785–799), King Höndök (憲德王 r. 809–826) and King Hüngdök (興德王 r. 826–836). Even among these four burial sites there is still the matter of whether the tomb's occupant has been accurately identified as is exemplified by the ongoing controversy over King Höndök's grave. More issues to consider are the fact that the stone statues of the four sites do not represent all of the original sculpture and the partially damaged state of some of the surviving statues. At the present, there

¹ According to tradition, there was a total of fifty-six kings that ruled during the Silla dynasty beginning with King Hyökköse (赫居世 r. 57 B.C.–A.D. 4). However, only thirty-eight royal tombs have been attributed to the kings of this period with thirty-six of these being located in Kyöngju. The remaining two belong to Queen Chinsöng whose tomb is located in Yangsan, Kyöngsangnam-do and King Kyöngsun buried in Yönc'h'ön-gun, Kyönggi-do. Absolutely positive identifications of the buried subject are rare, applying only to the tombs of King Munmu, Queen Söndök, King Muyöl, and King Hüngdök.

² In truth, both categories of stone statues portray the *muin*, or warrior, as their subject, but they are differentiated by the presence of either crown and sword or club.

³ Out of the surviving thirty-eight royal tombs, the funerary sculptures of ten sites have remained extant and span a period of about 150 years from the latter half of the eighth century to the end of the Silla dynasty. Of the ten sites only four feature stone statues.

remain one pair of military official statues at the tomb of King Söngdök, one pair each of both military official and warrior statues at the tombs of King Wönsöng and Hüngdök and finally the upper half portion of a single warrior statue at the tomb of King Höndök (Table 1).⁴

Table 1: Chart of stone statues located at the sites of Silla dynasty royal tombs

ROYAL TOMB	STONE STATUES		LION SCULPTURE	TWELVE ZODIAC ANIMAL DEITIES
	MILITARY OFFICIAL [武官像]	WARRIOR [武人像]		
TOMB OF KING SÖNGDÖK	1 Pair	None	4	12 (Free-standing)
TOMB OF KING WÖNGSÖNG	1 Pair	1 Pair	4	12 (Relief)
TOMB OF KING HÖNDÖK	No Longer Extant	Partially Extant (only upper half of a single statue remains)	No Longer Extant	5 Extant (Relief)
TOMB OF KING HÜNGDÖK	1 Pair	1 Pair	4	12 (Relief)

As has been briefly noted, there are many difficulties when it comes to the study of the stone statues of Silla dynasty royal tombs. Not only are there very few extant examples of these statues, but also in most cases scholars have been unable to come to an agreement regarding the identity of the buried figure. Even if the tomb's owner could be positively identified, the problem of accurately dating the statues remains. Although construction of the burial mound im-

⁴ For academic texts wherein the subject of stone statues of Silla dynasty royal tombs is the primary focus, see Pak Kyöngwön, "T'ongil Silla sidae üi myo üi söngmul sögin söksu yön'gu" [A study on the stone human figures and animals of the royal tomb in the Unified Silla dynasty], *Kogo misul* 154–155 (1982): 168–191; Yi Chaejung, "T'ongil Silla sidae wangnüng ap sögin yön'gu" [Research on the stone statues of royal tomb in the Unified Silla dynasty], *Sögo Yun Yongjin kyosu chöngnyön t'oeim kinyöm nonch'ong* [Essays published in commemoration of Professor Yongjin Yoon's retirement] (Nonch'ong kanhaeng wiwön, 1996), 803–845; Im Yöng'ae, "Silla sidae wangnüng chogak üi wansöng, Wönsöng wangnüng chogak üi chejak sigi chaegömt'o: wangnüng choyöng kwa wangnüng chogak üi sigi purilch'i munje" [Review of the manufacturing period of King Wönsöng's tomb sculpture, a masterpiece of royal tomb sculptures in the late Silla: focusing on period inconsistency between the royal tomb construction and the royal tomb sculpture], *Pulgyo misul sabak* 14 (2012): 7–33; Im Yöng'ae, "Silla wangnüng chogak üi misulsajök chomang kwa t'üksusöng" [Prospects of sculptures in royal tombs of Silla from the perspective of art history and their distinctive characteristics], *Silla munbwa* 41 (2013): 135–162.

mediately followed the king's death, the same rule did not always apply to the stone statues. Nevertheless, the general approach thus far has been to assign both the construction of the burial mound and the production of stone statues to the same timeframe as the king's date of decease. However, this approach is flawed, and the premise of this article is based on the opposing idea that the funerary stone statues and burial tomb were not always created simultaneously.⁵ Circumstances surrounding the production of royal funerary statues varied greatly between each royal tomb and depended largely on the situation of the successor to each deceased king. It follows that though the burial mound was almost always erected soon after a king's death, there were instances where production of the stone statues was postponed or possibly did not take place at all.⁶ Stone sculptures for the royal tomb in particular required significant time and effort, political stability and solid financial support wholly reliant on the successor. Thus, it was often impossible to allocate the time and resources necessary to have both projects—burial mound and stone statues—occur concurrently.

The difference in production dates of royal burial mounds and their accompanying funerary stone statues is an idea that has been introduced in a previous article by the author (see footnote 5). However, the present study's primary focus is exclusively on the stone statues located at the site of King Söngdök's royal tomb. This is significant because though there are numerous examples of Buddhist sculpture dating to before the Silla period, the same is not true of royal funerary sculpture. In fact, the Söngdök site examples are the first instances of stone statues to be erected at royal burial sites and thus signal the start to a Korean

⁵ The idea that the burial mound and funerary stone sculptures were created at different times has already been introduced by the author in a previous article (Im Yöngae, "Silla sidae wangnŭng chogak ūi wansöng," 7–33). However, while the first article focuses on the royal burial site of King Wönsöng, the present text explores the same theory through a study of the stone statues located at the tomb of King Söngdök. Thus, though this study discusses a preexisting idea, it is also distinct because it expands on the principal theory and provides new evidence to further the author's initial argument.

⁶ In the case of China, construction of the burial mound and production of the accompanying stone statues can typically be dated to the same period because the imperial tomb was built during the reign of its intended occupant, allowing sufficient time for its completion. This allowed for the creation of a variety of funerary sculptures, and these were produced in large numbers although many examples have since been destroyed. Additionally, stone sculptures were also made for auxiliary tombs containing the bodies of the emperor's family members or vassals, and as such a significant amount of labor was required. In fact, there was an entire organization tasked solely with the creation of imperial funerary sculptures. Specifically, Ouyang Xiu mentions "Zhenguan-shu" (甄官署), in the record of "Baiguan-zhi" (百官志). For details, please see *Xin Tang-shu* 新唐書 [New book of Tang], vol. 48, no. 3. For this reason it was possible for the burial mound and its stone statues to be built simultaneously.

tradition of royal funerary sculpture. Discerning the circum-stances that prompted the first production of such statues for the Sōngdōk tomb specifically as well as examining the subsequent implications comprise the fundamental starting points of this article. In such a way, the article starts by exploring the aforementioned problem of positively identifying the owner of what is thought to be King Sōngdōk's tomb and then examines King Sōngdōk the individual. This is followed by a study of and proposal detailing when and by whom the stone sculptures were built. Lastly, the text attempts to discern if the standards governing the number and style of the royal funerary stone statues developed as an independent phenomenon unique to the Silla dynasty or whether they were mainly a product of Chinese influence.

THE STONE STATUES OF MILITARY OFFICIALS (武官像) AT THE ROYAL TOMB OF KING SŎNGDŎK

It has been established that the very first royal tomb to have funerary stone statues produced for its site is that of King Sōngdōk, the thirty-third ruler of the Silla dynasty who died in the year 737.⁷ The Sōngdōk burial site houses only one pair of the military official type of stone statue that is located at the tomb's entrance (Figures 1–3).

⁷ King Sōngdōk ascended the throne in 702 and died thirty-six years later in 737. "The 36th year...The King [*sic*] died. His posthumous title was Sōngdōk and he was buried south of Igō Monastery." Kim Pusik, "Sōngdōk wang" [King Sōngdōk] of "Silla Pon'gi" [Main history of Silla], in *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Korean Kingdoms], vol. 8, trans. Edward J. Shultz and Hugh Kang (The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2012), 287; For a discussion regarding the date of King Sōngdōk's death see the following: Suematsu Yasukazu, *Shiragishi no shomondai* [Various issues in Silla history] (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1954), 413–428; and Michael C. Rogers, "The Thanatochronology of Some Kings of Silla," *Monumenta Serica* 19 (1960): 335–348, esp. 336–337.



Figure 1: Front view of the royal tomb of King Söngdök (arrows point to statues of military officials), Kyöngju



Figure 2: Stone statue of military official No. 1 located at the royal tomb of King Söngdök, Kyöngju



Figure 3: Stone statue of military official No. 2 located at the royal tomb of King Söngdök, Kyöngju

However, there are no warrior type statues to be found at the Söngdök site. By contrast, both types are featured at the later tombs of King Wönsöng and Hüngdök, making it apparent that the warrior group was initially absent from the sculptural scheme of Silla dynasty royal tombs (Table 1). The Söngdök site serves to support this idea as evidence dictates that the warrior type was never produced for this tomb in the first place. This is a more likely scenario than the possibility that the warrior type may have existed at one time but was unable to survive until the present. It should first be considered that the Söngdök site's extant sculptures of military officials, lions and twelve zodiac animal deities all remain in their complete sets of two, four and twelve respectively. This strongly purports that all of the original sculptures have survived as indeed it would be strange if only one set, namely a pair of warriors, disappeared completely while the other sculptures remained untouched. Furthermore, the Söngdök burial site is of a relatively small scale, unsuitable for housing pairs of both warrior and military official stone statues within its limited area.⁸ Taking both these points into account, it can be safely suggested that the warrior type appeared at a later time and that the occurrence of both groups of stone statues at a single royal tomb was also a subsequent development.

Of the two military official statues found at the Söngdök burial site, the first is in exemplary condition while the second has been extensively damaged, and only the upper-half portion remains (Figures 4 and 5).

⁸ King Söngdök's burial mound has a diameter of 14.6 meters, a height of 4.7 meters and a circumference of 45.6 meters. For comparative reference, the tomb of King Wönsöng, which houses pairs of both warrior and military official statues, has a much larger burial site, and its mound has a diameter of 22 meters, a height of 7.5 meters and a circumference of 69.3 meters.



Figure 4: Stone statues of the royal tomb of King Wōnsōng (from left: 1 pair of military official statues, 1 pair of warrior statues), Kyōngju



Figure 5: Lower portion of military official statue No. 1 located at the royal tomb of King Sōngdōk, Kyōngju

When facing the tomb's entrance, the first example is located to the right and stands at a height of 205 centimeters. Consistent with the typical characteristics of the military official group, the statue wears a crown, uniform and armor while the presence of a vertical instrument with a pointed tip placed between the statue's two feet indicates that the figure holds a sword with two hands that are hidden by the uniform's wide sleeves (Figure 5). The statue's face displays an intimidating expression with raised eyebrows, wrinkled forehead and a full mustache and beard. Above the statue's head, the crown's front portion features a cicada shaped ornament with spread wings (Figure 6).⁹ Both sides of the crown bear an attached bird wing-shaped adornment (Figure 7).¹⁰ Below, the statue's feet are covered with pointed shoes (Figure 5). Lastly, the front breastplate and rear backplate—both made up of many smaller pieces woven together—are connected by string worn over the shoulder, and the multiple parts are kept in place by a belt tied in a knot at the figure's back (Figure 8). As for the second statue, although in a dilapidated condition and incomplete, its original appearance was most likely similar or identical to that of the first (Figure 3).

⁹ There is an ongoing debate over whether the decoration featured on the crown's front portion is a portrayal of a cicada or not. Tang dynasty crowns meant for use during the emperor's morning assembly were decorated with sable tails or cicada wings. The crowns with cicada decoration were especially worn by warriors who taught martial arts or fought in wars. However, the cicada also appears on the crown of statues that depict scholars at the Tailing mausoleum of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang, where such subjects first appear. Thus it seems the cicada was not exclusive to the crown decoration of warrior statues (Figure 12, left). Yi Chaejung, "T'ongil Silla sidae wangnūng ap sōgin yōn'gu," 817.

¹⁰ Im Yōngae, "Sōyōk Pulgyo misul esō ūi choikkwan kwa kwandae" [Winged crowns and diadems in Chinese Turkistan Buddhist art], *Chungang Asia yōn'gu* 11 (2006): 115–139.



Figure 6: Face of military official statue No. 1 located at the royal tomb of King Söngdök, Kyöngju



Figure 7: Side view of military official statue No. 1 located at the royal tomb of King Söngdök, Kyöngju



Figure 8: Rear view of military official statue No. 1 located at the royal tomb of King Söngdök, Kyöngju

Examples parallel to the Söngdök military official statues can be found at the burial sites of Chinese royalty such as the Qianling (乾陵) mausoleum of Emperor Gaozong (高宗 r. 649–683) erected in 684.¹¹ To the mausoleum's east and west stand statues number ten and nine respectively, with heights ranging from 3.1 to 4.65 meters (Figure 9, left).¹² The military official statues of the Qianling mausoleum are at first glance similar to those of the Söngdök site. However, there are significant differences to be noted in the Chinese examples such as the clear visibility of the statues' hands and the absence of any armor (Figure 10).¹³ In fact,

¹¹ Most burial sites of royalty and their family or subjects in China built after the Qianling mausoleum feature stone statues. For the most current research on the Qianling site and for reading specifically regarding the military official statues, consult Qin Bo, *Tangdai lingmu shike yanjiu* [Research on the stone carvings of a Tang dynasty mausoleum], (Ph.D. diss., Central Academy of Fine Arts, 2014), 72–76; Tonia Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China, 618–907: The Politics of Paradise* (Routledge Curzon, 2005), 19–28.

¹² Qin Bo, *Tangdai lingmu shike yanjiu*, 49.

¹³ As is well-known, the Chinese term *shiwengzhong* (石翁仲) is used to describe the military official statues which were originally placed inside the tomb but were later moved to stand outside of it. The Jingling (靜陵) mausoleum of Emperor Xiaomin (孝閔帝 r. 557–557) of Northern Wei as well as the Yongling (永陵) mausoleum of Emperor Wen (文帝 r. 534–551) of Western Wei are the earliest examples at which the stone statues were placed outside the tomb. However, this practice really began in earnest starting with the Qianling mausoleum of Emperor Gaozong of Tang. Li Yufang, “Tangling shike jianlun” [Research on the stone carvings of a Tang dynasty mausoleum], *Wenbo* 3 (1994): 36; Dou Zhiqiang, *Tangling shidiao dikao guxue yanjiu* [Archaeological research on stone carvings of a Tang dynasty emperor's mausoleum], (Ph.D. diss., Shandong University, 2007), 37; Zhang Jianlin, “Tangdai diling lingyuan xingzhi difa zhanyu yanbian” [Layout of Tang dynasty mausoleums and chronological changes], *Kaogu yu wenwu* 5 (2013): 82–90. For further reading on the Chinese *shiwengzhong*, see Liu Xiangyang, *Tangdai diwang lingmu* [Imperial tombs in the Tang dynasty] (Xi'an: Shanxi chuban jituan sanqin chubanshe, 2012), 101–102.

we cannot find military official statues of China wearing any armor until the Tailing (泰陵) mausoleum of Tang dynasty Emperor Xuanzong (玄宗 r. 712–756) who died in 762. This point is further emphasized by the clear contrast between the armored statues of the Tailing site and the plainly uniformed military officials standing at the Qiaoling (橋陵) mausoleum (Figure 11) of Emperor Xuanzong’s immediate predecessor, Emperor Ruizong (睿宗 r. 710–712).



Figure 9: Left: Statue of military official located at the Qianling mausoleum of Emperor Gaozong of Tang, Xian in China. Right: Statue of military official located at the auxiliary tomb of Princess Yongtai, Xian, China



Figure 10: Detail of military official statue located at the Qianling mausoleum of Emperor Gaozong of Tang, Xian, China



Figure 11: Statue of military official located at the Qiaoling mausoleum of Emperor Rui-zong of Tang, Xian, China

Moreover, because the hands of the Chinese examples are not hidden, it is possible to examine their form as well as the manner in which the sword is held. Thus, it can be observed that the hands of the military official statues of the Tang dynasty royal tombs do not follow a fixed placement but rather the left or right hand is placed above the other interchangeably.¹⁴ It follows that military official statues only began to be produced wearing armor starting from the stone statues of the Tailing mausoleum (Figures 12 and 13).¹⁵ This leads to the natural

¹⁴ In the case of Tang dynasty royal tombs, the scholar statues more often have their left hand placed over their right while in the case of warrior statues the opposite is a more common occurrence. However, neither placement is absolute or exclusive. For example, there are presently eight scholar and seven warrior statues at the site of the Tailing mausoleum, of which five have the left hand and six the right hand placed above the other hand respectively. Wang Jing and Mu Baoning, “Qianxi Tangling shiren shoubu bianhua” [Changes of hand positions in Tang dynasty mausoleums], *Qingchun suiyue* 22 (2010): 46.

¹⁵ The general approach is to view the Tailing mausoleum of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang as the beginning of the systemization of royal tombs. Zhang Jianlin, “Tang Xuanzong Tailing lingyuan yizhi kaogu kantan, fajue jianbao” [Excavation and investigation of the Tang dynasty Tailing

conclusion that the armored examples at King Sōngdōk’s tomb must have been produced at a period after the completion of the Tailing mausoleum in 763—a point further explored later in the text.



Figure 12. (Left) statue of scholar & (Right) statue of military official, Xian, China. Both examples are located at the Tailing mausoleum of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang, Xian, China



Figure 13. Rear view of military official statue located at the Tailing mausoleum of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang, Xian, China

SOLVING THE CONTROVERSIES OF IDENTITY AND CHRONOLOGY

The royal tomb of King Sōngdōk is significant in that it was the first to feature stone statues specifically of the military official type at its burial site. However, before any study of the site’s sculpture can be carried out, there is the matter of settling the issue of positively determining the tomb’s occupant as King Sōngdōk, the thirty-third ruler of the Silla dynasty.¹⁶ The tomb in question has never been officially excavated, making it difficult to definitively identify the buried individual, and thus there is disagreement over the validity of designating King Sōngdōk as the grave’s occupant. The argument affirming the identification is primarily based on two textual references. The first is found in *Samguk yusa* [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms] wherein it is stated: “The royal tomb of King Sōngdōk is situated at the site of Yangjang valley, located south of Tongch’on.”¹⁷ The loca-

mausoleum site], *Kaogu yu wenwu* 3 (2011): 3–11.

¹⁶ At the present, the site of the royal tomb has been appointed as Historic Site No. 28 under the name ‘Royal Tomb of King Sōngdōk.’

¹⁷ *Taishō* 49: 2039.Era; *Taishō* is the shortened form of *Taishō shinshū dai zōkyō* (Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaikyoku, et al., eds., *Taishō shinshū dai zōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. (Tokyo: Taishō

tion mentioned in this text is consistent with the tomb's current position, reinforcing the argument in favor of King Söngdök. Further affirmation is found in the Silla annals of the *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms] which relays the following: “The 36th year...The king died. People dedicated him [*sic*] the posthumous name Söngdök (meaning ‘sacred and virtuous’) and buried him south of Igö temple (移車寺).”¹⁸ As the vestiges of a temple site have been discovered north of the tomb, this seems to be consistent with the historical records and further strengthens the idea claiming King Söngdök as the actual occupant of the tomb at issue.

Nonetheless, a counterargument also exists disputing the positive identification of the buried subject as King Söngdök. The objection focuses on the fact that the stele of the tomb belonging to King Söngdök is said to have been erected in the year 754 by King Kyöngdök (景德王 r. 742–765) as recorded in *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms]. But such a stele has not been found at the site of the tomb in question.¹⁹ There is, however, a tortoise-shaped pedestal (Figure 14) that would have held a stele identifying the tomb's owner located just 20 meters away from the burial mound.



Figure 14: Tortoise-shaped pedestal located at the entrance of the royal tomb of King Söngdök, Kyöngju

issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–35).

¹⁸ See footnote 7.

¹⁹ For the argument identifying King Kyöngdök as the tomb's occupant, see Nishijima Sadao, “Chū kuni, Chōsen, Nippon ni akeru jūnishizō no nitsuite” [Changes of twelve zodiac animal deities in China, Korea, Japan], *Kodai higashijūshi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1978), 295–338. For the argument in support of identifying King Söngdök as the only possible occupant of the tomb see Yi Kūnjik, *Silla wangnūng yōn'gu* [Study of royal mausoleums of Silla] (Seoul: Hagyon munhwasa, 2012), 113. For the argument that views King Söngdök as the most likely owner of the royal tomb but notes that this theory cannot be absolutely resolved, see Kim Yongsōng and Kang Chaehyōn, “Silla wangnūng ūi saeroun pijōng” [New designation of Silla royal tombs], *Yae kogohak* 15 (2012): 196–197.

Be that as it may, because the stele itself has been lost, its contents cannot be confirmed and thus cannot be established as belonging to the site with absolute certainty. Accordingly, it is problematic that the object crucial to validating the site as King Söngdök's tomb is no longer extant. It is the absence of this significant marker that is considered to be the main discrepancy by those supporting the counterargument. Despite these misgivings, the tortoise-shaped pedestal's proximity to the burial site and the fact that there are no other royal tombs in the vicinity cannot be ignored. It is only logical to deduce that the now-missing stele is the very one commissioned by King Kyöngdök, a son of King Söngdök, for his father's tomb. Taking this into account along with the remarkable congruity between the tomb's position and the location of the site as recorded in the two aforementioned texts, it seems appropriate to consider the royal tomb as indeed being that of King Söngdök.²⁰

Now that the tomb's owner has more or less been confirmed, we must turn our attention to King Söngdök the individual. Once King Hyoso (孝昭王 r. 692–702), the thirty-second ruler of the Silla dynasty, passed away at the age of sixteen after reigning for only ten years, his brother Söngdök succeeded to the throne. Söngdök did not undergo official appointment as crown prince but was rather selected as king by the people of his nation and ruled for a considerably long period of thirty-seven years.²¹ King Söngdök sought to strengthen royal authority, earning himself a generally positive reputation as being responsible for the most prosperous period of rule during the history of the Silla dynasty, although there has been some opposition to this evaluation.²² Whatever one's position, it is undeniable that subsequent rulers such as King Kyöngdök and King Hyegong (惠恭王 r. 765–780) sought to emulate their predecessor who was undoubtedly considered to be the model of a great leader as is recorded in the inscription gracing the *Sacred Bell of Great King Söngdök* completed in 771 (Figure 15).²³

²⁰ Chu Podon, "Silla üi nüngmyobi e taehan myönmööt nonüi" [Several topics on tombstones of the Silla dynasty], *Silla wangnüng III* [Royal tombs of the Silla dynasty III], (Kyöngju: Han'guk chönt'ong munhwa taehakkyo, 2013), 140.

²¹ "Hyoso had no sons. The people of the country enthroned him." Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms], 266.

²² For the most recent research regarding King Söngdök, see Cho Pömhwan, "Silla chungdae Söngdök wangdae üi chöngch'ijök tonghyang kwa wangbi üi kyoch'e" [Two queens and King Söngdök: a study of the political trends in eighth-century Silla], *Silla sabakpo* 22 (2011): 99–133.

²³ See footnote 28.



Figure 15: *Bell of King Söngdök*, completed 771, bronze, height 3.75 meters, diameter 2.27 meters, weight 18.9 tons, Gyeongju (Kyöngju) National Museum

It is only fitting that the royal tomb of such an influential ruler was furnished with stone statues of military officials that were the first of their kind in the Silla dynasty. In terms of their date of production, the statues were most likely created and placed at the burial site at some time after the completion of the tomb's construction which took place under the direction of King Hyosöng, one of King Söngdök's sons. The idea that there was a temporal gap between the production date of the burial mound and stone statues is best supported by the evidence provided by the placement around the tomb of statues of the twelve zodiac animal deities (Figures 16 and 17).²⁴

²⁴ The theory stating that the statues of the twelve zodiac animal deities at the royal tomb of King Söngdök were a later addition was first introduced by the scholarship of Kang Ubang. Kang Ubang, "Silla sibi chisang üi punsök kwa haesök" [Analysis and interpretation of the Silla twelve zodiac animal deities], *Pulgyo misul* [Buddhist art] 1 (1973): 25–75; Kang Ubang, *Wönyung kwa chohwa* [Infinite interpenetration and harmony] (Yörhwadang, 1990), 322–323.



Figure 16: Statue of zodiac animal deity located at the royal tomb of King Sōngdōk, Kyōngju



Figure 17: Statue of zodiac animal deity located at the royal tomb of King Sōngdōk, Kyōngju

At all of the royal tombs built after the Sōngdōk site, the twelve zodiac animal deities appear as reliefs carved into the stones that make up the base of the burial mound (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Relief of one of the twelve zodiac animal deities located at the royal tomb of King Kyōngdōk, Kyōngju

In contrast, the twelve zodiac animal deities at the Sōngdōk site are the only examples to appear as freestanding statues. Each deity was sculpted from a single stone and was hence capable of being moved, making the prospect of the statues being a later addition at the very least a possibility. A more compelling detail can be found in the placement of the deities. Although there are twelve statues, there are thirty possible placements created by the presence of thirty triangular-shaped pieces of stone situated around the burial mound (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Full view of the royal tomb of King Söngdök, Kyöngju

Due to the discrepancy between the statues and their conceivable locations, the deities have been placed at irregular intervals, and so it is clear that the twelve statues were not a consideration when the tomb was being planned or built. Consequently, the statues of the twelve zodiac animal deities must have been added after the tomb's construction. Furthermore, as the military official statues are of the same rough granite material as well as being similar in style of uniform, the two groups of statues were probably produced and placed at the Söngdök tomb simultaneously.

The issue now is pinpointing the exact timeframe of this event. On this point there are two conflicting views. The first dates the statues to approximately 754 during the rule of King Kyöngdök while the second credits King Hyegong for the statues' production, specifically citing the latter half of the eighth century.²⁵ As stated previously, King Kyöngdök who was the second son of King Söngdök, erected a stele dedicated to his father eighteen years after Söngdök's death in 754.²⁶ The first view theorizes that the stone statues of the twelve zodiac animal deities, lions and military officials were all made during this same period and placed at the burial site along with the stele. King Kyöngdök believed that in order to become a *cakravartin* 轉輪聖王 [the epitome of an ideal Buddhist ruler] he had to first elevate his father to that status.²⁷ The production of stone statues would have been an integral part of that effort. Likewise, King Kyöngdök planned for

²⁵ For scholarship that dates the statues to the time of King Kyöngdök's reign, see Kang Ubang, "Silla sibijisang üi punsök kwa haesök," 35–41. An opposing view that dates the statues to King Hyegong's time is presented in Im Yöng'ae, "Silla wangnüng üi söginsang" [Stone statues at royal tombs of the Silla dynasty], *Chosön wangnüng söngmul chogak sa*, vol. 1 [Stone sculptures at the royal tombs of the Chosön dynasty I] (National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2016), 125.

²⁶ "The 13th year... During the 5th month, (The court) erected a memorial stele to King Söngdök." Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms], 298; Kang Ubang, "Silla sibi chisang üi punsök kwa haesök," 32–33; Kang Ubang, *Wönyung kwa chohwa*, 322–323.

²⁷ Kang Ubang, "Silla sibi chisang üi punsök kwa haesök," 41.

the construction of the *Sacred Bell of Great King Sōngdōk* assumedly for the same reason though ultimately he did not succeed in carrying out his intentions.²⁸ Of course, it could be argued that only plans for the production of such statues were made while actual realization failed to take place. But the first view places great emphasis on King Kyōngdōk's filial affection as a strong reason for the creation of the military official statues along with the stele.²⁹ Naturally, the strengthening of royal authority and power would also have served as strong motivators for the statues' production.³⁰ When taking these factors into consideration, the simultaneous production of the statues and stele at around the year 754 under Kyōngdōk's reign can be assessed as being highly likely.

Notwithstanding the merits of the first argument, this article takes the position that the opposing view is the more credible one. Foremost of several reasons, the plan for the *Sacred Bell of Great King Sōngdōk* that King Kyōngdōk failed to initiate was taken up and completed by King Hyegong, who was the grandson of King Sōngdōk. In this manner, King Hyegong would have adopted his predecessor's projects in order to achieve a heightened sense of royal authority while honoring a well-respected ancestor.³¹ It would have been a natural progression to obtain

²⁸ "Filled with filial affection, when [King Sōngdōk's] successor King Kyōngdōk reigned over the kingdom, he inherited the royal cause and dealt with numerous political affairs in a skillful manner, but unfortunately lost his mother early on and as time passed he missed her. Not long after the king's father also passed away, and thus every moment spent in the empty palace was another filled with sadness, and the emotions the king experienced when thinking of his ancestors gradually became sad, exacerbating his desire to pray on behalf of the souls of the deceased to the point of desperation. Therefore, the king hoped to cast a single bell of an impressive 3 meters [in honor of the deceased] through his donation of 72,000 kilograms of copper, but before he could do so he passed away." Part of inscription on the *Sacred Bell of Great King Sōngdōk* (Sōngdōk taewang sinjong chi myōng [聖德大王神鐘之銘]). The full Korean translation of the bell's inscription can be found at the website of the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage: http://gsm.nricp.go.kr/_third/user/viewer/viewer02.jsp.

²⁹ The construction of Pulguk Temple (佛國寺) and Sōkkuram (石窟庵) are additional examples that emphasize King Kyōngdōk's filial piety, and the start to their construction can be understood in the same context as the production of the Sōngdōk site statues. Iryōn, *Samguk yusa*, no. 5, *Taishō* 49:2039.1018a04.

³⁰ In the same context, King Kyōngdōk commissioned the production of a large bell for Hwangnyong Temple (皇龍寺) as an indication of his power as recorded in the *Samguk yusa*: "In the year of the horse (754), the thirteenth year of the Tianbo (天寶) Reign, the thirty-fifth ruler of the Silla Kingdom, Great King Kyōngdōk, molded the bell of Hwangnyong Temple, which was 10.2 feet high and 0.9 feet thick and weighed 658,195 pounds." Iryōn, *Samguk yusa*, no. 3 Pagodas and Images of Buddha, *Taishō* 49:2039.991b02, "The Bell of Hwangnyong Temple," trans. Kim Talyong (Chimmundang, 2006), 213.

³¹ "The actions of King Hyegong are in accordance with his ancestors and his intentions reflect extreme devotion. Thus, auspiciousness exceeds that of the past and is responsible for the present." Part of the inscription on the *Sacred Bell of Great King Sōngdōk*.

these same goals through the decoration of the Söngdök tomb with statues of military officials and lions.³² Another supporting reason lies in the parallel between the military official statues of the Söngdök site and those found at the Tailing mausoleum of the Tang dynasty Emperor Xuanzong. In fact, the military official statues at the Tailing site are the first in China to feature the presence of armor and with this new development the first appearance of statues depicting scholars also occurs (Figures 12 and 13).³³ Thus, although statues of military officials had existed prior to the Tailing mausoleum, it is not until the completion of Xuanzong's tomb in 763 that the statues are fashioned with armor. Following this logic, it is extremely unlikely that military official statues with armor would have first appeared during the Silla dynasty when King Kyöngdök erected the stele dedicated to his father in 754 as this point in time preceded the Tailing examples. Furthermore, the scholar statues are only present at the sites of Silla royal tombs constructed subsequent to the Söngdök site. As the Chinese equivalents of the scholar type emerged alongside the first armored statues of military officials in 763, it can be deduced that the two groups of scholar and armored military official statues were the product of a much later descendant of King Söngdök and were most likely of Chinese influence. The armor was probably employed to differentiate between the two types of statues and their different subjects, their presence on the Söngdök examples serving to further signify that their creation must date to a period after 763. Moreover, the Söngdök examples also display stylistic characteristics more akin to the latter half of the eighth century rather than the mid-eighth century. Therefore, King Hyegong who reigned from the years 765 to 780 is the most plausible candidate to be credited with the installation of the Söngdök military official stone statues, and the latter half of the eighth century seems to be the most appropriate timeframe for the statues' production.

³² The royal tomb of King Wönsöng is another good example of the creation and installation of stone statues to emphasize a ruler's authority. Im Yöngae, "Silla sidae wangnüng chogak üi wansöng," 7–33.

³³ The only example of armored stone statues produced before those found at the Tailing mausoleum of 763 is the single statue placed at the Gongling (恭陵) mausoleum of 675. The Gongling mausoleum belongs to the crown prince Lihong (李弘 652–675) who died before ascending to the throne but was posthumously endowed with a royal tomb. Thus, it can be argued that the Gongling mausoleum is technically not an official royal tomb. Takashi Kitamura, *Todai koteiryö no kenkyü* [Research on the mausoleums of the Tang dynasty] (Gakuseisha, 2001), 40.

DISCERNING THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE PRODUCTION OF THE FIRST FUNERARY STONE STATUES OF THE SILLA DYNASTY

As has been established, when the stone statues of King Söngdök's tomb are considered in comparison with those of the Tailing mausoleum, the most likely scenario dictates that the Söngdök statues were produced in the latter half of the eighth century by King Hyegong rather than during the reign of King Kyöngdök.³⁴ In order to discern the motivations behind King Hyegong's decision to produce the first stone statues of military officials in the Silla dynasty and place these statues at the preexisting royal tomb of his ancestor, the political circumstances of the period must be examined. The rule of King Hyegong was highly unstable, and during the sixteen years Hyegong sat on the throne, a total of five revolts occurred to dethrone him. In light of the various threats to his throne, King Hyegong sent an envoy to the Tang dynasty in 767 requesting an official order of investiture in support of his instatement as king. In response, Emperor Daizong of Tang (代宗 r. 762–779) dispatched envoy Gui Chongjing (歸崇敬 712–799) to the Silla kingdom in the following year of 768.³⁵ Soon after, the *Sacred Bell of Great King Söngdök* was completed in 771, thirty-four years after the death of King Söngdök. Of particular note is the bell's inscription (Figure 14) which states: "For forty years (King Söngdök) tended to matters of state so that not a single war would make the people suffer. Thus, neighboring states on all sides far and wide held great admiration for the king's edification of his nation and all possible causes of war were resolved early on."³⁶ This passage reflects the pride King Hyegong had for his ancestor King Söngdök who had both strengthened the royal authority of the Silla kingdom and given it stability, earning the respect of its neighboring kingdoms. In the same context, King Hyegong began to directly govern his kingdom at this point, and the above inscription was

³⁴ Additional evidence is present in the sculptural style of the lion that is a part of the lion stone capital at Wölchönggyo erected towards the end of 760 during the nineteenth year of King Kyöngdök's reign. When comparing this lion sculpture to those of the Söngdök site there are clear differences. Stylistically speaking, because the Söngdök examples are much bulkier and clumsier, their production is most likely a later addition by King Hyegong. Im Yöngae, "Wölchönggyo ch'unyanggyo üi saja sökchu, imiji wa üimi" [The images and signification of the lion stone pillar of Wöljöng and Ch'unyang Bridges], *Silla munhwa* 43 (2014): 127.

³⁵ "The third year... During the seventh month of autumn, (The court) sent *ich'an* (伊浪) Kim Ŭngö (金隱居) to Tang with local products of tribute and then requested orders to invest (the new King)," and "The fourth year... During the ninth month, (The court) sent an envoy to Tang to present tribute." Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms], 307–308.

³⁶ Inscription on the *Sacred Bell of Great King Söngdök*.

ostensibly an expression of his desire to achieve the same political strength and stability that his predecessor was so admired for.³⁷

After the completion of the *Sacred Bell of Great King Söngdök* in 771, King Hyegong sent an envoy to the Tang dynasty (618-907) once a year from 772 until 776.³⁸ Additionally, King Hyegong made trips to the Kamün Temple (感恩寺) where he watched the sea in the hopes of confirming the legitimacy of his succession to the throne.³⁹ These deeds were carried out as considerable efforts on the part of King Hyegong to consolidate his ruling authority and validate his claim to the throne. Producing the various statues of military officials, lions and twelve zodiac animal deities and placing them at the royal tomb of his grandfather King Söngdök was King Hyegong's way of establishing a symbolic connection to an ancestor whom he admired as the epitome of an ideal ruler. Combined with the fact that King Hyegong had only just begun his period of official rule, it is reasonable to conclude that King Hyegong was the individual responsible for the creation of the Söngdök site military official statues.

During the latter half of the eighth century, King Hyegong was sure to have been influenced by the systematic layout of Tang dynasty royal tombs when

³⁷ Regarding how the King Hyegong thought of his grandfather, King Söngdök, see the inscription on the *Sacred Bell of Great King Söngdök*. The majority view is to date the start of King Hyegong's period of direct rule to 775, the eleventh year of Hyegong's reign. But recent scholarship has suggested the alternative date of 771, the same year that the *Sacred Bell of Great King Söngdök* was completed. For further reading, see Kim Sut'ae, "Silla Hyegongwang tae Manwöl puin üi söpchöng" [Madam Manwöl regent of Silla King Hyegong], *Sillasä hakpo* 22 (2011): 154–159. For the most recent research regarding King Hyegong, also see the following: Cho Pömhwan, "Silla chungdaemal Hyegong wang üi honin üi t'onghayö pon chöngguk üi pyönhwa" [Study on the political trends during the mid-end of the Silla age through the reexamination of the marriage of King Hyegong], *Silla munhwa* 43 (2014): 227–248; Kim Sut'ae, "Silla Hyegong wang tae Manwöl puin üi söpchöng," 135-174; Kim Sönsuk, "Silla Hyegong wang tae üi kungnaeoe chöngse wa taeil oegyo" [Silla's political situation and diplomacy toward Japan in the times of King Hyegong], *Chöngsin munhwa yön'gu* 30, no. 4 (2007): 3–29; Sin Chönghun, "Silla Hyegongwang tae chöngch'ijök ch'ui wa ch'önjae chibyön üi sönggyök" [Political trends in King Hyegong's period and the features of natural disaster], *Tongsö sabak* 8 (2001): 1–56.

³⁸ "The 8th year (the 1st month of spring), the 9th year (the 4th month of summer), the 10th year (the 4th month of summer and the 10th month of winter), the 11th year (the 1st month of spring and the 6th month of summer), the 12th year (the 7th month of autumn and the 10th month of winter)" *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Korean Kingdoms], Silla Pon'gi [Main history of Silla], Book 9 King Hyegong; King Hyegong dispatched the envoys eight times in five years, all of which took place after the king's consolidation of his sovereignty.

³⁹ "The 12th year...The king traveled to Kamün Temple to view the ocean." Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Korean Kingdoms], 301.

adding the various items of stonework to King Söngdök's burial site.⁴⁰ Due to the royal status of the burial site, it would have been essential to have a system of rules in place dictating the specific placement of any stonework at the tomb. Thus, the parallels between the layouts of the stone statues at the Söngdök site and the Tailing mausoleum is no coincidence. As was explained previously, the system of Chinese royal tombs was first established with the construction of the Qianling mausoleum of Emperor Gaozong of Tang. However, further specification of this system was not developed until the differentiation of scholar and military official stone statues through the addition of armor as seen at the Tailing mausoleum.⁴¹ This highly organized system developed in the Tang dynasty was adopted by the Silla dynasty as the basis for the design and layout of the stonework to be placed at the sites of royal tombs. A special case involves the Tang dynasty auxiliary tombs of Prince Yide (懿德 682–701) and Princess Yongtai (永泰 684–701) which serve as specific models of tombs that were 'elevated in status' and thus display two pairs of stone statues rather than one. These tombs were appropriately granted a higher status than an ordinary auxiliary tomb but their status was still lower than that of an emperor's tomb.⁴² A correlation can be drawn from these two 'elevated' tombs to the Silla dynasty royal tombs based on the stone statues standing at the Silla dynasty Wönsöng and Hüngdök burial sites. Each of the two sites feature a pair of statues which corresponds to the same number of stone statues found at the tombs of elevated status belonging to Prince Yide and Princess Yongtai (Table 2).⁴³

⁴⁰ The idea that the royal tombs of the Silla dynasty were influenced by the system established at the mausoleums of the Tang dynasty had already been suggested in the first half of the twentieth century. Tadashi Saito, "Shinra toitsu jidai no hakasei" [General survey of the tomb system in Unified Silla], in *Chosen kodai bunka no kenkyu* [Research on ancient Korean culture] (Chijinshokan, 1943), 162-165, 197.

⁴¹ For more information regarding the royal mausoleums of China, see Takashi Kitamura, *Todai koteiryö no kenkyu*, 172; Yang Kuan, *Chungguk yöktae nüngch'im chedo* [Research on the history of ancient Chinese mausoleums], trans. Im Taehüi and Chang Insöng (Sögyöng, 2005), 149–170; Yang Kuan, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidu shiyanjin* [Research on the history of ancient Chinese mausoleums] (Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003); Victor Segalen, *The Great Statuary of China* (University of Chicago Press, 1978), 47–53.

⁴² "Zhongzong banuliezhuàn" (中宗八女列傳) [Biography of Zhongzong's eight daughters] in *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 [New book of Tang] no. 83; Pak Kyöngwön, "Tongil Silla üi myo üi söngmul sögin söksu yön'gu," 172.

⁴³ Auxiliary tombs refer to the burial sites surrounding the royal mausoleum that are meant for the relatives and/or officers of the Emperor.

Table 2: Chart detailing stonework of Tang dynasty auxiliary tombs

ATTENDANT TOMBS OCCUPANT	MAIN MAUSOLEUM	BURIAL YEAR	STONE STATUE	STONE TIGER	STONE LAMB	STONE LION	STONE PILLAR
Princess Changle	Zhaoling 昭陵	643	1 Pair	1 Pair	1 Pair	--	1 Extant
Princess Xincheng	Zhaoling 昭陵	663	1 Pair	1 Pair	1 Pair	--	1 Pair
Lixun	Zhaoling 昭陵	669	1 Pair	3 Total	3 Total	--	--
Prince Yide	Qianling 乾陵	706	2 Pairs	--	--	1 Pair	1 Pair
Princess Yongtai	Qianling 乾陵	706	2 Pairs	--	--	1 Pair	1 Pair
Prince Jiemin	Dingling 定陵	710	1 Pair	--	--	1 Pair	1 Extant

*This chart was compiled by reorganizing the contents found in the following text: Ying Weifeng, “Tangdai diling peizang muyanjū,” 85–86.

However, it must be noted that the higher number of stone statues at the burial sites of Prince Yide and Princess Yongtai relative to other Tang dynasty auxiliary tombs is a unique exception. This irregularity is due to the premature passing of both Prince Yide and Princess Yongtai which prompted their father Emperor Zhongzong (中宗 r. 684–710) to honor them in an exceptional manner. It certainly was not a common occurrence for the burial sites of an individual other than the emperor to be graced with a total of four statues in a system that usually mandated only one pair of stone statues per tomb. Regardless of quantity, the aesthetic appearance and characteristics of the military official statues located at the sites of the emperor’s tomb and its auxiliary tombs are identical in all aspects except for size as the statues belonging to the imperial tomb are larger in scale (Figure 9).

The statues at the mausoleums of Tang emperors would have sufficed on their own as models when King Hyegong was carrying out his project in the late eighth century to furnish the Silla dynasty’s royal tombs with new stonework. Other outside examples would not have been necessary. This also applies to the Sōngdōk site which was the first royal tomb to be furnished with stone statues but was decorated with only one pair of military official statues. As this seems to have been intentional, it is doubtful that the Tang dynasty tombs of elevated status belonging to Prince Yide and Princess Yongtai, which feature two pairs of stone statues each, served as models for the Sōngdōk site specifically. A better alternative would be any of the Tang dynasty auxiliary tombs that feature one pair

of stone statues such as the burial site of Prince Jiemin (節愍). Unfortunately, although many auxiliary tombs of the Tang once featured a pair of stone statues that would have served as guiding examples for the Söngdök site, very few of these examples have survived to the present day. This makes any in-depth comparison between the sites and funerary stone statues of Tang and Silla difficult as is the case with the auxiliary tomb of Gao Lishi (高力士 684–762), a eunuch to Emperor Xuanzong of Tang.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

The stone statues of the Silla dynasty royal tombs are relatively few in number. Out of thirty-eight royal tombs, stone statues have been discovered at only four of these sites. Even if one were to take into account the possibility that some examples could have been lost or destroyed, the number of surviving statues is startlingly low. The period between the first appearance of stone statues at the royal tomb of King Söngdök in the late eighth century until the end of the Silla dynasty in 935 spans approximately 150 years, during which about twenty different kings ruled over the kingdom. However, only twenty percent of these rulers currently have stone statues standing at their burial sites. It is unclear whether this drastically low number of stone statues is due to a lack of production or is a result of irreparable damage. The former seems to be a more probable explanation as not all of the royal tombs would have had stone statues produced for them. Therefore, one can conclude that the Tang dynasty tradition of placing stone statues at the sites of royal tombs had indeed reached the Silla dynasty and was even employed at some sites, but the practice was neither firmly established nor did it proliferate throughout the kingdom. Instead, as the evidence suggests, stone statues were produced in an extremely limited manner and made selectively for very few sites.

At this juncture it is interesting to note that the sites featuring the surviving stone statues—the royal tombs of King Söngdök, King Wönsöng, King Höndök and King Hüngdök—all follow a common layout.⁴⁵ Furthermore, all four sites also feature lion sculptures as well as sculptures of the twelve zodiac animal deities and in comparison to royal tombs of previous periods, the aforementioned

⁴⁴ Ying Weifeng, *Tangdai diling peizangmu yanjiu* [Research on the attendant tombs of the emperor's mausoleum], (PhD diss., Northwest University of Shaanxi province, 2011), 17; Wang Shuanghuai, "Tangling peizangmu di fenbu tezheng" [Distribution of Tang mausoleum's attendant tombs], *Shanxishi jinda xueji xuejiao yu xuebao* 18, no. 1 (2001): 67–68.

⁴⁵ Kim Yongsöng and Kang Chaehyön, "Silla wangnüng üi saeroun pijöng," 188 and 194.

sites are all located at relatively far distances from the royal district.⁴⁶ These common aspects suggest that although stone statues such as those of the military official type were produced for the royal tombs in a particular form, their implementation and propagation into the mainstream tradition of Silla dynasty funerary sculpture proved difficult and was ultimately unsuccessful.

This article has thus far argued against the general consensus maintaining that the stone statues of the Silla dynasty royal tombs should be dated to the same timeframe as the death of the tombs' occupants. Instead, it maintains that the stone statues were more often later additions. It has been established that this was the case with the Söngdök site for which King Hyeogong ordered the production and placement of the Silla dynasty's first royal funerary statues in the second half of the eighth century. These statues of military officials, lions, and zodiac animal deities were most likely created after Tang dynasty examples made for Chinese imperial burial sites. It is through their production that King Hyeogong sought to inherit the royal credibility and authority of King Söngdök. As for the three remaining Silla tombs with stone statues, the same patterns are observed. The burial mounds were constructed soon after the death of their intended occupants, but the stone statues were produced at a later time by succeeding kings who wanted to emphasize their lineage and connection to a powerful ruler and predecessor. The creation of the statues also usually coincided with times when the succeeding ruler found himself in a political plight and required validation of his royal authority as was the case with both the Söngdök and Wönsöng royal tombs. For example, King Kyöngmun (景文王 r. 861–875) elevated the royal tomb of King Wönsöng through the addition of stone sculptures and by this act sought to consolidate his own position as king and validate his legitimacy to rule.⁴⁷ The dedication of the stone statues was undoubtedly a necessary task for rulers in difficult situations as illustrated by the example of King Hyeogong. Naturally, there would also have been strict rules and conditions implemented to prevent the careless or imprudent production of such stone statues.

Lastly, the idea that the royal tombs of the Silla dynasty were influenced by the

⁴⁶ For a more thorough examination of the issue regarding the distances between the Silla dynasty royal tombs and the royal district, especially in terms of the location of later burial sites, see Chön Tökchae, "Silla wanggyöng esö wangnüng i ch'ajihanün wich'i mit kwan'gye koch'al" [Location of royal mausoleums in the Silla capital and their relationship], *Silla wangnüng III* [Royal tombs of the Silla dynasty III] (Kyöngju: Han'guk chönt'ong munhwa taehakkyo, 2013), 480–487.

⁴⁷ The view that the stone statues of the Wönsöng site were produced around the time of King Kyöngmun's ascension to the throne and that those of the Hüngdök site were produced when the stone stele was erected during the period of 872–884 has already been explored and established in previous research: Im Yöng'ae, "Silla sidae wangnüng chogak üi wansöng," 7–33; Im Yöng'ae, "Silla wangnüng chogak üi misulsajök chomang kwa t'üksusöng," 147–153.

system already in place at the sites of Tang dynasty mausoleums has been examined. This idea is reflected in the Silla dynasty's first funerary stone statues located at the Söngdök site and their close resemblance to the form of the stone statues placed at the Tailing mausoleum of Emperor Xuanzong constructed in 763. It is important to note that in terms of quantity the Söngdök examples were guided by the number of statues produced for the Tang auxiliary tombs rather than the main imperial burial sites. Thus, there is only one pair of military official statues at the royal tomb of King Söngdök as was the practice for typical Tang dynasty auxiliary tombs. In contrast, the later tombs of the Silla dynasty beginning with that of King Wönsöng follow the particular practice of placing two pairs of stone statues at the burial site. By doing so, the tombs became 'elevated' in status as was demonstrated by the special Tang dynasty tombs of Prince Yide and Princess Yongtai. All in all, the statues of military officials at the Söngdök tomb can be interpreted as marking the beginning of a tradition of funerary sculpture that was unique to Silla. While this tradition began from Tang influence with the initial production of only one pair of military official statues, the addition of a pair of warrior statues (Figure 1) was exclusive to Silla. Indeed, the warrior type statues are found only at the sites of Silla dynasty royal tombs. This independent development and its progress is evident in the existence of the two pairs of military official and warrior statues placed at the royal tomb of King Wönsöng.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The military official statues may have been a product of Chinese influence, but the warrior statues are distinct in that they were an independent development of the Silla dynasty. It has been suggested that the warrior type was created as the result of the relationship between the Silla dynasty royal tomb sculptures and the Buddhist sculptures of the guardian deity Vajra-pani (金剛力士 *Kūmgang yöksa*). Im Yöng'ae, "Silla wangnūng chogak ū misulsajök chomang kwa t'üksusöng," 147–153. Just as the Vajra-pani sculptures installed at the entrances of temples were meant to function as protectors, the warrior statues made according to a similar aesthetic and placed at the entrances to the royal tombs were created to guard the burial site. The connection to Buddhist sculpture does not terminate with the warrior type but is extended to the sculpture of the twelve zodiac animal deities carved into the stone surrounding the burial mound, which bear a striking resemblance to the Buddhist sculptures of the Four Heavenly Kings (四天王 *Sach'onwang*) especially in their aesthetic appearance and the form of their armor. These zodiac animal deities are another sculptural tradition unique to the Silla dynasty and a reflection of the connection between the royal tombs of Silla and the Buddhist religion. For example, though sculptures of the zodiac animal deities were placed inside of Chinese royal tombs, Korean examples are found on the exterior of and around the burial mound in a similar manner to sculptural reliefs decorating the exterior of stone stupas. This connection to Buddhism existed primarily because the tombs' occupants were devout Buddhists, but another factor is evident in the role of their sculptors. The Silla dynasty differed from the Tang dynasty in that sculptors were not exclusively employed for the purposes of producing funerary stonework. Rather, sculptors of Buddhist art were hired on a need-basis and according to the scale of each individual project. Funerary stonework was not a project that required the presence of a permanent sculptor nor did

For these reasons the funerary stone statues of the Silla dynasty are a special part of Korean heritage and history, and the statues of the Söngdök site are even more significant as they represent the beginning of royal funerary sculpture in the Silla dynasty.⁴⁹

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the Silla dynasty construct auxiliary graves that would require a significantly higher number of items of stonework as the Tang did (see footnote 6). Thus, the fact that Buddhist influence is clearly evident in the stonework of Silla dynasty royal tombs is a characteristic that differentiates the funerary sculpture of the Silla dynasty from that of other cultures.

⁴⁹ Unlike Silla, stone statues at the royal tombs of the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasty were divided into two types, stone statues of military officials and civil officials, the number of which were also increased. Though most Koryŏ royal tombs have been destroyed, and the earliest one which remains intact is the royal tomb of King Kongmin (恭愍王 1330–1374), the thirty-first ruler. Stone statues of Chosŏn royal tombs are the same as those at the tomb of King Kongmin, although their sculptural style is slightly different.

* Note: All photographs and drawings are by the author unless otherwise specified.

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