27. The Epitaph of a Third-Century Wet Nurse, Xu Yi

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Lower-class women have been employed to breast-feed and rear upper-class children in societies around the world,[1] and the consequent blurring or crossing of class and gender boundaries that this practice entails has frequently invited critical evaluation by contemporary moralists and intellectuals. But the specific issues that such debates raise with respect to gender, status, and social advancement through the female body have provided historians with many insights into broader aspects of politics and culture.[2] Historians studying ancient and medieval Europe have investigated various facets of wet nursing, ranging from the sexual regulations of wet nurses in Roman Egypt and a slave-made-nurse's unspoken decision to spare her milk for infant slaves to the wet nurses' quasi-maternal role and its impact on family relations in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Florence.[3]

In China, although wet nurses also are mentioned in various documents, the topic has received little attention. Scholarly works on the late imperial period, including discussions of medical opinions on breast-feeding and research on charitable institutions such as foundling homes, mention in passing the practice of wet nursing.[4] But wet nurses are not the focus of these studies, and the earlier history of wet nursing has not been explored. To examine the lives of this particular group of women and to put their stories into the context of early medieval China, we must search through all kinds of material, including stan-

dard histories, literary collections, liturgical documents, medical texts, and archaeological discoveries. What I introduce and translate here is just one of these rare and precious records, the epitaph of a Jin dynasty empress's wet nurse, whose life story reveals much about the selection, duties, rewards, influence, and contemporary evaluations of wet nurses. Since wet nurses were often one of the most important marginal figures in aristocratic households, they are promising subjects for research into such topics as the history of family relations, women's medicine, social mobility, and the politics of the body in early medieval China.

The epitaph for the wet nurse of Empress Jia Nanfeng 賈南風, Xu Yi 徐義, was excavated in Luoyang, the Western Jin capital, in the early 1950s. According to the archaeological reports, Xu Yi's tomb was one of the largest of the group excavated, and her epitaph was one of three found at the site.[5] The epitaph was inscribed, and her body buried, in 299, nearly one year after her death. Although there is no name at the end of the epitaph to indicate its author, the fact that Wet Nurse Xu died at home and that the empress sent a representative to offer sacrifice in the family funerary hall, as well as the phrase "the adoration of her offspring was severed and they could no longer wait upon her . . . thus a song was composed," all confirm that the text was overseen and approved by her children, if not entirely written from their viewpoint.

The epitaph notes that before Nanfeng's birth, Empress Jia Nanfeng's mother, Lady Guo Huai 郭槐, "lost each of her children shortly after they were born." According to records given in *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語) and the *History of the Jin* (*Jin shu* 晉書), this was because she murdered their wet nurses. When Guo saw her husband Jia Chong 賈充, one of the most powerful officials who helped found the dynasty, touching her newborn son while the infant's wet nurse was holding him, Guo killed the nurse out of suspicion; the baby would not take another woman's milk and died of sorrow. This kind of incident happened twice, the accounts say, and Jia Chong was thus deprived of male offspring.[6] Guo resented the wet nurses as if they were her husband's concubines, and her jealousy indirectly caused the death of her own sons. Even so, the epitaph shows that nonetheless, Guo appointed Xu Yi when Nanfeng and her sister were born, an indication of how common it was for the aristocracy to employ wet nurses.

Xu Yi is said to have "married into the Xu family," a commoner's household, suggesting that her birth family name was unknown. But despite her apparently obscure origin, Xu Yi was still praised for "disregarding her own honorable genealogy" when she decided to nurse the Jia sisters, indicating that wet nurses often came from a status lower than that of commoners. That Guo was never legally charged for her crimes of murder also illustrates the difficulty that wet nurses might face in securing legal protection. The third-century debates over whether or not one should mourn for one's deceased wet nurse reflect the fact that, unlike ancient times when presumably the lower aristocratic wives

would be designated to breast-feed their superiors' babies, wet nurses in medieval China were often chosen from the household slaves. This practice caused problems among intellectuals in interpreting the Classics, which state that one should honor one's wet nurse with three months' mourning after her death.[7] Related arguments reveal the changes that occurred over time, in both the selection of wet nurses and the perception of a woman's status in an aristocratic household.

According to Xu Yi's epitaph, she was a mild-mannered person experienced in child rearing. Since she died at the age of seventy-eight in 298, we know that she already was thirty-eight years old when she started nursing the Jia sisters in 258. Indeed, she may have been appointed to the task because of her experience and may have escaped Guo's jealousy because of her advanced age.[8] Medical texts from this period advised the family to select women of mild temperament and healthy stature and to regulate their sexual activities and alcoholic consumption to ensure the quality of their milk.[9] Although no such details were recorded in Xu Yi's epitaph, her discretion and discipline were indeed emphasized. Her duties were nursing and tending to the Jia sisters while they were infants, guiding and watching over Jia Nanfeng when she became the imperial consort, and aiding Nanfeng in palace political struggles. According to the *Jinshu*, Jia Nanfeng conspired to oust Empress Yang and her father from political power. From another angle, however, the epitaph depicts the precarious court politics in which the conspirator had to activate all her human resources to avoid danger and carry out her plan.[10]

The epitaph portrays Xu Yi as a woman whose talents were greatly admired and whose contributions were too significant to be overlooked. After the political incident, not only was she invested with the title Lady of Fairness (*Meiren* 美人), but her son was promoted in officialdom. The appointment of Wet Nurse Xu's son to various offices by the emperor shows how wet nursing could open a path to upward social mobility for children of inferior households. Contemporary documents suggest that sometimes the master would adopt the wet nurse's sons, thus giving them an even greater opportunity for political advancement.[11] This practice, however, together with giving noble titles to loyal imperial wet nurses, did not escape criticism. Based on private relations and through unofficial channels, wet nurses' influence was usually considered sinister. As a result, the investiture of slave "mothers" to noble ranks was often linked as a bad omen with whatever natural disasters the empire suffered at the time, and the practice consistently drew reproach from concerned officials.

Since epitaphs were often filled with praises out of respect for the deceased, we would not expect to find such criticism there. We do not know whether Xu Yi was ever blamed by her contemporaries for Jia Nanfeng's infamous behaviors. According to the inscription, though, she was treated very well by her prestigious nursling throughout her life. Jia Nanfeng sent imperial doctors to care for Xu Yi and to provide her with the most nutritious diet when she fell ill,

and she expressed her deepest sorrow when she passed away. Although no mourning service was mentioned, the imperial sacrifices and the lavishness of her burial testify to the favor and status that Xu Yi was able to accumulate through her wet-nursing career.

The study of wet nurses touches on women's occupations and social mobility, contemporary conceptions of mothering and women's bodies, and also the development of gynecology. As mentioned earlier, previous studies have analyzed the practices and meanings of wet nursing in late imperial China. Wet Nurse Xu's epitaph extends our knowledge and understanding of this significant institution back to early medieval China. In contrast to the medieval European custom in which newborns were sent away into the countryside to live with contracted wet nurses, premodern Chinese brought wet nurses into their homes, where they were closely supervised. Some scholars suggest that this may have helped reduce infant mortality in China, but these live-in wet nurses may also have caused unexpected problems for their masters' families. Originally a maidservant or a commoner at best, a wet nurse might continue to serve in her master's family after her nursling grew up. Indolent wet nurses were whipped, and distrusted ones were sometimes executed. Most wet nurses, however, became famous for their loyalty to and intimacy with their nurslings, which brought them and their families both material and honorary rewards. It was these rewards that provoked criticism from contemporaries.

Early medieval moralists and intellectuals criticized wet nursing not because upper-class women disregarded breast-feeding as the obligation of motherhood and not because lower-class women produced inferior milk and emotions that might corrupt their charges. Instead, the principal reason that scholar-officials objected to the institution was the shattering of conventional gender and status boundaries that would result if a former wet nurse were given an aristocratic title or if her former nursling carried out official mourning rituals for her. Court bureaucrats objected to the fact that political danger could arise if powerful men confided in and were influenced by these women, to whom they felt they owed their lives. Proponents of mourning honors for wet nurses insisted that whatever her origins, a *rumu* 乳母 (literally, "milk mother") did carry the name of "mother" and substantiated her motherly merits with her milk. Opponents, however, rejected the idea that milk and maternal care could raise a lower-class woman to the status of the "mother" of an upper-class infant.

Defining the status of different women in a patriarchal household was an important aspect of the Confucianization of early medieval China. In this regard, the North sometimes appears to have moved less rapidly than the South. In codifying classical family ethics during this period, Confucian scholars felt that a woman's status should be determined solely on the basis of her relationship to the master of the house. Another piece of source material translated in this collection shows that such an assertion—which in many cases was followed by Southern ruling houses—caused serious debates and sometimes

denunciation in the Northern imperial courts.[12] Xu Yi's epitaph suggests that, given all the favors she enjoyed and the awards she received from the Jin imperial authority, whether inner court titles or material resources, she was not seen as having challenged the boundary between master and servant. Is this the reason why we find no contemporary criticism of Wet Nurse Xu, or is it simply that the Jin officials, unlike their counterparts in the Eastern Han, had no interest in blaming wet nurses for political problems? We need more sources to answer this question.

Moreover, even though the bond between a wet nurse and her charges was often depicted as a kind of mutual devotion, the reality was perhaps more complicated in view of the frequent political struggles in early imperial courts. Once a woman, slave or servant, was appointed as the wet nurse of an aristocratic newborn, she would be forced to ignore her own children in the interests of her master's, although she was given an opportunity to promote her family and herself by means of her female dispositions of milk and maternal care. But since history was never written by lower-class women, the true emotions and thoughts of wet nurses are probably forever beyond our grasp.

FURTHER READING

For a detailed analysis of Xu Yi's epitaph and a longer discussion of the institution of wet nursing in medieval China, see Jen-der Lee, "Wet Nurses in Early Imperial China," *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in Early and Imperial China* 2, no. 1 (2000): 1–39. On wet nurses in late imperial China, see Angela Ki Che Leung, "L'accueil des enfants abandonnés dans la Chine du bas-Yangzi aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," *Études chinoises* 4, no. 1 (1985): 15–54, and *Shishan yü jiaohua: Ming Qing de cishan zuzhi* 施善與教化：明清的慈善組織 (Taibei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1997), esp. 71–102. See also Ping-chen Hsiung, "To Nurse the Young: Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Family History* 20, no. 3 (1995): 217–38, and *A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005). For women's roles in domestic health care in medieval China, see Jen-der Lee, "Gender and Medicine in Tang China," *Asia Major* 16, no. 2 (2003): 1–32.

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Epitaph of Xu Yi 徐義

[front] Epitaph of the Lady of Fairness [*Meiren* 美人], Xu Yi, wet nurse for Empress Jia of the Jin dynasty. The name of the Lady of Fairness was Yi, and she was from Dongwu 東武 County of Chengyang 城陽 Prefecture.[13] Her ancestors resided along the sea. After her parents and siblings died in local disturbances, she drifted to the area north of the Yellow River, where she settled and married into the Xu family of Dayuan 大原.[14] The virtuous stature of the Lady of Fairness surpassed [that of] King Wen's mother; her spotless standing was comparable to [that of] Lady Bo 伯姬.[15] She was calm and elegant. Her management of the house was better than that of a benevolent man. She watched over all the areas without stepping down out of the hall. She took care of her children with wise guidance; her teaching was harsher than a severe father's, while her grace was grander than the spring sun. Her bright perception was known by those far and near; her generosity in reception and provision was praised by her neighbors. People sang about her, and families followed her [examples].

The Jin Dynasty's Late Palace Attendant, Acting Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent, Grand Steward, and Duke Wu of Lu, [that is,] Master Jia [Chong], was from Pingyang 平陽. The master came from an eminent lineage [but] had few descendants [because] his wife Lady Guo, Countess Yicheng 宜城, had lost each of her children shortly after they were born. The Lady of Fairness had a loyal and faithful mind and decided to serve for the fortune [of the Jia family], disregarding her own honorable genealogy, beginning in the third year of the Ganlu era [258], to attend to Empress Jia and [her sister], the wife of the late Cavalry General Master Han of Nanyang 南陽. The Lady of Fairness nursed the babies, taking care of them as a tender mother and loving them more than a birth parent would. [When they wet the bed,] she would move the babies to the dry part and sleep on the wet spot herself. She [cared for them,] regardless of the icy weather, and she chewed delicacies to feed them, so much so that she hardly slept soundly, and she loved them from the bottom of her heart. If not for her meritorious words, they would have had no helping guidance. She taught them to stay in the inner chambers and play in the hall without displaying their voices and faces to the exterior.

The empress [Jia Nanfeng] was physically upright and thriving, her virtue wonderful and great. When she was thirteen, Emperor Wu thought that Master Jia had served the official administration and the imperial family very well and sent Chen Huang 陳惶, Viscount of Sikuai 泗澮子, also Chamberlain for the imperial clan, to betroth her as the consort of the heir apparent in the first month of the sixth year of the Taishi era [270]. The consort, at a young age, was entrusted to the prince's harem. The Lady of Fairness followed the consort into the palace in order to serve her there and was given official dresses and hats by the emperor. The consort behaved properly, as if she were a guest, when she had an audience with the emperor. She refrained from speech, meals, rest, travels, and music unless the Lady of Fairness also enjoyed them. Their affection was like that of parent and child. On the twenty-fourth day of the fifth month of the third year of the Dakang era [282], Emperor Wu invested [Xu Yi] with the title of Lady of Talents and appointed her son, Lie 烈, as an administrator in the Ministry of Education. On the twenty-second day of the fourth month of the first year of the Daxi era [290], Emperor Wu passed away. The heir apparent

was enthroned as Emperor [Hui]. The Lady of Fairness began to serve in the imperial palace and was invested with the title Lady of Virtue. On the ninth day of the third month of the first year of the Yongping era [291], the treacherous Grand Mentor Yang Jun 楊駿 claimed to receive inner orders to raise the army and plotted treason. [His daughter] Empress Dowager Yang summoned Empress Jia to her side with the intention of doing evil. At the time, all the palace servants were frightened, afraid that death was unavoidable and destruction was imminent. The Lady of Fairness produced some excuses and thus saved the empress from the situation. After the principal criminal Jun was executed, the emperor, appreciating the contribution [of Wet Nurse Xu], bestowed on her the title of Lady of Fairness in the first year of the Yuankang era [291], granting her one thousand bolts of silk and twenty servants. The titles and the gifts were abundant. The empress commended her for taking care of all kinds of tasks and entrusted her with intimacy. Her cuisine was the same as that of the imperial concubines, and she enjoyed special favors. In the second month of the fifth year of the Yuankang era [295], the emperor decreed the investment of the son of the Lady of Fairness, Lie, as Battalion Commander of the Heir Apparent. Promotions and honors accumulated exceptionally; truly [the Lady of Fairness and her son] have benefited from the grace of the great Jin dynasty.

In the seventh month of the seventh year of the Yuankang era [297], the Lady of Fairness fell seriously ill and returned home from the palace to recuperate.

[back] The emperor and the empress cared for her, sending the imperial gatekeepers to ask after her health every day and commanding the palace doctors, the Commandant in Chief of Chariots [and] Marquis of Guanzhong Cheng Ju 程據, Liu Xuan 劉琁, and others to examine her at her house. They provided imperial medicine and a variety of foods. The Lady of Fairness received every kind of precious victuals in the empress's dietary. Her illness grew increasingly severe over the year, and she died at the age of seventy-eight, on the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month of the eighth year [of the Yuankang era, 298]. The empress could not help but cry and wail in lamentation. [The empress] granted [the Lady of Fairness] burial vessels and dresses, sent the Director of Palace Women, Song Duanlin 宋端臨, to personally oversee the funeral, and granted five million coins as well as five hundred bolts of silk for the funeral service. The emperor sent Gentleman of the Interior Zhao Xuan 趙旋 as a representative to offer the three sacrifices. The empress sent Concurrent Aide of the Private Storehouse, Receptionist, [and] Leader of the Court Gentlemen Attendants at the Palace Gate Cheng Gongbao 成公苞 to offer the small sacrifice in the family funeral hall.[16] On the fifth day of the second month of the ninth year, [the Lady of Fairness] was buried, forever covered deep down under the ground. The adoration of her offspring was severed, and they could no longer wait on her. Alas! What sadness it was!

Thus a song was composed, saying:

How tranquil the Lady of Fairness was, her virtue surpassed [that of] Er 娥 and Ying 英.[17] She was like the woman from Qi who ascended to the purple hall.[18] Her experience reached the imperial realm and extended to two palaces. She served the imperial household, supporting it faithfully. She was edifying and insightful, and her politics was good and clean. With all her authority, the empress listened to the Lady of Fairness. People both far and near admired and relied on her, singing songs to expand her fame. She was supposed to enjoy boundlessness and live to eternity. But Heaven had no sympathy, and she died at a young age. Her spirit was dispersed and gone, and she was covered deep down under the ground. What an everlasting pain! Not to be seen [again] in a thousand years! Crying out loud like cutting until the five viscera collapse.

This song was composed separately to finish the plain epitaph.

["Jin Jiahuanghou rumu meiren Xushi zhiming" 晉賈皇后乳母美人徐氏之銘, in Zhao Chao 趙超, *Han Wei Nanbeichao muzhi huibian* 漢魏南北朝墓誌彙編 (Tianjin: Gujichubanshe, 1992), 8–10]

NOTES

1. Part of this introduction is based on material from Jen-der Lee, "Wet Nurses in Early Imperial China," *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in Early and Imperial China* 2, no. 1 (2000): 1–39.
2. More than one hundred articles have been published on the history of wet nursing in Europe and America. See Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Basic Blackwell, 1988), app.
3. For Roman wet nursing, see Keith R. Bradley, "Sexual Regulations in Wet-Nursing Contracts from Roman Egypt," *Klio* 62 (1980): 321–25. Bradley also discusses the impact of wet nursing in Roman social relations in "Wet-Nursing at Rome: A Study in Social Relations," in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, ed. Beryl Rawson (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 201–9. Sandra R. Joshel explores nineteenth-century American documents on female slaves and nursing decisions, seeing similarities with the situation in ancient Rome, in "Nurturing the Master's Child: Slavery and the Roman Child-Nurse," *Signs* 12 (1986): 3–22. For wet nursing in medieval Florence, see Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "Blood Parents and Milk Parents: Wet Nursing in Florence, 1300–1530," in *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 132–64.
4. For instance, Angela Ki Che Leung discusses the difficult recruitment and limited allowance of wet nurses in foundling homes in "L'accueil des enfants abandonnés dans la Chine," *Études chinoises* 4, no. 1 (1985): 15–54, and *Shishan yu jiaohua: Ming-Qing de cishan zuzhi* 施善與教化：明清的慈善組織 (Taibei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1997). Ping-chen

Hsiung describes the selection of wet nurses in wealthy families in "To Nurse the Young: Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Family History* 20, no. 3 (1995): 217–38, and *A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005). Both pieces deal with late imperial China.

5. According to the archaeological report, the excavation was carried out from the spring of 1953 to September 1955, and fifty-four Jin tombs were discovered. Among them, Xu Yi's tomb was almost 17 feet wide and about 40 feet deep, with a tomb alley nearly 123 feet long, testifying to the status of the tomb's occupant. See Jiang Ruoshi 蔣若是 and Guo Wenxuan 郭文軒, "Luoyang Jinmu de fajue," 洛陽晉墓的發掘, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1957, no. 1 (1957): 169–86.
6. The first incident was recorded in *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語) 35/3. The second incident was recorded in *JS* 40.1170.
7. The three-month mourning was prescribed in the *Etiquette and Rituals* (*Yili* 儀禮), *SSJZ*, 33.8b. The debates were recorded in Du You 杜佑 (734–812), *Comprehensive History of Institutions* (*Tongdian* 通典) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 92.2512.
8. Traditional Chinese medical texts often describe a woman's life according to her fertility, starting from her first menstruation at fourteen to her menopause at forty-nine. A preliminary survey of women's epitaphs in early medieval China suggests that the average life expectancy of women was about fifty-five years, so a thirty-eight-year-old woman would most likely be considered middle-aged. For a medical discussion of women's fertility and life span, see Lee Jen-der 李貞德, "Han Tang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan—Jianlun fuke lanshang yu xingbie lunshu" 漢唐之間求子醫方試探—兼論婦科濫觴與性別論述, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 68, no. 2 (1997): 283–367. On gauging women's life expectancy through the survey of epitaphs, see Jen-der Lee, "The Life of Women in the Six Dynasties," *Funü yü liangxin xuekan* 婦女與兩性學刊 (Taibei: Women's Research Program, National Taiwan University) 4 (1993): 47–80.
9. The *Xiaopinfang* 小品方 by Chen Yanzhi 陳延之 of the Liu-Song period (420–479) was the first of the surviving medical texts to mention the qualities required of wet nurses. Similar ideas were reiterated by Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682) and Cui Shi 崔氏 (presumably Cui Zhiti 崔知悌, d. 681). See Chen Yanzhi (ca. fifth century), *Xiaopinfang*, cited in Yasuyori Tanba 丹波康賴 (912–995), *Ishinpo* 醫心方 (982; repr., Taibei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1982), 25.17a–b; and Sun Simiao, *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (Taibei: Hongyeh bookstore, reprint of Edo copy of Song edition), 5.74. The advice given by Cui Zhiti is cited in Wang Tao 王燾 (670–755), *Waitai miyao* 外台秘要 (reprint of Song edition, Taibei: Guoli zhongguo yiyao yanjiusuo, 1964), 35.980b.
10. For Jia Nanfeng's conspiracy, see *JS* 31.955.
11. For examples, see *BS* 49.1809–10.
12. Jen-der Lee, chapter 9 of this volume.
13. Zhao Chao 趙超, *Han Wei Nanbeichao muzhi huibian* 漢魏南北朝墓誌彙編 (Tianjin: Guji chubanshe, 1992), 8–10, includes this epitaph but mistakes her original place as Chengyang Dongwucheng 城陽東武城人也. I changed this in accordance with the original image of the epitaph published in *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1 (1957): 182. According to *JS* 14.424, Dongwucheng 東武城 was located in Qinghe Commandery in Ji Region 冀州清河郡, but Dongwu was a county administrative unit belonging to Chengyang Commandery in Qing Region 青州城陽郡, according to a statement elsewhere in the same work. See *JS* 15.450. Paragraph breaks in this translation were added for clarity and are not in the original.

14. Dayuan 大原 should have been Taiyuan 太原, which belonged to Bing Region 并州. See *JS* 14.415, 14.428.
15. Lady Bo 伯姬 of the Spring and Autumn period is said to have been so virtuous that she refrained from stepping out of the hall without a chaperone even when the hall was on fire, and she burned to death. See Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 B.C.E.), *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, reprint of *Sibu beiyao* edition, 1983), 4.1b–2a.
16. Not like the Three Sacrifices 三牲祠—of a bull, a goat, and a pig—the small sacrifice 少牢 entailed only a goat and a pig and often was categorized as the prince's, instead of the emperor's, sacrificial ritual.
17. Er means Erhuang 娥皇, and Ying means Nüying 女英. They were the two daughters of the ancient sage-king Yao 堯 who later became the wives of his successor, Shun 舜. For their virtuous stories, see Liu Xiang, *Lienü zhuan*, 1.1a–2a.
18. Here the epitaph writer was probably referring to the virtuous queen of King Xuan of Zhou, who was originally from the Qi kingdom. Purple palace or purple hall was often used to designate the imperial palace. For her story, see Liu Xiang, *Lienü zhuan*, 2.1a–b.