

**Anth 150: Visit to Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art**  
(All directions are in reference to facing the throne)

**History and Ideology**

Many rulers of ancient states and empires created objects in the image of artifacts from previous dynasties. There are several examples of this in the exhibit:

- Compare the Bodhisattvas (enlightened beings in the Buddhist tradition) against the left wall. The one on the right is from the Yuan dynasty, while the one on the left is from the Qing dynasty several hundred years later. What differences do you see in the earlier and later examples? Are they still recognizable as the same image?
- There are other examples of more explicit call-backs to previous dynasties in the gallery. The blue and white vases next to the throne have similarities to the Ming dynasty, and the square jade vase on the treasure wall is similar to the Zhou dynasty.
  - Do you see similar forms or motifs repeating in any of these objects through time?
- What reasons would current rulers have for imitating previous dynasties/states?

**Stratification**

One element of ancient states is the rigidity of social classes. Examine the clothing in the gallery.

- What does the nature of various clothing items (fabric, cut, size, etc.) tell you about the expected activities of the elites who would have worn it?
- Examine the Mandarin Squares to the right of the throne- for what reasons might a ruler enforce such strict clothing standards/uniforms for the palace community?

### **Crafts and Skill**

- Examine the assemblage associated with writing? What does this tell us about who was writing and the prestige of literacy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Think about the skill necessary to create the various objects in this room. How would these artisans have been supported?

### **Consumption**

- Look at the various items around the room- what objects do you consider utilitarian? What objects do you consider purely decorative?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What might the reasons be for ornate decoration on utilitarian items? What would possession of these objects symbolize?

### **Preservation**

- What objects in this room would survive in an archaeological deposit? Would they provide you with an accurate picture of the society?