

Earth Deity Mapping and Community Networks in Taiwan

JAMES X. MORRIS, NATIONAL CHENGCHI UNIVERSITY

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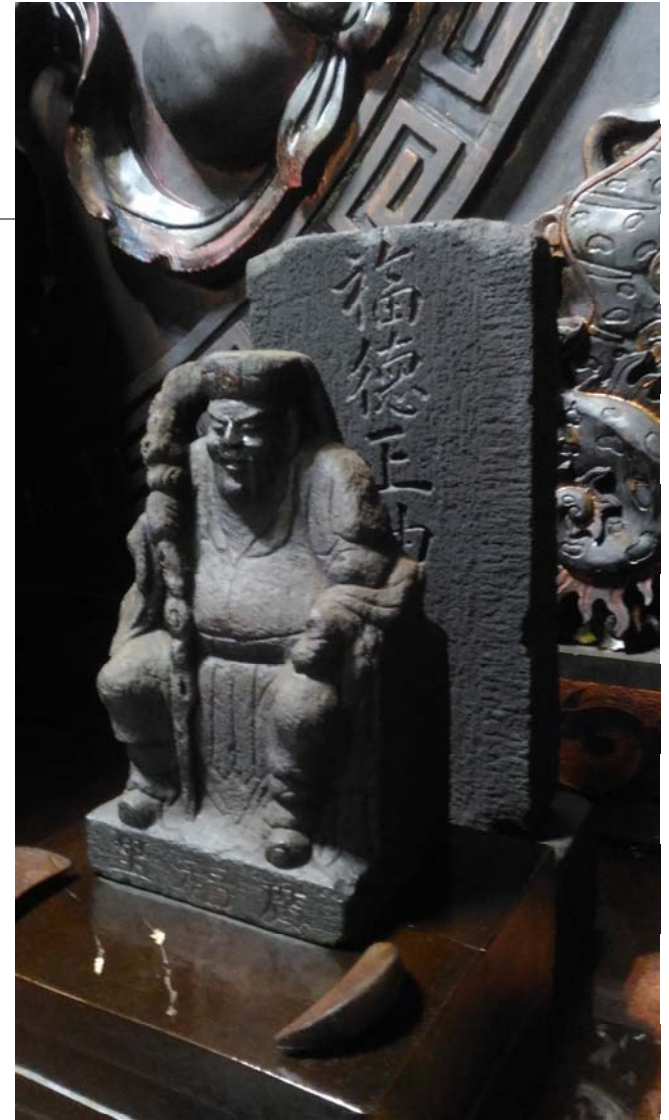
Overview of research and methodology

Purpose of presentation and definitions

Case study: earth deity steles

- Dating the steles
- Semi-circle motifs
- Botanical motifs
- Localized stele expressions
- Preliminary observations

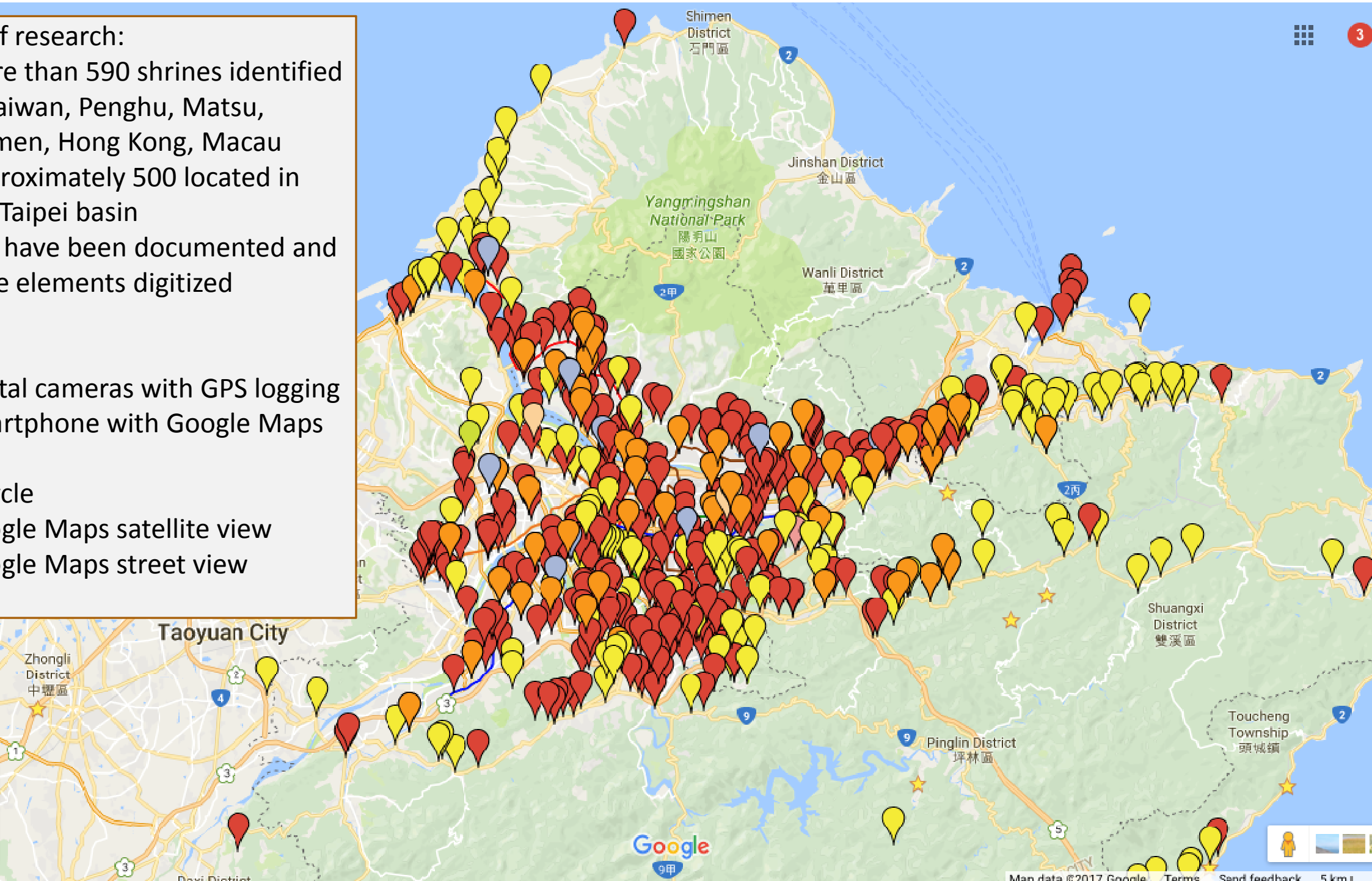
Moving forward

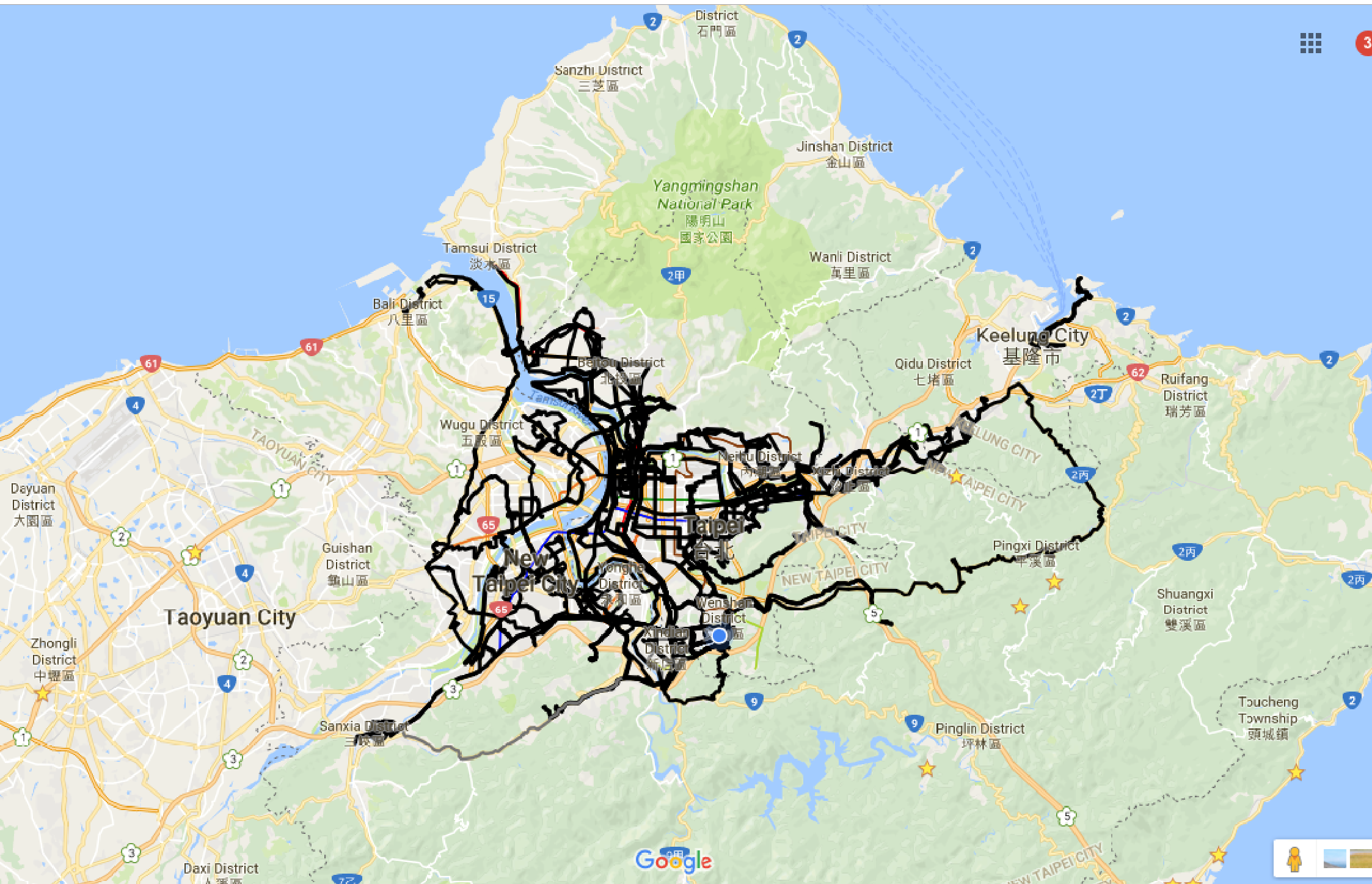


f research:
re than 590 shrines identified
aiwan, Penghu, Matsu,
men, Hong Kong, Macau
roximately 500 located in
Taipei basin
have been documented and
e elements digitized

tal cameras with GPS logging
rtphone with Google Maps

cle
gle Maps satellite view
gle Maps street view





What is digitized and documented?

Site



Shrine



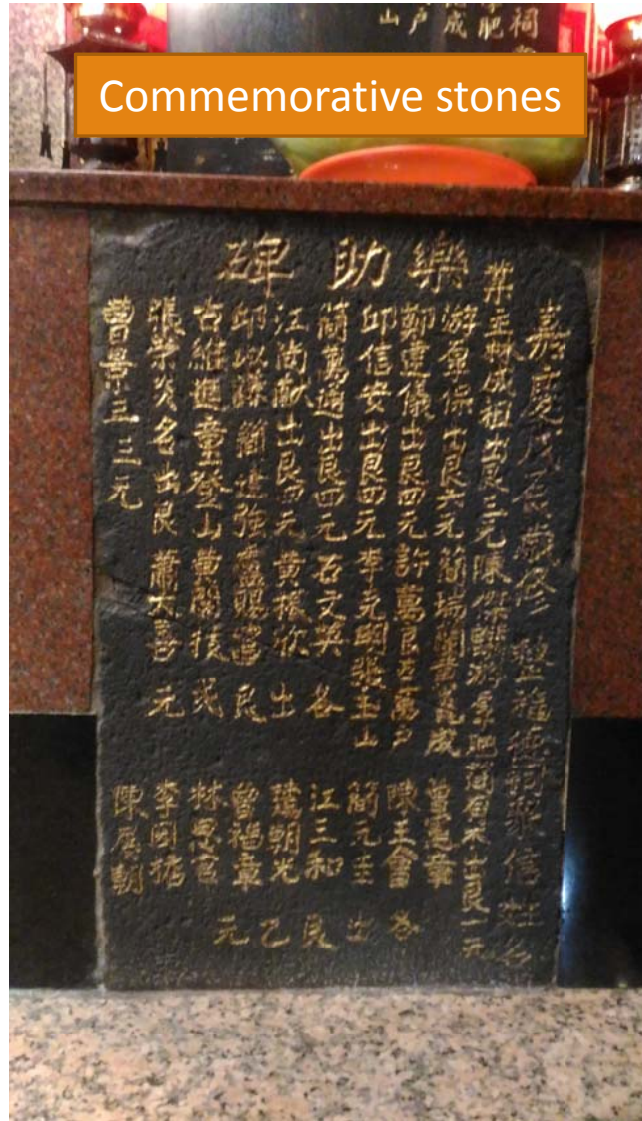
Altar



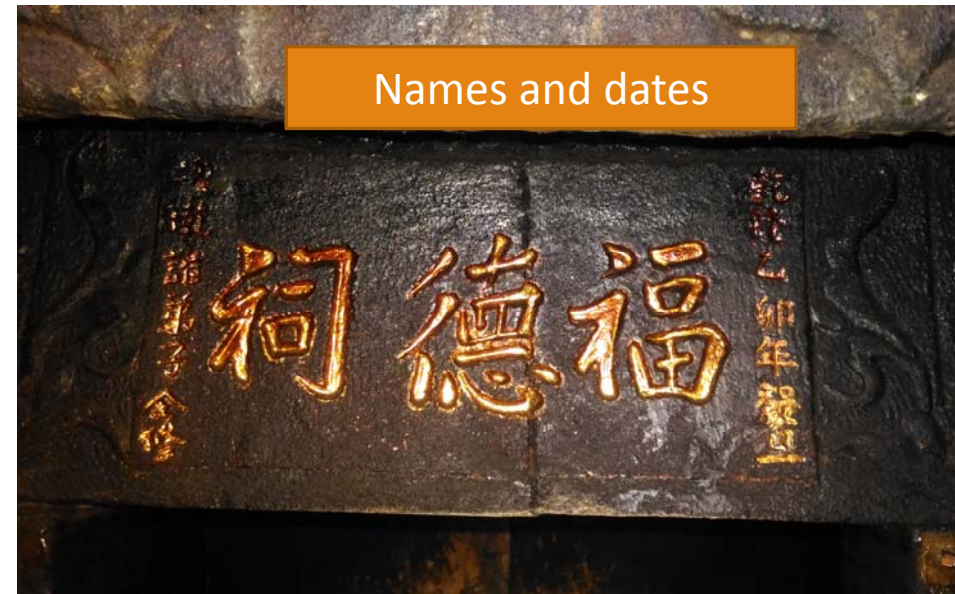
Deity images



Commemorative stones



Names and dates



Renovations

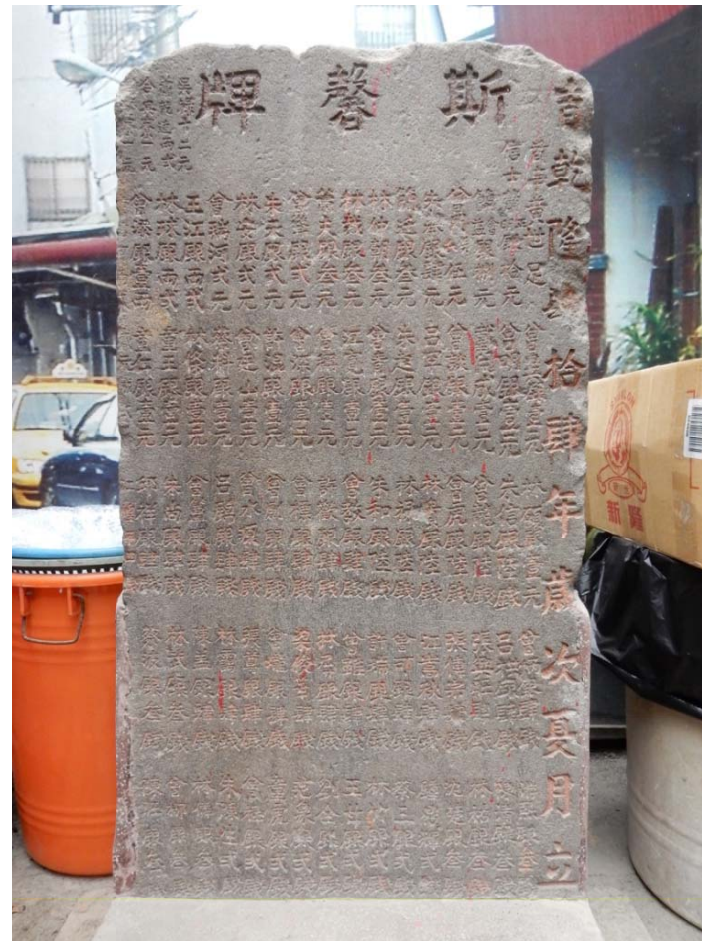


Building a repository of spatiotemporal data

Digitizing all elements found at an earth shrine a comprehensive system of images can be identified across time and space

Particular recurring attributes can help identify clusters where particular families, workshops, trends, and networks were more dominant

Changing attributes at a site can be compared with other shrines to get an understanding of shifting trends within an area over time.



Purpose

NOT to add to the already existing literature which has been conducted largely on the nature of the god, worship of him, and the roles that he plays within communities.

INSTEAD attempts to test whether or not, due to its frequency of appearance within communities, the earth deity can act as a marker, indicator, or a tangible heritage asset that can determine historical community networks, trade, and the spread of fashions.

How does studying the earth deity help us map communities and networks?



Taitung County



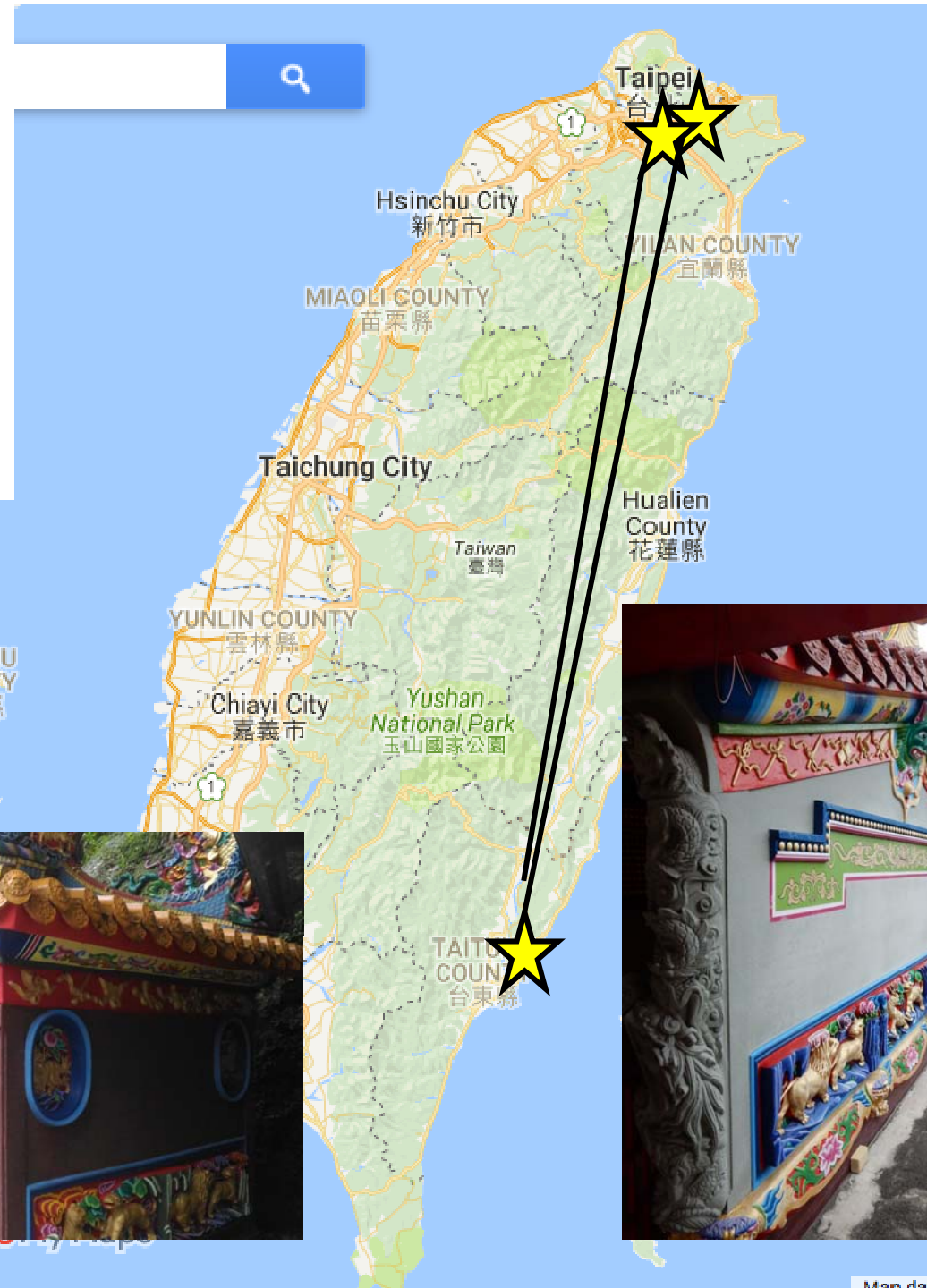
New Taipei City

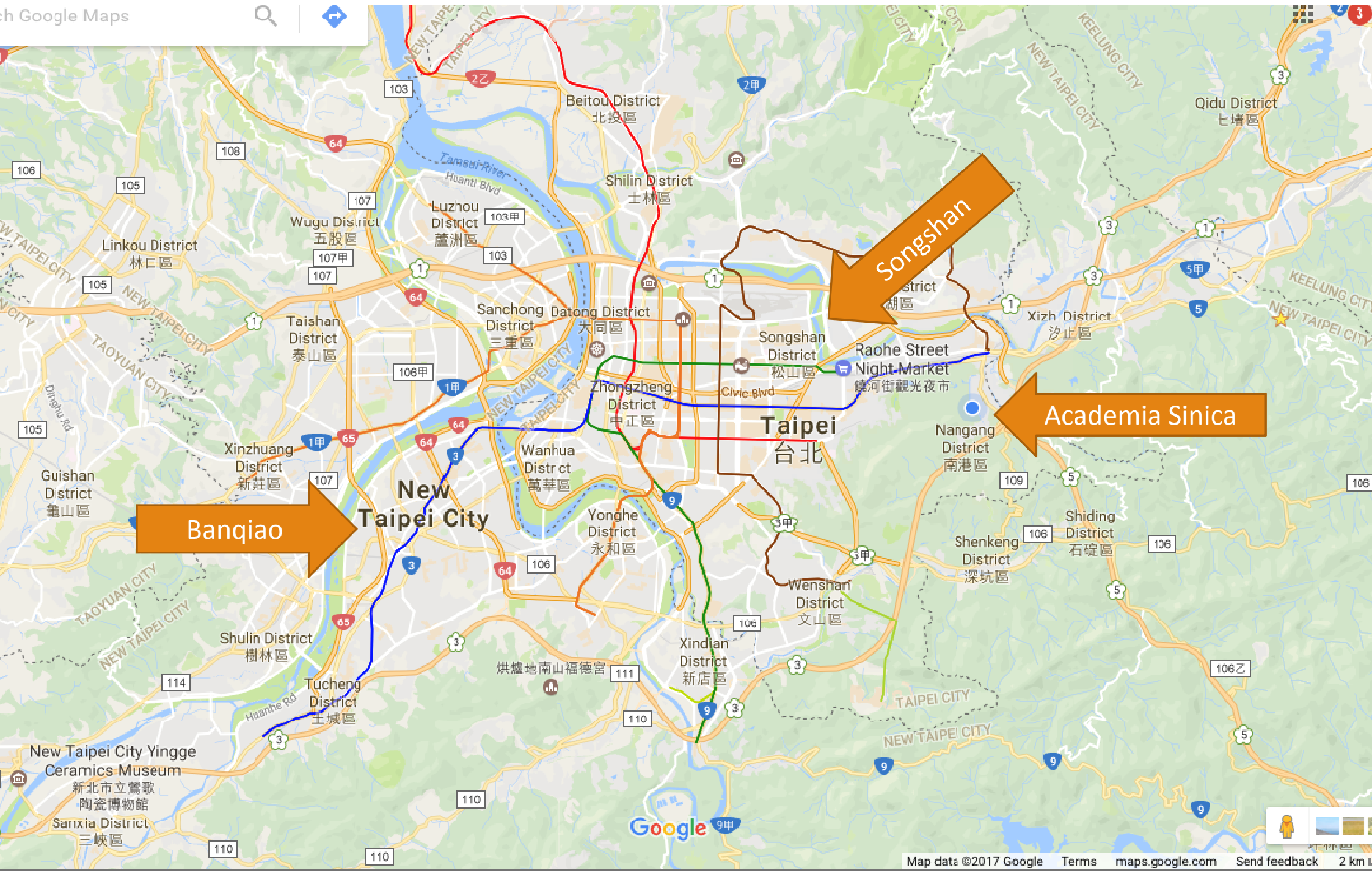
- Looking for evidence of community connections through the temples
- Ubiquity of the land god throughout communities
- Locutionary nature of the deity allows for localization of worship, trends, and practices
 - Socially-malleable practices
- Construction and materials easily reflect community trends, industrial norms, and commercial networks

Definitions

Community network:

Measurable phenomena of interaction between settlements and communities in the areas of economics, trade, norms, and social trends





Banqiao

Songshan

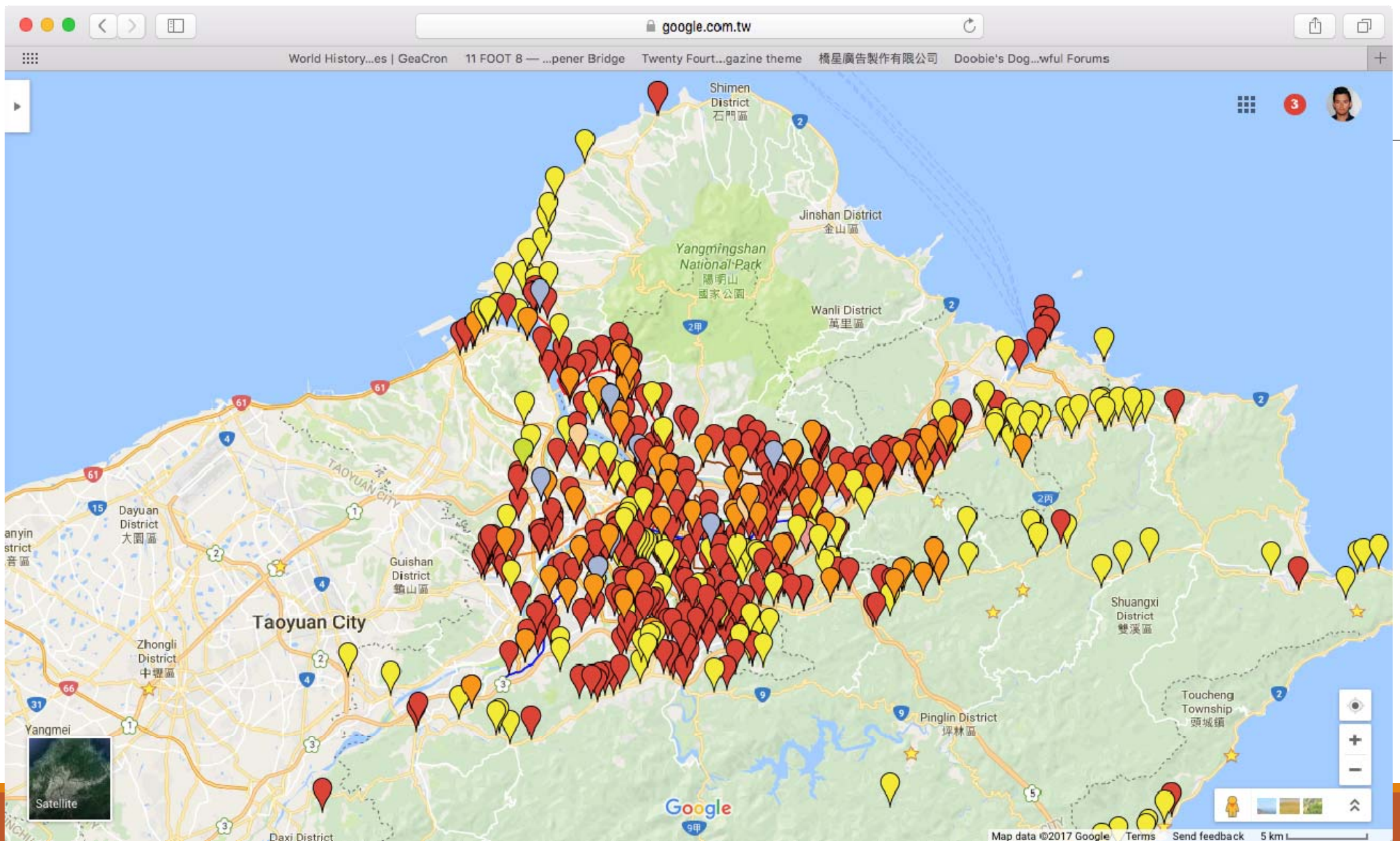
Academia Sinica

New Taipei City

Taipei
台北

TAIPEI CITY
NEW TAIPEI CITY

Case study: Taipei basin steles



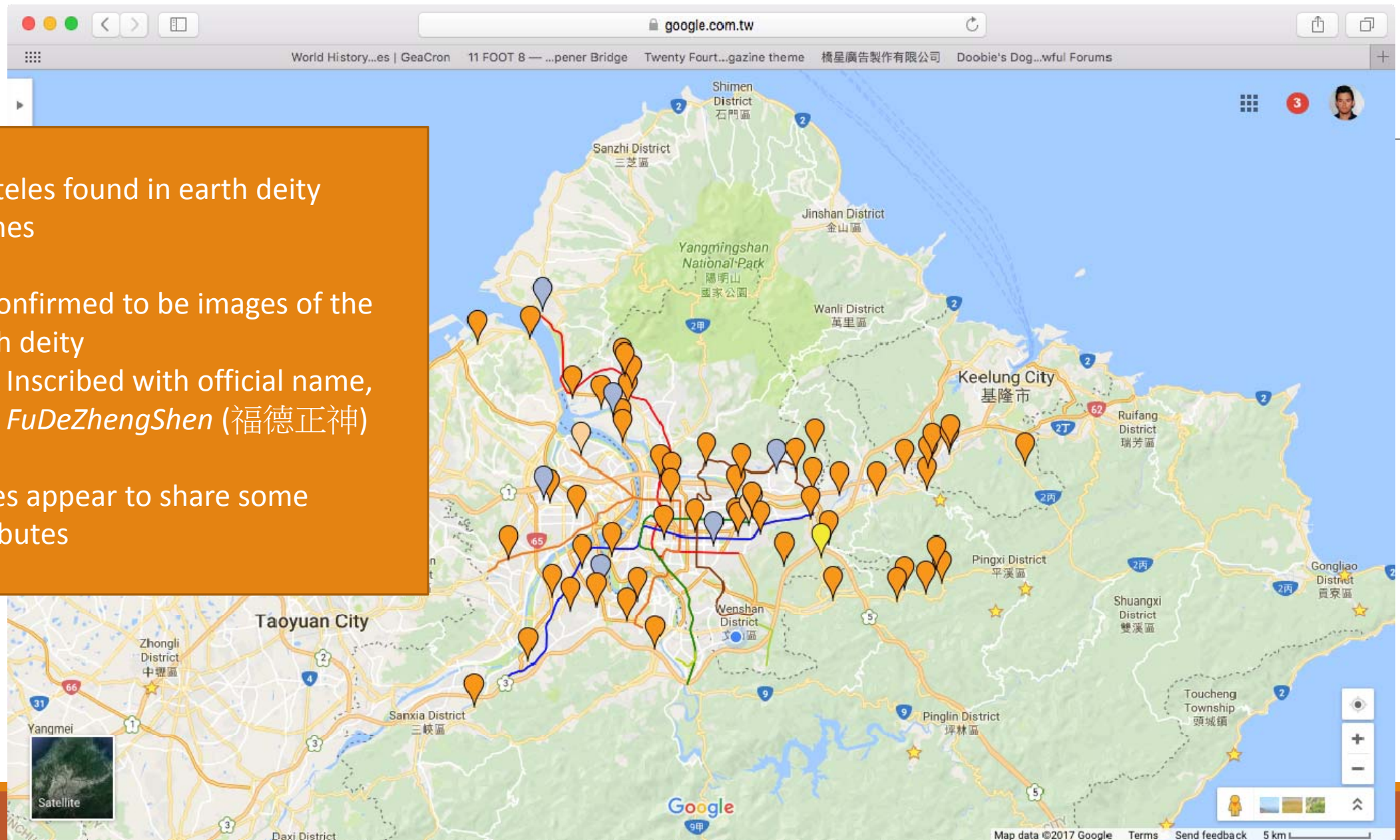
Case study: Taipei basin steles

66 steles found in earth deity shrines

9 confirmed to be images of the earth deity

- Inscribed with official name, *FuDeZhengShen* (福德正神)

steles appear to share some attributes

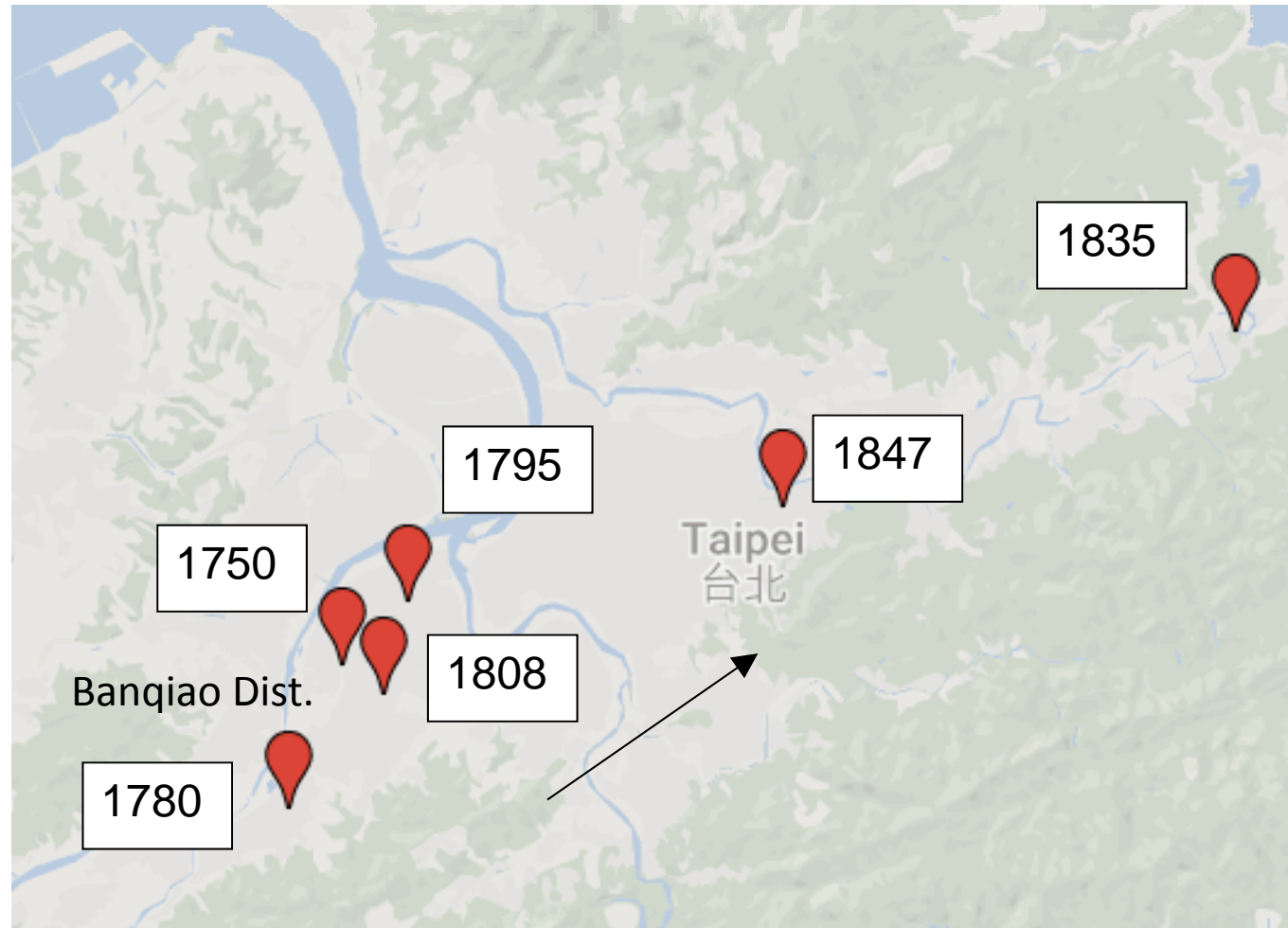


Dating the steles

Only six stele shrines had dates associated with the original time of construction



Stele and commemorative stone at Banqiao FuXingGong, dated 1750



Semi-circle motif



Only four steles exhibit a semi-circle motif





Botanical/ivy motif

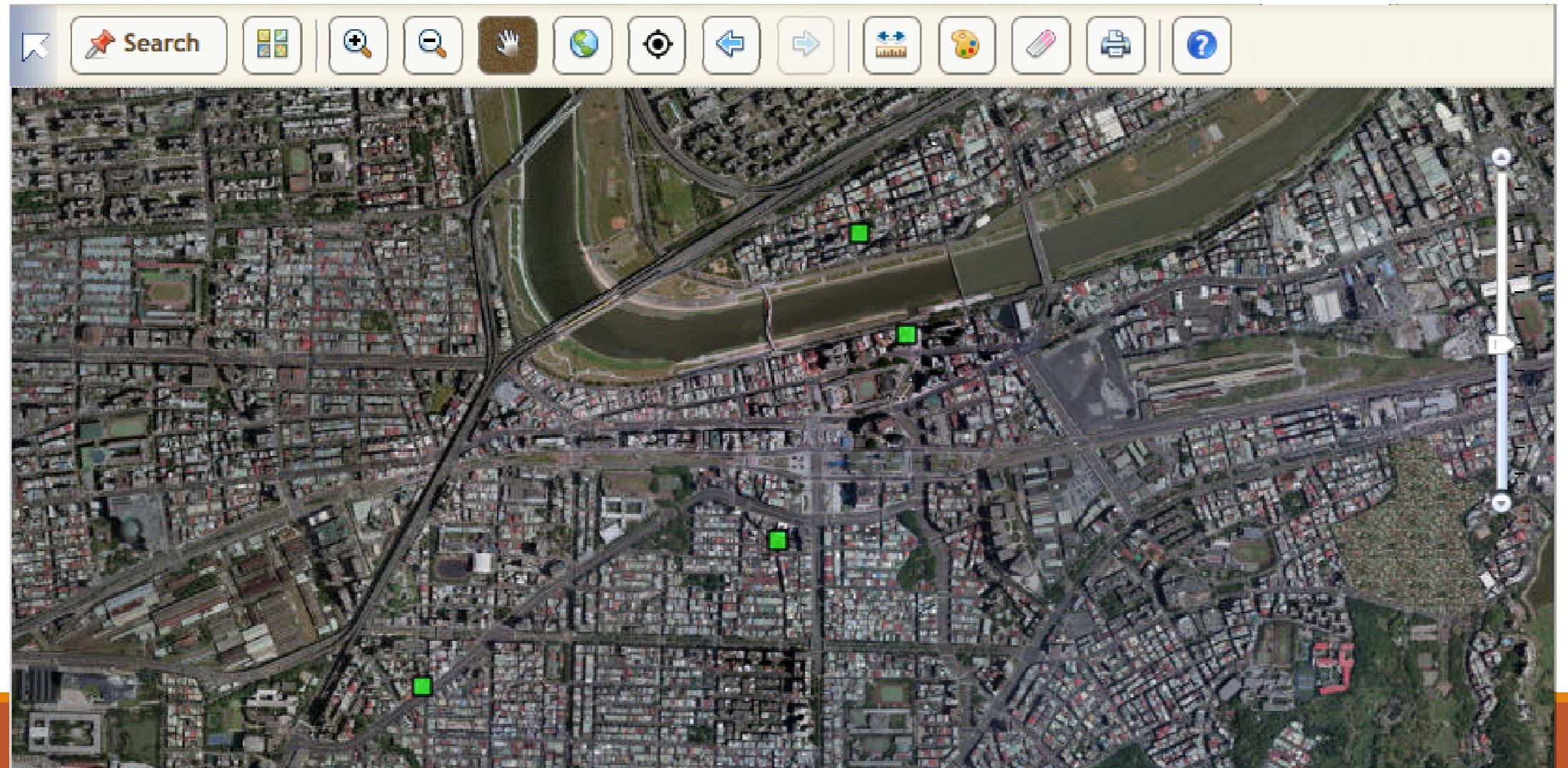
Only three steles exhibit ivy borders



德正神

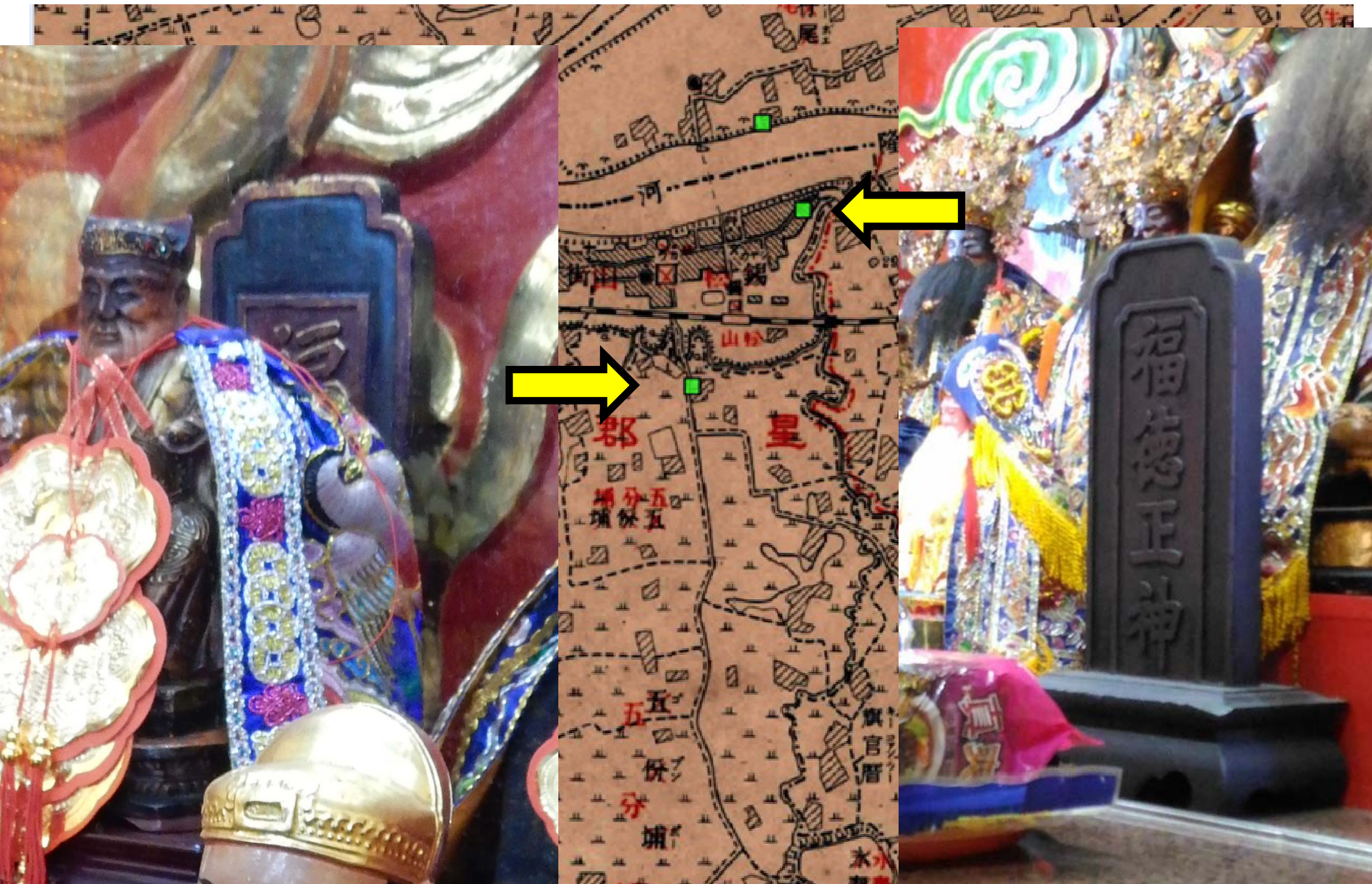


Localized stele expressions









Preliminary observations

Between 1750 and 1847 the Taipei basin was experiencing the phenomenon of stele enshrinement

We cannot call 1750 the beginning of the trend

We cannot call 1847 the end of the trend

The stele motifs appear to have begun in Banqiao, developed, and spread across the basin

The Xizhi district appears to have been directly influenced by Banqiao

From Xizhi stele enshrinement appears to have spread to communities along the Keelung River

Moving forward...

The steles only provide a partial story of the community networks

- Steles are only one attribute of these shrines
- Too few of the stele shrines provide dates of original construction, other earth deity shrines must be used too
- Other elements at the shrines, such as donor and commemorative placards should be used

Earth deity shrines appear to be useful markers, indicators, and tangible heritage assets that can help uncover lost community linkages

Additional research and documentation must be conducted for a more clear understanding

