

Re-discussion on the Age of the Mural Tomb in Wangshang Village of Dengfeng

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Abstract: The mural tomb found in Wangshang Village of Dengfeng is an octagonal brick tomb with one chamber, in which relatively complete murals are preserved. Because of the absence of unearthed objects, the tomb was formerly designated as a tomb of the Jin Dynasty according to the structure of the tomb, the shape as well as glaze color of the porcelain bowl, and the contents of murals. Through analyzing the distribution of murals and figures' costumes, this paper estimates that the tomb should be built at the beginning of Yuan Dynasty.

1. Introduction

Original materials of the Song and Jin Mural Tomb in Wangshang Village of Dengfeng were originally published in the 10th issue of Cultural Relics in 1994.^[1] According to the structure of the tomb, the characteristics of the unearthed object and the situation of painted murals, it is generally considered that the tomb was built in Jin Dynasty. However, after observing the contents of murals, it can be found that the costume of figures has obvious characteristics of the Yuan Dynasty: men wearing Shen Yi and women wearing low buns and half sleeve. Therefore, the tomb structure, the unearthed object and murals are re-analyzed to confirm the age of this tomb.

2. The Structure of the Tomb

The tomb is an octagonal brick tomb with single chamber. It consists a tomb path, a paved path and a coffin chamber. The tomb path is a ramp with staircases. The tomb door is bricked, arched, frontally plastered with white mortar, and painted with flower patterns with black ink. The paved road is vaulting, brick-lined, with wall plastered with grass mud and white ash, and painted with colorful patterns on both sides. The coffin chamber is octagonal, flat and brick-lined with a dome top. The tomb door is in the south while the coffin bed is in the north. The front of the coffin bed is narrow in the middle, showing the shape of Xumizuo.

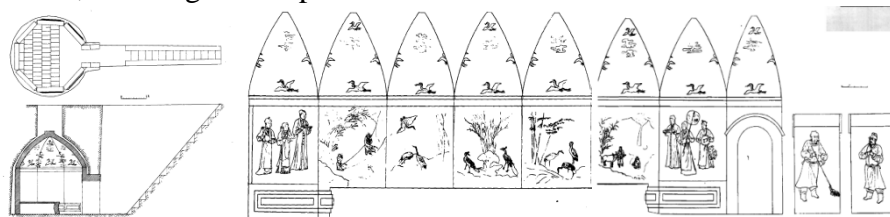


Figure 1. Plane and Sectional Figures of the Mural Tomb in Wangshang Village of Dengfeng (The pictures are from the Brief Report on the Excavation of the Mural Tomb in Wangshang of Dengfeng, pages 5,6,7.)

Tombs built in the Northern Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties are mainly divided into three types: earth cave tombs, brick vaulting tombs and polygonal brick mural tombs. Octagonal tombs are the third type. This type of tomb can be found in materials of the Northern Song Dynasty, the late Liao Dynasty, the Jin Dynasty and the early Yuan Dynasty. The structure and size of this tomb are in line with the characteristics of wood-like brick tombs with mural carvings of Song and Jin Dynasties found in Shanxi and Henan. However, the octagonal tombs of the Northern Song and Jin Dynasties are mostly decorated with brick-like wooden structures, Tables, chairs and living utensils, and are painted with colors; the coffin beds are inverted concave; there are white paintings and murals on

the walls. Compared with previous dynasties, the octagonal tombs in Yuan Dynasty show a tendency to simplify. Ru Feng's Tomb^[2] and Sanweng Feng's Tomb^[3] are examples. Sanweng Feng's Tomb still has a relatively simple imitation wood structure, but Ru Feng's Tomb has nothing alike. The Mural Tomb of Wangshang Village has no imitation timber architecture, furniture or living utensils, which is similar to the same type of tomb built in Yuan Dynasty.

3. The Buried Object

There is only one white porcelain bowl found in the tomb, which is shaped as "open and arc belly, with short circle feet, gray texture, full glaze inside and half glaze outside. The bowl has the caliber of 17.2 cm, the height of 6.2 cm and the bottom diameter of 5.1 cm". At present, there are only a few white glazed bowls unearthed in octagonal tombs in Henan. The white porcelain bowl found this tomb is gray-white, just like the black glazed bowl in the Jin Tomb of Xingyang^[4] and the white glazed bowl in the Jin Tomb of Jiaozuo Power Plant^[5]. White glazed pottery bowls with similar shapes also appear in tombs of Song and Jin Dynasties^[6] found in Donglongguan Village of Fenyang. The upper limit of its time can be extended to Jin Dynasty, but the lower limit of the time cannot be accurately judged.

4. Murals

4.1 The layout and themes of murals

Through sorting out published materials on mural tombs, we can see that the decoration features in murals of the Northern Song and Jin Dynasties are as follows. The first feature is drawing colorful paintings on wood-like brick structure. The second feature is painting flowers or curly cloud patterns, crane patterns, immortal images or filial piety stories on the door. The third is depicting pictures on the wall, common themes include the image of the tomb owner, the living and serving pictures, the filial piety story pictures and the picture of opening the door. The fourth is, murals are rich in content. The tomb walls are often divided into different parts. The upper and lower regions are scattered and layered with different pictures. The murals of Yuan Dynasty tombs, besides patterns of Zao Jing, scrolls, clouds and cranes depicted on the top, other walls are usually painted with of the image of the tomb owner, scenes of daily life, filial piety stories and Taoist artistic conception pictures. The contents are less than those of the previous period, and the stories of maids, characters and filial piety stories are all represented in the form of big pictures.

In terms of layout, murals in the tomb found in Wangshang Village depict large-scale images in the unit of murals, which are closer to the style of Yuan Dynasty. From the content of murals, the murals do not depict the imitated wood structure or filial piety stories. Instead, the murals depict the picture of two birds as well as plum blossom and bamboo on the north of the front wall, the pictures of three cranes on the northeast and northwest walls, the Taoist debating picture on the east wall and the immortal painting on the west wall. These themes are rare in the murals of Song and Jin Dynasties. Xin-lin Dong also pointed out in his article A Preliminary Study on the Epochal Characteristics of the Mural Tombs of Mengyuan: Analyzing the Ages of Mural Tombs^[7] that painting pictures in which characters are in the landscape were popular in the murals of the Yuan Dynasty.

4.2 Figures' costume in murals

Based on archaeological materials, male costumes from the Northern Song Dynasty to Yuan Dynasty can be divided into three types according to hair style and clothing.

Type A: The man has buns in head or wear various kerchiefs and hats. According to different clothes, type A are divided into four subtypes.

Type Aa: The man wears a robe with round collar or "Y" shaped cross collar; many robes have side slits; the man wears waistbands, short boots or shoes

Type Ab: The man wears short robe or unlined upper garment with round collar or "Y" shaped cross collar, wearing waistbands, long trousers and shoes.

Type Ac: The man wears a Qidan round-collared robe, the robe can cover calves, wearing long trousers and short boots.

Type Ad: The man wears a white robe with wide sleeve and dark edges, i.e. the “Shen Yi” or a Confucian dress.

Type B: Figures have the hair style of Kun. There are different types of Kun; the common feature is, by the side of ear there are two locks of hair. Some people wear a round cap. The men wear a robe with narrow sleeve and round collar; the robe has a slit on the back. They have waistbands and short boots.

Type C: Figures have the hair style of Po-jiao, or short hair in the front and braided hair in the back, without hats or wearing corrugated cap and round hat. There are three subtypes according to the clothes.

Type Ca: The man wears a robe with round collar or “Y” shaped cross collar and narrow sleeve; the robe has wrinkles on both sides at the lower part, or has wrinkles all over the robe. The figure wears pants, boots and waistbands.

Type Cb: The man wears a narrow sleeve robe with “Y” shaped cross collar with the left one upon the right; the robe has folds on the sides. He has a half-sleeve long coat with “Y” shaped cross collar as the outer cover; boots on.

Type Cc: The man wears narrow sleeve short robe, covered by square collar or round collar half sleeve short jacket, wearing trousers, boots and waistband.

Women’s clothes can be divided into seven types according to different hairstyles.

Type A: The figure combs the hair in a high bun, wraps it in a towel or wears a crown. It can be divided into two subtypes according to different clothes.

Type Aa: The woman wears boob tube top and long skirt, covered by a straight-necked coat. She wears pointed shoes.

Type Ab: The woman wears a short jacket with “Y” shaped cross collar, covered by long skirt and a silk tippet. She has pointed shoes on the foot.

Type B: The figure combs double buns. There are two subtypes according to the style of bun and clothing.

Type Ba: The woman has double buns, dresses in coat or short jacket, skirts and pointed shoes.

Type Bb: The woman has double low buns, which hung at the lower back of the head or at the sides of the ears. She wears a short jacket, a skirt or round collar robe. The jacket is tied under the chest, with the left one upon the right. The skirt has folds on both sides. Some of the skirts are covered with half sleeves.

Type C: The figure combs low buns. There are two subtypes according to the clothes.

Type Ca: The woman wears boob tube top, long skirt, coat with straight collar and pointed shoes.

Type Cb: The woman wears a narrow sleeve robe with “Y” shaped cross collar. In most cases, the figure wears a jacket with the left one upon the right, a belt under the chest, a skirt with folds on both sides, and half sleeve coats in some cases

Type D: The figure combs several buns and decorates them. Inside there is a cross-collar robe and a long skirt, covered by a short coat with straight collar and shoes.

Type E: The figure combs Kun hairstyle with bun, wears a cross collar robe. The robe can be long or short, with the right one upon the left. The robe has narrow sleeve and side slits. The woman also wears long skirt and pointed shoes or boots.

Type F: The woman wears a round cap or fur eaves cap; it can be divided into two subtypes according to different clothes.

Type Fa: The woman wears a cross-collar robe and boots.

Type Fb: The woman wears a cross-collar short jacket inside, a straight collar half-arm coat outside, pants and boots, and a tippet around the neck.

Type G: The woman combs Gu Gu hat on the head, wears boots and long robe with “Y” shaped cross collar, the right one upon the left. The robe has wide sleeve with narrow cuff.

The development of different clothes is as following.

Table 1. The Development of Different Clothes

male costume	Northern Song	Liao	Jin	Southern Song	Yuan	Female costume	Northern Song	Liao	Jin	Southern Song	Yuan
Aa Type	√	√	√	√	√	Aa Type	√	√	√	√	
Ab Type	√	√	√	√	√	Ab Type	√	√	√	√	√
Ac Type		√	√			Ba Type	√	√	√	√	
Ad Type				√	√	Bb Type					√
B Type		√	√			Ca Type	√	√	√	√	
Ca Type					√	Cb Type					√
Cb Type					√	D Type		√	√		
Cc Type					√	E Type		√			
						Fa Type		√			
						Fb Type			√		
						G Type					√

In mural on the middle east wall of the Wangshang Village tomb, the servant wears Fu Tou, a kind of hat in ancient China, a cross-collar shirt and a short robe with narrow sleeve and round collar. The bottom of the robe is below the knees; the robe has no side slits. The waistband is tied behind him. The servant wears trousers and light-colored edge boots. The servant in the west wall wears black headband and wears the same clothes as the men in the east wall. There are no signs of Kun hair style in both servants. They dress as AC-type Han men wearing Qidan boots and robe. That male image can be found in the tombs of the late Liao Dynasty. The Jin Dynasty follows this system in a wide range.

There are two men in robes in both the east Taoist debate picture and the west becoming immortal picture. These characters all wear black kerchiefs, white robe with black margins and the left one upon the right, black belt, white trousers and black round-mouthed shoes. They dress as the aforementioned Ad-type Han people. Their clothes have the left part covering upon the right, which accords with the dressing habits of people in the Jin and Yuan Dynasties. The Shen Yi was used to be the name of robes in Qin and Han Dynasties. It can be literally translated as the “deep clothes“, since it can cover a large part of the body. The specific form is not clear. Guang Si-ma wrote the book, Shen Yi System in the Song Dynasty to study the clothes. Later, Xi Zhu also made textual research on the styles and data and incorporated them into Family Etiquette to create “Zhuzi Shen Yi“, whose specific style can be learned from existing manuscripts and the records of his disciples. It is “made of cloth. The black robes have broad sleeves. The skirt is made of white yarn“. ^[8] It is matched with “kerchiefs and square shoes“. ^[9] It can be dressed when visiting friends, at home and in sacrificial rituals; it can also be used as the funeral dress. Xi Zhu’s ideas were inherited by later scholars. Then black kerchiefs and white Shen Yi became their formal clothes. Taking the spreading time of the Family Etiquette as a reference for the dissemination of Shen Yi, according to the Annual Review of the Origin and Development of the Family Etiquette, ^[10] Xi Zhu sent the article of Shen Yi to Yuan-ding Cai in the fourth year of Chunxi (1177). The article began to be published in the South in the fourth year of Jiading (1211) and formally published in the north in the eighth year of Jiading (1271). According to the ruling time of Jin (1115-1234), Mongolia (1206-1271) and Yuan (1271-1368), it is inferred that the image of Shen Yi began to appear in North China in the period from Mongolia to the early Yuan Dynasty.

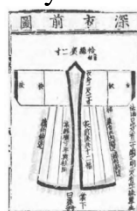
Figure 2. Zhuzi Shen Yi ^[11]



Figure 3. The Female Tomb Owners and Her Maid in Yuanbaoshan Yuan Tomb, Chifeng

(According to current materials, the picture shows the typical image of women and maids in Yuan Dynasty; pictures are taken from Chun-song Xiang's article, Yuanbaoshan Yuan Mural Tomb in Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia, which is published in the fourth volume of Cultural Relics, 1983.)

There are six maids and one girl in the two pictures of preparing wine and tea. The first maids are older, with low buns and phoenix hairpins. They wear cross collar inner cloths and long skirts inside, covered by long coats down to the ground with narrow sleeves, straight collars and buttons down the front. The costume is similar to the combination of Type Ca and Type D. The second maid in the wine preparation picture is younger, with two buns hanging down, wears a long robe with narrow sleeve, cross collar and side slits, a skirt or pants with side slits and a coat with half sleeve and buttons down the front. The rest maids are in short buns, wearing cross collar inner cloths, long skirts, long robes with narrow sleeves, cross collars and side slits, covered by jackets with half sleeves, straight collars and buttons down the front, and pointed shoes. The girl wears a bun, an inner cloth, a skirt and half sleeves. Their dress is different from Han women's Type A in Jin Dynasty and Qidan women's Type E, but is similar to the Han women's Type Cb. They have very typical female characteristics of the Yuan Dynasty and are very similar to the image of women in the Yuan Tomb of Yuanbaoshan. The coat with six pairs of button cannot be found in tombs of the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties, while the buttons decorated in coat were unearthed in De'an Zhou Family's Tomb of the Southern Song Dynasty.^[12] This tomb should be close to or later than Zhou's Tomb (died in the 10th year of Xianchun, AD 1274); its date should be the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty.

5. Conclusion

Through the re-analysis of the tomb structure, the unearthed object, the simplicity of the decoration of the tomb wall, the contents and distribution of the murals, and the costume of men and women, we can see that the tomb retained the basic features of the Jin Dynasty. But the various characteristics of this tomb are different from those of the same type of tombs in the Jin Dynasty and are more similar to those of the same type of tombs in the Yuan Dynasty. Thus, the age of Mural Tomb of Wangshang Village should be about the early Yuan Dynasty.

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