

西漢南越王墓

上

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# 西滂南越王墓

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# NANYUE KING'S TOMB OF THE WESTERN HAN

(WITH AN ENGLISH ABSTRACT)

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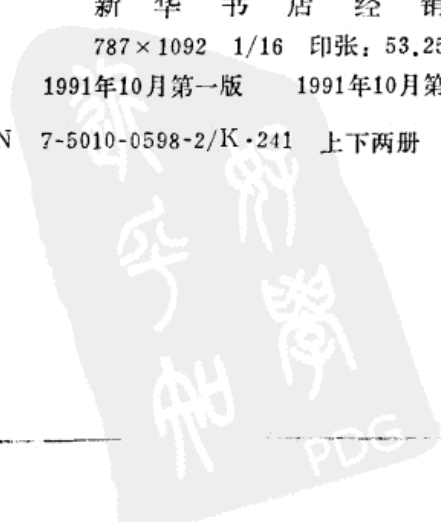
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## NANYUE KING'S TOMB OF THE WESTERN HAN

### (Abstract)

The present report deals with all material of the Nanyue king's tomb of early Western Han excavated at Xianggang, Guangzhou in the autumn of 1983.

This is the largest, well-preserved and richest stone-chambered tomb discovered so far in the area south of the Five Ridges. The grave goods include ritual bronzes, musical instruments, weapons, iron farm tools, jade and stone artifacts, gold and silver wares, elephant-tusks, ivory articles, lacquered wooden and bamboo objects, silk and medicinals, of which the bronzes, jades and irons come first in number. They often exhibit features of the Han culture in the Central Plains and sometimes show traits of the Chu culture; a number of finds belong to the local Yue culture. In addition, there are plaques of the animal style characteristic of the Hun culture in northwestern steppes. The 15 human victims of the tomb have no analogues in the Han princes' tombs discovered up to now.

The tomb is built in the depth of Xianggang Hill on Jiefang Beilu Street in Guangzhou of more than 750 red sand stone blocks different in size. It is 10.68m in length from the north to the south, 12.24m in the maximum width from the west to the east, and 3m in height, with the bottom being 20m from the hill top. The chamber is divided with two stone gates into a front and a rear parts either having a stone gate. These are subdivided into three and four rooms respectively. All rooms are walled with sand stones and floored with wooden planks, and have doorways leading to each other. The tomb top is covered with 24 large stone blocks. Outside the tomb gate is an exterior storage cabin, where a human victim is brought to light; to the south is a narrow sloping tomb-passage, which contains another human victim.

The tomb owner is buried in double, an inner and an outer, coffins placed at the centre of the main rear room, in a jade shroud sewn with

silk thread. There are found jade *bi* discs—14 on the corpse and 15 large pieces covering and underlying the shroud; 5 iron swords on either side of the tomb owner; 9 seals on his body, including official ones such as the “Wendi Xingxi 文帝行玺” and “Taizi 太子” in gold with a dragon-shaped and a tortoise-shaped knob respectively, and personal ones such as the “Zhao Mo 赵昧” in jade (Plate CXVII); and numbers of jades, silver boxes and other precious objects at both ends of the coffin. To the left of this coffin cabin is the eastern side room, where four ladies are buried accompanying the dead, all with bronze mirrors, one or more seals and gold and jade pendants. Among the inscribed seals are the “Tai Furen Yin 泰夫人印”, “? Furen Yin □夫人印” and “Zuo Furen Yin 左夫人印” in gilt bronze (Plate CXXX), the “You Furen Xi 右夫人玺” in gold, and the personal “Zhao Lan 赵蓝” in ivory. In the western side room on the right of the coffin cabin, apart from bones left from sacrificial pigs, oxen and sheep, there are seven human victims (Plate CLXI, 1) with mirrors and a few jade ornaments but no coffins. Behind the coffin cabin is a rear storage room for delicious food, measuring less than 4 sq m and yielding some hundred bronze and iron cooking vessels and bronze and pottery containers in piles, mostly with remains of fowl, livestock and aquatic products and fruit.

In the front half of the chamber, the middle room is flanked by two side ones. It is gorgeously painted on the ceiling and walls with cloud patterns in red and black (Colour Plate I). There are a chariot on the right and a human victim with the seal “Jing Xiang Ling Yin 景巷令印” in bronze on the left. The eastern side room is furnished mainly with banqueting vessels and musical instruments, the former including wine containers of the *hu* (pot), *fang* (square-sectioned vase), *bu* (contracted-mouthed basin) and *titong* (swing-handled pot) types, the latter a set of bronze bells, a set of musical stones and a set of bronze *Goudiao* bells with a upward mouth (勾铎, eight pieces). Beside the chimes is a human victim, probably a musician. The western side room yielded objects in a large number and in the greatest variety. These are bronzes, jade, stone, gold and silver ornaments, whole elephant-tusks, alchemic minerals, etc., piling in 2~3 layers.

The present book is divided into two volumes, i.e. a textual part and an album. The former comprises 12 chapters and 18 appendixes along with approximately 300 figures. Chapter I gives a statement of the discovery and excavation of the tomb as well as its location and form; Chapter II dis-

cribes the tomb-passage and the exterior storage cabin; from Chapter III through Chapter IX, the seven rooms are dealt with in structure and funeral objects; Chapter XI is an identification of the tomb owner and a chronological study of the grave. Judging from the gold seal "Wendi Xing Xi 文帝行玺", the personal seal "Zhao Mo 赵昧" and the tomb-owner's skeleton as well as the evidence on Nanyue in the Historical Records 《史记》 and History of the Han 《汉书》, it can be confirmed that the tomb belongs to the second king of Nanyue State, a grandson of his predecessor Zhao Tao and that he died in about 122 BC. As the tomb yielded much written evidence (seals, inscriptions and ink-writings), it is appropriate to collect and decipher them in Chapter X.

Nanyue was the local authorities in the area south of the Five Ridges during the early Han period and also the first state in the history of the region. Tombs of the Nanyue period have been found in a large number near Guangzhou and in Pingle and Guixian, Guangxi. Analyzing their material in combination with the new finds from the Nanyue king's tomb and related historical records, Chapter XII of the report discusses comprehensively the political, economic and cultural aspects of the region more than two-thousand years ago.

Among the 18 appendant papers, three are on the restoration of objects from the tomb (jade shroud, iron armor, lacquered screen), two on the corrosion, preservation and casting techniques of metal finds, and all the rest report the analysis of bronzes, irons, jades, glasses, medicinals, textiles and human and animal skeletons.

The discovery of the tomb of the second Nanyue king provides extremely valuable material for studying the history and culture of the region south of the Five Ridges in the Qin-Han period. A number of funeral objects much contribute to scientific researches. For example, the jade shroud sewn with silk thread (Colour Plate III) is never mentioned in literary records, and is the earliest among the well-preserved Han jade suits known so far. The jade pendants in variety, sword ornaments, horn-shaped cup, boxes and *zhi* wine vessel can be rated as masterpieces among the Han jade objects. The set of eight bronze *goudiao* (Plate XIV) is the first find of its sort from the Han tombs excavated all over the country up to now, each piece bearing the inscription "Made by masters of the Music Organ in the 9th year of the reign of Emperor Wendi 文帝九年乐府工造", the "Wendi" meaning the king of the Nanyue State and the year being equal to



129 AD. The bronze mirror set in a tray (Colour Plate XXII) and those with six 山-shaped patterns (Plate CLXII) or painted design (diameter 41.5cm, Colour Plate XXI), the bronze plaques inlaid with plane blue glass (Colour Plate XIX) and the ink pellets are all first unearthed in archaeological excavation. The "Wendi Xing Xi 文帝行玺" (Colour Plate II) is the largest among the Han gold seals so far discovered and also the first find among the seals of Han supreme rulers. Lying on the verge of the South China Sea, Guangzhou has been an important seaport of marine commerce in south China since ancient times, and, therefore, foreign products such as whole African elephant-tusks, silver boxes (Colour Plate XXIII) and gold button-shaped ornaments welded with gold grains (Colour Plate XIX) are found after each other in the tomb. All these constitute doubtlessly a batch of extremely significant material data for studying the "Maritime Silk Road" starting from south China.

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