

Political Symbolization of Traditional Artifacts: An Analysis of the Political Culture of Architectural Mingqi During the Han Dynasty

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Abstract: During the pre-feudal society of the Han Dynasties in China, significant advancements were made in political, economic, and cultural domains to align with the evolving societal landscape. Among the notable features of Han Dynasty tombs is the presence of architectural mingqi, which reflects the period's architectural aesthetics and societal values. A comprehensive study of these architectural mingqi sheds light on the tomb system and social structure of the Han Dynasty era, offering invaluable insights into the philosophical ideologies and social norms prevalent during the Western Han Dynasty. It is evident that the political culture of the Han Dynasty exerted a profound influence on the creation of architectural artifacts, driving both innovation in form and development of ideological connotations. These architectural objects transcend mere artistic expression; they serve as vessels carrying political, social, and cultural ideologies, thereby bequeathing a rich historical legacy to posterity.

Keywords: Han Dynasty, Architectural Mingqi, Political Symbols, Political Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The miniature architectural models buried in ancient tombs are called "architectural Mingqi". The most prevalent in the Han Dynasty (Steinhardt, 2019; Yu, 2021), the material is mostly pottery, with a small amount of copper, stone and wood (Rice, 2015). The term "architectural Mingqi" is a general term. Including a variety of architectural models of different functions, common barns, stoves, wells, toilets (circle), houses, pavilions, courtyards and so on (Cruvellier et al., 2017). This title reflects the researcher's understanding of the material properties, one, the performance of the building, the other, belonging to the architectural (Li, 2018). Because most of them are made of pottery, they are often called "pottery building" or "pottery house" (Zhanga et al., 2021). Considering that this paper is the overall of such artifacts as the object of study, for the convenience of the text, still use the "architectural Mingqi" a name.

Han Dynasty architectural Mingqi has been unearthed in a wide range of areas, and has been found in all parts of the world, and the basic types are

relatively consistent (Cheng, 2011; Fang, 2017; Liu & Liu, 2015). Differences between geographical areas are mainly manifested in the difference between the southern and northern architectural traditions, for example, most of the pottery houses unearthed in the Lingnan area are of the dry-rail type, and there are also pottery boats, which are not found in the northern part of the country (Hong, 2015). The ceramic pavilions are mainly found in the northern region, and are rare in Lingnan.

From the tomb of the vassal kings to the small and medium-sized tombs, there are architectural Mingqi unearthed (Tang & Tang, 2020; Yong, 2004). In the tomb of Liu Jing and his wife, the kings of Guangling, there were stoves, pigsties and houses, in the tomb of Liu Chang and his wife, the kings of Zhongshan and Mu, there were ceramic models of wells, stoves, circles and buildings, and in the tomb of Liu Chong, the king of Chenqin, there was a lot of warehouse. It is more common for small and medium-sized tombs to be buried with architectural Mingqi (Thote & Lagerwey, 2004). Most architectural Mingqi simulate civil engineering structures through the process of making pottery, and the most notable feature is their "miniaturization", much like in modern architectural design or urban planning schemes (Luo, 2016), samples made of easily processed materials according to architectural design drawings or concepts in a reduced proportion (a means used in architectural design to express the appearance and spatial relationships of buildings or building clusters). Relatively tall buildings in the form of pavilions are generally no more than 2 meters tall (only one exceeding 2.1 meters can be seen) (Zhao, 2021). The representation of an architectural Mingqi is a miniature architectural space. Looking at the large number of models, one gets a strong impression of the care and skill that has gone into the representation of architectural features (Steinhardt, 2014). However, it is easy to overlook that, due to the influence of technology, materials, and concepts, architectural Mingqi may not be an equal scale reduction of the actual building, and the dimensions and perspectives that can be explored may be far richer than what is commonly thought (Turner et al., 1991). The change of social and cultural structure can maximize the influence of folk artifact culture (Judge et al., 2020). At the time of the Han Dynasty, the development of the manor economy, the growth of the social structure of the social structure of the changes triggered by the growth of the scholar class to make the development of the art of artifacts show rationalization, secularization, the trend of realism. In the original artifacts outside of the framework of the system, the addition of a number of new types of artifacts, and a large-scale popularity, which is more typical of the construction of the Mingqi (Hung,

2015a). Han Dynasty architectural Mingqi as an emerging style popular in the middle and late Eastern Han Dynasty. Before that, there had never been such a large-scale form of building-mediated artifacts. Image is the medium, it is the representation and synopsis of the era. The article takes architectural Mingqi as the material, and uses the method of anthropology and sociology of artifacts to excavate the cultural mechanism of folk artifacts (Lai, 2015). Architectural Mingqi is a concept formed in the process of research on architectural. Through the traceability of Han Dynasty architectural Mingqi and the interpretation of images and documents of architectural Mingqi (Murray, 2018), the cultural connotations of buildings, warehouses, stoves, wells, toilets, and circles centered on "residence". This paper relies on the historical records of Chinese traditional architectural Mingqi and norms, and explores the design concept of Han Dynasty houses centered on "rituals", and finally concludes that: Han Dynasty buildings centered on rituals were placed in tombs through the changes of materials, scales, and spaces, and the symbolisms of architectural Mingqi and buildings were cohesively integrated in the architectural Mingqi system, constituting a combination of heaven and earth, and a kind of cultural connotation of buildings (Liu & Huang, 2023). The architectural Mingqi and the symbolic meaning of architecture are coalesced in the combination of the architectural Mingqi system, which constitutes a kind of medium for the intersection and communication between heaven, earth, man and god (Chan, 2018). Architectural Mingqi extend the living space and ritual concepts of real life to the tombs in miniature form. Buildings, barns, stoves, wells, toilets, circles and other architectural Mingqi not only imitated real-life practical buildings, but were actually parodies of the religious spirit and beliefs of the Han people's love for and attachment to the daily living life of the Han people, and an imitation of the world constructed by borrowing the system of objects to express the hierarchical social class of the living people, the status of the power of the popularity of the trend. After the Han Dynasty, architectural Mingqi did not disappear completely, and they occasionally appeared in some tombs after the Wei and Jin Dynasties, but the shift in the context of the tombs led to the dissolution and deconstruction of the extended significance of this medium, which was internalized into other forms of burial Mingqi (Strehovec, 2023).

While existing scholarship acknowledges the prevalence of architectural Mingqi, there remains a need to comprehensively explore their role in shaping the cultural and societal landscape of the Han Dynasty. By delving into the material properties, functions, and geographical distribution of

architectural Mingqi, this study aims to bridge the gap in our understanding of their significance within the broader context of Han Dynasty tombs and social structures. Moreover, the study seeks to elucidate the underlying cultural mechanisms behind the creation and symbolism of architectural Mingqi, shedding light on the philosophical ideologies and social norms prevalent during the Han Dynasty era. Through an interdisciplinary approach drawing on anthropology and sociology of artifacts, the research aims to excavate the cultural connotations embedded within architectural Mingqi, particularly focusing on their representation of "residence" and the ritualistic significance imbued within Han Dynasty architectural designs. Ultimately, the study seeks to demonstrate how architectural Mingqi served as a medium for communication between heaven, earth, man, and gods, extending the living space and ritual concepts of real life into the realm of tombs. Through a thorough analysis of historical records, norms, and interpretive frameworks, the research aims to elucidate the enduring cultural legacy and symbolic significance of architectural Mingqi, not only as imitations of practical buildings but also as reflections of Han people's religious beliefs, societal hierarchies, and cultural values.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE ARCHITECTURAL MINGQI OF THE HAN PERIODS

Architectural Mingqi were produced in the process of transforming the buried architectural Mingqi from ceremonial Mingqi to living utensils. The Qin and Han dynasties are the prosperous period of architectural Mingqi (Hung, 2015b). During this period, things closely related to people's life, such as the barn for storing grain, the well for drilling water, the stove for cooking, and the toilet for people's convenience, etc., are all reflected in architectural Mingqi. Although they are buried architectural models, they can provide valuable physical information for the study of the architectural technology, art, and social life of ancient China in an intuitive and visual way. In this paper, the development and evolution of architectural Mingqi are divided into three stages: pre-Qin, Qin-Han, and post-Qin-Han.

The earliest architectural models of archaeological excavations in China so far are five models of pottery houses in the Yangshao Culture site of Youfeng, Wugong County, Shaanxi Province, all of which are round buildings (Lewis, 1999). A kind of clay red pottery, pointed roof, hollow, horizontal oval door. From the point where the pointed roof meets the wall, it is decorated with densely arranged vertical thick rope patterns,

symbolizing the thatched structure of the roof, below the roof it slopes slightly inward, appearing to be a semi-cavern-like house. There is also a pottery cover with a knob in the shape of a house and a broken bottom edge. Clay and gray pottery. Pointed roof, eave out to the top, hollow, topped with a rectangular skylight and a round door below (Dien & Dien, 2007). The roof is decorated with a conical spiked pattern, resembling the shape of a bundle of thatched grass stacked in sequence. In addition, a model of a red ceramic house made of clay with coarse sand, with a doorway net in the center, was also found in the Yangshao culture period site excavated in Wulou, Chang'an County.

During this period, some models of houses were also unearthed in other parts of the country, such as Figure 1, Jiangsu Pixian Dadunzi middle period tombs unearthed three pieces of ceramic house model, the form of square, round two, basically has the prototype of the house of later generations. A rectangular façade, short eaves, save the tip of the roof, the front door, three sides of the window, this model of the door under the line engraved with a dog guarding the door.



Pottery House Model (Neolithic Age)

Height 23.9 centimeters

***Unearthed Tombs in the Middle Period of Dadunzi,
Pixian County, Jiangsu Province
(Collected by Nanjing Museum)***

Figure 1: Model of pottery house

<https://www.njmuseum.com/zh?menuid=c2f7b822-0c8b-417a-a393-dc8de9946b5a&id=aae4295a-aeed-49c1-b808-e8470f59305f>

Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasties, the construction of Mingqi is mainly based on ceremonial ware, and very few living construction of Mingqi has been found (Valenstein, 1989). There is a pottery house unearthed in the

tomb of Warring States Qin in Xicun, Fengxiang, Shaanxi Province: gray pottery, with a four-slope roof, a ridge, eaves on all sides, and open walls. The whole building seems to be built on a surface, the surface of the platform for a flat plate, four edges out, under the surface of the platform is carved out very neat horizontal and vertical cross pattern, forming countless slightly rhombic protruding surface. Except for this decoration, the rest of the surface is plain, and the traces of knife cutting left behind during the production are very clear (Zhuang & Zhang, 2022).

As shown in Figure 2, this object may not be architectural Mingqi, or that is, pottery racket, but the perforations are small and not smooth, and it seems not to have been used. According to the archaeological excavation data, the earliest house class construction Ming ware should be Shaoxin, Zhejiang province, Po Tang warring states tombs unearthed in the copper house model. This copper building model, the plane is close to square. Face width and depth are three openings, the front bright room is slightly wider. The south side is open, there are two round pillars, the east and west sides of the rectangular lattice through the floor standing wall, the north wall near the center part of a small rectangular window.

The roof for the four corners of the save pointed shape, the top of the center of an octagonal section of the column, column height 7 cm, the top of the column lying a large bird, columns on all sides decorated with S-shaped hooked cloud pattern. Inside the house there are six people, nude, two sitting and four playing musical instruments.

From the Qin Dynasty onwards, the burial objects began to transform from the ceremonial objects representing the political status to the objects for secular life, but the reign of Qin was very short, so there are very few architectural Mingqi of the Qin Dynasty unearthed, and it is more difficult to distinguish between the tombs of the Warring States Qin Dynasty and the Qin Dynasty, so this paper describes the architectural Mingqi of the period in the first part.

"Han inherited the Qin system", the Han Dynasty due to social and economic development, changes in funeral concepts and the maturity of the construction industry, a large number of architectural Mingqi, in the history of the aesthetic culture, the emergence of a special landscape of "Chong real interest in Shang".

Before Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, the architectural Mingqi were basically inherited from the Qin Dynasty, and were mainly warehouses and stoves, after Emperor Wu, with the development of social economy and the popularization of Confucianism, the architectural Mingqi were increased to be a combination of warehouses, stoves, and wells, which were

popularized in Xi'an, Luoyang, and other places



Figure 2: Pottery house excavated from a Qin tomb of the Warring States period in Xicun, Fengxiang, Shaanxi, China

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The Qin and Han Dynasties were the first peak period of ancient Chinese architecture, especially in the late Western Han Dynasty, when the building of pavilions was greatly developed (Keswick, 2003). The roof appeared in many forms, such as veranda, Xieshan, Xuanshan and pyramidal roof, and groups of arch of wooden architecture were already used on the capitals. Moreover, it also comprehensively utilizes painting, carving, writing, and other elements as decorations.

The ground wooden architecture of the Qin and Han dynasties no longer exists, but the architectural image of this period is reflected in the portrait stones, stone pavilions, stone temples, and architectural Mingqi shown in Figure 3. The pottery tower unearthed from the Eastern Han Dynasty tomb in Sangzhuang, Fucheng, Hebei Province, with a total height of 216 centimeters, is currently the tallest pottery tower discovered in China and best reflects the grandeur of the Han Dynasty towers. The overall building is square, consisting of steps, gatehouses, and pavilions.

From the appearance, the pavilion is divided into five floors by waist eaves, flat seats, and railings. From the inside, there are interlayers below the waist eaves of each floor below the fourth exterior layer. In fact, the interior space of the pottery building can be divided into nine floors. The base is rectangular, with a sloping walkway in the center of the front. Handrails and railings are carved on both sides and in the center of the

walkway.

A gatehouse is erected in the center of the front of the railing, with a suspended mountain style roof, densely arranged tiles, and rolled cloud patterned tiles. Under the eaves are door frames and two doors, with auxiliary headband decorations on the front face of the door. The first floor of the pottery building is in a four sided slope style, with nail arches (insert arches) protruding from the four corner seams. The second floor has a flat seat with a horizontal railing, with a bird crouching at each corner of the railing and a feather shaped design. The decoration of the third and fourth floors of the pottery building is basically the same as that of the second floor. The fifth floor is the top floor of the pottery building, surrounded by railings. The four corners are decorated with lion heads and a column, on which is a bucket of two liter arch of wooden architecture. The roof is of the Four Arhats style, with a short main ridge and a slight bird tail shape

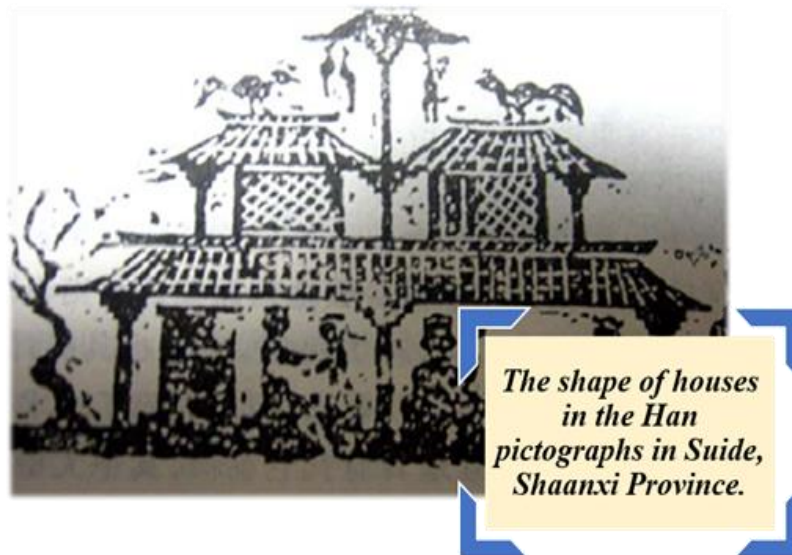


Figure 3: The shape of houses in the Han pictographs in Suide, Shaanxi Province
https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_14159689

3. SYMBOLISM OF ARCHITECTURAL MINGQI

The concept of the tomb as a "house of the underworld" has existed for a long time. Figure 4 shows a few examples of early coffin tombs, from which it can be observed that the lacquered coffins of Zeng Houyi's tomb were painted with doors and windows, making the coffins more like dwellings. As a result, the Mingqi inside the coffins were brought to life, as the souls of the owners could enter and exit the coffins freely.

Western Han Dynasty coffin tomb with many examples of doors and windows, some tombs will also be divided into two layers of the coffin

room, wooden coffin between the upper and lower layers of the symbolic wooden ladder, some of the upper layer of the coffin, the lower layer of the chickens, pigsties and other construction of the Ming ware. Early Western Han Dynasty Xianyang Yangjiawan No. 4 tomb, "water Jingji" that is the early Western Han Dynasty general Zhou Bo or Zhou Yafu's tomb, according to the excavation report, this tomb by the tomb road, the front room, the outer chamber of the three parts, like the door of the residence, the configuration of the atrium and the back of the hall, the tomb Xieng Khouang on the shelf of the three-storey wooden "pavilion" type of building.

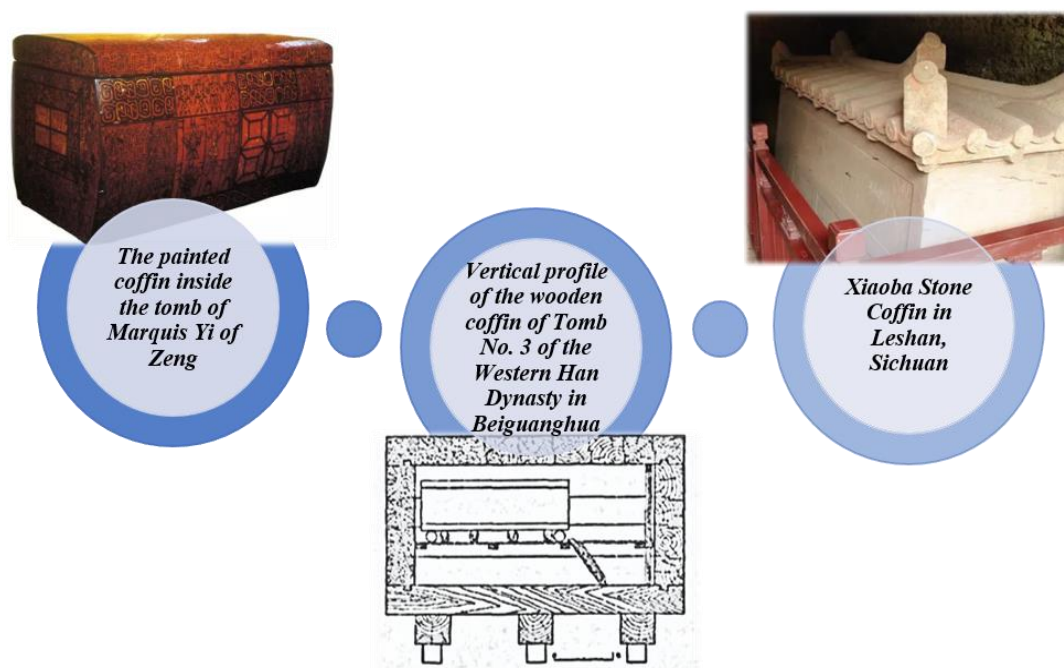


Figure 4: Figure 4-Examples of Several Early Coffin Tombs

These designs for outer tombs indicate the desire for tombs to mimic the dwellings of living beings. The emergence of chambered tombs further stereotyped this ideal, and many tombs had elaborately designed doors and roofs.

The burial objects changed accordingly, and the modeling of the household image became a new type of ceramic architectural Mingqi, and architectural Mingqi was also developed (Hong, 2011; Selbitschka, 2015). Figure 5 is a subsidiary chamber in the tomb of the King of Chu in the Western Han Dynasty in Beidongshan, which is a four-entry "mansion" built with stone bars.

The first chamber has a main entrance with double doorways, in which there are weapons and figurines of guards, the second chamber is divided into three rooms, and in the larger one, there are groups of glass cups, small

bells, ceramic thurles, stone chimes and other musical instruments, as well as a large number of figurines of music and dance, the third chamber is in fact a courtyard, with stone wells at one corner of the courtyard, and an adobe stove base, the fourth chamber also has three rooms, and according to the relics, it should be a kitchen and a storehouse.

This is a stone-built mansion containing a main entrance, a hall, a courtyard, a warehouse, a kitchen, a well, a toilet and other facilities, and each room is built with a zigzag sloping roof. As we know, the processing of stone is quite time-consuming and laborious, and only the vassal king with his power to build such an underground palace, the eleven rooms and thirteen rooms of the compound has a total area of 335 square meters.

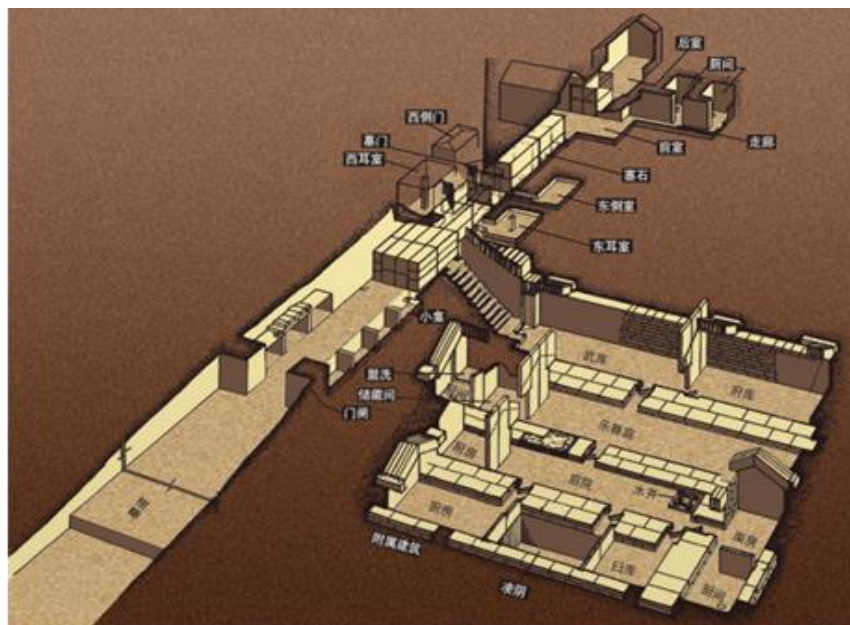


Figure 5: Figure 5-Perspective view of the tomb of the King of Chu at Beidongshan Mountain

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A luxurious model of a ceramic courtyard, measuring 1.30 meters in length from north to south and 1.14 meters in width, was unearthed from the Yuzhuang Han Tomb in Huaiyang.

The model actually consists of two parts, a courtyard in the east and a field in the west. This courtyard is one of the most wonderfully detailed pieces ever found, so much so that some scholars have expressed skepticism that the excavation report dates it to the Western Han Dynasty.

The layout of this compound is very similar to that of the ancillary burial chamber of the king of Chu in Beidongshan. The compound has three entrances, including the front courtyard, the central atrium and the back courtyard, as shown in Figure 6.

The compound has a number of murals, are painted on the surrounding walls, the best preserved on both sides of the gate, both sides of the content is basically the same, are three people standing like, the center of a person seems to be the master, on both sides is the waiter. In a space of 1 meter square, all kinds of facilities form a closed and complete ideal world. A long and narrow field in the interior of the compound is obviously just a symbol, and many models of paddy fields have been found in Han tombs, which should also be the meaning.

This artifact is more like designing all the needs of the tomb owner in a small closed box, and its "realism" comes largely from the patient representation of the architecture, with neatly arranged rows of tiles, as well as tiles with scrolling cloud patterns that can be seen even when they are reduced to this size, and the irrigation ditches of the fields are clearly visible as are the fields' dams.



Huaiyang Yuzhuang Han Tomb



Plan of the bottom of the pottery courtyard

Figure 6: Plan of Yuzhuang Han Tomb, Huaiyang, China

These examples show that architectural Mingqi are not without significance in burials. Sometimes, the structure of the tomb even changed accordingly, suggesting that the spaces where these architectural Mingqi were placed were most likely arranged in advance.

For example, in Tomb No. 41 of Baizhuang in Jiaozuo (Figure 7), a canglou is located at the west end of the front chamber, and if the center line of the tomb passage is taken as the center line, the east and west ends of the front chamber are not symmetrical, and the west end just puts down the ceramic canglou, which seems to be like a niche set up specially for it.

Jiaozuo Baizhuang Tomb No. 6 (Figure 8) also has a horizontal front room, the pottery warehouse building is also located in the west end, the warehouse building of the northern part of a small room, just to put down a pigsty, from the view of the entire front room, the west end of the north wall of the protruding small room should be for the placement of the pigsty and placed.

Guangzhou Han tombs unearthed pottery house more in the back end of the chamber, some specifically open niche placed. Hebei Qian'an Yujiacun No. 1 Han Tomb unearthed a ceramic building, placed in two layers of four large red bricks paved with the ground, and the surrounding green and gray bricks to distinguish.

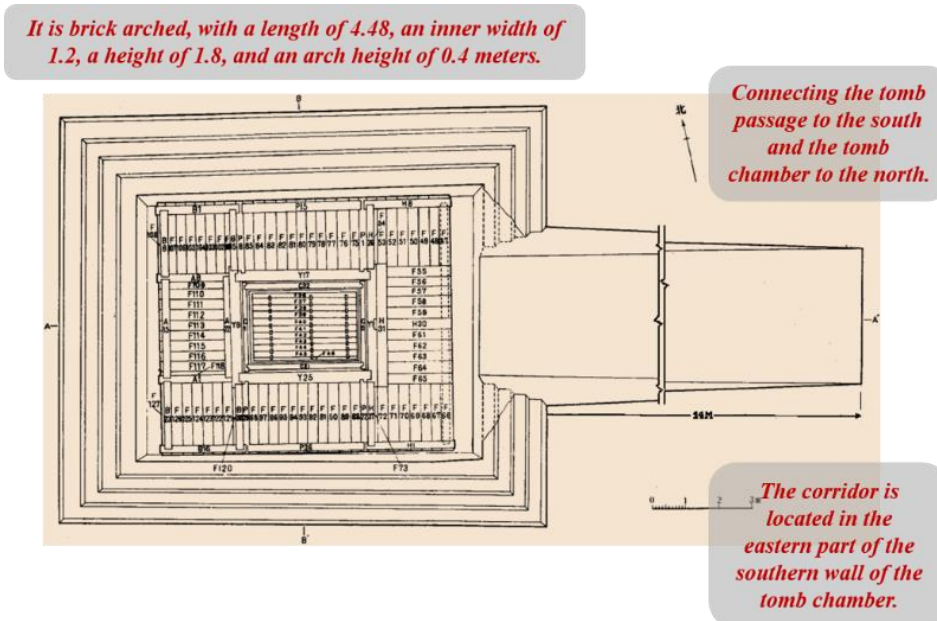


Figure 7: Floor Plan of Tomb No. 41 in Baizhuang, Jiaozuo

In general, barns, stoves, and wells were mostly placed near the door of the tomb, or at the entrance of the side chambers, while pottery toilets (circles) were basically placed on the side of the coffin, or at the back of the coffin (Cooney, 2021; Silverman & Brovanski, 1997).

This feature does not fit all the examples of Han tombs, and the different regions, the variety of tomb shapes and the disturbance of the tombs by burglary all add to the difficulty of exploring this issue.

However, from the above examples, it can at least be judged that the architectural Mingqi were associated with, but did not overlap with, the burial space, which was designed with the presence of these Mingqi in mind. The architectural Mingqi are a world unto themselves in a miniature form, suggesting a wider ideal home within a limited space.

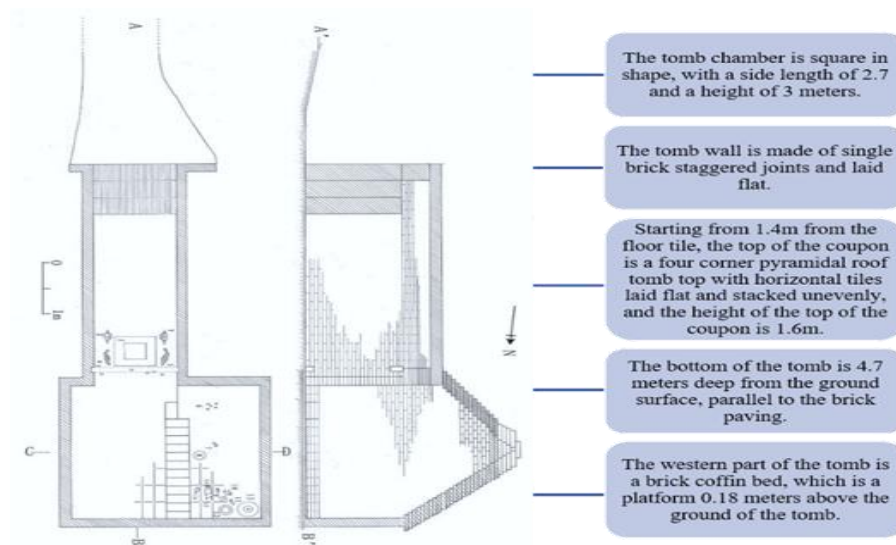


Figure 8: Floor Plan of Tomb No. 6 in Baizhuang, Jiaozuo

4. THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL CULTURE ON ARCHITECTURAL MINGQI IN THE HAN PERIODS

The early to late Eastern Han Dynasty is the complete stage of the development of model architectural Mingqi in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River (Kidder et al., 2012). Although there is still an imbalance in the combination and development of model architectural Mingqi among various sub-districts, mutual cultural exchanges accelerated the development of model architectural Mingqi in various sub-districts, and the types and combinations of model architectural Mingqi gradually converged, with distinctive common cultural characteristics (Guo, 2002). Established in the context of long-term political, economic, and cultural unity, cultural exchanges between different zones have made the common cultural characteristics of the model architectural Mingqi in the core area distinct, and have become the main cultural feature of burial objects in this stage. Based on the development characteristics of this stage and compared with the second stage, it can be seen that the combination of model architectural Mingqi has undergone significant changes overall.

This is in sync with the social changes and funeral system changes in the historical period behind it, and is influenced by comprehensive factors such as economy, politics, society, and ideological beliefs. As artificial products used in the funeral process, the self development of model architectural Mingqi between the Han Dynasty dynasties highlights two aspects of transformation, which are closely related to the transformation of social values and funeral concepts. The Eastern Han regime came from the support of the powerful clans. The powerful monopolized political

privileges and, in turn, economic benefits, and power and wealth became more closely intertwined as they sought to acquire property for profit. The secular world was characterized by a preference for official positions and wealth. Residence, property, livestock, slave girl, etc. are important parts of family property (Rodriguez, 1994). This period of burial goods also represent the wealth and power to enjoy the daily necessities, residential buildings, property, horses and cars, etc., the main combination of burial goods. In particular, the middle and lower classes of society, due to the rank restrictions, were not able to exceed the system to use the burial goods that symbolized the social status, such as car clothes, ceremonial tools, seals and ribbons, etc., and then focused on the use of model architectural Mingqi such as fields and houses, livestock, etc., which showed the individual's wealth and status in the burial goods.

In the quadrangle excavated from the Han Tomb of Laodao Temple in Mianxian County, Shaanxi, there is a beautifully structured barn located in the left room of the quadrangle. The barn has two floors, the upper and lower, and the barn has a floor plan of three rooms. The upper level is the storage of grain warehouse body, the lower level is the grain outlet. The upper and lower floors have a single external door, the door is molded with a handrail staircase connected to facilitate the activities of people out of the grain. From its structure, it can be seen that the barns in the physical building at that time have the same structure. At the same time, the tomb unearthed a red ceramic pond reservoir water field model shown in Figure 9. One can clearly see the nearly square pond and the crisscrossed paddy fields, which are separated by a raised dam with molded gates and a drainage channel leading straight into the paddy fields. This dam structure and irrigation method are still in use today, reflecting the advanced agricultural technology of the Guanzhong region.



Figure 9: Red ceramic model of a pond reservoir and paddy field excavated from a Han tomb at Laodao Temple, Mianxian County, Shaanxi, China
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A large number of subjects of gods and immortals appeared in architectural Mingqi. The secularization of belief in immortals was another factor in the transformation of the development of architectural Mingqi. The secularization of belief in immortals in the Han Dynasty was manifested in the diversification and simplicity of the ways to become immortal, the general belief of all social classes, and the shift from the pursuit of eternity in the early period to the enjoyment of a rich and free immortal life in the later period. After the late Western Han Dynasty, the Queen Mother of the West and the Kunlun Fairyland became the subjects of immortals in a large number of graves in the Han portrait masonry and murals, in addition, there were a large number of fairy-related decorations such as feathered figures, gods and fairy inscriptions on Han Dynasty Mingqi. This in the Eastern Han Dynasty after the excavation of the model building on the Ming ware is also much reflected. Architectural Mingqi in the maintenance of the original real form, the surface is usually molded or painted with the four gods, clouds and auspicious birds and beasts, feather people and other patterns.

At the beginning of the Han Dynasty, the ruling class had deliberately practiced frugality and rested with the people, laying a good foundation for the middle period's prosperity as well as foreign expansion, however, not all rulers were able to adhere to the same original intention as their predecessors. Starting from the period of Emperor Jing and Emperor Wu, the rulers pursued generous burials, coupled with the prevalence of the concept of the immortality of the soul in society and the Confucian concept of filial piety, people to a certain extent believed that generous burials of the elders was the fulfillment of filial piety, and the wealth of the society had reached a certain level, so that the trend of generous burials became more and more intense.

Since 1990, a total of 195 burial pits have been discovered in the Hanyang Tombs, and more than 10,000 people have been buried in the northwest of the tombs. On the other hand, the extreme importance attached to burials by the upper nobility and local princes and lords also led to a large-scale change in the history of Chinese tombs, making the vertical coffin tombs since the pre-Qin era gradually replaced by horizontal chamber tombs of the Han Dynasty, such as the eight tombs found in the Jiayuguan Valley, there are two methods of construction, one of which is to cut out the tomb passage first, and then, according to the size of the tomb, use the method of drilling a vertical well to open up the front room, the middle room, and the back room, and another is to cut out the tomb passage first, and then follow the direction of the tomb passage according

to the underground chamber, and another is to cut out the tomb passage first, and then follow the direction of the tomb passage according to the underground chamber.

After the middle and late Western Han Dynasty, the pottery stove surface decoration became the main body of decoration, generally molded in the stove surface kitchen supplies such as scoops, shovels, hooks, chippers, brushes, counting, spoons and other items, as well as used for cooking fish, turtles, meat, steamed bread and other food, but also found to reflect the life atmosphere of the rat. Through this variety of display, not only reflects the living to the deceased in the netherworld life thoughtful consideration, but also sends people to the rich life of hope. For example, the semi-circular double-eyed stove^o unearthed in the middle Eastern Han Dynasty tomb at Dujiabao, Xianyang, has fish, rats, shovels, hooks, brushes, calculations, spoons and other motifs molded on the surface of the stove, as shown in Figure 10. In addition, the treasure-topped chimney at the rear end of the stove surface was also molded and pasted

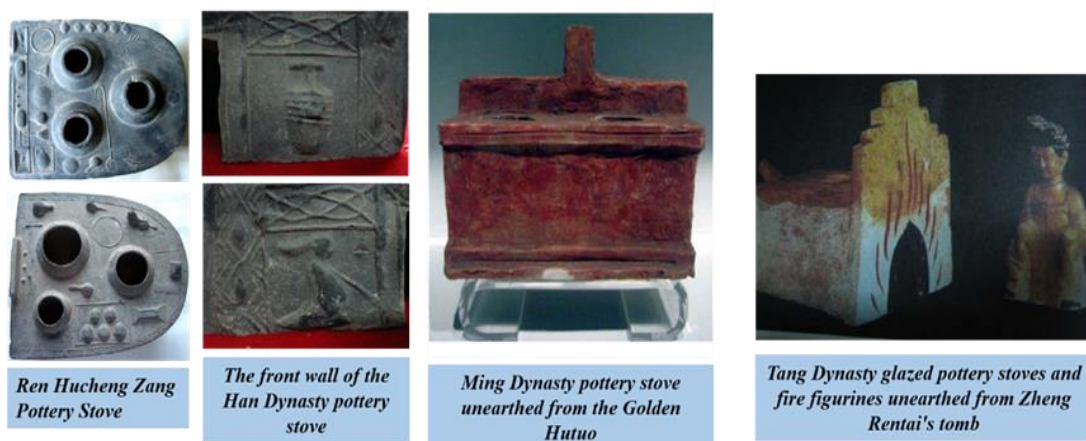


Figure 10: Decorated and painted cooktops

After the Eastern Han Dynasty, the upper class aristocrats continued this idea of luxury and enjoyment, the Wei and Jin Dynasties often have the upper class aristocrats to compare the wealth of the historical events, at the same time, the rise of the construction of Ming ware, the powerful landowners in the enjoyment of this building and organization of their own interests and sense of security at the same time, the delusion of the underground can also continue to keep, it will be the image of the dockyard in the manor mural paintings, made of the construction of Ming ware, to bring into another world. The world. To sum up, the style of burial, the catalyst of war, the manor system, all subjective and objective factors are intertwined, which all together created the "fortress kingdom" above and below the ground.

5. DISCUSSION

The significance of this study lies in its comprehensive exploration of the cultural, social, and philosophical significance of architectural Mingqi from the Han Dynasty era. By delving into the material properties, functions, and geographical distribution of these miniature architectural models, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of Han Dynasty tombs and societal structures.

Firstly, this study sheds light on the significance of architectural Mingqi as symbolic representations of Han Dynasty architectural aesthetics and societal values. Through a meticulous examination of historical records and archaeological findings, the research unveils the intricate craftsmanship and symbolic meanings embedded within these miniature structures. By analyzing their forms, functions, and spatial arrangements, the study illuminates how architectural Mingqi served as reflections of Han people's daily lives, religious beliefs, and social hierarchies.

Furthermore, this research bridges the gap in existing scholarship by elucidating the cultural mechanisms behind the creation and symbolism of architectural Mingqi. By employing interdisciplinary methodologies drawing from anthropology and sociology of artifacts, the study excavates the cultural connotations imbued within these miniature structures, particularly focusing on their representation of "residence" and the ritualistic significance within Han Dynasty architectural designs. Through this lens, the research offers insights into the philosophical ideologies and social norms prevalent during the Han Dynasty era, enriching our understanding of ancient Chinese society and culture. Despite its significant insights, this study has certain limitations that affect its generalizability.

Firstly, reliance on historical records and archaeological findings introduces potential biases inherent in these sources, impacting the interpretation of data. Additionally, the study's geographic focus primarily on Han Dynasty tombs within China limits its scope and may not fully capture the diversity present in architectural Mingqi from other regions or periods. Furthermore, the emphasis on symbolic and cultural significance may overlook practical functions and material characteristics of architectural Mingqi.

However, this research holds considerable implications for Han Dynasty archaeology and cultural history. By elucidating the cultural mechanisms behind architectural Mingqi, it enriches our understanding of ancient Chinese society, belief systems, and architectural aesthetics. The

interdisciplinary approach and nuanced analysis contribute to broader discussions on material culture, ritual practices, and symbolic communication in ancient civilizations. Moreover, the findings offer valuable insights for future research.

By identifying key themes and areas for exploration, this study lays the groundwork for further investigations into architectural Mingqi, tombs, and cultural practices in ancient China. Continued interdisciplinary collaborations and methodological innovations can deepen our understanding of ancient Chinese civilization.

In conclusion, while this study has limitations, it significantly contributes to our knowledge of Han Dynasty archaeology and cultural history. Its insights into architectural Mingqi provide valuable perspectives on ancient Chinese society and culture, paving the way for future research endeavors in the field.

6. CONCLUSION

A large number of architectural Mingqi unearthed in Han tombs are valuable materials for the study of the Han Dynasty burial system, architectural technology, agricultural technology and other aspects. Unlike the small and medium-sized tombs of the Western Han Dynasty, the Han tombs of the Eastern Han Dynasty in which complex multi-story ceramic barns were unearthed are generally of medium and large sizes, and the owners of the tombs are of high rank and may be of prominent aristocracy, which suggests that these complex architectural Mingqi may be expensive and hard to be used by commoners in general.

The architectural Mingqi of the Han Dynasty vividly reflect the socio-economic conditions, class relations, and cultural exchanges between China and the West at that time. For example, the combination of burials of cages and wells can reflect the development of agriculture at that time, the dock wall, which also has the function of defense, reflects the antagonistic and interdependent class relationship between the big families and the dependent laborers, and the introduction and evolution of pagodas is a true reflection of the cultural exchanges between China and the West in Shanxi-Gansu region, which is located along the Silk Road. Through the study of architectural Mingqi in the Han Dynasty, we can better understand the cultural lineage of this period, and also provide a strong reference and inspiration for future in-depth research on the relationship between ancient architecture and political culture.

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