

Supplementary Evidence for the Overall Nature of the Five “Halls” in the Mausoleum Plan for the Zhongshan Royal Tombs of the Warring States Period

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Abstract

Excavated from Tomb M1 at the royal tombs of the Zhongshan state in the Warring States period was a bronze plaque inlaid with gold and silver with the layout for a mausoleum complex, indicating that aboveground buildings had been planned for the tombs of certain nobility at the time. However, the overall nature of the five “halls” designed for the mausoleum complex has been the subject of debate in academia. Some opinion has suggested they were “sacrificial halls” while another sees them as “coffin chambers.” And then there is the notion that they were a kind of memorial hall. However, before addressing this issue further, one must first clarify the meaning of “hou tang (queen hall)” and “furen tang (consort hall)” in the architectural plan, which is clearly a direction that currently has received little attention.

The present study is based on the efforts of previous scholars and analyzes how the five “halls” in the mausoleum plan are not actually “sacrificial halls” based not only on the features of “sacrificial halls” but also on the fact that Zhou dynasty statutes did not allow consorts to have their own sacrificial temples but permitted consorts to be included in their husbands’ temples and receive sacrifices. Furthermore, the evolution of and tomb rituals at mausoleums as well as consorts having a place for receiving their own rites makes it possible to identify the overall nature of the five “halls” in the mausoleum plan of the Zhongshan rulers, in which the “chamber” in the “mausoleum chamber” derives from changes in the “coffin chamber” to a “chamber hall.” It is hoped that the evidence provided in this study can supplement the research of previous scholars.

Keywords: Zhongshan royal tombs, mausoleum plan, aboveground tomb buildings, sacrificial hall, chamber

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