



Female Space in Princess Yongtai Cemetery in Tang Dynasty

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Abstract. In a narrow sense, the underground space of a tomb usually has gorgeous decoration and furnishings. In this real and imaginary coexistence space, there are many two-dimensional and three-dimensional female images. The space composed of these images and the surrounding environment is called female space. This paper starts from the context of the Tang Dynasty's thick burial wind and explores the particularity of female space in Princess Yongtai's tomb by restoring the isolated and isolated female images in the tomb to their images, buildings, and social environments. What causes this? How to traverse an architectural barrier? Consider the importance and relevance of female images in female space in relation to male space, going beyond individual images.

Keywords: Tombs of the tang dynasty · Female space · Tomb of Princess Yongtai · Noble · Female image

1 Introduction

Reviewing the past decade, the research on the theme of female images in tombs has indeed made some progress, but some problems have also been exposed. In the tombs of Princess Yongtai in the Tang Dynasty, the subject matter of character painting is mostly women, and the characters have their specified positions. What is the special meaning of this division of position in space? In the previous studies on these female characters, they are basically in the study of single female image, which has certain limitations. How can we break through the barriers of traditional concepts? Here we will introduce a definition of female space. Wu first proposed the concept of female space [1]. But what is discussed and studied is the question of female space in Chinese history from Warring States to Qing Dynasty, Contains a wide range of content, less targeted. In summary, the study of female space in Princess Yongtai cemetery in the Tang Dynasty is still worth filling and studying.

Therefore, this paper is not limited to the traditional method of studying the cemetery. It focuses on the complex composition of female space. The interaction between female images and other elements, and the interaction between words and images at multiple levels and explores the original language and significance of each image. The introduction of the definition of female space to the study of Princess Yongtai's cemetery is to allow readers to refocus on the work itself in the cemetery.



Fig. 1. Dragon and phoenix, silk book of warring states period.

“Feminine space refers to the real or fictional place where women are perceived, imagined and represented.” writes by Hung. Conceptually, female space includes female characters and female artifacts. Different from female images and their material representations (such as mirrors, fans, flowers). Women’s space is a whole space—a world created by landscape, flowers and grass, architecture, color, light, sound, and carefully selected residents and their activities [1]. The earliest female-centered work in the history of Chinese art is the Dragon and Phoenix of silk painting unearthed from Chenjia Mountain in Changsha, Hunan Province (Fig. 1), comparing Human Reining Dragon painting, we can find that Female space has begun to emerge from the Warring States period. From the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, the female images of Princess Yongtai’s tombs, Prince Yide’s tombs and Prince Zhanghuai’s tombs in corridor and the inside the cemetery were mostly nobles and waitresses accompanying the owner of the tomb. Male officials and warriors did not belong to this field, which showed that the female space had completed the transformation from affiliated position to independence. These three most typical noble tombs in the Tang Dynasty fully reflect the transformation of female space in the Tang Dynasty tombs.

2 Particularity of Female Space in Princess Yongtai’s Cemetery in Tang Dynasty

Princess Yongtai, whose name is Xianhui, word Nonghui. It is the granddaughter of Zhi Li and Zetian Wu in Tang Dynasty, and the seventh daughter of Xian Li in Tang Dynasty. She was killed for privately discussing Wu Zetian’s life. As a political victim at that time, Zhongzong moved her coffin from Luoyang to Qianling and buried it in a hierarchical system with upgrading the tomb as the royal necropolis [2]. Most of the royal family members in the Tang Dynasty were accompanying burial of Tombs of the Emperor, without cemeteries and inner cities. Usually, these two structures belonged to the burial specifications of the emperor, but these two structures appeared in Princess Yongtai’s tomb and had corner buildings [3]. The specifications of stone carvings and burial utensils also reflect the quantity of rite plus. The specifications of Princess Yongtai cemetery are



Fig. 2. Tomb road east mural location map.

far greater than the general princess's tomb [4]. Such Princess Yongtai cemetery is a typical representative of the female aristocratic cemetery in the Tang Dynasty.

2.1 Positional Relationship Between Female Space and Male Space

Princess Yongtai tomb consists of tomb passage, corridor, front room, back room four parts. East wall drawing from south: a group of warriors, dragon image, architectural drawings, north of the building has a long wall connected with the hole, this should be the palace wall can be seen outside the hills, streams, vegetation. North from the watchtower on both sides of the gate, there are five groups of Guard of Honor composed of warrior. Near the northernmost end of the first tunnel, there are a series of halberd frames, and each of the two western people horsemen leads a horse.

The west and east walls (Fig. 2) are the same except for the four gods [5]. Etiquette space straight line extends down, in the fifth passage aristocratic women ride sedan chair mural [6]. The number of paintings unearthed from Princess Yongtai tomb is the largest, a total of 878, can be divided into pottery paintings, tricolor paintings, wooden paintings [7]. The gender of these paintings is divided into male and female, placed around the entire cemetery by region. Research on gender, as well as the relationship between male and female gender space in Princess Yongtai's tomb, this section is a local female space, where women appear mainly as accessory to men. There are two front and rear chambers. The front chamber is square. The four walls have a certain radian outward. There are door holes in the middle of the north and south walls. After entering Princess Yongtai's tomb door is given priority to with the female character image and has the shadow imitation wood partition forms the architectural space, on the wall many draws waitress ready to serve the tomb owner [8].

There are Baoxiang flower, peony flower, lotus, and other patterns at the top of the front corridor (Fig. 3), two main characters with flowers and hills. These patterns are used to symbolize women, Baoxiang flower is also an auspicious pattern in Buddhism. The pattern of these flowers is not a realistic imitation, but a combination of deformation and reorganization. This imagined flower is both realistic and freehand [9]. It also shows that Princess Yongtai's tomb is not a female space in the general concept and realistic situation, Instead, it is a stylish, luxurious, and romantic fantasy-filled private symbolic female space composed of special interests and religions. The rear chamber is in the northmost, with the same structure as the front chamber. On the west side there was a stone coffin, made up of 34 large stones, with Princess Yongtai's body. The outer layer of the stone coffin was a stone portrayal of the scene composed of fine female images. On the east side there was a carved stone mantle tent, as if Princess Yongtai's soul were sitting on it [10]. There are no male officials and warriors in this interior space.



Fig. 3. Patterns of flowers on the top of the front corridor.

The ancient tomb culture has always contained local female space, but the division of architectural space in Tang Dynasty tombs has its particularity. Princess Yongtai's tomb is bounded by the tomb door and the door wall at the beginning of the corridor, and the inward spaces are female images, including the palace women in men's clothing. Indirect heterosexuals judged by facial and physical characteristics are also limited to court eunuch and dwarfs [8]. This symbolically imagined the interior of the tomb as the residence of the tomb owner or the palace when he was alive, forming a unique female space in the Tang Dynasty. On the contrary, the external space is a male-dominated space, a temporary facility known as funeral space, with only partial female space.

2.2 Causes of Female Image System in Tang Dynasty

Why the Tang Dynasty tombs produced such a clear division of female space? In terms of etiquette, the etiquette in the Tang Dynasty was quite complete. Confucius quotation: "Respect its respect, love its loved ones, death as life, filial piety as well" [11]. This reflects the Confucian funeral etiquette thought of death as life and the strict hierarchical etiquette system at that time. This requires the burial system to serve the identity of the owner of the tomb, which leads to the content in the burial space to be consistent with the various parts of the house symbolized by the burial structure [12]. Politically, the proportion of women in politics in Tang Dynasty is rare in history, and women's status is at the peak of history. For example, empress Wu Zetian ruled for nearly half a century, which deeply encouraged the participation of royal aristocratic women in politics. Xuanzong's pet concubine Yang Guifei had to pet the whole family, so Bai Juyi would write "It is not important to have a boy but a girl." Economic and cultural aspects, Tang Dynasty in our history can be said to be a peak period of civilization, cultural prosperity, strong economic strength, aristocrats have more experience and financial resources invested in cultural construction. National integration, diversified culture in the Tang Dynasty has been fully demonstrated, ethnic minority women's status is higher, women's freedom. In terms of art, the theme of women's painting in the Tang Dynasty was included in higher art and became the expertise of many famous painters. Many works about women's painting appeared. And women generally have a higher level of education [13], According to the records in Old Tang Book [14], the imperial concubines

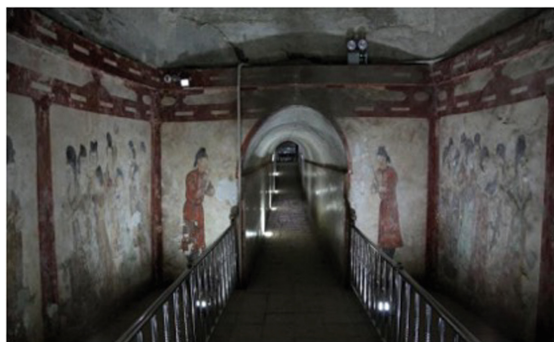


Fig. 4. Shadow imitation wood.

in the Tang Dynasty have many achievements of 11 people, in addition to many people have poetry, painting, calligraphy and other expertise. Many of the empresses in the Tang Dynasty have specialty in poetry, painting, and calligraphy. Through the above analysis, such direct or indirect reasons directly led to the transformation of the female space in the tombs of the Tang Dynasty from affiliated to independent.

2.3 Breakthrough of Female Space in Tombs in Architectural Space

From the architectural point of view. The main spatial structure of the tomb is supported by soil and brick, which limits the size of the whole tomb, and the wall becomes the boundary of space [15]. Female space does not mean an independent female image. Princess Yongtai's tomb chamber front room we can see in each side of the murals around the characters draw a simple decorative column and arch (generally known as shadow imitation wood) (Fig. 4). Although it does not play a substantive role in simple terms, it makes the original brick-and-earth cemetery visually show that it is not only a mural, but also a space of wooden buildings. This dual functional approach blurs the boundaries between the mural and the actual cemetery space, it is a kind of mural picture space. The female waiter in the painting seems to be standing in the interior of a wooden building, which can shuttle walking, as if going from one room to another [16]. On the south side of the east wall of the front room of Princess Yongtai's Tomb, there is a Palace maid painting (Fig. 5). The whole painting has 9 people, they carry items in their hands, like going to the tomb owner's bed chamber, serving the tomb owner who is ready to sleep. In the painting, the palace maid steals whispers, the spirit is lively and active. These images are centered on the coffin that symbolizes princess Yongtai, forming an underground female space for Princess Yongtai's daily life.

Doors and windows are an indispensable part of a house, engraved on the inner wall of the stone coffin in Princess Yongtai cemetery are doors and windows, birds and beasts, flowers and plants, and palace maid (Fig. 6) [8]. According to archaeological data, the practice of carving doors and windows on outer coffins is worth exploring. As if the coffin belonged to another space, there is a continuous space outside this window, it's like everything's blocked out of the coffin. When we stand in the cemetery cannot help



Fig. 5. Palace maid.



Fig. 6. The palace maid carved on the inner wall of the coffin.

thinking, we stand indoor or outdoor. Such spatial structure, breaking the real existence of architectural space, female space won a broader imagination.

There is a celestial map on the dome, drawing a picture of the moon and the stars. Yin and Yang are a pair of core concepts in Chinese traditional culture, more moon representative Yin means women. The celestial map symbolizes the vast space of the universe. The moon, which represents women, together with Princess Yongtai in the coffin below, forms a mythical and fantasy female space. Think of the tomb owner's constrained area as a hazy fairyland. At the same time, this romantic star map also enlarges the component of the cosmic belief in the Tang Dynasty society. This cosmic symbol makes the static murals have a medium beyond the world.

3 Discussion

In the tombs of the Tang Dynasty, the female space completed the transformation from affiliated to independent. In this space, two-dimensional images, three-dimensional objects, and architectural space form a female space belonging to Princess Yongtai. We are not discussing the appearance, image, clothing, and painter's strokes of the individual female image in the space, starting from the whole image, we define the relationship between the position of the female image and the male image in a macro visual space. The relationship with the surrounding symbolic female elements, its symbolic significance and narrative story. The relationship between female characters and politics, religion, and literature. Through such exploration, we can find a new understanding space for female painting themes and provide important information for the study of the performance of women in special times.

4 Conclusions

Through the analysis of Princess Yongtai coffin chamber, this paper explores the unique construction of female space in the Tang Dynasty coffin and the significance of the female image beyond the individual in the tomb. Let the reader break away from the traditional female image research, with a new perspective to explore the meaning of female image, this is not only because the content of this perspective is incredible complexity and richness, but also because the complexity and richness wait to find and prove.

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