

Study on Sogdian Stone Figures Unearthed from the Tang Tomb in Huanghe Road of Liaoning Province

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Abstract: A pair of stone figurines were unearthed from a Tang tomb at Huanghe Road, Chaoyang City of Liaoning Province. Scholars generally believe that they show the image of Mohe people. This paper studies the clothing, braided hair style, appearance, eagle holding gesture, Wo holding posture and other characteristics of the stone figurines. Through comparing these features with stone figurines of Hu people in Tang Dynasty, images of Hu people in murals of Tang Dynasty, as well as stone burial utensils and human statues found in tombs of Sogdians entering China, and referring to historical documents of the pair of stone figurines in the Tang tomb of Sixu Yang found in Xi'an, as well as stone human statues found in Turkic prairie, the author points out that stone figurines unearthed in Huanghe Road should express the images of Sogdians. This paper also summarizes the historical background of Sogdian stone figurines unearthed in Chaoyang (Yingzhou of Tang Dynasty).

1. Introduction

A pair of stone figurines were unearthed from the Tang tomb in Huanghe Road, Chaoyang City of Liaoning Province. They have special hair styles, facial features, costumes, and objects in their hands. These features were well carved, which should be used to shape the image of Hu people or nomadic people in the north. [1] Most scholars think that they show the image of Mohe people. This paper studies the clothing, braided hair style, appearance, eagle holding gesture, Wo holding posture and other characteristics of stone figurines, and points out that these characteristics are not unique in depicting Mohe people in Tang Dynasty. They were often used in shaping the image of Sogdian people.

2. Characteristics of Stone Figurines Unearthed from the Tang Tomb in Huanghe Road

For the two stone figurines unearthed from the Tang tomb of Huanghe Road, the hair of the female figurine is combed from the forehead and temples, and is tied in a bun on both sides of the head. A lock of hair is separated from each bun and braided at the back of the head and hung down on the back (Figure 1). The female image has deep eyes and high cheekbones, wearing a lapel robe. The front of the robe is rolled up in the belt. Two pockets and other objects are hung on the left of the belt. Her hands are put in front of her chest. Jin Yang points out that it should be a female figure of Hu, and Ji Sun thinks it should be a male figure of Hu. Judging from the characteristics of this figurine, it should be a female Hu figurine. The hair of the male figurine is combed back from the forehead and temples to the neck, and braided at the neck; the upper end of the braid is tied with a thin band (Figure 2). He has large eyes and high cheekbones. He wears a robe with the round collar; an eagle stands on his left arm. The man also holds a Wo, a tool for horse training or hunting in the right hand.



Fig.1 Female Stone Figure of Sogdian in the Tang Tomb



Fig.2 Male Stone Figure of Sogdian in the Tang Tomb

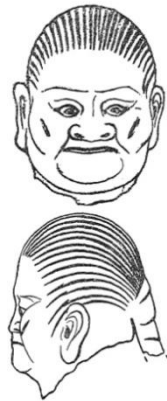


Fig.3 Head of a Pottery Figurine Found in Tang Tomb in Xi'an



Fig.4 Terra-Cotta Figure in the Tomb of Prince Zhanghuai

In terms of their appearance and costumes, the two stone figurines should be Hu people or nomadic people in the north. Niansi Jiang, wrote in his paper, *A Study on Mohe Stone Figurines Unearthed from the Tang Tomb at Huanghe Road, Chaoyang City of Liaoning Province*, that the stone figurines should be Mohe people from the aspects of braided hair, holding Wo, standing eagle and folded arms. [2] However, in Tang Dynasty, these characteristics were not unique to Mohe people. They were often used to shape the images of Sogdian people at that time. Therefore, the author intends to analyze the Sogdian nationality from the characteristics of the overall shape of stone figurines.

3. Evidence of Stone Figurines as Sogdian Image

3.1 The Style of Braided Hair and Appearance

The images of Hu people, which are similar to the hair style and appearance of the pair of stone figurines, can be seen in many Hu figurines unearthed from Tang tombs. Examples include the Tomb of Sixu Yang of Tang Dynasty in Xi'an (740 A.D.) (Figure 3), the Tomb of Siben Li in Xingyuan, Yanshi, the Tang Tomb of Haokuan in Xiangyuan, Shanxi Province, the Tomb of Prince Zhanghuai of Tang Dynasty in Qianxian county (Figure 4) and the Tang Tomb of Senzhai Han unearthed in Xi'an. These Hu figurines have similarities in eyes, clothing, hair style and movement; they should be Hu people of the same ethnic group. [3-5] Among them, the features of the pottery figurines unearthed from the tomb of Sixu Yang (Figure 3) are basically the same as those of the male figurine found in the Tang tomb at Huanghe Road; both of them have braids hanging back and high cheekbones. We have written an article to discuss the custom of Sogdians to braid their hair. From the scope and time of excavation, it seems that they are Sogdians rather than Mohe.

More coincidentally, pairs of stone figurines were also unearthed from the tomb of Sixu Yang; they also hold objects on hands and hang various objects on the waist. This kind of stone figurines appeared in Chaoyang and Xi'an at the same time, and the ethnic group that could bring influence should be Sogdian. [6] Guangda Zhang pointed out, "in Tang Dynasty, the business activities of Sogdians reached peak. A large number of pottery figurines with camels and horses represented the image of Nine surnamed Zhaowu; they lived in many big cities such as Chang'an and Luoyang." [7] This kind of figures with braided hair usually leading camels or horses, which is also a common way to represent the image Sogdian people.

3.2 The Tradition of Pairing Stone Figurines in Sogdian Tombs

The owner of the Sui tomb of Yuhong in Taiyuan was born in Sogdiana of Central Asia. He once served as an officer of the government. A pair of stone figurines were unearthed from his tomb (Figure 5), which is an early example we found. [8] The stone figurines are similar to stone figurines in the Tang Tomb of Huanghe Road. They all hold objects and hang various ornaments and utensils on their waists. In the Sui Tomb of Anbei in Luoyang, stone figurines with the image of Hu people holding objects were also unearthed (Figure 6). The Sogdian stone couch of Northern Dynasties collected by Guimet Museum of France is also accompanied by stone figurines holding objects. [9-10] It can be seen that Sogdians have a tradition of burial pairs of stone figurines. In Tianshui, Gansu Province, a Sui and Tang tomb with stone coffin platform is found; the owner of the tomb is Sogdian. Five stone figurines with kneeling posture were unearthed in the tomb; the figurines are Hu people. Though they are not pairs of stone figurines, it can also be seen as an evidence of stone figurines used in Sogdian tombs. In the tomb of Jingling of Northern Wei Dynasty in Luoyang, pairs of stone warriors with swords stand on both sides of the tomb passage. The stone warriors with swords were also found in Daogui Lv's Tomb of Sui Dynasty in Jinan. The burial of pairs of stone figurines with objects in the tomb should be related to the burial custom of Sogdians who came to China.



Fig.5 Pair of Stone Figures in Sui Tomb of Yuhong



Fig.6 Stone Figure of Sogdian in Sui Dynasty



Fig.7 Gure in Turkic Prairie



Fig. 8 Stone Figure in Turkic Prairie

The braided hair of Sogdians and stone figurines used in their tombs were all influenced by Turks. Turkic people with their hair braided can be found on the back of stone figures in Turkic prairie (Figure 7 and Figure 8), the Turkic emissaries painted in murals of Samarqand and the Turkic monarch's stone statue at the North Sima Gate of Zhaoling. The stone statues of Fanshou erected in front of the Zhaoling and Qianling mausoleums of Tang Dynasty were influenced by stone figures on Turkic grassland. The stone figurines in Huanghe Road tomb are similar to Turkic stone figures in characterization, such as the detailed described belt, the shape of robes and hand-held objects. For stone figurines found in Shermi river (6th-8th century) in Tuwa area of southern Siberia (Figure 8), their hair style with backward braid hanging on the back is similar to that of stone figurines found in Huanghe Road. [11]

During the Northern Dynasties as well as Sui and Tang Dynasties, Sogdians were closely related to Turks. Xinjiang Rong pointed out that the Northern Tianshan Road and Mobei area, which Sogdians went through for trade to the East, were directly ruled by Turks, and that Turks were the suzerain of western kingdoms in the Tarim Basin. Therefore, Sabah, the leader of Sogdian settlement, needs to form an alliance with Turks. [12-13] According to stone burial utensils of Sogdians, Sogdians and Turks held talks, formed alliances and usually went hunting together (Figure 9). It is a custom to express Sogdian images with Turkic elements. The shape of stone figurines in tombs of Sogdians is similar to that of stone figurines in front of Turks' mausoleums. It

should also be the expression of the phenomenon, “the same marriage and funeral customs with Turks” recorded in volume 1933 of the *General Code*; it is related to the close relationship with Turks. [14-15]

3.3 Sogdian Custom of Hunting with Eagles

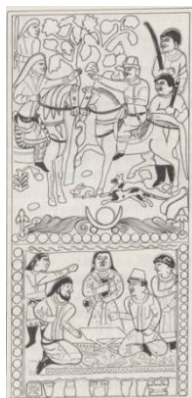


Fig.9 and Turks



Fig. 10 Sogdians Hunting



Fig.11 Hu People Holding the Eagle



Fig.12 Animal Trainer of Hu with Wo

The images of Hu people holding eagles can be seen in stone burial utensils of Sogdian entering China, the Hu figurines of Tang Dynasty as well as murals of Tang tombs. On the painting found on the western wall of the stone chamber of Shijun's Tomb of Northern Zhou Dynasty in Xi'an (Figure 10), the Hu people on the right are holding eagles to hunt. [16] Hunting is not only a way to provide food for Sogdian caravan, but also a means to obtain tribute items. The eagle should be a raptor commonly used by Sogdians. In Tang Dynasty, holding eagles to hunt was popular, which should be recorded as “arm eagle” in literature. Feeding eagles at home was also advocated in aristocratic families. The images of Hu people holding eagles are commonly found in cultural relics of Tang Dynasty; the Hu figurine holding the eagle and riding the horse unearthed from the Xianzhu Tomb of Jinxiang County in Xi'an, the pictures of Hu people riding eagles and training harriers found in murals of the tomb of Prince Yide in Qianxian County, and the standing figure of Hu people holding the eagle found in Hubei (Figure 11) should all show the Hu figure of Sogdians. [17-18]

3.4 Holding Wo: a Common Method Expressing Sogdians People in Tang Dynasty

Wo is a tool used in hunting and animal training in ancient times. It is a long and slender rod, with the top end bended, which is similar to a polo-stick. In the mural of the Tang tomb of Prince Yide in Qianxian County, there are many pictures depicting high nosed Hu people holding and taming cheetahs (Figure 12). The image of Hu people hunting on horseback can also be seen in tri-colored pottery as well as gold and silver wares of Tang Dynasty; literature also contains contents that Central Asia and West Asia paid tribute of beasts such as cheetahs and lions. Many documents such as *Ce Fu Yuan Gui* and *Old Book of Tang* recorded that Sogdian people paid tribute of dogs and leopards. In Tang Dynasty, most of the Hu people who tamed leopards and served for the royal

family and the noble class were Sogdians who came with the tribute of leopard. In Tang Dynasty, the prototype of horse riding Hu figurine with dogs and leopards was the Sogdian. The male stone figurine in Huanghe Road holds the eagle and the Wo, which are both the living customs of Sogdians, and the common way to express the image of Sogdians in Tang Dynasty.

4. Background of Sogdian Stone Figurines Unearthed in Chaoyang

Chaoyang, an important town in Northeast China, had trade relations with the west through the grassland silk road as early as the Sixteen Kingdoms period. In the tomb of Sufu Feng in Beiyan, Chaoyang, several pieces of glassware produced in Rome were unearthed, which could not be found in any other relics of the Sixteen Kingdoms. These glassware may be imported into Beiyan by the grassland Silk Road, because the Northern Wei Dynasty controlled the Silk Road through the Central Plains. Chaoyang, known as Yingzhou and Liucheng in Tang Dynasty, is located in the northeast of Youzhou and is an important place from North China to Northeast China. From here, you can go to the Korean Peninsula to the East; to the north, you can reach the Capital Longquanfu of Bohai State. There are also roads leading to Khitan, Xi and Shiwei. Therefore, Yingzhou is located in the traffic artery and has important strategic and commercial significance. The Tang Dynasty sent Pinglu Jiedu envoy to manage the northeast region. A group of Sogdian silver wares were unearthed from the Tang Tomb of Lijiayingzi in Aohan banner near Yingzhou, reflecting the activities of Sogdian merchants in Yingzhou. As Bai Su said: "there were many Sogdians living in Yingzhou. At that time, there were many Sogdians who lived inside and outside the eastern part of the Great Wall. This situation started from the Northern Dynasty, and became more obvious in the 7th and 8th centuries. The unearthed gold and silver wares from Central Asia should be related to the fact that many Hu people lived in Yingzhou." [19-20] It can be seen that the Sogdian people lived in Yingzhou for a long time and had a large population. Yingzhou was confronted with Khitan and Xi, two powerful groups of aborigines in Northeast China. The Tang Dynasty used these Sogdians who were good at fighting against them; Lushan An and Siming Shi grew up in the battle with the northeast aborigines. Sogdian people began to move to Yingzhou in the early Tang Dynasty. The age of stone figurines in the tomb of Huanghe Road is the early Tang Dynasty, which is consistent with this background.

5. Conclusion

Based on above research, the braided hair style, appearance, clothing, eagle holding gesture, holding Wo and other characteristics of the pair of stone figurines found in the Tang tomb at Huanghe Road, Chaoyang of Liaoning Province are common features of Sogdians shown in cultural relics of Tang Dynasty. The burial of a pair of stone figurines in tomb is also a Sogdian custom, which firstly appeared in tombs of Sogdians entering China in Northern and Sui Dynasties. Cultural relics unearthed from this tomb contain many cultural factors related to Sogdian people. Therefore, this pair of stone figurines should be the image of Sogdians in Tang Dynasty. The stone figurines reflect the large number of Sogdians in Chaoyang area (Yingzhou) in Tang Dynasty.

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