

Two Qin Tombs of the Spring and Autumn Period Found at Yuandingshan

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The Yuandingshan 圆顶山 cemetery is located to the southwest of the Zhaoping 赵坪 Village, Lixian 礼县 County, Gansu 甘肃; to the opposite of it is the Dabaozi 大堡子 cemetery associated with lords of the Qin state. In 1998 and 2000, two seasons of excavation were performed by the Lixian County Museum at this cemetery. Four tombs and one chariot pit were opened, and another chariot pit was discovered. Since these tombs had already been looted before excavation, and their pits were sometimes filled with water at the time of excavation, the excavation data are not always complete. Data from Tombs 98LDM1 and 98LDM3, and chariot 2000LDK1 have already been published. Those from Tombs 98LDM2 and 2000LDM4 will be presented in this report. The two tombs are located at the western side of the cemetery, 2000LDM4 located 20 m to the northeast of 98LDM2. 10 m to the east of Tomb M4, there is another chariot pit. The head side of both tombs is oriented 275 degrees. The bottom of them lies below the water level.

I. Tomb 98LDM2

1. Tomb structure

The shaft pit is rectangular, 6.25 m long, 3.25 m wide, and 7 m deep. On the eastern and western walls there is a line of holes for descending. The pit is filled with mixed earth, which is pounded without distinct layers. The four walls each have an earth ledge. In the center of the bottom there is a rectangular waist pit, also oriented east-west. The pit contains two nested coffins, but was full of water at the moment of excavation. The coffins and skeletons are all decayed; what survives is a large amount of cinnabar.

The tomb contains seven sacrificed humans, who are

placed in three niches on the eastern, southern, and northern walls. Each niche has a rectangular plan and an arched roof, and is located at the depth of 5.1 m. The northern niche contains two humans, the eastern one also two humans, and the southern wall three humans. All these sacrificed humans are placed in a coffin coated with red lacquer. Their bodies are laid supine and flexed, and ornamented with jade pieces, beads, and stone plaques. A sacrificed dog is found in the fill in the southeastern corner. It is placed at the same depth as the sacrificed humans, heading eastward and laid prone, and adorned with one bronze bell (Fig. 1). In spite of having been looted, the tomb yields a great number of artifacts. These include bronze *ding*-tripods 鼎, *gui*-tureens 簋, *hu*-vessels 壶, pan, and ceramic *li*-tripods 鬲 between the two layers of coffins, a bronze bell, a bronze sword, and a stone plaque upon the coffins or between the two coffins at the head and foot sides. Some weapons, jade and stone artifacts are found on the bottom of the two coffins.

2. Description of artifacts

The tomb yields altogether 102 items (set) of artifacts, which include 36 bronze vessels.

A *ding*-tripod set. It consists of four items, which are identical in form and decoration but graded in size. Each of them has a slightly enclosing mouth, two standing handles, rounded bottom, and animal-feet-like legs. Each is decorated with a band of bird-like scale design at the neck, a band of wavy lines at the belly, a band of the stylized dragons design at the feet, and concentric rings on handles. The item M2:36 is 26.2 cm across at the mouth, and 23.6 cm high (Fig. 2); the item M2:28 is 22.2 cm across at the mouth, and 22.2 cm high (Fig. 3).

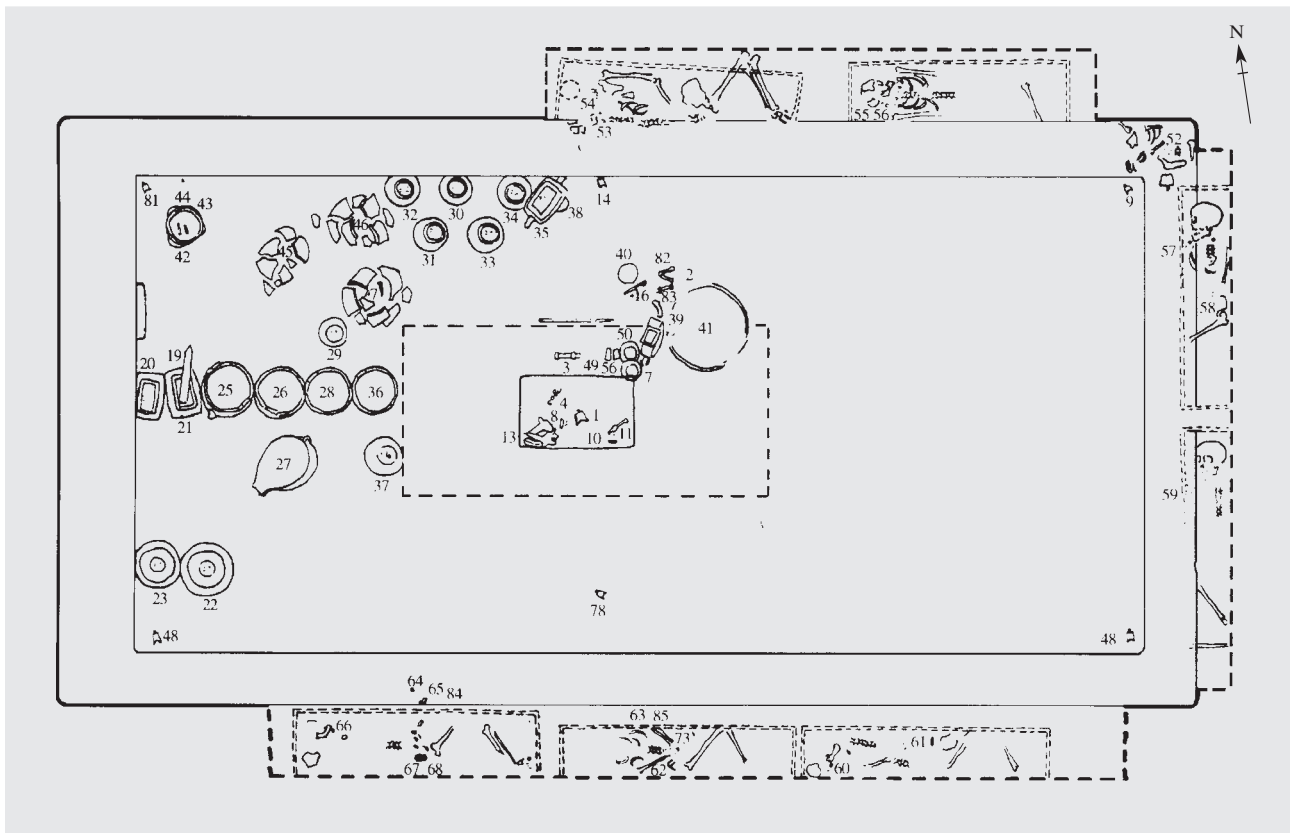


Fig. 1 Plan of tomb 98LDM2 (scale: 1/50)



Fig. 2 Bronze *ding*-tripod (98LDM2:36)

One isolated *ding*-tripod (item M2:38) has a flat lid with a ring-like handle. The vessel has an upright mouth, two handles, a semi-spherical belly, and three animal-foot-like legs. It is decorated with a band of the scale design at the shoulder, a band of ribbon at the belly, and double rings on the handles. Its height is 10 cm (Fig. 4).

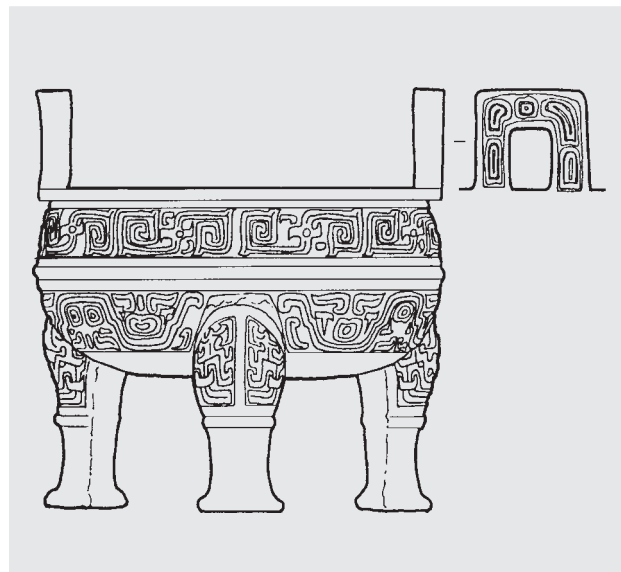


Fig. 3 Bronze *ding*-tripod (98LDM2:28) (scale: 1/4)

Six *gui*-tureens. Four of them (items M2:29–32) are identical in form, ornamentation, and size. Each has a tray-like lid with a ring-foot-like knob. The vessel has a drooping bottom, two ring-like handles with animal-head design, flat bottom, a ring foot, and three supporting legs. The lid and the vessel itself are decorated with stylized

dragons and ribbons. As an example, the item M2:32 is 17.8 cm at mouth, and 19.3 cm in height (Fig. 5). The other two *gui*-tureens (M2:33 and 34) are also identical in form, decoration, and size. Each has a tray-like lid and a ring foot. The body has an enclosing mouth and a drooping belly, added with ring-like handles and feet in the form of animal head. The lid, body, and ring foot are decorated with stylized dragons and ribbons. The item M2:33 is 17.6 cm across at mouth and 19.4 cm high (Fig. 6).

Two rectangular *hu*-vessels (items M2:20 and 21). They are identical in form, decoration, and size. Each has a lid with a ring-foot knob and four figurines of standing tiger; each has a body with rectangular section, a flaring mouth, a long neck, a ring foot, and four legs in the form of a crouching tiger. The lid and body are decorated with stylized dragons, the scale design, the wavy design, and ribbons. As an example, the item M2:20 is 54.4 cm high (Fig. 7).

One circular *hu*-vessel (item M2:37). This vessel has a lid with a knob in the form of an indistinct animal. The body of this vessel has a long neck, a rounded shoulder, a flat bottom, and two symmetrically positioned ring-like handles. The lid and body are decorated with strings and triangles filled with cloud design. Its height is 32.8 cm (Fig. 8).

One *he*-vessel (item M2:39). The lid, elliptic in form, has a rectangular ring foot knob. The body has a drooping bottom and four legs in the form of indistinct animal. The top of the lid is decorated with a crouching bird at the center and four small birds at the four sides of the knob, which carry feather and the scale design. The wall is decorated with two tigers. The pipe is made in the form of an animal head with tusks, and upon its mouth stands another animal. Opposite to the pipe there is a handle in the form of animal head. On the

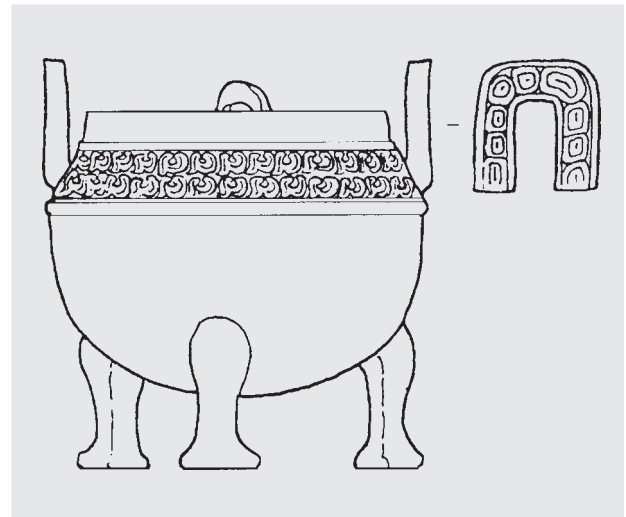


Fig. 4 Bronze *ding*-tripod (98LDM2:38) (scale: 1/2)

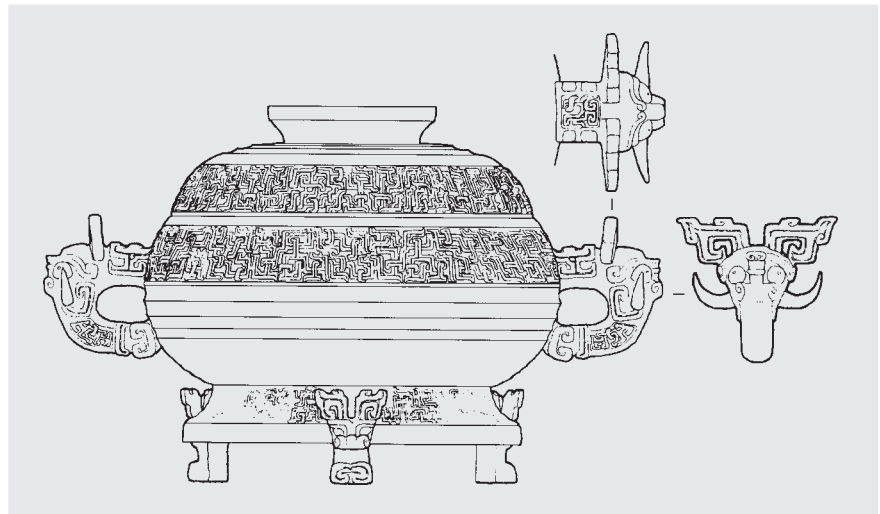


Fig. 5 Bronze *gui*-tureen (98LDM2:32) (scale: 1/3)

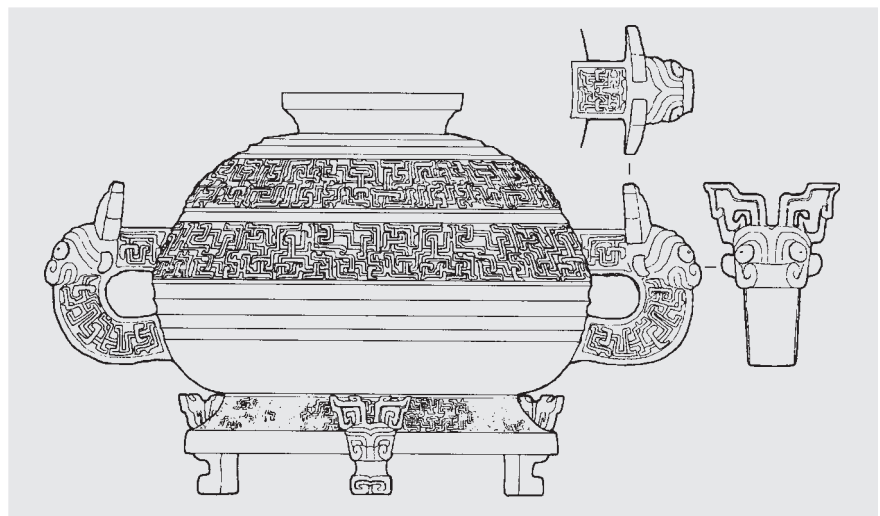


Fig. 6 Bronze *gui*-tureen (98LDM2:33) (scale: 1/3)

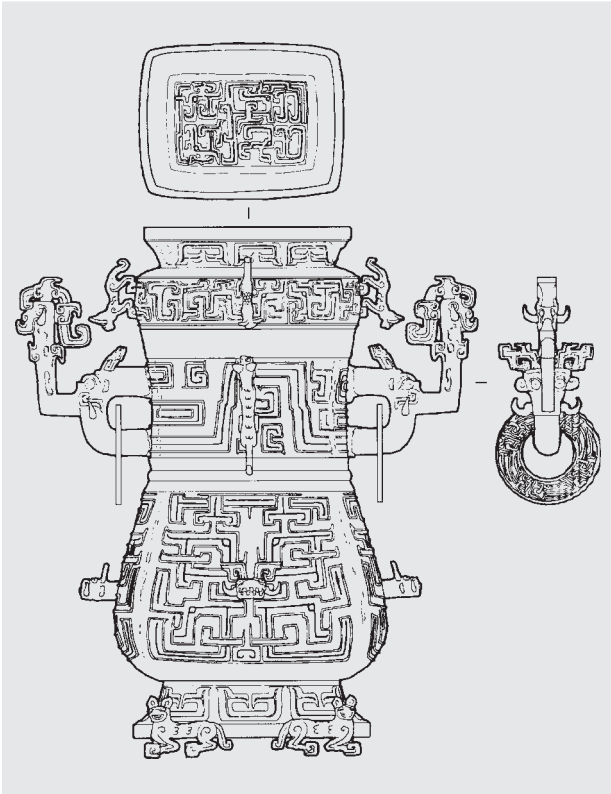


Fig. 7 Bronze *hu*-vessel (98LDM2:20) (scale: 1/5)



Fig. 8 Bronze *hu*-vessel (98LDM2:37)

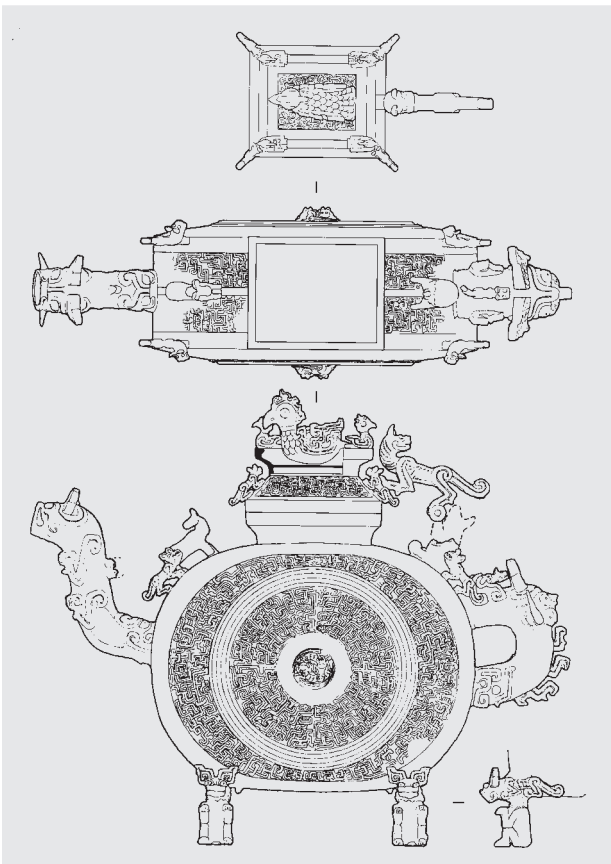


Fig. 9 Bronze *he*-vessel (98LDM2:39) (scale: 1/3)



Fig. 10 Bronze *he*-vessel (98LDM2:39)

shoulder stand tigers, and on the handle stand a male bear. The lid top and wall are decorated with stylized dragons; the body is decorated with stylized dragons as

well but added with broad bands and a pair of circular roundels in the form of animal heads. The overall height of this vessel is 32 cm (Figs. 9 and 10).

One *fu*-vessel 簠 (item M2:35). Rectangular in section, the lid, in the form of a ring foot, is furnished with four birds at the four corners, four pairs of crouching tigers that face each other on the top and six tigers on its rim that face six tigers on the rim of the lower part. The body slightly protrudes and carries two handles in the form of bird. On the crowns of the birds stand another bird and three tigers. The ring foot is furnished with four legs in the form of tiger carrying a standing bird. The lid, the body and its ring foot, are adorned with stylized dragons, ribbons, and net design. It is 23 cm at mouth (length) and 21.4 cm high (Fig. 11).

The tomb also yield bronze vessels such as *yi*-vessels 匱, pans, daggers, swords, knives, and bells, eight ceramic vessels such as jars and *li*-vessel, and 48 jade and stone artifacts, 33 of which are jades, including *jue*-earrings 玦, *gui*-tablets 圭, *huang*-pendants 璜, and *huan*-rings 环.

II. 2000LDM4

1. Tomb structure

The shaft pit of this tomb is rectangular, 6 m long, 2.65 m wide, and 5.1 m deep. It is filled with pounded earth but without distinct layers. The tomb is severely looted and filled with water; there is little information about human sacrifice and coffin.

2. Inventory

This tomb also yields 14 bronze, six jade, and 11 stone artifacts. Bronze objects include five *ding*-tripods, four *gui*-tureens, two *hu*-vessels, one *yan*-steamer 鬲, one *fu*-vessel, and one box.

The five *ding*-tripods are identical in form but graded in size. Each has an enclosing mouth and a swelling belly. Each has a leg in the form of animal foot. Decorative motifs are identical to those *ding*-tripods from Tomb 98LDM2.

The four *gui*-tureens are also identical in form, size, and decoration. As an example, the item M4:6 has a bowl-like lid and two handles in the form of animal heads at two sides. The lid and ring foot are decorated with stylized dragons, ribbons, and scales. Its overall height is 20 cm (Fig. 12).

The *yan*-steamer (item M4:12), a steamer, consists of a deep container and three legs in the form of animal foot. The entire vessel is adorned with the scale design, concentric rings, and stylized dragons. Its overall height is 33.7 cm (Fig. 13).



Fig. 11 Bronze *fu*-vessel (98LDM2:35)



Fig. 12 Bronze *gui*-tureen (2000LDM4:6)



Fig. 13 Bronze *yan*-steamer (2000LDM4:12)

III. Conclusion

1. Date of tombs

The artifacts from Tombs 98LDM2 and 2000LDM4 are identical in assemblage, form and decoration to that from Tomb 98LDM1 that has been published. The assemblage of these tombs consists of sets of *ding*-tripod, *gui*-tureen, *hu*-vessel, pan, *fu*-vessel, *he*-vessel, *yi*-vessel, which served as food-serving, wine-serving, and water-container. The prevalence of food-serving vessels over wine-serving ones is a diagnostic feature of the late Western Zhou. The combination of a *ding*-tripod set with pan, *fu*-vessel, *he*-vessel, and *yi*-vessel is also a regular formula of this period. Ceramic vessels from these tombs, *li*-tripods and open-mouth jars, resemble their counterparts from tombs of the Spring and Autumn period found at the Baqitun 八旗屯 cemetery in Fengxiang 凤翔 County, and the Songcun 宋村 cemetery in Huxian 户县 County. On these grounds, we date these tombs to the middle and late phase of the Spring and Autumn period.

2. Status of the occupants

The numbers of *gui*-tureens indicate that Tomb 98LDM2 originally contained a seven-*ding*-tripod set, and Tomb 2000LDM4 a five-*ding*-tripod set. The shaft pit of Tomb 2000LDM4 is slightly smaller than that of Tomb 98LDM2, but it is furnished with an outer coffin and a chariot pit. The sets of ritual bronzes from these tombs are identical to the one from Tomb 98LDM1. The primary occupants of these tombs are therefore similar in status, all of the aristocratic caste of the time. In addition, the quantity of accompanying goods, sacrificed humans, and weapons reveals that the occupant of Tomb 98LDM2 is a male, and that of Tomb 98LDM1 a female, the two of which might have made a couple. The occupant of Tomb 2000LDM4 is again a male. The Yuandingshan cemetery is close to the Dabaozi cemetery, a cemetery assumed to be of Qin lords; it must have been a cemetery of aristocrats of the Qin state.

Note: The original report, published in *Wenwu* 2005.2: 4–27, with 32 illustrations including 14 photographs, is written by Li Yongning 李永宁, Wang Gang 王刚, Mao Ruilin 毛瑞林, and Zhao Wucheng 赵吴成. This summary is prepared by Li Yongning and Liu Wenke 刘文科 and English-translated by Zhang Liangren 张良仁.

3. Characteristics of the two tombs and accompanying artifacts

The fact that bronze vessels from the Yuandingshan cemetery often bear pairs of figurines of animals is a distinctive feature of this cemetery. It indicates that these vessels, while inheriting forms and styles of the late Western Zhou, formed an independent style. Human sacrifice is pervasive in tombs of early and middle Western Zhou found in Chang'an 长安 County, Huxian County, and the Baoji 宝鸡 region in Shaanxi, the Luoyang 洛阳 region in Henan 河南, and at the Liulihe 琉璃河 cemetery in Beijing 北京. It became rare in tombs of the late Western Zhou, only occasionally occurring at tombs such as Tomb M3 at Songcun in Huxian County. The aristocratic tombs found at the Yuandingshan, however, all contain human sacrifice. Tomb 98LDM2, for instance, contains seven humans. It appears that human sacrifice was a common practice in this region in the Spring and Autumn period.

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