A Method to Translate Hieroglyphs in the Pottery of Longshan Stone Tombs

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Abstract: From the paper,we can get a conclusion that Longshan Stone Chamber Mound Tombs（龙山石室土墩墓）is similar to mastaba in structure and meaning. Besides, we can see the connections between hieroglyphs in the pottery and Egyptian hieroglyphs, and we can translate hieroglyphs in the pottery of Longshan Stone Tombs.

The Lvjiang area (閩江) includes the Dongcheng Village of Helv City (閩閩城) and the Lvjiang Village and Yangjia Village opposite to the Zhihu Port. There are a large number of remains of Majiabang (马家浜), Songze (崧泽) and Liangzhu (良渚) culture in the Neolithic Age. There are also post-Liangyu civilizations, Baiyue (百越) cultural relics of the equivalent time of Shang and Zhou dynasties in Central Plains of China, and Wu Kingdom (吴国) relics.

On the top of the Longshan Hill and on the ridge, Zhang Min's archaeological team of Helv City led to the excavation of eight stone chamber mound tombs(Longshan Stone Tombs for short), and a large number of celadon bowls with symbols, geometric hard pots and urns were unearthed. These cultural relics were sealed in the Helv City archaeological station of Wuxi Archaeological Institute, Zhang Min reported that these cultural relics were unearthed in "Wu Tombs"(吴墓). In the past, the archaeological community divided them into "Maqiao Culture"(马桥文化) by the shape.

Besides, Longshan Stone Chamber Mound Tombs (龙山石室土墩墓) is similar to mastaba in structure and meaning. And a mastaba (/ˈmæstəbə/, /ˈmɑːstɑːbə/ or /mɑːˈstɑːbə/) (meaning "house for eternity" or "eternal house" in Ancient Egyptian) is a type of ancient Egyptian tomb in the form of a flat-roofed, rectangular structure with inward sloping sides, constructed out of mud-bricks (from the Nile River).

These edifices marked the burial sites of many eminent Egyptians during Egypt's Early Dynastic Period and Old Kingdom. In the Old Kingdom epoch, local kings began to be buried in pyramids instead of in mastabas, although non-royal use of mastabas continued for over a thousand years. Egyptologists call these tombs mastaba.

Example of a mastaba

Until at least the Old Period or First Intermediate Period, only high officials and royalty would be buried in these mastabas.

The word 'mastaba' comes from the Arabic word for a bench of mud, and when seen from a distance a mastaba does resemble a bench. Historians speculate that the Egyptians may have borrowed architectural ideas from Mesopotamia since at the time they were both building similar structures.

The above-ground structure of a mastaba is rectangular in shape with inward-sloping sides and a flat roof. The exterior building materials were

initially bricks made of sun dried mud, which was readily available from the Nile River. Even after more durable materials like stone came into use, all but the most important monumental structures were built from the easily available mud bricks. Mastabas were often about four times as long as they were wide, and many rose to at least 30 feet in height. The mastaba was built with a north-south orientation, which the Ancient Egyptians believed was essential for access to the afterlife. This above-ground structure had space for a small offering chapel equipped with a false door. Priests and family members brought food and other offerings for the soul, or ba, of the deceased because Egyptians believed that the soul had to be maintained in order to continue to exist in the afterlife.

Inside the mastaba, a deep chamber was dug into the ground and lined with stone and bricks. The burial chambers were cut deep, until they passed the bedrock, and were lined with wood. A second hidden chamber called a "serdab" (سرداب), from the Persian word for "cellar", was used to store anything that may have been considered essential for the comfort of the deceased in the afterlife, such as beer, cereal, grain, clothes, and precious items. The mastaba housed a statue of the deceased that was hidden within the masonry for its protection. High up the walls of the serdab were small openings that would allow the ba to leave and return to the body (represented by the statue); Ancient

Egyptians believed the ba had to return to its body or it would die. These openings "were not meant for viewing the statue but rather for allowing the fragrance of burning incense, and possibly the spells spoken in rituals, to reach the statue".

Structure of a mastaba

Mastabas evolved over the early dynastic period. During the 1st Dynasty, a mastaba was constructed simulating house plans of several rooms, a central one containing the sarcophagus and others surrounding it to receive the abundant funerary offerings. The whole was built in a shallow pit above which a brick superstructure covering a broad area. The typical 2nd and 3rd Dynasty mastabas was the 'stairway mastaba', the tomb chamber of which sank deeper than before and was connected to the top with an inclined shaft and stairs.

5th Dynasty mastabas had elaborate chapels consisting of several rooms, columned halls and 'serdab'. The actual tomb chamber was built below the south-end of mastaba, connected by a slanting passage to a

stairway emerging in the center of a columned hall or court.

Mastabas were still well attested in the Middle Kingdom. Here they had a revival. They were often solid structures with the decoration only on the outside.

By the time of the New Kingdom (which began with the 18th Dynasty around 1550 BC), "the mastaba becomes rare, being largely superseded by the independent pyramid chapel above a burial chamber".

Structure of a mastaba

The distribution range of Longshan Stone City and Longshan Stone Tombs

The satellite map of Lvjiang (闽江) area

Xu Hill (胥山) in the north of Helv City (阖闾城)

Longshan Stone City is stacked on top of the Longshan Stone Tombs

Longshan Stone Tombs

Longshan Stone Tombs

The Burial Chamber of Longshan Stone Tombs

Burial Utensils in the Tomb

Unearthed cultural relics from Longshan Stone Chamber Mound Tombs(Longshan Stone Tombs for short), which were stored at the Helv City Archaeological Station of Wuxi Archaeological Institute

Hieroglyphs in the pottery of Longshan Stone Tombs

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Hieroglyphs in the pottery of Longshan Stone Tombs

So how to translate the hieroglyphs in the pottery of Longshan Stone

Tombs? Well, the first hieroglyph , resembles the Egyptian

hieroglyph , which means "string, rope", or Egyptian numeral 100 or the hundreds. Because there is little rope unearthed in Longshan Stone

Tombs, so the first means a hundred. The second

hieroglyph , resembles the Egyptian hieroglyph , which means Ra. so why did the producers not draw the whole hieroglyph? In my point of view, the external circle was already done! Because the base of the pottery is also round, so the producers omitted the external circle. And Ra or Re is the ancient Egyptian deity of the sun. By the Fifth Dynasty in the 25th and 24th centuries BC, he had become one of the most important gods in ancient Egyptian religion, identified primarily with the noon sun.

In later Egyptian dynastic times, Ra was merged with the major state god Horus into Ra-Horakhty ("Ra, who is Horus of the Two Horizons"). He was believed to rule in all parts of the created world: the sky, the earth, and the underworld. He was synonymous with the falcon, and he was commonly depicted with the head of a falcon. These images can be told apart from images of Horus due to having a sun disk on its head instead of Horus's usual Pschent headdress.

In the New Kingdom, when the god Amun rose to prominence he was fused with Ra into Amun-Ra. During the Amarna Period, Akhenaten suppressed the cult of Ra in favor of another solar deity, the Aten, the deified solar disc, but after the death of Akhenaten the cult of Ra was restored.

The cult of the Mnevis bull, an embodiment of Ra, had its center in Heliopolis and there was a formal burial ground for the sacrificed bulls north of the city.

All forms of life were believed to have been created by Ra, who called each of them into existence by speaking their secret names. Alternatively man was created from Ra's tears and sweat, hence the Egyptians call themselves the "Cattle of Ra".

To the Egyptians, the sun represented light, warmth, and growth. This made the sun deity very important, as the sun was seen as the ruler of all that he created. The sun disk was either seen as the body or eye of Ra.

Ra was represented in a variety of forms. The most usual form was a man with the head of a hawk and a solar disk on top and a coiled serpent around the disk. Other common forms are a man with the head of a beetle (in his form as Khepri), or a man with the head of a ram. Ra was also pictured as a full-bodied ram, beetle, phoenix, heron, serpent, bull, cat, or lion, among others.

He was most commonly featured with a ram's head in the Underworld. In this form, Ra is described as being the "ram of the west" or "ram in charge of his harem".

Ra's local cult began to grow from roughly the Second Dynasty, establishing him as a sun deity. By the Fourth Dynasty, pharaohs were

seen as Ra's manifestations on earth, referred to as "Sons of Ra". His worship increased massively in the Fifth Dynasty, when Ra became a state deity and pharaohs had specially aligned pyramids, obelisks, and sun temples built in his honor. The rulers of the Fifth Dynasty told their followers that they were sons of Ra himself and the wife of the high priest of Heliopolis. These pharaohs spent most of Egypt's money on sun temples. The first Pyramid Texts began to arise, giving Ra more and more significance in the journey of the pharaoh through the Duat (underworld).

During the Middle Kingdom, Ra was increasingly affiliated and combined with other chief deities, especially Amun and Osiris.

At the time of the New Kingdom of Egypt, the worship of Ra had become more complicated and grander. The walls of tombs were dedicated to extremely detailed texts that depicted Ra's journey through the underworld. Ra was said to carry the prayers and blessings of the living with the souls of the dead on the sun boat. The idea that Ra aged with the sun became more popular during the rise of the New Kingdom.

Many acts of worship included hymns, prayers, and spells to help Ra and the sun boat overcome Apep.

Ra on the solar barque

So I think the second hieroglyph , means Ra with

Chinese characteristic. The third hieroglyph is similar to

the Egyptian hieroglyph , which was used for: 1, brother, husband; sister, wife, "smell", touch, grasp ; 2, "second", 'the same'-(twin), two, both, etc. Because men usually loved their wives in the ancient Egyptian

society, so the third hieroglyph means wife. The fourth

hieroglyph , resembles the Egyptian symbol ,

Egyptian scientists called the petal a golden rosette. The golden rosette appeared in many objects in the predynastic and the first dynasty until the third dynasty disappeared. The exact meaning of it has been heatedly discussed. The most common explanation is that this symbol represents the monarch or the High Lord. In the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods of ancient Egypt, it was apparently known as the king. In the very late time of ancient Egypt, this badge was awarded to senior officials and princes, especially those who had served the goddess Seshat. Because the time of Longshan Stone Tombs was roughly the same as that of the very late time of ancient Egypt, so the meaning of the

badge is senior officials and princes, because the fourth

hieroglyph

was found in China, not in Egypt. So the fourth

hieroglyph

means governor. The fifth hieroglyph

, resembles the Egyptian hieroglyph , which means “throw”

or foreigners, enemies; and the Egyptian hieroglyph , which means last.

Because the hieroglyphs in the pottery of Longshan Stone Tombs were

hard to inscribe, the fifth hieroglyph means enemies. The

sixth hieroglyph , resembles the Egyptian hieroglyph

which means tomb, so the sixth means tomb. Well, the

seventh hieroglyph , resembles the Egyptian hieroglyph , which means Egyptian numeral 1, so the seventh hieroglyph

means 1. Now let us look at the eighth hieroglyph

, it is similar to the Egyptian hieroglyph , which means

town or city. And why did the producers not draw the whole hieroglyph?

In my point of view, the external circle was already done! Because the

base of the pottery is also round, so the producers omitted the external

circle. So the eighth hieroglyph means city or town. Besides, Egyptian governor always lived in the city, so the eighth

means city. Now let us look at the ninth hieroglyph

, it is similar to the Egyptian hieroglyph X, which means

divide, crossing and pass by. So the ninth means crossing.

Besides, let us have a look at the tenth hieroglyph , it is very

similar to the Egyptian hieroglyph , which means two lands(it indicates the lower and upper Egypt- the whole Egypt). So the tenth

hieroglyph means Egypt. Now let us try to translate the

last hieroglyph , it is similar to the Egyptian hieroglyph A,

which means beloved; so the last hieroglyph means beloved. So in sum, I translate the hieroglyphs in the pottery of Longshan Stone Tombs as this: A wife of the Egyptian governor, whom was beloved by the Egyptian governor, was killed by the enemies. In the name of Ra, 100 enemies were seized. Walking through the crossing of the city, you would find a tomb, the wife was buried there.

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