

Abstract

Hepu is located on the south coast of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, bordering the Gulf of Tonkin. From November 2009 until December 2013, the Guangxi institute of cultural relics protection and archaeology and the Hepu county administration of cultural relics etc. jointly implemented a rescue excavation in Hepu. In total 157 tombs have been excavated from 15 sites. Most of them had been looted before excavation. 154 Of these can be further divided into four stages: late Western Han dynasty tombs, Eastern Han dynasty tombs, Three Kingdoms dynasty tombs and Jin dynasty tombs.

A total of 15 late Western Han dynasty tombs have been found during the excavation. They are all wood-chambered tombs. In total 376 objects have been unearthed including pottery, bronze and terne metal objects, stoneware, and agate, glass, amber, crystal and etched carnelian beads and ornaments.

47 Eastern Han dynasty tombs have been found, including 9 early period tombs and 38 late period tombs. According to building materials and type of construction they can be divided into three categories: wood-chambered tombs, shaft tombs and brick-chambered tombs. The majority of tombs are brick-chambered. In total 523 pieces of funerary objects have been unearthed including pottery, glazed pottery, bronze and iron objects, silver ware lacquer, stoneware, talc ware, and various beads and ornaments.

80 Three Kingdoms dynasty tombs, all belonging to the brick-chambered tombs type, have been excavated. A total of 698 Objects have been unearthed. The categories of artifacts are basically the same as the Eastern Han dynasty tombs, with exception of the silverware.

A total of 12 Jin dynasty tombs were found. One belonged to the shaft-tomb type, and all the others belonged to the brick-chambered tombs type. 127 objects were unearthed including pottery, porcelain, iron, stoneware and glass etc.

The excavation report also discusses a type of paraboloid roof(卷棚顶) building, objects from overseas that reveal a close relationship with the maritime Silk Road, and “Bosheng Lianhua”(A Lotus Flower on top of a Begging Bowl) figures. A ceramic granary with paraboloid roof that was unearthed at tomb No.1 at Hepu electric power plant can be traced back to the late Western Han dynasty. According to the research findings obtained by the author so far, it is the earliest paraboloid roof building discovery in China. Furthermore this type of roof contributes significantly to the history of Chinese architecture. In addition, findings of glass, amber, garnet, etched carnelian,crystal beads and incense burners are important material proofs to study the maritime Silk Road. Besides that, the “Bosheng Lianhua”figures are closely related to the dis-semination of Buddhism into China by sea.