Archaeological Sites and Artifacts in the Liaodong Commandery: Later Han, Wei and Jin Tombs in Liaoyang and Shenyang and a Basic Chronology of Funerary Pottery

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The author has produced a basic chronology for tombs and their artifacts dating from around the 1st century C.E. through the 3rd century C.E. located in Liaoyang and the whole region of Shenyang to the north, thought to have been the locations of Junzhi and Xianping of the Liaodong commandery – the eastern part of present-day Liaoning Province – which was ruled by the Zhongyuan dynasty. Until now, considerable research has been undertaken on tombs in this region from the perspective of the relationship between mainly stone chamber tombs with wall paintings and tombs with wall paintings from Koguryo nearby to the east. The author studied these stone chamber tombs with wall paintings that were popular during the Wei and Jin periods, as well as tombs dating from Later Han at around the beginning of the Christian era, including brick chamber tombs in this region.

First, the author created a chronology of funerary pottery in order to determine the dates of these stone chamber tombs and brick chamber tombs. The tombs chosen for this chronology were those with similar types of funerary pottery jars and plates found in many brick chamber tombs and stone chamber tombs. The author classified the brick chamber tombs and stone chamber tombs using their planar structure as the main criterion. The process of changes in the structure of these tombs was then identified based on the chronology of the funerary pottery.

The results of the analyses described above revealed that while the brick chamber tombs and stone chamber tombs in Liaoyang and Shenyang were influenced by the central part of Zhongyuan from the Later Han through the Western Jin periods, at the same time as retaining certain regionality, the inner structure changed while maintaining associations that traversed differences in the construction materials of the tombs.

Keywords: Liaodong commandery, stone chamber tomb, brick chamber tomb, funerary pottery, structure of tombs, chronology