Contents

Introduction
1. The Above-ground Architecture
   1.1. The Architects of the Liao Dynasty: Qidan or Han-Chinese?
   1.2. Liao Architectural Style
2. Special Features of Liao Architecture and Wall Painting Programmes in Tombs
   2.1. Zaojing Ceilings
   2.2. The Lotus Motif and the 28 Lunar Mansions
   2.3. Octagonal Groundplans and Shapes
3. Subterranean Architecture
   3.1. Liao Tombs as a Methodological Problem
   3.2. Architectural Features of Liao Tombs

Finals Remarks

Introduction

The book under review\(^1\) belongs to the great number of studies on the history and cultural heritage of the border dynasties Liao (907-1125), Xi Xia (1032-1226) and Jin (1115-1234) which have been published in recent years in the west. Sinologists have started reevaluating the history of the so-called “barbarian” or “conquest” dynasties of China.\(^2\) This newly aroused interest in the west

---


\(^2\) Here is not the place to list all of the many historical works published
may have been triggered off both by the research and publication activities of Chinese colleagues (Chen Shu, Shu Fen, Deng Guangming, Qi Xia, and others) and by the many extraordinary and spectacular archaeological finds made in northeast and north China in recent decades. These have certainly influenced the inclusion of Liao materials in western exhibition projects.

It is in the context of a growing interest in the cultural history of the non-Chinese dynasties in China that the study by Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, Professor of East Asian Art History at the recently. I would like to mention only that by Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (eds.), Cambridge History of China. Vol. 6, Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. It should be kept in mind that even sixty years ago comparatively little was known about the border dynasties. As far as the Liao dynasty is concerned there were the works by H.C. von der Gabellentz, Geschichte der Grossen Liao, Aus dem Mandschu ubersetzt, St. Petersburg 1877; and by H. H. Howorth, "The Northern Frontagers of China. Part V: The Kitai or Khitans", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society N.S. 13 (1881), pp. 121-182; apart from Japanese publications on the imperial Liao tombs, there followed the study by Joseph L. Mullie, "Les sepulchres de K’ing des Leao", TP 30 (1933), pp. 1-25; the annotated translation of parts of the Liaooshi by R.A. Stein, "Leao-tche", TP 35 (1939), pp. 1-154; and the most profound study on Qidan society, that by Carl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng, History of Chinese Society. Liao (907-1125), Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1949 [Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, N.S. 36 (1946)].

6 Qi Xia, Qiao Youmei, Liao Xi Xia Jin jingji shi, Baoding: Hebei daxue chubanshe, 1998.