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Ssangyeongchong

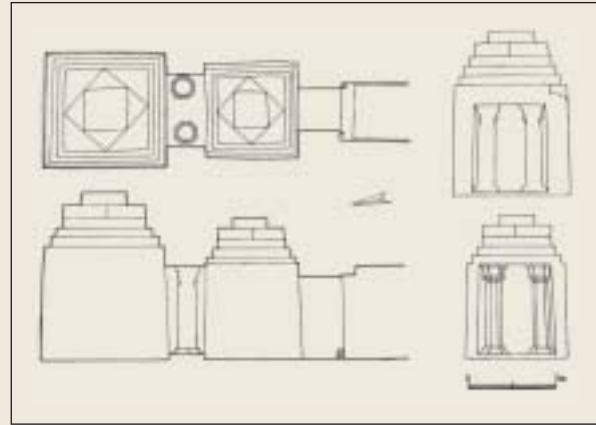
Second half of the 5th century, Yonggang-eup, Yonggang-gun, Nampo

Ssangyeongchong is a representative Koguryo tomb of the middle phase. The tomb consists of an antechamber and a main chamber with lantern ceilings. The designation of the tomb derived from its distinctive structural feature, two octagonal pillars standing in the corridor between the antechamber and the main chamber.

The murals of the tomb show genre scenes, a portrait of the deceased couple, immortals, heavenly animals, and a procession of ladies led by a monk. While all the murals provide important information for understanding the daily lives of the Koguryo people, the figures in the procession in the antechamber and those on both side walls of the corridor are especially significant for the study of the Koguryo costumes. The ceiling of the antechamber is embellished with colorful decorative patterns, as well as clouds and vine scrolls rendered in flowing lines. They create a majestic atmosphere of the heavenly world.



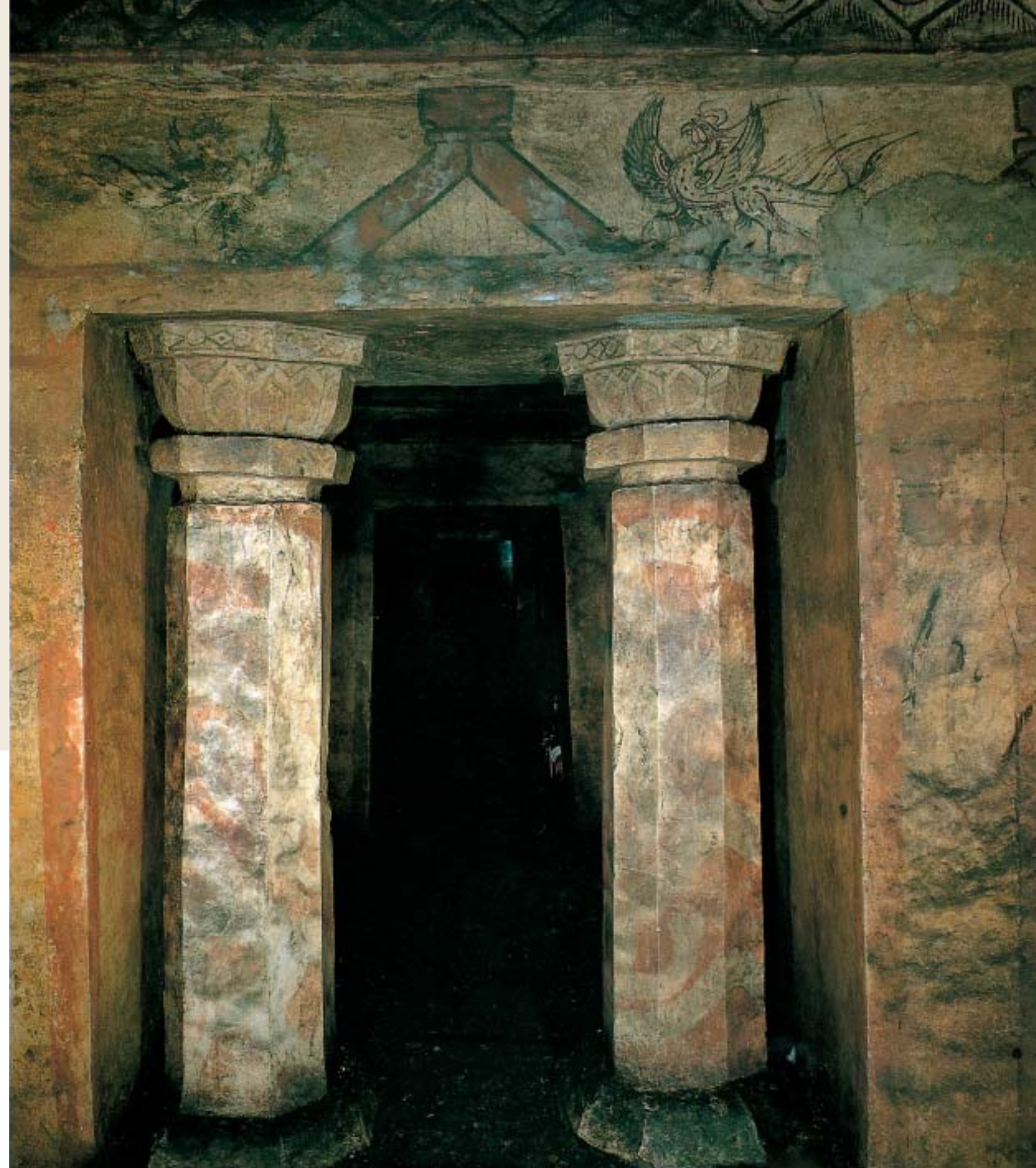
Ssangyeongchong



Elevation and plan



Drawing of the octagonal pillars seen from the main chamber



A pair of the octagonal pillars _ Entrance of the south wall of the main chamber

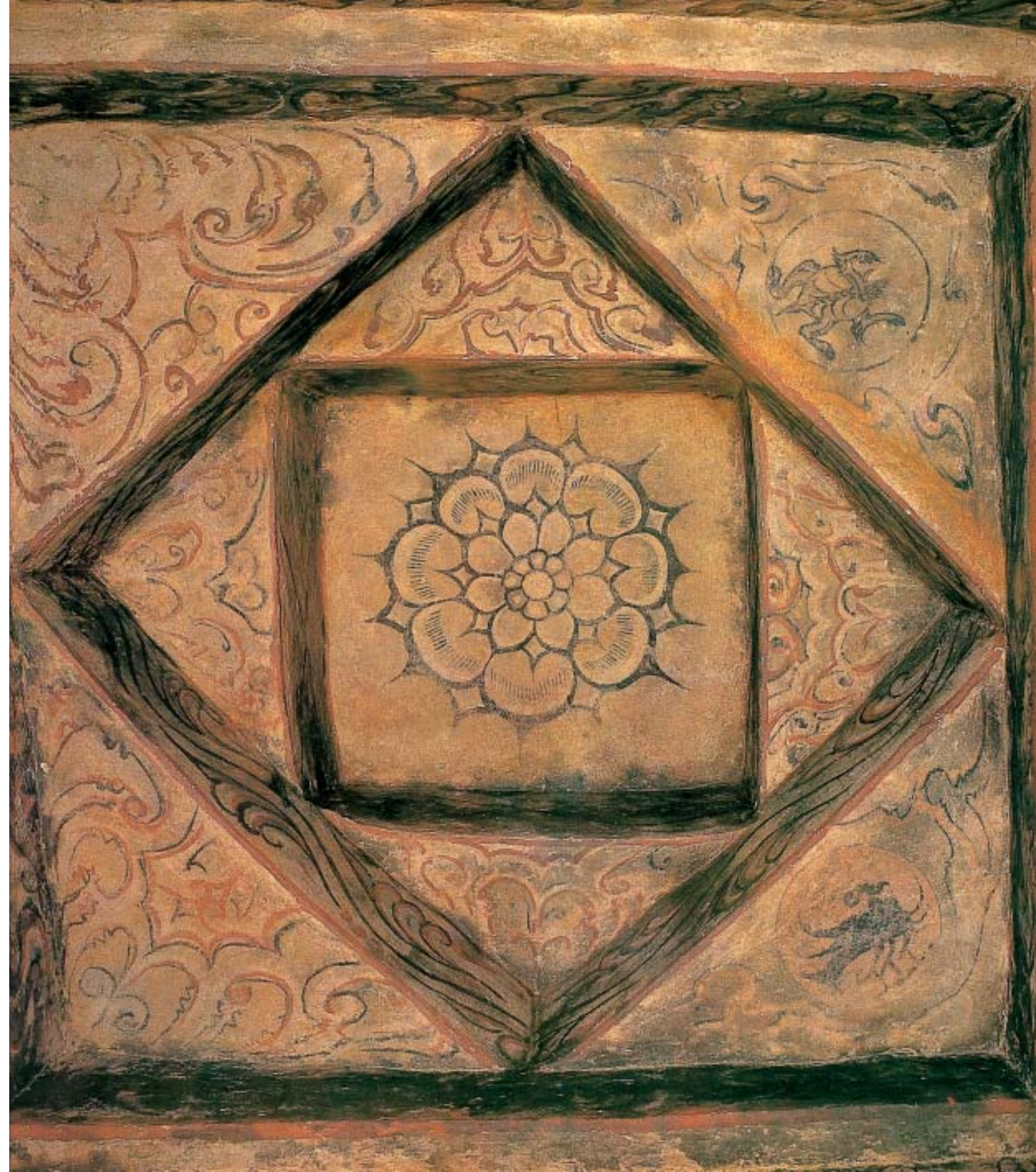
Two octagonal pillars standing at the entrance of the main chamber are not common features in the Koguryo tombs. A pair of red phoenixes is depicted on either side of the inverted-V bracket painted above the pillars. The arrangement of the Four Directional Deities of this tomb is different from that of the later period. The blue dragon and the white tiger are in the front chamber whereas the red pheonix and black warrior appear in the main chamber.



West ceiling of the main chamber



Ceiling of the antechamber



Lotus flower and heavenly world _ Ceiling of the main chamber

A fully bloomed lotus flower is depicted in the center of the lantern ceiling. The pointed ends of the lotus petals appear archaic and decorative, and rhythmic patterns of clouds and flames surrounding the flower give a sense of vitality and liveliness. A similar motif of lotus flower with decorative patterns is depicted on the ceiling of the antechamber of the same tomb, but here are added the sun symbol containing a mythical crow with three legs, and a moon disc with a toad inside.



Interior scene with the portrait of the deceased couple

_ North wall of the main chamber

On the north wall of the main chamber, there is a portrait of a couple, probably the deceased master and his wife, seated together under sumptuous curtains. The wooden structure of the building above the curtains frames the scenes of the indoor life of the tomb occupants. On either side of the couple is a pair of black warriors. This combination of the portrait of the tomb occupants and the black warriors is also found in Yaksuri Tomb. Generally speaking, the murals in this tomb look more advanced in terms of descriptive techniques compared with those of the previous era.



Flowers in a vase, detail on the upper left side of the north wall of the main chamber



Ceremonial procession

_ East wall of the main chamber

Though much damaged, one can see the murals better in the photograph taken in earlier days. On the left side of the procession, a maid holding a tall incense burner on her head, is leading the group. She is followed by a Buddhist monk in a heavy robe, another maid, and a lady, who is one of the tomb occupants, wearing a black coat and a pleated skirt. The painting shows an aspect the religious life of the Koguryo people and the costumes of Koguryo ladies.



Procession scene before the damage