

Iconic Objects: Ming Tomb

Royal Ontario Museum

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[Animated view of a spinning earth; podcast begins with a close-up of Toronto on a satellite map; rapid zoom out to show the entire spinning earth and zoom in on map of the city of Beijing; Ming Tomb and Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium are labelled on the map; animated red arrows]

*Voice of **Klaas Ruitenbeek**: This is Beijing. [Cut to view of busy multi-lane road in Beijing] I remember, when came the first time, [cut to a pedestrians walking down a crowded street] twenty-five years ago, [cut to view of Klaas standing on a bridge over a busy multi-lane road in Beijing] these were all fields—farmers' fields and between and on those fields, were tombs. The farmers just plowed around them. [Cut to split screen; on the right is a zooming shot of an archival still photograph of a boy standing in front of the Ming Tomb in the field; on the left a view of Klaas speaking from a bridge over a multi-lane street in Beijing] Most were simple farmers' tombs, [right frame cuts to panning view of an archival still photograph of a stone sculpture in a field] but there were also rich tombs with stone sculptures, of the type of which, [right frame cuts to a zooming view of an archival still photograph of the Ming Tomb site] we have an example in the Royal Ontario Museum—Zu Dashou's tomb.*

[Music cuts in and plays throughout montage; cut to view of rooftops in Beijing]

[Cut to view of city wall with pedestrians walking along the top]

[Music fades; cut to low-angle view of city wall from the exterior]

*[Cut to shot of a large gate-like structure in Beijing] **Klaas**: Zu Dashou was a famous general who defended the Ming Dynasty [cut to shot of people riding bicycles on a narrow street along the base of a stone wall] against the Manchus, and in 1656, [cut to a still archival photograph of a two figures standing by the Ming Tomb in a field; pans out to show the surrounding landscape] he died and built a beautiful tomb.*

[Zoom in to the two figures at the tomb]

Klaas: Now we have the chance [cut to view of a pedal-powered vehicle in a quiet Beijing street] to find out who was really buried in the tomb. [Cut to view of the landscape speeding by as seen from the interior of a car] It must be a member of the Zu family, [cut to view of Klaas in the back seat of a car] but is it really the famous general himself?

[Cut to view of Klaas emerging from the backseat of a green car] Now we have arrived at the site [Klaas shuts the door] and I'm really curious and quite excited.

[Cut to view of people milling around a cluster of small ramshackle buildings] It's strange you find cultural relics hidden in the strangest places.

[Cut to a view of a woman with a washing basin at an outdoor sink. A man outside the frame speaks in Chinese. Sub-titles read:

"Man: What do you want?"

The woman gestures with her hand; sub-titles read, "Woman: He is going to look at the stone tablet."

Cut to view of Klaas walking backwards toward a field as he speaks in Chinese, subtitles, "Klaas: We have some artifacts related to that tablet."

[Cut to view of Klaas walking away from the buildings, he gestures with his hand]

[Cut to view of a stone sculpture under a tree beside a pile of boxes and blankets, the camer

Klaas: See the turtle on the back? A beautifully carved stele in the shadow of that ancient tree.

[Music cuts in; cut to view of a group of people sitting under a grove of trees.]

[Cut to a view of a small truck moving along a narrow driveway as people walk beside it]

Klaas: [Cut to close-up on the head of the carved dragon] This one is really carved very beautifully. [Cut to close-up of the top of the stele] At the top it has intertwined dragons. [Cut to over the shoulder shot of Klaas as he winds his arms to demonstrate how the dragons are intertwined] Their backs are in a complicated knot. [Cut to view of Klaas as he approaches the stele and touches the dragons

carved in relief along the sides] Also there is dragons carved all along the sides. It's in two different scripts. *[Cut to close-up of Klaas hand as he touches the Manchu inscription]* One side in Manchu, *[cut to low angle view of Klaas' hand on the stele]* and the other side in Chinese. The contents is identical. *[Klaas reads the script in Chinese as he traces the script with his hand; the camera pans to show his face then pans back to the inscription]* That's essential, there is a name. Zu Yonglie *[Klaas points to each syllable as he reads it]* We know who he is. *[Camera pans out to show Klaas next to the stele]* He was the oldest son of Zu Dashou.

[Music; cut to close-up of the carved eyes of a sculpture]

[Cut to detail of the hands]

[Cut to detail of a dragon's head carved in relief]

[Music stops; cut to view of the Ming Tomb as seen through the stone gate installed in the Royal Ontario Museum] **Klaas:** Originally, the river was quite close to here. *[Cut to view of the river near the Ming Tomb site in Beijing]* It's very important to have water in the front *[cut to split screen; on the right is an archival still photograph of the Ming Tomb site; on the left, a view of Klaas standing in front of a tree]* and the mountain in the back. *[On the right, the camera zooms to show the Ming Tomb in situ, on the left, Klaas gestures with his arm]* Now mountains in the back is difficult in Beijing because the land is completely flat. So instead of a mountain, they built a wall.

[Cut to view of the stele under the tree, a pile of boxes and blankets at the base] **Klaas:** Maybe about twenty-five metres to the north of this stele, there was a stone gate *[cut to view of Klaas with piles of cloth and rubble in the background]* and behind that gate was a central mound, *[cut to view of people moving crates and rubble around]* the mound of Zu Yonglie *[cut to view of rubble and junk arranged in piles]* and to the left *[cut to Klaas]* and right of it were smaller tombs belonging to his sons.

[Cut to archival still photograph showing three figures under the stone gate as it stood in the field] **Klaas:** The arrangement of the tombs was identical to what we see on our photographs. *[Cut to archival still view of a man standing next to a large figural sculpture]* It was probably slightly more to the east or the west, *[cut to archival still photograph showing two men standing by the Ming Tomb in the field]* but it was within one hundred metres of this very spot.

[Cut to close-up of the top of the stele under the branches of the tree] **Klaas:** So we are here at the site of the ROM tomb *[cut to panning view of people milling around a pile of chairs and debris; camera pans to show Klaas]* for a first...discovery is really exciting.

[Cut to panning view of archival still photograph of a man standing beside a large figural sculpture in a field as music plays]