

The Ancient State of Puyō in Northeast Asia: Archaeology and Historical Memory.

By Mark E. Byington. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016. Pp. xv + 398. \$59.95/£47.95.

This long-awaited volume is set to revolutionize the field of Northeast Asian history and archaeology by providing a hard look at historical sources *for*, the inclusion of new archaeological data *on*, and a tempered view of the political stakeholders *in* the Manchurian basin past. Based on Byington's doctoral dissertation of 2003, this extended monograph attempts first, in Chapter 1, to contextualize the study of Puyō within scholarly traditions and the sociopolitical claims on the Manchurian basin, both ancient and modern. Puyō is hailed as the first state-level organization in Northeast Asia, estimated to be in existence by the late second century b.c. Puyō's capital region was slightly northeast of modern Changchun in Jilin province, along the lower Songhua River. The state was destroyed as an independent polity in 346 a.d. by the Murong 慕容 branch of the Xianbei 鮮卑 and became a tributary state to Koguryō until the Mohe 靺鞨 banished them from the central Jilin region in the fifth century a.d.

Byington is exceptionally diplomatic about Puyō's historical location in the current Jilin province of the People's Republic of China, the co-option of Puyō origins by the early Koguryō and Paekche states of the Korean peninsula, and the preponderance of scholarship accomplished by Japanese scholars resulting from the occupation of Manchuria. Although Puyō left no records of its own, Byington gives it a voice through the extensive archaeological information now available and asks us to see Puyō "as a unique and independent entity" (p. 3), not what it represents to others. The latter, however, is not neglected, as he analyses the historical sources dealing with Puyō, both Chinese and Korean, and explores Puyō's legacy among later peoples.

Chapter 2 outlines the historical sources available and provides the first millennium b.c. context for investigating the beginnings of Puyō archaeology. Byington clarifies a great deal of what the various ethnonyms in the records meant in the context of Northeast Asian peoples. In particular, he identifies two uses of the term Mo 貉: Hu-Mo 胡貉 applying to peoples west/south of Yan 燕 in Zhou-period texts, and the Hui-Mo 穢貉 to the east in Early Han texts. The latter (K. Ye-Maek) are traditionally taken to be the occupants of the lower Manchurian basin and the progenitors of the Koguryō peoples. Other entities dealt with were the Sushen 肅慎 / Yilou 挹婁, Chaoxian 朝鮮 / Chosŏn, and Jizi 箕子 / Kija; an important semi-conclusion of Byington concerning the latter is that the Shang dynasty minister Jizi was likely to have established himself north of Yan upon the fall of Shang in 1045 b.c. but with no relation to the later Chaoxian/Chosŏn polity that appears in the Chinese histories for the late first millennium b.c. on the northern Korean peninsula. Instead he proposes that Chaoxian in the fourth century b.c. was a name associated

with the Liaodong peninsula and northern Korean peninsula, though he declines to specify whether it referred to “a people, a state, or a toponym” (p. 42).

The chapter ends with a review of the history and archaeology of the Zhou state of Yan’s expansion into the southern Manchurian basin at the end of the fourth century b.c. Byington discusses the controversies over the dating and attribution of these remains to different periods and how they correlate with place names known from documentary evidence. His conclusions are indicated in Figure 2.7, which illustrates the position of Yan’s five commanderies from north of Beijing to Chifeng 赤峰, and eastwards to the Liaodong peninsula; the commanderies are bordered on the north by Yan’s long wall into modern Liaoning province as far east as Fuxin 阜新, and defensive towers wrap around modern Shenyang 瀋陽 and across the Yalu River. Walled sites are known south of the long wall—some were possibly commandery headquarters established by Yan but occupied through Qin, Han, and later. The Yan remains overlay cultural materials of a bronze culture; Yan was thus colonizing the territory of people with a metal-using culture related to the Upper Xiajiadian 夏家店上層 of the Northern Complex during the Zhou period. One of the more outstanding archaeological sites is a Yan walled town, Erlonghu 二龍湖, lying beyond the defensive tower line about 160 km northeast of Shenyang. This site, in the heart of the early bronze-users territory, is now thought to have been a “port of trade” (my words) with the bronze-using predecessors of the Puyǒ peoples, bringing sophisticated tools (particularly iron), knowledge of higher military and administrative organization, and exotic prestige goods to the area.

Prior to the Yan expansion, the area from north of Beijing across the southern Manchurian basin hosted a patchwork of bronze-using cultures through the first millennium b.c., discussed in Chapter 3. Some of these were important to Puyǒ development, others to later Koguryǒ development. The type-site, Xituanshan 西團山, for the bronze-using culture of the Puyǒ predecessors is located slightly southwest of modern Jilin city. Several hundred Xituanshan culture sites are known, and one map constructed in 1994 (Figure 3.3) shows they are distributed within about 100 km radius from Jilin city; others to the west are now considered by some as belonging to a separate Wanghua 望花 culture. The subsistence base of these cultures was hunting and fishing with some agriculture. Chapter 3 incorporates descriptions of five excavated sites along the Songhua River from Jilin city northwards—an area considered the “core region” of Xituanshan culture, which came into being in the eleventh century b.c. and was infiltrated by Yan and Xiongnu 匈奴 / Xianbei influences from the third century b.c.

Most Xituanshan culture sites around Jilin are on hilltops. The hillside Xituanshan site itself, dating ninth–fifth centuries b.c., consists of a cemetery and pit-houses with central stone-lined hearths. The burials are stone cists, some with accessory

chambers for burial goods. Interred with the deceased were stone tools, clay tools, pottery, and wild boar teeth ornaments as well as pig mandibles. Surprisingly, no bronzes were recovered here. The richest Xituanshan culture burial was a large hilltop cist burial at Saodagou 騷達溝 site of a fifty-seven-year-old man, buried with similar goods but also including forty-eight stone ornaments and several small bronzes: one axe, two knives, a whistling arrowhead and thirteen buttons. These suggest a higher status for this elder, but there was little social stratification in Xituanshan society. The Houshishan 猴石山 cemetery (fifth–third centuries b.c.) has yielded bronze spear-points, finial caps, and handled disks (mirrors?); these burials belong to the late Xituanshan phase and one sector of the cemetery appears to be slightly richer than the others. The Xingxingshao 星星哨 burials (tenth–fifth centuries b.c.) divide into earlier, richer stone chambers of stacked flagstones and later cist burials. The cemetery yielded a Liaoning-type bronze dagger, bronze spearhead, bracelets, and spangles. Their owners are thought to have had higher social status than others, and the dagger indicates trade with people in the Liaodong peninsula region.

The Xituanshan core region developed into the Puyō core, but this can only be monitored archaeologically. The end of the Xituanshan culture in the third century b.c. is marked by the influx of Yan material culture via the Erlonghu walled site, which continued operating into Western Han. The following post-Xituanshan culture (possibly better designated as a “horizon” as it includes local named cultures) is discussed in Chapter 4. This culture forms a transitional archaeological period during which the Puyō state emerged during Western Han, as estimated by Byington, though the state isn’t mentioned in Chinese documents until the mid-first century a.d. with the Eastern Han alliance. Three components of this post-Xituanshan culture are noted: the continuing indigenous Xituanshan pottery component, imports and influences from Yan and Han, and imports from the Xiongnu/Xianbei tribes on the Mongolian plateau/Western Manchuria. Through a combination of these, agricultural production was improved with iron tools, while husbandry expanded with the addition of goats, cows, horses, and dogs. Burials changed from stone cists to pit-graves with wood coffins; cemeteries were laid out in rows (possibly indicating lineages, though this possibility was not discussed by Byington), and richer graves were separated from lesser, reflecting an emerging status system. Iron armour and weaponry replaced bronze, though Han bronze mirrors, belt clasps, and coins plus prestige goods of gold, silver, bronze, jade from both Han and the Xiongnu/Xianbei were treasured.

Within the general post-Xituanshan culture, two local cultures are thought to be specific to Puyō development: the Paoziyan 泡子沿 culture in essentially the same core area as that of Xituanshan above, and the Liangquan 涼泉 culture which succeeded the Wanghua culture, named above, to the west. These archaeological cultures show the most rapid and progressive developmental sequences, but they cannot

be directly equated with the territory of a Puyō “state” or with the distribution of Puyō “people.” Only the Paoziyan culture will be summarized below.

Paoziyan culture existed from the third century b.c. (in the post-Xituanshan horizon) through and perhaps beyond Eastern Han. Excavations of five sites are discussed in Chapter 4, the most important being two cemeteries, at Laoheshen 老河深 and Mao’ershan 帽兒山. Most of these sites were excavated in the late 1970s to early 1980s; among them are some chronological differences that clearly show the emergence of an elite class buried with exotic goods. However, with such a paucity of material spanning five centuries or so, the exact timing and specific transformations that took place are not yet known. Development was obviously spurred by increased agricultural output and increased ties to the western mounted societies providing horses, weapons (abacus-bead hilted iron swords), and armour (the Mongolian helmet).

Mao’ershan is well-known for the striking gilt-bronze face masks found nearby in the 1930s (Plates 30, 31). Attempts have been made to identify Mao’ershan as a Puyō elite cemetery and with a mention in the Chinese chronicles as the “hill south of the capital” (國南山) associated with funerary activities (p. 119). The location of the Puyō capital has been contested by scholars, but a consensus has been reached that probably it was the walled site of Dongtuanshan 東團山 on the eastern bank of the Songhua River in Jilin city (Figure 6.1; Dongtuanshan, 252 m high, is located at 43.851976, 126.597631). Whereas Byington summarized archaeological report information above with respect to the various cultures and excavations, his analysis of walled sites in Chapter 6 is original research that contributes greatly to the understanding of the population distribution and territorial extent of Puyō. He is the first to collate data on two kinds of walled sites—urban centres and small hilltop fortifications, Dongtuanshan belonging to the former—and specifically postulate these were Puyō remains.

Byington groups the Dongtuanshan walled site and its surrounding defensive “networks” into the Dongtuanshan Complex. The Dongtuanshan itself is encircled by three concentric walls, with a fourth “hill skirting wall” encircling it to the east; then the fifth longer Nanchengzi 南城子 wall, extending the enclosure farther to the east (Figure 6.1). This Nanchengzi extension is accessed by north and south gates and contains a raised terrace within. Beyond the Nanchengzi wall to the east existed housing leading up to the Mao’ershan cemetery occupying a broad area across several low hills. Artefacts indicate that Dongtuanshan was originally occupied during the Xituanshan culture, then continued through post-Xituanshan and Puyō, Koguryō, and Parhae, Liao, and Qing. Architectural dates are known only for the construction of Nanchengzi wall: Western Han and Wei/Jin periods. Byington surmises that fortresses on nearby Mt Longtan 龍潭山 and Sandao Ridge 三道壕 were also part of the Puyō

defensive network, though there is little evidence other than strategic geographical placement. Nevertheless, the concentration of elite Paoziyan cultural remains of Dongtuanshan identifies it as a core area, and its circular shape corresponds to Chinese historical descriptions.

Fortresses farther afield, down to the latitude of modern Shenyang, are interpreted to mark the maximum extent of Puyō territory in the first century a.d. (Figure 6.11). Within this territory are many walled sites, both on mountains and on plains, that have been geographically identified but not precisely dated. Many are ascribed to the Liao–Jin periods but have ceramic remains in them from the Xituanshan culture onwards. Byington undertakes detailed analyses of each grouping of such walled sites in different river basins surrounding the Paoziyan core area to the north and south/southwest, making the case that these areas began to be fortified in the Xituanshan period and served the emerging Puyō state during post-Xituanshan times. The Shanghewan 上河灣 site cluster in the north sits just south of the Qing dynasty Willow Palisade and is intervisible with the Laoheshen cemetery to the northeast on the east bank of the Songhua River. These sites are taken to mark the northern territorial boundary of Puyō. To the east of Jilin along the Jiao River 蛟河 are multiple Xituanshan cemeteries, settlements, walled hilltop sites, and walled plains sites; the walled sites are hypothesized by Byington to have been “associated with the emergence of the Puyō state” (p. 211). The southern border is marked by the Qingyuan 清原 walled sites, deriving from the Liangquan culture and probably constructed in response to the string of Han defense towers running west to east along the Suzi River 蘇子河. In the southwest, at least three walled sites were established in response to the siting of the Erlonghu facility of Yan–Han at *c.* 18 km distance.

It is a constant difficulty of proto-historic archaeology to correlate material remains with historic records. The archaeology can be discussed in terms of cultural names, but ethnonyms and polity names are much harder to assign to material culture, as with the walled sites discussed above. A further difficulty is that in a stratified social system as increasingly typified Puyō, rural and peripheral settlements may continue earlier material styles (Xituanshan), while central urbanites add exotic elements that define more regional interactivity (post-Xituanshan). Moreover, Puyō territory as discussed above seems to have included two regional material cultures: Paoziyan in the core area and Liangquan in the south.

The name Puyō occurs in a solid historical context first in the Western Han records, *Shiji* 史記, stating that the Yan commanderies overlook Wuhuan 烏桓 and Puyō to the north—a situation dating probably to between 118 and 108 b.c. (p. 141), the latter date being when Han established its four commanderies in the southern Manchurian basin and northern Korean peninsula (Xuantu 玄菟 commandery being the more important for Puyō, and Liaodong 遼東 commandery for Koguryō relations).

The *Shiji* was compiled around 85 b.c., so the name of Puyō was extant by that time; but there is no further record indicating what the area was called during Yan's time of expansion. Puyō's development was inextricably linked to the Yan/Han intrusions from the southwest and the Xiongnu/Xianbei machinations to the west. Byington assigns the emergence of a "centralized state-level kingdom" of Puyō to the time period of Western Han (p. 142).

The historical context of Han dynasty policies and interactions with the north-eastern frontier peoples is dissected in Chapter 5, though without the benefit of maps (what we really need is a map *anime* of all the convoluted shifts in alliances and commandery borders). Particularly disruptive were Wang Mang's 王莽 interventions, which gave rise to the Koguryō state in the first century a.d. Great enmity developed between Puyō and Koguryō, located in the eastern Manchurian massif and northern Korean peninsula, despite the fact that the latter claimed its foundation myths and genetic heritage from Puyō. Puyō became an ally of Han with the establishment of tributary relations in 49 a.d.—the same year as the dissolution of the Xiongnu confederation. The Han–Puyō alliance aimed to keep apart the Koguryō (on Puyō's east) and emerging Xianbei (on their west) (p. 149).¹ The treaty lasted until 166 when the Puyō joined with the Koguryō, Xianbei, Wuhuan, and Southern Xiongnu to attack Han's northern commanderies. In 174, relations between Puyō and Han were resumed; but on the decline of Han power, Puyō became a tributary of the Liaodong commandery now run by the warlord Gongsun Du 公孫度, who affirmed relations with Puyō through a marriage alliance. The Wei dynasty forces ousted the Gongsun family from Liaodong in 238, but Koguryō launched an attack on Wei in 242, with Wei retaliation in 244.

The most detailed record of Puyō was most likely written in the *Weilüe* 魏略 and incorporated into the later *Sanguozhi* 三國志 of mid-third century date (p. 185, n. 12). Byington analyses this historical account with reference to archaeological data in Chapter 6, in terms of Puyō geography, natural resources, social organization, customs and laws, ritual practices, character, and values. The information is thought to have been garnered by Wei troops when they passed through Puyō territory after the routing of Koguryō from their capital in 245 a.d. The period in the succeeding century is described by Byington as a "process of decline and disintegration" (p.159) due to a rapid decay of kingly authority, though tribute missions were sent to the new Jin dynasty. The Murong branch of the Xianbei had established themselves as

¹ The Xianbei played a crucial role in Puyō's demise, but they are not described in enough detail in the book to understand the background of the Murong Xianbei branch. I recommend Charles Holcombe's work to fill the gap. See Holcombe, "The Xianbei in Chinese History," *Early Medieval China* 19 (2013), pp. 1–38.

clients of the Jin, with a base located to the west of Erlonghu on the western border of Puyō territory. Puyō suffered from a debilitating attack by the Murong Xianbei in 285 with “over ten thousand [Puyō] people” driven out (p. 161). In an interesting archaeological aside, a cemetery in western Liaoning, at Lamadong 喇嘛洞 in the heartland of the Murong Xianbei territory, is discussed in Chapter 4 as belonging to resettled Puyō. The excavation report suggests these were soldiers and their wives, and Byington suspects they were taken there after the 285 defeat to instruct on iron technology (p. 134).

Puyō was reconstituted with the help of Jin after the Xianbei attack, allowing it to survive until sacked in the early 340s. Strangely, the historical records attribute this attack to a group named Paekche; Byington unravels the details that might have caused the Koguryō to be referred to by this name (pp. 165–66). After the Murong sacked the Puyō capital for the final time in 346 a.d., the territory was indeed taken over by Koguryō. Byington speculates that the Murong only wanted to capture the Puyō king and 50,000 of his people for their own state and were uninterested in administering conquered territory.

In nearly 400 pages of text, there is a veritable gold mine of information here—both archaeological and historical—about Puyō and its context of emergence, demise, and legacy; this review has not done justice to the detailed analyses and interpretations offered. One must read the whole book! But the reader will find it to be idiosyncratically organized; part of this is due to the difficulty of working back and forth between historical and archaeological records (e.g. the 285 Murong Xianbei attack in Chapter 5 but Lamadong cemetery in Chapter 4). But the separation of data (cemeteries in Chapter 4, walled sites in Chapter 6) is puzzling, since Chapter 6 was supposed to focus on comparing historical and archaeological data (the comparison occupied only 1.5 pages as opposed to pure history/mythology and pure archaeology). It would have been easier to digest the material if cemeteries and walled sites had been presented together as above, and other things discussed in clearer chronological order rather than jumping around.

Ultimately, this is a book for specialists who already have a broad knowledge of Chinese and Northeast Asian history—who already know the problems and will find Byington’s revelations refreshing, educational, and occasionally provocative. It forms the basis for more focused archaeological research, and with the eventual precision dating of the archaeological materials, we will have the means to understand more fully the emergence of the Puyō state which has been so expertly contextualized here.

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