A Virtual City: The “Record of the Lands of Yue” and the Founding of Shaoxing

Olivia Milburn (London)

Introduction

The city of Shaoxing 紹興, in what is now northern Zhejiang province, is one of China’s oldest recorded planned cities.1 At the time of its foundation in 490 BCE, the city was intended to function as the capital city of the independent and culturally distinct kingdom of Yue 越, at that time on the southern edge of the Chinese world. It was laid out by order of King Goujian 越王勾踐 (r. 496–465 BCE), the most famous monarch of that kingdom, who played a crucial role in the political life at the very end of the Spring and Autumn period (771–475 BCE). Shaoxing was founded at a time when a great construction boom was taking place in the Jiangnan 江南 region (south of the Yangtze River), and this was one of many cities and walled settlements built at this time.

The earliest known account of the landscape of the city of Shaoxing and its surrounding landscape is found in the “Jidi zhuan” 記地傳 or “Record of the Lands [of Yue]” chapter of the Yuejue shu 越絶書 (Histories of the Kingdom of Yue), a text compiled during the Eastern Han dynasty.2 This book is a collection of short essays, mainly concerned with the wars that defined political life at the end of the Spring and Autumn period: the struggle between the southern kingdoms of Chu 楚, Wu 吳 and Yue. The book concentrates particularly on the towering figure of King Goujian of Yue, who led his people first into a crushing defeat and then to a stunning victory against the kingdom of Wu, which ultimately culminated in complete conquest in the year 473 BCE. However, rather than focussing on political history, the “Record of the Lands of Yue” emphasises the impact King Goujian had on the landscape of this region: virtually every building mentioned is said to have been erected either for his personal use or as part of the war effort he initiated to defeat the kingdom of Wu. The authors repeatedly link landscape features of this part of northern Zhejiang province to events from the life of the greatest king of Yue. This paper contains the first translation into English of the “Record of the Lands of Yue.”

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1 The name of the city of Shaoxing commemorates a turn in the fortunes of the Southern Song dynasty. In 1126, the capital of the Northern Song dynasty Bianliang 洛梁 (now known as Kaifeng 開封) fell to the Jurchen Jin dynasty. The new emperor, Song Gaozong 宋高宗 (r. 1127–1162), moved south to evade capture, and established his capital at a series of southern cities, including Lin’an 麓安 (now known as Hangzhou 杭州), Pingjiang 平江 (modern Suzhou 蘇州) and Yuezhou 越州 (Shaoxing). At this last city, he declared the beginning of a new reign era, Shaoxing (1131–1162), to symbolize a new start for the Southern Song regime. This was successful, and the city authorities petitioned the emperor that in future the city might be known as Shaoxing, the designation that has been used to the present day. See Peng Yun (2004), 396.

In the title to this paper, Shaoxing is referred to as a virtual city. There are two reasons for this. Although the authors of this text went to considerable lengths to connect landscape features and physical structures in this region of China with the important historical figure of King Goujian of Yue, these attributions (in the absence of further evidence) must remain largely speculative. Numerous geographical features and ancient buildings south of the Yangtze River have been linked to famous figures from the conflict between Wu, Yue and Chu, and sometimes these attributions have been conclusively disproved.3 There is also another factor involved in making this ancient account a description of a virtual or imaginary city. In 1223, during the Southern Song dynasty, the whole city was demolished and completely reconfigured under the direction of the Prefect Wang Gang 汪綱. The original city with its two connected walled enclosures was completely razed and a new city built on almost the same site (with significant expansions both to north and south), in an irregular rectangle, divided into five wards for ease of administration. The Song dynasty remodelling continued to define the shape of the city centre until these walls were pulled down during the Republican era.4 Although references were frequently made after this remodelling to landscape features that had survived the work, the old city was gone. The “Record of the Lands of Yue” is therefore of great importance, as it is the earliest surviving account of the original layout of this ancient city.

Much of the information contained within the “Record of the Lands of Yue” is unique. The paucity of sources about the history of the kingdom of Yue is notorious, and even less is known about the architectural and design history of King Goujian’s capital.5 There are fundamental problems with understanding any Yue text, in that many aspects of the cultural and linguistic background are unknown, and completely different from those recorded in other ancient Chinese texts. This however merely enhances the importance of the Yuejue shu as a source for understanding the culture of this major pre-unification kingdom, and of the “Record of the Lands of Yue” as a description of its capital.

The Yue People in Ancient China

It was only towards the end of the Spring and Autumn period that the people of the Zhou confederacy began to become aware of the Yue peoples in the south. The Yue peoples, related culturally and linguistically but not politically (and indeed often at war with each other) stretched along the coast from what is now southern Jiangsu province down the coast to northern Vietnam. Although there are some references in ancient texts to contact between the early Zhou kings and a people called the Yuyue 於越, any link between this ancient people and the Yue kingdom of Zhejiang some five centuries later remains highly controversial.6

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3 For example, there is a waterway known as the Wu canal which runs from the Yangtze in Anhui province into Lake Tai in Jiangsu province, which was traditionally said to have been dug by order of the Wu minister Wu Zixu 伍子胥 to facilitate his attack on the capital of Chu in 506 BCE. However, modern scholars have demonstrated that this is in fact not a canal at all but a natural river. See Wei Songshan (1982), 56.

4 See Zhang Yu'an (2001), 8–9.

5 See Su Tie (1990), 374.

6 According to Zhushu jinian B:3a, the Yuyue 於越 presented tribute to King Cheng of Zhou 周成王 in 1040 BCE. For a critical account of the interpretation that this is an indication of early links between the Yue and the Zhou, see Huang Weicheng (1985), 58.
Every reference in ancient Chinese texts to the people of the south, particularly to the
kingdom of Yue, spoke of their unusual appearance and strange customs. The people of Yue
were regarded as alien by the inhabitants of the Central States since they wore their hair cut
short and they were tattooed. In addition to that they were a riverine and coastal people,
travelling by boat rather than by horse and cart. They were highly bellicose, with a reputation
for great bravery. This was enhanced by the widespread use in Yue culture of swords, gener-
ally admitted to be of unparalleled quality. To the people of the Central States (whose records
provide virtually everything that is known of the Yue people prior to the archaeological dis-
coversies of the last half century), the Yue were exotic and dangerous.

The recorded history of the kingdom of Yue runs from some two centuries, beginning
with an attack by Yue on Wu in 537 BCE and ending with the conquest of Yue by the king-
dom of Chu in around 333 BCE. Of this two hundred and four year history, the reign of one
monarch, King Goujian of Yue, is recorded in by far the greatest detail. The date of his birth is
not known, but he came to the throne in 496 BCE on the death of his father King Yunchang
越王允常, the first historically recorded monarch of the kingdom of Yue. While still in
mourning for his father, Yue was attacked by their powerful neighbour to the north, the king-
dom of Wu, led by their monarch King Helü of Wu 吳王闔閭 (r. 514–496 BCE). Meeting in
battle at Zuili 檇李 (modern day Jiaxing 嘉興 in Zhejiang province), Yue comprehensively
defeated the forces of Wu, and King Helü, wounded in the foot, died of his injuries during the
retreat. However some three years later, King Helü’s son and heir, King Fuchai of Wu 吴王夫
差 (r. 495–473 BCE) attacked the Yue army and defeated it. His kingdom conquered, King
Goujian retreated to the fortress at Kuaijishan 會稽山. From there he negotiated his surrender
to the victorious forces of Wu.9

Having been forced to a humiliating surrender, King Goujian went as a hostage to Wu.
According to some ancient accounts he even took part in the triumphal procession through
the Wu capital.10 On his return to Yue, King Goujian began the long process of reconstructing
his kingdom and preparing to take revenge on Wu. During this time he built up a formidable
reputation for austerity, as well as working hard to regain the trust of his people. It was in the
seventh year of his reign, possibly to celebrate his return from exile in Wu that he laid out a
new capital city as described in the Yuejue shu 越絕書.11 His campaign of vengeance ended in 473 BCE
with the conquest of Wu and the suicide of its last ruler, King Fuchai. After this, King Goujian
went on to establish undisputed dominance in the south. He was recognised as a hegemon by
the Zhou king, and moved his capital to Langye 琅琊, in what is now Shandong province.12

7 For example, Mò 12.453 [48: "Gongmeng” 公孟] describes King Goujian of Yue as having “cut hair
and a tattooed body.”
8 See Zhòng Shàoyì (1998), 46. There are many references in ancient Chinese texts to the quality of Yue
swords; see for example Zhanɡwò ěr 20.1002 ["Zhào cè” 趙策 3.1]; see also Zhūnzǐ 司馬子
9 See Zuozhuan, 1605–1606 ["Aīgōng” 哀公 1.2].
10 See Hán Fèizì 7.403 [21: “Yǔlào” 吳老].
11 The theory that his new capital was built to celebrate his release is elaborated in Chén Qiàoyì (1999), 355.
12 The title of hegemon (bà 霸) was an extraordinary title granted to feudal lords who had performed great
services to the Zhou kings. The inclusion of King Goujian of Yue on the list of the hegemon of the
Spring and Autumn period is striking, since his state was not part of the Zhou confederacy. The deci-
sion by the Zhou king to recognise King Goujian of Yue as a hegemon is described in Shiji 41.1746.

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No account of the conflict between Wu and Yue would be complete without reference being made to the great ministers who advised their monarchs. On the Wu side there was Prime Minister Bo Pi 伯嚭 (?–473 BCE), who was said to have taken bribes from the Yue monarch, and Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (?–484 BCE), who argued implacably for the conquest of Yue and who was in the end forced to commit suicide by King Fuchai. On the Yue side, the most important of King Goujian’s advisors were the diplomat Wen Zhong 文種 (usually known by his title of Grandee Zhong) and the strategist Fan Li 范蠡 (fl. 496–473 BCE). As with so many of the major figures in the conflict between Wu and Yue, Grandee Zhong and Fan Li were both said to have come from Chu.13 According to the “Record of the Lands of Yue” both of these men left their mark on the landscape of the kingdom.

The “Record of the Lands of Yue”

The “Record of the Lands of Yue” is the eighth juan 卷 (fascicle) of the Yuejue shu 越絕書. The Yuejue shu is frequently described as the first gazetteer ever to have been written in China, on the basis of two fascicles, the “Ji Wudi zhuan” 記吳地傳 or “Record of the Lands of Wu” and the “Record of the Lands of Yue.”14 The other juan in Yuejue shu cover a wide variety of subjects, from economic thought in the “Ji Ni neizhuan” 計倪內傳 (Inner Traditions of the Young Master of Accountancy) to local legends in the “Ji baojian” 記寶劍 (Record of Precious Swords). The presence of this extraneous material in the Yuejue shu should not be perceived as invalidating the description of these two chapters, the “Record of the Lands of Yue” and “Record of the Lands of Wu,” as the earliest surviving gazetteers, since the original composition of this material predates the compilation of the text into its present form at the end of the Eastern Han dynasty. Indeed, from the Sui dynasty onwards, there are numerous references to the “Records of the Lands of Yue” under the title of Yuedi zhuan 越地傳 (Traditions of the Lands of Yue), which may be evidence of independent transmission of this text.15

Between them, these two chapters contain considerable information about the architectural and cultural history of the two kingdoms of Wu and Yue. This has proved a great boon for historians and archaeologists, attempting to understand excavation sites from these undocumented kingdoms. However, there are important differences between the two chapters. The “Record of the Lands of Wu” concentrates largely on the laying-out of the capital, modern-day Suzhou, a city designed to rival in grandeur and size anything to be found in the Central States, which was built some twenty years before the founding of Shaoxing.16 Considerable detail is given, including descriptions of many structures which stood within the walls of the city, including palaces, gates, the market, roads and canals. The “Record of the Lands of Yue,” on the other hand, describes the kingdom of Yue as a whole, with the description of the architecture of the capital forming a comparatively minor element. However, the construction of

13 See Wang Suijin (2005), 12.
14 See Huang Wei (1983), 118. The role of these two chapters in establishing the reputation of the Yuejue shu as the first gazetteer is also considered in Hargett (1996), 406.
15 See Li Bujia (2003), 37–38. See also Qian Peiming (1957), 23.
King Goujian’s capital should probably be viewed as at least in part an effort to rival this earlier Wu planned city.

The “Record of the Lands of Wu” and the “Record of the Lands of Yue” are unique in ancient Chinese literature on urban history. There are earlier texts, such as the “Luogao” 諸誥 (Announcement at Luo) in the Shujing 舜經 (Book of Documents) and the song “Wenwang you sheng” 文王有聲 (Famous is King Wen) in the Shijing 詩經 (Book of Odes), which focus on the important ceremonies to be carried out when a new city was laid out.17 These very ancient accounts provide but little information on what was built, the ritual significance of the occasion was predominant. The earliest surviving text on Chinese town planning, the “Kaogong ji” 考工記 (Record of Crafts), describes the principles for laying out a city.18 This text sets out the proportions for a harmonious city, listing the key religious and administrative buildings to be contained within its walls. While this text was no doubt important for establishing the ideal way to lay out a proper Chinese city, and proved enormously influential in later urban design, it was apparently not related in any way to the urban planning described in the “Record of the Lands of Yue.”19 This text describes an actual urban landscape rather than an ideal one, and the lop-sided design of the Yue capital bears no relation to the symmetrical ideal city described in the “Kaogong ji”. It is not surprising that this should be the case, given that at the time Yue stood outside the Zhou sphere of influence.

While the “Record of the Lands of Yue” shows little influence from earlier texts on Chinese city design and urban planning, it is also not closely related to contemporary Han dynasty literature on historical geography. There are a number of other surviving Han dynasty geographical texts, such as the “Heju shu” 河渠書 (Treatise on Waterways) in the Shiji 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), “Dili zhí” 地理志 (Treatise on Geography) from the Hanshu 漢書 (History of the Han Dynasty), and “Junguo zhí” 郡國志 (Treatise on Commanderies and Kingdoms) in the Houhan shu 後漢書 (History of the Later Han Dynasty), but texts of this kind are primarily concerned with contemporary problems of bureaucratic administration and differ markedly from the two chapters of the Yuejue shu in both content and structure.20 Although mention is occasionally made of the historical significance of a particular site, this is not the primary purpose of the geographical treatises found in the dynastic histories. The “Record of the Lands of Yue” is a text in which the history of the place is related to its architecture and design. The factors shaping the development of this city were not religious or symbolic, but practical: the city wall was left incomplete because Wu wished to neutralise the threat of resistance, Yue developed outlying regions of the kingdom because they hoped to conceal the work from Wu.

17 “Luogao”, see Shangshu 33 (15.221–229); “Wenwang you sheng”, see Manshu 244 (Vol. 2, 116–119). The Shijing also contains another song, the “Mian” 緬 (Entwining), which provides a vivid description of the process of building the Western Zhou capital; see Manshi 237 (Vol. 2, 87–94). These ancient texts are considered in detail in Steinhardt (1990), 29–33.
18 “Kaogong ji”, “Jiangren” 匠人, see Zhouli 6 (41.641–644). This text and its influence on urban planning in China has been the subject of numerous studies, including Wu (1985) and He Yeju (1985).
19 While admitting the significance of the “Kaogong ji” text is a manual for city design, there were a number of other models for urban planning; see Steinhardt (1986) and Xiong (1993).
The “Record of the Lands of Yue” is composed from at least two different ancient source texts. These texts can be distinguished in both content and grammar. The core text describes the geography and landscape of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period kingdom of Yue. Almost every entry in this section of the text begins with a title, the name of a place or building. In some cases this clause is grammatically related to the next sentence, but in other cases it is simply functioning as a title. In each case the clause ends with the suffix -zhe. Therefore in translation the title to each section is given in bold, as can be seen in the following example:

若耶大冢者，句踐所徙葬先君夫鐔冢也，去縣二十五里。
The Great Tomb at Ruoye was the tomb where Goujian reburied our former ruler Futan. It is located twenty-five li from town.

This entry is typical in that the text following the title gives information about the landscape feature or building, relating it to important events in the history of the kingdom of Yue, and describing dimensions and distance from the capital. The focus of this section of the text is overwhelmingly on the history and culture of Yue during the reign of its greatest monarch, King Goujian.

From internal evidence, this core text must have been written or at least updated during the Eastern Han dynasty, as there is a reference to the destruction of a city wall built by Fan Li during the reign of Wang Mang (r. 9–24 CE). The related core text of the “Record of the Lands of Wu” was apparently written during the Western Han dynasty, since there is a reference to Liu Pi, King of Wu (r. 195–154 BCE). The compilation of the Yujue shu into its present form is generally dated to the Eastern Han dynasty, some time after 52 CE, since that is the most recent date in the whole book. There is also a terminus ante quem, for this chapter in particular must have been compiled before 219 CE, for Shaoxing is referred to as Shanyin, an appellation changed at the end of the Han dynasty.

The material not from this core text, mainly found at the beginning and end of the chapter, has a very different focus. This extraneous material can be divided into three main groups, though it is not clear if that also reflects three different source texts. One group of material is concerned with linking the ruling house of the kingdom of Yue with the legendary figure of Yu, the tamer of the floods and founder of the mythical Xia dynasty. By stressing the link between Yu and the ruling house of Yue, this southern kingdom is integrated into the Chinese world-view. This preoccupation is also found in other Han dynasty texts dealing with the history of the kingdom of Yue such as the Shiji. The second type of material focuses on the figure of King Goujian of Yue. This material both serves to minimise his culpability at the appalling defeat

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21 This grammatical construction is also seen in the “Record of the Lands of Wu” chapter, suggesting that these two texts were closely related before they were compiled into the same book.
22 Yujue shu 8.61 [10: “Jidi zhuan”记地传].
23 See Yujue shu 2.18 [3: “Ji Wudi zhuan”].
24 See Axel Schussler and Michael Loewe, “Yue jüeh shu,” 491.
25 The most recent comprehensive study of the dating of various sections of the Yujue shu argues that the “Record of the Lands of Yue” was mainly composed in the late Qin and early Western Han dynasties, but that a certain amount of interpolation and revision occurred at the very end of the Eastern Han dynasty; see Zhou Shengchun (1992), 128–129.
26 See Shiji, 41.1739. Han dynasty attempts to integrate the Yue into the Chinese world are discussed in Jiang Bingjian (et al., 1988), 18–32.
suffered by Yue in 494 BCE, when the kingdom was virtually wiped out by Wu, and to stress his importance as a great king, whose authority was recognised by his peers and transmitted to his descendents. The third group of material is concerned with the history of Yue immediately after the unification of China, and in particular with the progress made to the region by the First Emperor of Qin in 210 BCE. It is likely that this material dates to the beginning of the Western Han dynasty. The difference in structure between the core text and this other material can be appreciated by comparing the example cited above with this piece, concerning the disastrous appointment of the general Shi Mai by King Goujian of Yue, which begins:

When Goujian fought the kingdom of Wu in battle on the Zhe river, Shi Mai was made a general. Both young and old came forward and remonstrated: “Shi Mai is a man who has both personal enemies and is involved in family vendettas. He is also greedy and small minded, and does not plan ahead. Even if your majesty employs him the country will certainly not follow him.” The king did not listen and made the appointment.

In this paper I have translated as many of the historical place names as possible. This was done to allow non-specialist readers to gain an insight into the information conveyed by these place names. It seemed important to include such a translation, since in many cases the details that follow about the uses of a particular site or its historical significance are linked to the name that is given. However it should be noted that the people of Yue, at the time of King Goujian, did not speak Chinese, and there are numerous problems associated with the transliteration of Yue names and place-names into Chinese. It is therefore quite possible that terms which I have translated in fact represent the transliteration of the Yue name, but the characters used for this purpose appear to have a significant meaning. In a number of cases, such as Ruoye river and Guzhong Mountain, I am sure that the characters are used in transliteration of a Yue name, and it has proved impossible to provide a translation. Mention is also frequently made in the “Record of the Lands of Yue” to dimensions and distances. Given that the core text would seem to date from the Eastern Han dynasty, I have used those measurements as standard when converting to Western measures.

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27 According to Huainanzi 18.1289 ["Renjian xun" 人間訓], the First Emperor of China was deeply interested in the luxury products arriving from the Yue region, including rhinoceros horn, elephant ivory, and pearls.

28 Yuejie shu 8.60 [10: “Jidi zhuan”].

29 See Shuoyuan 11.278 [“Shanshuo” 善說].

30 See Zhou Zhenhe (et al., 1982), 61–63.

31 The conversion of measurements was made using Wu Chengluo (1957).
Translation

Long ago, Wuyu, the former lord of Yue who was a descendant of Yu, was separately enfeoffed in Yue, in order that he might guard Yu's tomb. [Yu] had enquired into the Way of heaven and earth, and the guiding principles of the myriad things, he never lost sight of the fundamentals. Shennong (the Divine Husbandman) tasted the hundred herbs, and investigated whether the waters and the earth were sweet or bitter. Huangdi created clothing and Hou Ji (God of Millet) developed agriculture and created tools, so that people had what they needed for farming. When applying compost and manure on their mulberry trees and hemp plants, and sowing the seeds of the five grains, they had to use their hands and feet. The coastal people of Dayue (the Shaoxing region) are unique in their development of "bird fields." Distinctions were maintained between small and large fields, and there were rules about planting in rotation. Without anyone directing them, people went to develop the area. What is the reason for this? It is said: When Yu began his labours, he felt great pity for the common people and rescued them from the flood. When he arrived in Dayue, he climbed Maoshan (Reed Mountain) and held a great meeting there, at which he gave noble titles to those who had been virtuous, and enfeoffed those who had merit. Then he changed the name of Maoshan to Kuaiji (Meeting [Mountain]). When Yu became king he went on a royal progress through Dayue, during which he met with elders, collected poetry and documents, checked steelyards and scales, and standardised the dou and the hu measures. Then he became ill and died, and was buried at Kuaiji. The outer coffin was made of woven reeds and the inner coffin of paulownia wood, and they excavated a pit seven chi (1.66 m) deep. There were no leaks in the tomb vault above, nor was there any chance for water to seep in from below. The altar of pounded earth was three chi (71 cm) high, and there were three steps leading up to it, and measuring from north to south it covered a mu of ground. However [Yu] thought that people who lived there were happy, while those who built the tomb suffered. Since he did not have a way to repay the people for their hard work, he taught the people to use bird fields. Thus his one failure was cancelled out by this success. In the time of Yu, Shun died in

32 This translation of the “Record of the Lands of Yue” is based on Yue Zumou's edition of Yuejue shu 8.57–68 [10: “Jidi zhuan”]. The main commentary used was that by Yu Jidong in Yuejue shu quanyi, 161–197.

33 Wuyu 無餘 was said to have founded the first city in the region, known as Yuecheng 越城; for a discussion of early urbanisation in the region see Dong Chuping (1988), 131.

34 This refers to a legend that in Yue the birds dropped seeds from their beaks in spring to plant the fields, and later returned to weed the plots; see Zhang Yu'an, 13. In the Lunheng (Discourses Weighed), Wang Chong (27 – c. 100 CE) provided a rational explanation for this term; the people of Yue waited until the birds had been past to eat the insects before they planted their fields. See Lunheng, 243–244 [Shuxu pian 書虚篇].

35 Both the dou 斗 and the hu 斛 were dry measures for grain.
Cangwu, where the elephants plough the fields for people.36 There was a reason why Yu came to this region: because of the polders. These polders are made of soil taken from that region, and have the virtue of Saturn.37 Yu thought that this was beautiful and reported it [to the gods]. Yu realised that time was running out, and that he was growing old, so he begged for a writ to be sent below. A white horse was sacrificed at the well of Yu.38 Well (jing) means ‘rule.’ Since Yu was buried according to the proper rules and principles, [his burial] did not cause trouble for the ordinary people.39

無餘初封大越,都秦餘望南,千有餘歲而至句踐。句踐徙治山北,引屬東海,內,外越別封削焉。句踐伐吳,霸關東,徙瑯琊,起觀臺,臺周七里,以望東海。死士八千人,戈船三百艘。居無幾,躬求賢聖。孔子從弟子七十人,奉先王雅琴,治禮往奏。句踐乃身被賜夷之甲,帶步光之劍,杖物盧之矛,出死士三百人,為陣關下。孔子有頃姚稽到越。越王曰:「唯唯。夫子何以教之?」孔子對曰:「丘能述五帝三王之道,故奉雅琴至大王所。」句踐喟然嘆曰:「夫越性脆而愚,水行而山處,以船為車,以楫為馬,往若飄風,去則難從,銳兵任死,越之常性也。夫子異則不可。」於是孔子辭,弟子莫能從乎。

Wuyu was first enfeoffed in Dayue, and had his capital south of Qinyuwang, and after more than one thousand years Goujian arrived.40 Goujian moved the seat of government north of [Kuaiji] mountain, from where he opened communications with the Eastern Sea, and from then on the Inner and Outer Yue granted and revoked lands separately.41 Goujian attacked Wu, and was hegemon over the lands east of the pass. 42 He went to Langye and built the Guantai (Observation Platform), 43 The tower was seven 里 (3 km) in circumference, and from it you could look out over the Eastern Sea. He had eight thousand death-defying warriors and three hundred warships. A short time later, he per-

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36 For an important compilation of records of the use of elephants by the Yue people, for warfare, farming, and as beasts of burden; see Chuxue ji 29.698–699.
37 Tian 填 here seems to stand for Saturn or Tianxing 填星, also known as Tuxing 土星 (Earth Star).
38 The most comprehensive account of the worship of Yu in the Yue region is found in Eberhard (1942), 365–381.
39 The ruling houses of both Wu and Yue were regularly praised in ancient texts for the simple burials that they held, in particular the funeral for the son of Prince Jizha of Wu, which was commended by Confucius. See Li Ji 9.193–194 [4: “Tangong, xia” 檀弓下]. The reference here to Yu’s funerary rites would seem to be part of an ongoing Confucian concern with expensive and over-elaborate rituals.
40 According to the Zhengyi 正義 (Rectified Interpretations) commentary on the Shiji, Wuyu’s capital was founded south of Kuaiji mountain. This was based on a quotation from the Yuejue shu, but this section is missing from the present transmitted text. See Shiji 41.1739, footnote 1. Qinyuwang 秦餘望 has been identified as Qinwangshan 秦望山 (Qin Viewing Mountain) which the First Emperor of China was said to have climbed during his southern progress. See Fan Daquan (1984), 127.
41 The term Waiyue 外越 is generally interpreted as referring to the inhabitants of the islands off the coast of Zhejiang, possibly even including the aboriginal population of Taiwan. Neiyue 内越 or Inner Yue was the term used to describe the people of present day mainland Zhejiang province. See Che Yueqiao (et al, 2001), 6.
42 This is interpreted as a reference to the Hangu 函谷 pass; see Yu Jidong, 164. This would have made King Goujian of Yue hegemon over virtually every state of the Zhou confederacy with the exception of Qin. King Goujian’s hegemony is mentioned in a number of ancient Chinese texts, such as for example Shiji 41.1746, which records that the Zhou king gave him a mandate and a gift of meat, but there are no references to the extent of his dominance.
43 According to the Zhoubu jinian B:19a, the move of the capital to Langye in fact only took place in 468 BCE, during the reign of King Goujian’s son. For a discussion of various theories about the movements of the Yue capital in the late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States (475–221 BCE); see Diao Du Anh (1976), 78–79.
sonally invited wise men and sages to come to his court. Conclusively brought his seventy disciples, and carried an elegant lute. He rectified the rituals, and then went to offer his advice. Goujian then put on the armour of Ciyi, he buckled on the sword Buguang, and grasped the lance Wulu. He sent out three hundred death-defying warriors, and made them line up in battle formation below the pass. Confucius then arrived in Yue in state. The king of Yue said: “Good, good, what are you going to teach me?” Confucius replied: “I can explain the Way of the Five Emperors and the Three Kings, therefore I packed up my fine lute, and came to your majesty’s home.” Goujian sighed deeply and said: “The people of Yue are weak and stupid; they live on dry land but travel by water. Boats are their chariots and oars are their horses: when they travel it is as if they are drifting on the wind, once they set off they are hard to stop. Besides which, it is the nature of the Yue people to keep their weapons ready, and they have no fear of death. Do you think you can change this?” Confucius then said goodbye, and none of his disciples were able to stop him.

It was a very long time from the reign of King Futan of Yue back to Wuyu, and the line of succession was not recorded. Yunchang was the son of Futan. Yunchang’s son was Goujian, the great hegemon who was entitled king, and who moved to Langye and had his capital there. Goujian’s son Yuyi was recognized by his contemporaries as hegemon. Yuyi’s son Ziweng was acknowledged by his peers to be the hegemon. Ziweng’s son Wujiang had his hegemony accepted during his lifetime. Wujiang’s son Buyang had his hegemony accepted during his lifetime.

44 This is mentioned in Guoyu 20.635 [“Yueyu, shang”越語上].
45 The “Wudu fu”吳都賦 (Wu Capital Rhapsody) by Zuo Si 左思 (c. 250 – c. 305 CE), refers to “Yangyi 暘夷 armour and Bolu 博盧 lances;” see Wen xuan 5.72. In the commentary on this phrase, Li Shan 李善 quotes this section of the Yuejue shu, but with slightly different wording: “The king of Yue then put on the Yangyi armour, and grasped the Bolu lance.” In this case the two names are most likely to refer to two tribal peoples: the Yangyi and the Bulu 卜盧; see Knechtges (1982), 408.
46 This section seems to be related to a story found in the Shi ji chapter on the disciples of Confucius, recording the diplomatic efforts of Zigong. According to this King Goujian presented the sword Buguang and the lance Qulu 屈盧 to the king of Wu as a diplomatic gift. See Shi ji 67.2199–2200. These fine weapons (unlike many other named Yue blades) are not otherwise mentioned in ancient Chinese texts.
47 The kings of both Wu and Yue used a distinctive form of address for their monarchs, whereby the name of the state and the title were pre-posted (Wu wang Fuchai 吳王夫差), rather than the custom in the Central States where the name of the state was placed before the name and the title placed last (Chu Ling wang 楚靈王). However this kind of southern nomenclature eventually came to be used interchangeably with that of the north. See Dong Chuping (et al., 1998), 44. It is striking that in this chapter of the Yuejue shu, names are given throughout in the Yue style.
48 The importance of this double title is discussed in Gu Derong (et al., 2001), 160.
49 The references in Eastern Han dynasty texts to King Goujian of Yue moving his capital to Langye in Shandong remain highly problematic. For Yue to have moved its capital so far north would have completely altered the balance of power in the Central States in the late Spring and Autumn period. It is also important that there are no references in any earlier text, such as the Zuozhuan, Guoyu or Shi ji to such a move. For an analysis of the evidence see Gu Jiegang (1987), 31–32.
self as a chief. Zhihou’s son Zun was recognized by his contemporaries as their chief.\footnote{In the Han dynasty numerous southern kings and chiefs would claim descent from King Goujian of Yue; see for example \textit{Hanshu}, 64.2787. During the early years of the Han dynasty, these chiefs were often given fiefs by the emperor, but their powers and independence was increasingly circumscribed; see Zhu Weigan (1984), 28–30.} Zun’s son Qin lost his people, and when Chu attacked him, he fled to Nanshan (South Mountain).\footnote{The paucity of evidence makes it difficult to interpret how successful the Chu conquest of Yue actually was. This point is discussed in Ni Shiyi (1987), 27, where it is argued that the conquest, usually dated to 323 BCE, was not actually accomplished until 306 BCE.} From the reign of Qin back to Goujian was eight rulers in all, and they had their capital at Langle for two hundred and twenty-four years.\footnote{The \textit{Shiji} gives a different version of the Yue king-list, with some changes in the order, for example Zhihou is named as Wujiang’s father, rather than the other way round. See \textit{Shiji} 41.1747. It would seem likely that the \textit{Shiji} king-list is more accurate than that found here, since the names given on excavated bronze inscriptions (such as for example King Bushou of Yue 越王不壽, the grandson of King Goujian) are identical; see Dong Chuping (1992), 152–247.} Before the reign of Wujiang, the rulers of Yue were hegemons and were entitled kings.\footnote{This echoes information given in the \textit{Shiji}, which suggests that after the death of King Wujiang of Yue at the hands of the people of Chu, Yue power in the ancient south was effectively at an end. \textit{Shiji} 41.1751, however does not record any Yue monarchs after Wujiang.} From the reign of Zhihou onwards they were weak, and were called chiefs.\footnote{Although it might seem a demotion for the descendants of King Goujian to have become chiefs, in fact it is probably more accurate to view this as a return to the traditional more consensual government practices of Yue; see Wang Kewang (et al., 1985), 166.}

句踐小城，山陰城也。周二里二百二十三歩，陸門四，水門一。今倉庫是其宮臺處也。句踐之宮，柱長三丈五尺三寸，霤高丈六尺。宮有百戶，高丈二尺五寸。大城周二百五十里七十步，不築北面。而滅吳，徙治姑胥台。

King Goujian’s Citadel, the Walled City at Shanyin (North side of the Mountain).\footnote{Another point is discussed in Ni Shiyi (1987), 27, where it is argued that the conquest, usually dated to 323 BCE, was not actually accomplished until 306 BCE.} It is two \textit{li} two hundred and twenty-three \textit{bu} in circumference (1.15 km), with four land gates and one water gate. The present day granaries and arsenals are where the palaces and platforms used to be. [The palace] was six hundred and twenty \textit{lu} (880 m) in circumference, the pillars were three \textit{zhang}, five \textit{chi} and three \textit{cun} high (8.38 m), the eaves were one \textit{zhang} and six \textit{chi} long (3.8 m). The palace had one hundred doors, each \textit{one} \textit{zhang}, two \textit{chi} and five \textit{cun} high (2.97 m). The main city wall is twenty \textit{li} seventy-two \textit{bu} in circumference (8.4 km), but there is no wall on the north side. After the conquest of Wu, they moved the seat of government to Guxutai (Guxu Platform).\footnote{Guxutai 姑蘇臺, also known as Gusutai 姑蘇臺 (Gusu Platform), was built by order of the kings of Wu at the spiritual heartland of the Gouwu 勾吳 people, the original inhabitants of the lands which later became the kingdom of Wu. After King Fuchai of Wu defeated King Goujian in battle in 494 BCE, the king of Yue supposedly sent fine timbers from the southern forests as tribute to Wu. The king of Wu ordered that these timbers be used in the construction of the tower, as a symbol of Yue submission; see \textit{Yinju zhu 2.12} [3: “Ji Wudi zhuan”]. Guxutai is said to have been destroyed by fire at the time of the conquest of Wu in 473 BCE, but according to some accounts the timbers were salvaged for use in a temple dedicated to the memory of the last king of Wu; see \textit{Wujun zhi}, 113.}
The Large Walled City at Shanyin was built under the auspices of Fan Li. Now it is commonly known as [Fan] Li’s city wall. There are three land gates and three water gates, with an opening to the north-west, in order to show their loyalty [to Wu]. During the Shijianguo era (9–13 CE), Li’s wall was destroyed.

Jishan (Altar of Grain Mountain) was the site of Goujian’s Zhaijietai (Ritual Purification Platform). Jishan was the site of Goujian’s Zhaijietai (Ritual Purification Platform). Guishan (Turtle Mountain) was the place where Goujian built Guaiyoutai (Investigating Anomalies Platform). This mountain is located to the south-east of Simamen (Marshal’s Gate), and received its name because it was there that turtle shells were cracked for divinations. It was also there that [Goujian] looked up to observe heavenly omens, and where he watched natural phenomena in the skies. This mountain is forty-six zhang, five chi and two cun high (11,048.5 m), and five hundred and thirty-two bu round (755 m). Now it is the site of Dongjue Village. It has the alternative name of Guishan (Phenomenal Mountain). This phenomenal mountain appeared long ago during the course of one night all by itself, and the local people thought this strange so they named it Guishan.

Jatai (Carriage Platform) has a base six hundred bu around (852 m). It is now the site of Ancheng Village.

Although it is not mentioned here in the Yuejue shu, there are numerous stories suggesting that Fan Li laid out the city according to the patterns of constellations. See Wheatley (1971), 442.

There is considerable argument over whether this kind of “double city” with conjoined walled areas was a Zhou dynasty design feature, or if it represents the sideways expansion of the original city. The “Record of the Lands of Yue” would seem to suggest that in this kingdom the capital was designed to be such a double city. Yang Kuan (1993), 66–67, 88–91. Excavation reports from a number of other roughly contemporary Chinese “double cities” are considered in Steinhardt (1990), 48–50. In the case of Xiadu, the capital of the state of Yan, the eastern part of the city was clearly built long before the western; see “Hebei Yixian Yan Xiadu gucheng kancha he shijue;” see also Ou Yan (1988).

References of this kind to the altars of soil and grain, one of the cornerstones of Zhou religion, have led scholars to speculate that ancient Yue religion had incorporated elements of Central States religious practice with their own traditional shamanic worship of snakes, crocodiles and birds. However this kind of interpretation of the evidence found in this chapter remains highly speculative. Fu Zhenzhao (2002), 278. Zhaijie or ritual purification involved restricting the diet prior to worship, and was certainly a crucial part of religious practice in both the Central States and the kingdom of Chu. See Cook (2006), 75. Tai, wooden structures built on platforms of pounded earth, were a major architectural development in the Spring and Autumn period, at a point when royal and noble houses increasingly wished to build tall palaces, rather than imposingly large but low buildings. See Wu (1999), 665–675.

This mountain is now known as Feilaishan (Flying Mountain) and is the site of an ancient temple, the Baolinsi (Precious Forest Temple) founded in 473 CE. See Zhou Youtao (2004), 21.

This gate is also mentioned in Wye Yue chunqiu 8.131 (“Goujian guiguo waizhuan” 勾踐歸國外傳), where it is called the Tongma men (Same Horse Gate).

A different version of this story is recorded in Wye Yue chunqiu, which records that Goujian fortified Lange, and when the walls were completed, this mountain rose up of its own accord; see Wye Yue chunqiu 8.131 (“Goujian guiguo waizhuan”). However the Yuejue shu account makes it clear that this mountain stood in near Shaoxing.
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63 A Ligong (Separate Palace) is mentioned in the Wu Yue chunqiu, but it is not clear if this refers to the same structure. See Wu Yue chunqiu 8.131 ["Goujian guiguo waizhuan"].

64 Excavations carried out at this site in 1959, and 1973–1974 have revealed a large number of Yue bronzes and pottery artefacts; see Zhou Yuebao (et al., 2004), 3–4.

65 The earliest explicit references to Xi Shi 西施 as a protagonist in the conflict between Wu and Yue are found in texts of the Eastern Han dynasty, such as this and the Wu Yue chunqiu 9.147 ["Goujian yinmou waizhuan"].

66 For the identification of zhu 蘆 as the kudzu plant (luo 藤 meaning vine); see Knechtges (1982), 320.

67 Zhongzhitai 中指臺 is usually identified as the same place as Zhongsutai 中宿臺 (Rest Platform), mentioned in the entry below, and in the Wu Yue chunqiu 8.131 ["Goujian guiguo waizhuan"].

68 Bingshi 冰室 literally means ice house, but the use of ice in Yue cuisine was debated until the recent publication of the discoveries at the major Yue cemetery at Hongshan outside Wuxi; see Hongshan Yuemu chutu liqi, 54, plates 45–46. For the use of icehouses in ancient China see Zuozhuan, 1248–1250 ["Zhaogong" 貞公 4.1], and Sterckx (2005), 36.

69 An elaborate series of rituals were built up around entering and exiting any walled city. For an account of the importance of these rituals in Chu culture see Cook (2006), 5–6.
horses at Liqiu, visiting the Meirengong, having fun at Zhongsu. He would pass by Maqiu, go shoot-
ing along the roads running through Leye, and race his dogs at Ruoye. Then he would retire to con-
sider his plans in the stone house, eating at the larder. He led the work digging out the earth to build
the Changtutai (Glorious Earthen Platform). He concealed his true identity and hid his real feelings.
According to one account the ice-house was the place where delicacies were prepared.

浦陽者,句踐軍敗失眾,懣於此。去縣五十里。

Puyang.70 When Goujian’s army was defeated and his people were lost, this was where he endured
his depression. It stands fifty li from town (20.75 km).

夫山者,句踐絕糧,困也。其山上大冢,句踐庶子冢也。去縣十五里。

Fushan (Master Mountain).71 When Goujian ran out of grain, this was where he suffered.72 There
are important tombs on top of this mountain, since Goujian’s commoner sons were buried here.73 It
stands fifteen li out of town (6.23 km).

句踐與吳戰於浙江之上,石買為將。耆老、壯長進諫曰:「夫石買,人與為怨,家與為
仇,貪而好利,細人也,無長策。王而用之,國必不遂。」王不聽,遂遣之。石買發,
行至浙江上,斬殺無罪,欲專威服軍中,動搖將率,獨專其權。士眾恐懼,人不自聊。

When Goujian fought the kingdom of Wu in battle on the Zhe river, Shi Mai was made a general.74
Both young and old came forward and remonstrated: “Shi Mai is a man who has both personal ene-
mies and is involved in family vendettas. He is also greedy and small minded, and does not plan
ahead. Even if your majesty employs him the country will certainly not follow him.” The king did not
listen and made the appointment. Shi Mai then set off along the Zhe river, cutting off the heads of

70 The Puyang 浦陽 River runs just west of the city of Shaoxing; see Chen Qiaoyi (1999), 356.
71 Zhang Zongxiang (1956) notes in Yuejue shu jiaozhu 8.4b, that this mountain name is not mentioned in
any other text or subsequent local history. Therefore he suggests that this section of the text is corrupt.
72 This would seem to be a reference to the famine in Yue in 481 BCE which was relieved by gifts of grain
from Wu. When Wu in its turn suffered famine, King Goujian refused to send grain to the starving. See
Shiji 41.1743.
73 Yue society is frequently said to have been monogamous, but occasionally reference is made to sons of
different status (as was the case in contemporary Central States society, which divided children into dizi
敵子 (legitimate children) and shuzi 庶子 (commoner children). This division affected not just social
status, but also inheritance and property rights). There are references in ancient texts to the idea that
Yue people distinguished between two kinds of children; see for example Guoyu 20.635 [“Yueyu,
shang”]. However it is still not clear if the distinctions observed in ancient texts dealing with Yue are the
same as the well-recorded discrimination in the Central States, or if they were merely a projection of
northern Chinese attitudes on an unfamiliar cultural situation.
74 This story seems to be related to the account found in the Guoyu that King Goujian provoked the attack by
Wu in 494 BCE, which ended with his army being crushed and himself taken hostage; see Guoyu 20.641
[“Yueyu, xia” 越語下]. However the figure of Shi Mai 石買 is not mentioned in any other ancient text.
the innocent [as he went]. He wanted to monopolise power within the army, taking charge of the
army and exercising his authority unilaterally. Both officers and men were terrified of him, and did
not know where to turn. The Bingfa (Arts of War) says: ‘Treat the people like children, for then you
can lead them into deep waters.’ The officers and men were in dire straits, but Mai was not aware
of this, so he still used the harshest laws and the severest punishments. Wu Zixu was the only one
to see an opportunity that ought to be seized, so he changed his plans: sending some people north
and some people south. Then one night he lit the beacons and banged the drums, and in the morn-
ing he lined up troops [in such as way as] to deceive [Shi Mai]. The Yue army collapsed, and they did
not obey orders, they just turned tail and fled. When this was reported to the king, he killed Mai, and
apologised to his army. News of this development reached Wu, and the king of Wu became fright-
ened, but [Wu] Zixu was secretly delighted. He said: “The Yue army has been defeated! I have heard
it said that when the fox is about to be killed it bites its lips and bares its teeth. Now Goujian of Yue
has already been defeated, your majesty can relax, for Yue will easily be conquered.” He sent a man
to go and make inquiries, and the Yue army asked to be allowed to surrender but Zixu would not
hear of it. The [king of] Yue made his stand at [the fortress] at Kuaiji Mountain, and the Wu army
pursued and besieged him there.76 Goujian sighed deeply and made use of the plans laid out by
[Grandee] Zhong and [Fan] Li, and they turned this terrible defeat into a hegemony. In the life of an
individual, good and bad luck succeed each other, [but for a country] flourishing and decline, success
and failure rest in the quality of ministers that it employs. There are ten thousand ways to rule, the
important thing lies in obtaining the services of wise men. At the time when [King Goujian of] Yue
made his stand at Kuaiji, he made peace with Wu, and Wu then led their troops away. Goujian was
about to surrender, and he travelled west to the Zhe river, where he waited for permission to enter
Wu. [The place where he waited] was called Jimingsu (Cock-crow Wastes). When he entered [the
borders of Wu] he said: “Your humble vassal Goujian [king of a] vanished [kingdom] now leads his
officers and men to enter [Wu] as subject peoples and prisoners of war. My people are here to be
used by you, my lands are now in your possession.” The king of Wu agreed to this, Zixu was furious,
his eyes flashed like lightning and his voice was like the roaring of a tiger: “You have surrendered to
Yue without a battle. Heaven has given [Yue] to Wu, are you going to go against the will of Heaven?
I think your majesty should kill him now!” Wu did not listen and agreed to [King Goujian] going to
live by the Zhe river.

陽城里者，范蠡城也。西至水路，水門一，陸門二。Yangchengli (Yang Walled Settlement was Fan Li's walled city. There is a canal to the west, and it has one water gate and two land gates.

北陽里城，大夫種城也，取土西山以濟之。經百九十四步。或為南安。Beiyanglicheng (Northern Yang Walled City) was Grandee Zhong's walled city. The earth built up for the walls here came from Xishan (West Mountain), and it was one hundred and ninety-four bu in diameter (276 m). Some people call this the Nan’an (Southern Fortress).

富陽里者，外越賜義也。處里門，美以練塘田。Fuyangli (Rich Yang Village) was land bestowed on the Outer Yue. The area around the village gate was considered beautiful because the fields were protected by the Liangtang (Smelting Embankment).77

75 This is a slight misquotation of a line in Sunzi bingfa 孫子兵法 10.261 [“Dixing pian” 地形篇], the original referring to soldiers rather than people.
76 Zhang Zongxiang (1956), 8.5a argues that the character tui 退 (to withdraw) in the original text is a mistake for zhui 追 (to pursue).
77 Although the Yuejue shu 用字 was the word lan 煉 (to train or practice) this is almost certainly a mistake for han 煒 (to smelt), and it is clear from context that this place was developed for the metalworking industry.
The Great Armoury at Ancheng Village. When Goujian attacked Wu and took King Fuchai prisoner, he greatly prized the weapons used in this victory and so he built a great armoury to store them in. It has a circumference of two hundred and thirty li (327 m). Now it is known as Ancheng Village.

The Old Ancestral Temple to Yu was outside the south gate to the citadel, but inside the main city wall. Yu’s altar of grain was to the west of the temple, at present day Nan (South) Village.

The Great Tomb at Dushan (Solitary Mountain) was the tomb that Goujian built for himself. When he moved [the capital] to Langye, the tomb was not completed. It stands nine li from the town (3.7 km).

Malinshan (Hemp Plantation Mountain) was also named Duoshan (Duo Mountain). When Goujian wanted to attack Wu, he planted hemp in order to make bowstrings, and employed people from Qi to guard the plants. In the Yue language people from Qi are called “Duo” (reconstructed pronunciation: *tâ), and therefore they were called Malin Duo (the Qi people from the Hemp Plantation), because they were participating in the preparations for the war against Wu. The fields below this mountain were given as fiefs to meritorious ministers. This place is twelve li from town (4.98 km).

The Fortress on Top of Kuaijishan. When Goujian did battle with the kingdom of Wu, he was comprehensively defeated, and he made his last stand at this fort. Below this fort is Muyuchi (Mu Fish Pond), whose profits were never taxed.

The Great Tomb at Ruoye was the tomb where Goujian reburied our former ruler Futan. It is located twenty-five li from town (10.36 km).

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78 This would suggest that the capital of Yue was laid out with a mixture of urban areas and agricultural land within the city walls. This was certainly the custom in Wu, indeed the area within the old city walls at Suzhou was only finally built up in the 1970s, so vast was the scale on which King Helü of Wu laid out his capital. This can be seen by comparison between the maps included in the recently published collection Suzhou gucheng dituji, which records the development of the city from 1229–1949.

79 This site is identified with the modern Dushan at Keqiaozhen 柯橋鎮. This mountain has been extensively researched, but no signs of ancient diggings have ever been found. See Shaoxing wenwu zhi, 25.

80 The reconstructed pronunciation of the word duo comes from Coblin (1983), 244.

81 King Goujian’s retreat to the fortress at Kuaijii is mentioned in a number of ancient texts; see for example Guoyu 20.63 [“Yueyu, shang”] and Shiji 41.1740–1742. These accounts are discussed in Yang Shanguan (1988), 49.

82 The kingdom of Yue is thought to have been the first place in China to have worked out the techniques of farming fish, a skill traditionally attributed to Fan Li. Fan Li was also said to have been the author of the world’s first known book on fish farming, the Yangyu jing (Classic on Raising Fish), as a result of which he was sometimes known by the epithet Yufu 魚父 (Fish Elder). See Zhang Fengyou (et al., 1998), 256.
Geshan (Banana Cloth Mountain) is where bananas were planted after Goujian was defeated by Wu. He employed Yue women to weave banana cloth, and presented it to King Fuchai of Wu. It is located seven \textit{li} from town (2.9 km).

Guzhongshan (Guzhong Mountain) is the mountain under the control of the officials in charge of bronze manufacture in the kingdom of Yue. The people of Yue call this place Tongguadu (Copper Canal). It is two hundred and fifty \textit{bu} across (355 m), and stands twenty-five \textit{li} from town (10.36 km).

Fuzhongdatang (Riches Great Embankment) was built by Goujian in order to create fields dedicated to famine-relief, they were highly fertile, and so they were called ‘riches.’ It is found twenty \textit{li} and twenty-two \textit{bu} from town (8.33 km).

Quanshan (Dog Mountain). When Goujian was defeated by Wu, he raised dogs to hunt white deer at Nanshan, because he wanted to present them to Wu. Strangely they did not catch a single one, therefore it was named Quanshan. Quanting (Dog Neighbourhood) stands on top of it. It is twenty-five \textit{li} from town (10.36 km).

Bailushan (White Deer Mountain) stands south of Quanshan, twenty-nine \textit{li} from town (12 km).

Jishan (Chicken Mountain) and Shishan (Pig Mountain) were where Goujian raised chickens and pigs when he was about to attack Wu, in order to feed the soldiers with them. Shishan stands south of Xishan (Tin Mountain), fifty \textit{li} from town (20.75 km), while Shishan stands west of Minshan (People Mountain), sixty-three \textit{li} from town (26.15 km). When the border of Yue was set at the Huanjiang (Broad River), I suspect that Shishan was then within the borders of Yuji.

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83 This place is more commonly associated with the Yue metalworking tradition; see \textit{Yuejue shu} 11.79 [13: “ji baojian” 记寶劍]. The decision by King Goujian of Yue remains extremely mysterious, for many monarchs in ancient China moved their capitals without feeling any need to disturb ancestral tombs. See Dong Chuping (et al., 1998), 51.

84 Subsequent gazetteers for Shaoxing would record further plantations associated with King Goujian of Yue; see for example the Ming dynasty gazetteer \textit{Kuaiji xianzhi} 5.131, 5.168, 22.600–601.

85 Banana cloth was a speciality of this region. See \textit{Qimin yaoshu} 10.770–771.

86 This place remained an important local centre for metalworking well into the Han dynasty. See Wang Shilun (1987), 4.

87 This, together with the polders mentioned earlier, seem to be evidence of ancient attempts to control the notoriously difficult and flood-prone plains of Northern Zhejiang. The works carried out there in Imperial times are discussed in detail in Elvin (2004), 141–161.

88 In the commentary by Qian Peiming (1957), 27, it is suggested that the soldiers referred to here were specifically the suicide troops for which Yue was so famous.

89 The Huanjiang 淮江 is understood as a reference to the Qiantang River; see Zhang Zongxiang (1956), 8.7a. Yuji 餘暨 is almost certainly a mistake for Zhuji 諸暨, which was at the southern border of Yue during the reign of King Goujian. See Chen Yuanzhao (1985), 89.

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Liantang. During the reign of King Goujian, [the trees] on Xishan were cut down to make charcoal, which was called ‘ash lumps.’ This was then transported along Tandu (Charcoal Canal) to Liantang, and these places derived their names from this fact. It is located fifty li from town (20.75 km).

木客大冢者，句踐父允常冢也。初徙瑯琊，使樓船卒二千八百人伐松柏以為桴，故曰木客。去縣十五里。一曰句踐伐善材，文刻獻於吳，故曰木客。

The great tomb of Muke (Woodcutters’ [Place]). This is the tomb of Goujian’s father Yunchang.90 In the past, when [Goujian] moved the capital to Langye, he sent two thousand eight hundred men from his navy to chop down pine and cypress trees to make canoes, therefore this place was called Muke.91 It stands fifteen li from town (6.23 km). According to one account, Goujian cut down the finest timbers, painted and carved them and then presented them to Wu, and that is why it is called Muke.92

官瀆者，句踐工官也。去縣十四里。

Guandu (Official’s Canal), is where the officials who supervised Goujian’s artisans and craftsmen lived, and it is located fourteen li out of town (5.8 km).

苦竹城者，句踐伐吳還，封范蠡子也。其僻居，徑六十步。因為民治田，塘長千五百十三步。其冢名土山。范蠡苦勤功篤，故封其子於是，去縣十八里。

Kuzhucheng (Bitter Bamboo Walled City).93 When Goujian returned from attacking Wu, he gave this settlement to Fan Li’s son. This is an out-of-the-way place, with a diameter of sixty bu (85.2 m). In order to allow people to work the fields here, they had to build an embankment one thousand five hundred and thirty-three bu long (2.2 km). His tomb is known as Tushan (Earth Mountain). Fan Li worked very hard and was both diligent and honest, therefore his son was given a fief here. It stands eighteen li from town (7.4 km).

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90 The site of King Yunchang of Yue’s tomb is now known as Yinshan 印山 (Seal Mountain), and excavations have revealed an enormous mausoleum complex, which sadly yielded few remains, for the tomb had been robbed in antiquity, as well as in 1996 (the robbery that provoked the excavation). See “Zhejiang Shaoxing Yinshan damu fajue jianbao.” According to Wu Yue chunqiu 10.177 [“Goujian fa Wu wai-zhuan”], King Goujian had planned to move his father’s tomb to the new capital at Langye, but when the tomb was opened, it blew sand and rocks at his workmen until they gave up. This story is discussed in Zuo Buqing (1998), 153.

91 References such as this suggest that the kings of Yue were able to command a truly formidable navy. It has been estimated that in 481 BCE the kingdom of Yue had a population of at least two hundred thousand people and possibly much more; see Chen Guoshan (et al., 2003), 36.

92 According to a number of ancient texts, including the Zuozhuan, 1608–1609 [“Aigong” 1.7], King Fuchai of Wu had a mania for building. King Goujian supposedly took advantage of this, sending him fine trees which were used in the building of Guxutai, a major prestige project undertaken by the king of Wu to celebrate his victory over Yue. This is also mentioned in the Wu Yue chunqiu, which records how woodcutters were sent to cut down trees to be presented to King Fuchai of Wu. “The king of Yue then sent out more than three thousand wood-workers, to go into the mountains and cut down trees. For one whole year they found nothing suitable. The wood-workers thought of returning home, they were all resentful and homesick, and so they sang the ‘Woodcutters’ Plaint’ (Muke zhi yin 木客之吟).” See Wu Yue chunqiu 9.143 [“Goujian yinmou waizhuan”]. The site, Muke, where the Yue king obtained these fine timbers has been identified as Muzecun, near Lanting 郎亭 south of Shaoxing. See Fu Zhizhao (2002), 146.

93 Bitter bamboo is identified as Pleioblastus amarus; see Zhongguo zhuanzhi, 9(1): 598–599.
The Northern Walled City, outside the Northern Outer City Wall, by Lu'nan River. This is where Goujian built his bell and drum palace. It stands seven li from town (2.9 km). This place is also known as Gongqian.

Zhoushi (Boat House) was Goujian’s covered shipyard. It stands fifty li from town (20.75 km).

The Great Tomb West of Min[shan] was the grave of Goujian’s client Qin Yi, who was good at making divinations by cracking turtle shells. Therefore they named the tomb Qinyishan (Qin Yi Mountain).

Shepu (Riverside Archery Ground) was the place where Goujian trained his soldiers. Today Shepu stands five li from town (2.075 km). When the archer Chen Yin died, he was buried west of Min[shan], and therefore it is called Chenyinshan (Chen Yin Mountain).

Zhongshan (Zhong Mountain) is the place where Goujian buried Grandee Zhong. Two thousand sailors from Yue warships were employed to build a suitable tomb, and he was buried below Sanpeng[shan] (Three Thorn Mountain). When Zhong was about to die, he wrote down his last words: “In one hundred years time a wise man will be born. Bury me at Sanpeng, that I may inspire future generations.” Goujian buried him here, to show his appreciation for [one of] the three wise men.

Wuli (Shaman Village) was the single village that Goujian moved the shamans to. It was twenty-five li from town (10.38 km). Their buildings and shrines have now become the foundations of the altars of soil and grain for Hegong commandery.

94 The great archer Chen Yin is also mentioned in the *Wu Yue chunqiu* 9.152–154 (“Goujian yinmou waizhuan”), where it says that he originally came from the kingdom of Chu.

95 The mountain where Grandee Zhong was buried was later also known as Fushan (Government Office Mountain) and Wolongshan (Sleeping Dragon Mountain). In the Qing dynasty, the name was briefly changed to Xinglongshan (Soaring Dragon Mountain) following a visit by the Kangxi emperor. See Fan Daquan (1984), 47.

96 This would seem to be a reference to the three men who were crucial for the reconstruction of Yue after the disastrous war with Wu: Grandee Zhong, Fan Li, and Ji Nizi. This account seems somewhat at variance with the story of Grandee Zhong’s death found in other ancient texts, which state that he was forced to commit suicide at the behest of King Goujian of Yue; see for example *Wu Yue chunqiu* 10.176 (“Goujian fa Wu waizhuan”).

97 On the role of *wu* (shamans or spirit mediums) in Zhou society see Falkenhausen (1995).

98 The original text here reads *hegong qun* 和公群. Qian Peiming (1957), 27, argues that the character *qun* is a mistake for *jun* 郡. The only problem with this is that there does not seem to have been an administrative unit called Hegong commandery in the Han dynasty mentioned in any standard source, such as the “Dili zhi” chapter of the *Han shu*. This is not an absolutely insuperable problem, since a number of geographical divisions were not recorded in texts like this, but are known to have existed from other sources.
巫山者，越[鬼+扁]，神巫之官也，死葬其上，去縣十三里許。

Wushan (Shaman Mountain). This was the site of the palace where shamans and spirit mediums lived. When they died they were buried on top of the mountain. It is located about thirteen li from town (5.4 km).

六山者，句踐鑄銅，鑄銅不爍，埋之東坂，其上馬箠。句踐遣使者取於南社，徙種六山，飾治為馬箠，獻之吳。去縣三十五里。

Liushan (Six Mountains) is the site where Goujian forged his bronzes. When the bronze did not smelt properly in the forge, the results were buried on the eastern slopes. A variety of bamboo called Masheng (Horse whip) grows on top of this mountain. Goujian sent messengers to collect it from the Nanshe (Southern Altar of Soil) and plant it instead at Liushan. They carved these bamboos into horse whips and presented them to Wu. These mountains stand thirty-five li from town (14.5 km).

江東中巫葬者，越神巫無杜子孫也。死，句踐於中江而葬之。巫神，欲使覆禍吳人船。去縣三十里。

Shamans’ Eastern River Cemetery. This belongs to the descendants of Wu Du, a spirit medium from Yue. When he died, Goujian buried him by the Zhongjiang. He employed a spirit medium because he wanted to bring disaster on the Wu navy. This place is thirty li from town (12.45 km).

石塘者，越所害軍船也。塘廣六十五步，長三百五十三步。去縣四十里。

Shitang (Stone Embankment) was where the Yue forces destroyed the Wu navy. The embankment is sixty-five bu wide (92.3 m) and three hundred and fifty-three bu long (501 m). It is located forty li out of town (16.6 km).

防塠者，越所以遏吳軍也。去縣四十里。

Fangwu (Defensive Harbour) was built by Yue to resist the forces of Wu. It stands forty li from town (16.6 km).

杭塠者，句踐杭也。二百石長買卒七士人，度之會夷。去縣四十里。

Hangwu (Boat Harbour) was where Goujian anchored his boats. The man in charge was paid two hundred shi of grain, and he employed seventy guards. There was convenient access to Kuaiyi from here. It stands forty li from town (16.6 km).

塗山者，禹所取妻之山也，去縣五十里。

Tushan is the mountain where Yu married his wife. It stands fifty li from town (20.75 km).

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99 The character here is so obscure that it is not to be found in any dictionary. I assume from context that it is a title, referring to someone who can communicate with ghosts, and hence have translated it as ‘spirit medium.’ The original text reads shenwu zhi guan ye 神巫之官也. In accordance with the commentary by Qian Peiming (1957), 27, the character guan has been amended to gong 宫 (palace).

100 This site has been identified as Liufengshan 六峰山 (Six Peak Mountain) which stands south west of the city of Shaoxing see Chen Qiaoyi (1999), 67.

101 The original text says that the man in charge of the harbour only employed seven men: qi shi ren 七士人. In accordance with the commentary by Qian Peiming (1957), 27, this has been amended to qi shi ren 七十人.

102 At several points in the Yuejue shu, Kuaiji Mountain, the most important site in the kingdom, is known as Kuaiyi 會夷. The reasons for this are not known.

103 Before the Han dynasty, this mountain was usually identified as that of the same name which stands in modern Fenghu county 涛埠縣 in Anhui province. There is also a mountain of the same name in Song county 嵩縣 Henan province which claims to be the one mentioned in the legends of Yu. For an account of the conflicting evidence, see Huang Weicheng (1985).
朱餘者，越鹽官也。越人謂鹽曰「餘」。去縣三十五里。

Zhuyu (Red Salt) was where the Yue Salt Bureau [was located]. Yue people call salt *yu* (reconstructed pronunciation: *jüo*).\(^{104}\) This place is thirty-five li from town (14.5 km).

句踐已滅吳，使吳人築吳塘，東西千步，名辟首。後因以為名曰塘。

After Goujian had destroyed Wu, he made the Wu people build the Wutang (Wu embankment), which is a thousand bu long (1.42 km) from east to west. At that time it was called Pishou, but later on its name was changed to Tang (Embankment).

獨婦山者，句踐將伐吳，徙寡婦致獨山上，以為死士示，得專一也。去縣四十里。後說之者，蓋句踐所以遊軍士也。

Dufushan (Widows' Mountain). When Goujian was about to attack Wu, he moved widows to live on top of this mountain [where they would be safe]. This was proclaimed among his troops, so that they would be able to concentrate on the task ahead. It stands forty li out of town (16.6 km). Later on when people spoke about this place, they said that Goujian had taught his armies to swim here.

馬嗥者，吳伐越，道逢大風，車敗馬失，騎士墜死，疋馬啼嗥，事見吳史。

Mahao (Horses’ Scream). When Wu attacked Yue, they ran into a storm on the way in which chariots were overturned and horses stumbled. The cavalry were killed falling to the ground. The horses screamed [in pain and fear]. This matter is recorded in the history of the kingdom of Wu.\(^{105}\)

浙江南路西城者，范蠡敦兵城也。其陵固可守，故謂之固陵。所以然者，以其大船軍所置也。

Xicheng (West Fortress) on the Southern Road leading from the Zhe River is the fort where Fan Li mustered his troops. This hill could always be defended, so it was [also] called Guling (Certainty Hill).\(^{106}\) Because of this fact, it was where the largest ships in the navy were based.

山陰古故陸道，出東郭，隨直瀆陽春亭。山陰故水道，出東郭，從郡陽春亭。去縣五十里。

The old road from Shanyin runs out of the city through the eastern city wall. It follows the route of Zhidu (Straight Canal) to Yangchunting (Yang Spring Neighbourhood).\(^{107}\) The old waterway from Shanyin also leaves the city by the eastern city wall, and it makes its way to Yangchunting inside the commandery. It is fifty li from town (20.75 km).

語兒鄉，故越界，名曰就李。吳疆越地以為戰地，至於柴辟亭。

Yu'erxiang (Child’s Township) is the old border of Yue, and it is also called Jiuli.\(^{108}\) When Wu invaded Yue territory it was a battleground, right up to Chaipiting (Firewood Neighbourhood).\(^{109}\)

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\(^{104}\) The word *yu* 餘 was commonly used in ancient texts to transliterate Yue pronunciation. See Zhou Zhenhe (et al., 1982), 61. The reconstructed pronunciation comes from Coblin (1983), 186.

\(^{105}\) This is a rare reference to historical records being kept in the kingdom of Wu, and is frequently cited as evidence that texts such as this are based on contemporary local documents; see Yu Yue (1956), 57.

\(^{106}\) This place has been identified as Xixingzhen 西興鎮, near Hangzhou; see Chen Guoshan (et al., 2003), 38.

\(^{107}\) In the Qin and Han dynasties, a *ting* or neighbourhood was a unit of administration, comprising a theoretical one thousand households. Several ting would then be grouped together to form a *xiang* or township. These translations are derived from Hucker (1985), 511. The use of such terms to describe the kingdom of Yue is anachronistic.

\(^{108}\) There is a story that the name of this place came from the fact that Xi Shi gave birth to Fan Li’s child here, a baby who could speak at the age of one year, and hence the name should be translated as Speaking Child Township. See *Wudi ji*, 79.
Nüyangting (Girl's Neighbourhood). When Goujian went as a hostage to Wu, his wife followed him, and on the road she gave birth to a daughter in this neighbourhood. The girl was brought up at Li Township. When Goujian conquered Wu he changed the name of this place to Nüyang, and changed the name of Jiuli to Yuer Township.

吴王夫差伐越, 有其邦, 句踐服为臣。三年, 吴王復還封句踐於越, 東西百里, 北鄉臣事吳, 東為右, 西為左。大越故界, 浙江至就李, 南姑末, 寫干。

King Fuchai of Wu attacked Yue and captured their lands, Goujian surrendered and became his vassal. Three years later, the king of Wu again enfeoffed Goujian in Yue, and his lands stretched one hundred li from east to west (41.5 km). [King Goujian] served Wu to the north as a vassal, and so east was referred to as the right-hand side, and west was referred to as the left-hand side. The old borders of Yue stretched to Li on the Zhe river, and to the south [their lands reached to] Gumo and Xiegan.

覲鄉北有武原。武原, 今海鹽。姑末, 今大末。寫干, 今屬豫章。

Wuyuan is located north of Jin Township. Wuyuan is now known as Haiyan.110 Gumo is now known as Damo, while Xiegan is now administered by Yuzhang.111

自無餘初封於越以來, 傳聞越王子孫, 在丹陽皋鄉, 更姓梅, 梅里是也。

From the time that Wuyu was first enfeoffed in Yue there has been a tradition that princes and royal grandsons of the Yue royal house lived at the marshes of Danyang. They changed their surname to Mei, hence the name of Meili (Mei Village).112

自秦以來, 至秦元王不絕年。元王立二十年, 平王立二十三年, 武王立四年, 昭襄王亦立五十六年, 而滅周赧王, 周絕於此。孝文王立一年, 廣襄王更號太上皇帝, 立三年, 秦始皇帝立三十七年, 與同趙政, 政, 趙外孫, 則始立二百三十, 二十七, 六, 其子立十九, 兩十, 百七十歲, 漢高帝滅之, 治咸陽, 壹天下。

As for the Qin, until the reign of King Yuan of Qin (usually known as Lord Xian of Qin) there were no annual records. King Yuan ruled for twenty years (actually twenty-three, 384–362 BCE), King Ping (usually known as Lord Xiao of Qin) ruled for twenty-three years (337–311 BCE), King Zhaoxiang ruled for fifty-six years (306–251 BCE), and King Zhaoxiang ruled for fifty-six years (306–251 BCE). He killed King Nan of Zhou (r. 314–255 BCE) and this marked the end of the Zhou dynasty.113 King Xiaowen ruled for a

109 This refers to the events of 496 BCE, when King Helü invaded Yue, and fought what turned out to be his last battle at Zuili 檇李, here called Jiuli 就李; see Zuozhuan, 1595–1596 ["丁公" 定公 14.5]. Yu’er 誕兒 was traditionally said to mark the northernmost point in the Yue kingdom during the early part of the reign of King Goujian; see Cangwen 20.635 ["Yu’er, shang"]; This place is now the site of the Guojieqiao 国界桥 (Border Bridge) which was built in the Northern Song dynasty. On the northern side there is a sculpture of King Fuchai of Wu, on the southern side stands King Goujian of Yue. See Zhu Haiyong (2000), 287.

110 To this day, there is a county in northern Zhejiang named Haiyan 海鹽; see Chen Qiaoyi (1999), 22.

111 Yuzhang 豫章 is probably a mistake for Gouzhang 勾章, the Yue name for the Ningbo region; see Xu Jizi (et al., 1986), 5.

112 Some members of the Mei 梅 family, who claimed descent from King Goujian of Yue, went on to do extremely well during the Han dynasty. Among the most successful was Mei Xuan, who was enfeoffed as Marquis of Tai at the beginning of the Han dynasty, for his loyal service to the founding emperor; see Zhu Weigan (1984), 24, and Fan Duan’ang (1988), 154.

113 The reign of King Nan of Zhou 周赧王 marked the partition of the Royal Domain into two separate states: Eastern and Western Zhou, with King Nan becoming Lord Wu of Western Zhou 西周武公. Shiji 4.169 states that King Nan was not in fact killed by Qin, but was under their control.
year (250 BCE), and King Zhuangxiang, who is also known by the title of Supreme Emperor, ruled for three years (249–247 BCE).114 The First Emperor of the Qin dynasty ruled for thirty-seven years (246–210 BCE), and was known as Zhao Zheng, because [Ying] Zheng (the personal name of the First Emperor of China) was a relative of the Zhao royal house on his mother's side. Huhai ruled for two years (209–207 BCE), and Ziyang ruled for six months (207 BCE). From the reign of King Yuan of Qin to that of Ziyang there were in all ten kings, ruling for one hundred and seventy years. Emperor Gao of the Han dynasty (r. 206–195 BCE) destroyed [the Qin empire]. He had his seat of government at Xianyang, and united the world.

[The future First Emperor of China] sent General Wei She and Palace Scribe Jiao to attack Han, and they captured King An of Han (r. 238–230 BCE).115 He sent General Wang Ben to attack Wei, and he captured King Xie of Wei (r. 227–225 BCE).116 He sent General Wang She to attack Zhao, and he captured King Shang of Zhao (r. 235–228 BCE).117 [After that, the future First Emperor of China] sent General Wang Ben to attack Chu, where he captured King Cheng of Chu (r. 227–224 BCE).118 He sent General Shi Ao to attack Yan, where he captured King Xi of Yan (r. 224 BCE).119 He sent General Wang She to attack Qi, where he captured King Jian of Qi (r. 224–221 BCE).120 He then in the thirty-seventh year of his reign changed his title to First Emperor of the Qin dynasty, and went on an eastern progress to Kuaiji. He crossed Niuzhu (Cattle Ford) and travelled to Dong'an. Dong'an is present day Fuchun. 

114 This title was bestowed on the First Emperor's father in 221 BCE; see Shiji 6.235.
115 According to Shiji 6.232 it was the Palace Scribe Teng who led the campaign in 229 BCE that deposed King An of Han 韓安.
116 Shiji 6.234 states that it was Wang Ben who led the campaign against Wei 魏, in 224 BCE, though the last king of Wei's posthumous title is given as Jia; see Shiji 44.1863–1864.
117 Shiji 6.233 gives the names of two generals responsible for the Qin conquest of Zhao 赵: Wang Jian 王翦 and Qiang Lei 羌瘣. Also in the account of the Hereditary House of Zhao, the name of the last monarch is given as Youmu 幽繆; see Shiji 43.1831.
118 Comparatively little information is given in the Shiji about the fall of Chu 楚 to the forces of Qin, though it is mentioned that the generals responsible for the final victory were Wang Jian and Meng Wu 蒙武, and the name of the last king of Chu is given as Fuchu 負芻; see Shiji 40.1736–1737.
119 According to Shiji 6.234 the general responsible for the final victory over Yan 燕 was Wang Ben 王貳.
ence to Kuaiji) in the lands of Yue.121 The road [up the mountain to the boulder] had nine bends, and it is located twenty-one li out of town (8.7 km). At this time he moved the people of Yue to Yuhang, Ying-gong and [one character missing] Guzhang.122 Then he moved criminals and exiled officials from all over the Chinese world to the lands that had once been Dayue, in order that they could resist the Outer Yue from the Eastern Sea. Then he changed the name of Dayue to Shanyin. When he left he went to visit Zhuji and Qiantang, and then travelled on to Wu. While he was there he climbed Gusutai and then established an archery barracks north of Zhaiting (Home Neighbourhood) and Jiating (Trading Neighbourhood). That was the year [the First Emperor of China] died, so no archery ever took place there. In fact he left and travelled through Qu’a and Jurong. He crossed Niudu travelling west to Xianyang and then he died.123

Interpreting the “Record of the Lands of Yue”

The “Record of the Lands of Yue” records an ancient city that no longer exists, but which was once the capital of an important non-Chinese kingdom in south-eastern China. Much of what we know about the development of Yue and the early urbanisation of the region is derived from this text, which also provides a framework which has been used to understand recent archaeological discoveries, such as the tomb of King Yunchang of Yue excavated in the 1990s. The text in its current state reflects the preoccupations of its Han dynasty authors: relating the landscape of the region to important events in the history of Yue, recording the building works undertaken during the reign of King Goujian, and giving written authority to the claims that this region did not lie beyond the pale of the Chinese world but was instead a crucial part of it. These conflicting aims, making the lands of the ancient kingdom of Yue part of the Chinese world, while at the same time asserting the glory of the past when this region was independent, can be seen as reflecting contemporary Eastern Han dynasty concerns. During the Eastern Han dynasty there seems to have been a considerable resurgence of interest in the history of Wu and Yue, which can be seen both in literature and in the arts.124 This text may well have been produced as part of this movement.

121 The stone at Kuaiji was erected in 210 BCE, and the full text is given in Shiji 6.261–262. This inscription later disappeared, only for a replica to be cut during the Yuan dynasty in 1341, by order of the Supervisor in Chief, Shentu Jiong 申屠駉, using rubbings as a reference. This stone was rubbed flat by the reign of the Kangxi emperor. In 1792, during the reign of the Qianlong emperor, a new replica was carved; see Qin Kuaiji keshi, 1.

122 Different editions of the Yuejue shu record different levels of textual corruption in the “Record of the Lands of Yue.” This version of the text has only one character missing, while other editions have three characters lacking from this juan; see for example the Sibu beiyao edition, which has three characters missing: Yuejue shu 8:1a-6b.

123 The details given of the First Emperor’s southern progress are slightly different from those found in Shiji 6.260–264, and more detailed in terms of the dates given and the points of the itinerary indicated. This suggests that the authors of this section of the text may have had access to a local account of the event.

124 See He Xilin (2001), 171 for a discussion of the spread of the depiction of figures from southern history, such as Wu Zixu, Yao Li and Prince Qingji of Wu during the Han dynasty. The incorporation of these major figures from conflict between the kingdoms of Wu and Yue into the history of China as a whole can be seen from the enormous geographical spread of representations of these individuals. For example, in 1971 the painted tomb of an Eastern Han dynasty official was discovered in Inner Mongolia, with more than eighty historical figures painted on the walls of the main chamber, including Wu Zixu. This tomb has tentatively been dated to 140–170 CE. See Helin ‘geer Hanmu bihuа, 24.
In much the same way as the “Record of the Lands of Wu” had a lasting impact on imperial era accounts of the architecture of Suzhou, the “Record of the Lands of Yue” would have an enormous influence on later writings about the city of Shaoxing. This earliest record linking landscape features and buildings to the glorious history of the kingdom of Yue was imitated and referred to frequently in both official and unofficial local histories. During the imperial period, many writers went much further in linking the architectural, cultural and botanical heritage of the city with King Goujian, to the point where virtually every house and tree could claim some connection with the greatest of the kings of Yue. This can be seen in the earliest surviving Song dynasty gazetteer for the region, where the first entry quoted below is an imperial era addition of a royal association, while the second quotes directly from the Yuejiue shu.

Xishan 錫山 (Tin Mountain) stands fifty 里 to the east of town. An old text says: The king of Yue collected tin here.

Bailushan stands twenty-nine 里 to the south-east of town. The Yuejiue says: It stands south of Quanshan. The “Record of the Lands of Yue” clearly informed texts such as this both directly and indirectly. The major difference in presentation between the Han dynasty text and the Song dynasty one is that the latter includes information about directions. This has proved to be a cause of considerable difficulties in interpreting the information given in the “Record of the Lands of Yue.” This account seems to provide information about the Yue capital itself, and the surrounding area up to forty kilometres away, but without any more precise information about location, it is hard to determine the relationship of these distant sites with the centre and with each other. However, it would seem likely that Yue was deliberately pursuing a policy of decentralised development, at a time when they were preparing for war against the kingdom of Wu.

The “Record of the Lands of Yue” records a period of enormous and diverse construction in what is now northern Zhejiang province. This was part of a general trend at the time, in both Wu and Yue, towards the building of massive prestige projects, ranging from platforms and towers to embankments, and from palaces to whole cities. Many of these projects were built on a truly enormous scale, and within a very short space of time (even allowing for the tendency to attribute all such works to the most famous monarchs of each kingdom). However, while the history of other cities built at this time, including Suzhou, the capital of the kingdom of Wu, have been extensively researched, Shaoxing has generally been ignored. One reason for this is likely to be a combination of the factors that the capital is not described in much detail in the “Record of the Lands of Yue,” and that the entire city was razed to the ground and built to a new design in the Southern Song dynasty. After such a major redevelopment of the site, even the most dedicated antiquarian must have been troubled at the prospect of relating landscape features within the walls to the history of the illustrious King Goujian of Yue.

125 The ongoing influence of the “Record of the Lands of Wu” on imperial era accounts of the development of the city of Suzhou can be clearly seen in texts such as the Tang dynasty gazetteer Wudi ji, the Song dynasty gazetteer Wujiun zhi, and so on. Not only do these texts make frequent reference to the “Record of the Lands of Wu,” they also follow the same pattern in trying to link landscape features with events in the history of this kingdom.

126 See Jitai Kaului zhi 9.12a. For another example of the ongoing influence of the “Record of the Lands of Yue,” see the Qing dynasty unofficial local history, Yuezhong zashi.

Conclusion

When the city of Shaoxing was built, with its surrounding towers and palaces, it was intended to function as both the capital city of the kingdom of Yue and as the headquarters of the war-effort launched by King Goujian, who wished to expunge the shame of the humiliating peace treaty he was forced to agree with Wu in 494 BCE. This double purpose was built into the very design of the city, which lacked a wall to the north so that it would always be vulnerable to attack by Wu and hence would quieten suspicion. At the same time, many of the most important offices for building up and provisioning King Goujian’s navy were located at some distance from the city centre. The exigencies of the long campaign to conquer the kingdom of Wu defined this region throughout its history. Many sites around Shaoxing still retain at least a vestigial connection with the towering figure of King Goujian of Yue, either in name or in popular stories, even two thousand five hundred years after the event.

The “Record of the Lands of Yue” provides but little detail about the design principles that determined the layout of this ancient city. However, the account given in this text of the development of the region which took place under the auspices of King Goujian of Yue is crucial for understanding the process of urbanisation which took place in and around Shaoxing during the late Spring and Autumn period. It is an early landmark in the literature about historical geography in China, and a major resource for understanding one of the most important non-Chinese independent kingdoms of the Spring and Autumn period. In 221 BCE, with the unification under the First Emperor of Qin, Yue became part of China and the history of this region became part of Chinese history. This text is vital for understanding the context in which the city of Shaoxing was originally built.

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