

Palace and Government Office Site of the Nanyue State in Guangzhou in 2000

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The Guangzhou Children's Park 广州市儿童公园 is situated in the north side of western Zhongshan Silu 中山四路, in the center of old Guangzhou City proper. Since 1970s, a couple of important finds of the Nanyue State period have been discovered unceasingly around it. In 1975, a ship-making site was spotted in the court of Guangzhou Municipal Cultural Bureau 广州市文化局 to the southeast of it. A road for palace and government office of the Nanyue State in northeast to southwest direction measured 20 m in length and 2.25 m in width was discovered in the layer superimposed upon the ship-making site. In 1988, a large-scaled architectural site of the Nanyue State with brick-paved ground 7 m beneath the surface came out to the southwest of it. From 1995 to 1997, Guangzhou Municipal Institute of Antiquity and Archaeology excavated a couple of Nanyue State garden vestiges including large-scaled stone-paved pool and winding canal not far away from the east and south of it. After examination, the experts from the State Administrative Bureau of Antiquity deemed that they belonged to imperial garden of the Nanyue State (Fig. 1). Based on accumulated data, there should be architectural vestiges of palace and government office site of the Nanyue State inside the Children's Park.

The joint archaeological team combined by the Institute of Archaeology, CASS, Guangzhou Municipal Institute of Antiquity and Archaeology, and Preparatory Office of the Nanyue Palace set up three intensive excavation squares covered 360 sq m within the east side of the Park from February 15 to May 25, 2000. Due to high water level, the actual excavated area is 266 sq

m. 25 house-foundations, 33 ash-pits, 18 sand wells, 29 wall-foundations, 8 water wells, 6 roads, 2 trenches, 1 canal, 1 pool, and 1 stove were brought to light. We obtained essential knowledge about the stratigraphical deposit and preservation condition of the sites in different periods at the Park. A great amount of vestiges and artifacts of the various periods from the Nanyue State to the late Qing Dynasty were discovered; among them F24 of the Nanyue State, L6 of the Tang period, and F14 from the Five Dynasties to Song times were the most important.

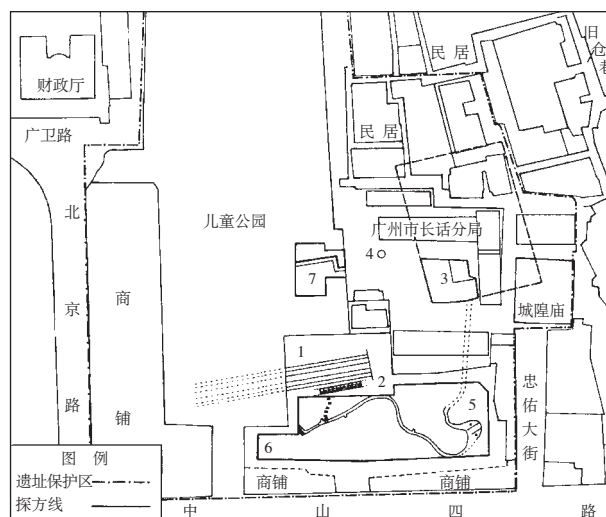


Fig. 1 Illustration of the past excavations in the central area of the Nanyue State site



Fig. 2 F24



Fig. 4 The east apron of F24



Fig. 5 The north apron of F24

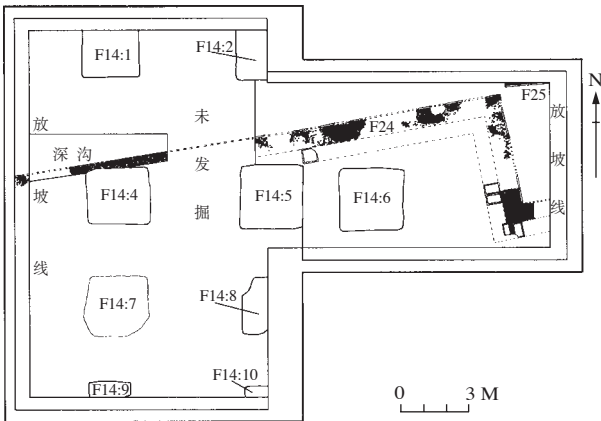


Fig. 3 Plan of F24

I. F24 of the Nanyue Period

Layer 15 superimposed upon F24. The vestiges consist of aprons of the northeastern, the eastern part of northern, the northern part of eastern sections of the main pavilion and the east road. The excavated area is 21.5 m in length from the east to the west, 11 degrees on the compass. The main architecture is a foundation built

by rammed reddish brown earth tempered with large amount of crumbs of fired clay. In view of large scaled excavation and preservation in the future, the present test excavation maintains a layer of late earth on the foundation, which is 46 cm higher than the brick paved apron surface. The post bases are unidentified. The late vestiges intruded into the foundation showed that the latter was directly rammed on the hill (Figs. 2 and 3). The apron is 1.5 m in width. Slab bricks with mortise slot pave its outer side; and its inner side is 70 cm in width by pebbles. Near the foundation of the pavilion, the apron is 70 cm in width flat paved by large-scaled pattern brick; the north and east by square and rectangular bricks respectively (Figs. 4 and 5). To the northeast of F24, an apron to the north of one road which is affiliated to F24 was found; its north edge, 3.5 m to the north side of rammed foundation, connected with the east apron, which is turned and extended eastward of the east apron. Its north edge is 5 m away from the northeast corner of apron of F24. The width and structure of the



Fig. 6 Tile (C15:20)



Fig. 7 Tile scripted with “Wansui” characters (C15:18)

apron of the road are completely identical with that of F24.

In test excavation, a great amount of architectural material and weapon of the Nanyue State period were recovered. Of the architectural material, there are those of bricks and tiles. The brick consists of square, rectangular and mortised ones, which were used to pave apron. They are hard in texture and yellowish white in color. The front side of the former two bricks stamped with lozenge pattern in the center and geometric pattern in the surrounding. The patterns slightly wear and maintain in good condition. The tiles comprise of semi-cylindrical and flat ones; most of them tempered with fine sand. Their matrix is of grayish white or greenish gray; few are light yellow. They were made of clay-strip forming technique and their outer sides decorated with cord-marking patterns; one end stamped with intaglio lines. Their inner side decorated with dots. Some flat tiles attached with triangular-shaped nails that is called flat tile with nail (Fig. 6). The tile-ends bear Chinese characters “Wansui 万岁 (longevity)” were found. The two characters in seal script read from the right to the left in

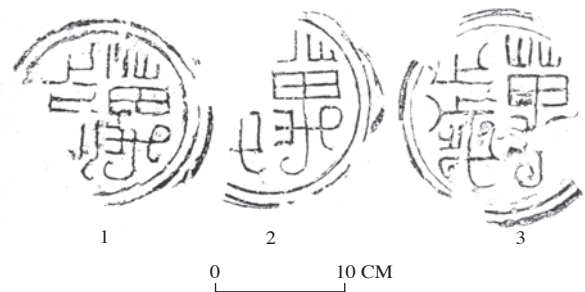


Fig. 8 Copies of tiles scripted with “Wansui” characters of the Nanyue State period

1. C15:17 2. C15:21 3. C15:18

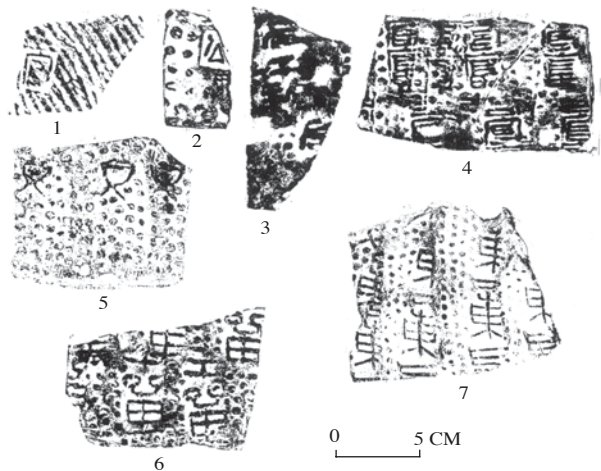


Fig. 9 Ceramic characters of the Nanyue State period

1. Guan (C15:36) 2. Gong (C15:35) 3. Zuo (C15:9) 4. Guanfu (C15:8) 5. Zhi (C15:1) 6. Gongdan (C15:10) 7. Dong (C15:19)

narrow edge and with no border line. Part of tile-ends was painted with cinnabar (Figs. 7 and 8).

A number of unearthed architectural materials modeled or stamped with seal scripted Chinese characters; the former is more. They are often occurred in the inner side of flat tiles; semi-cylindrical ones and the outer side are rare. The characters were stamped uncased and most of them are undecipherable. The characters “Guan 官,” “Gong 公” are official organizations (Fig. 9:1 and 9:2). “Zuo 左,” referred to the past discovery “Zuoguan nushou 左官奴兽,” perhaps is the abbreviation of “Zuoguan 左官” (Fig. 9:3). “Guanfu 官富,” “Guan 官” is an official organization, “Fu 富” is a person name (Fig. 9:4). “Gongdan 工单,” “Gong 工” is an official organization, “Dan 单” is a person name (Fig. 9:6). In addition, there are a lot of characters are undecipherable (Fig. 9:5).

II. Vestiges and Artifacts of the Sui and Tang to Song Periods

1. The vestiges mainly comprise of roads L5, L6, and one foundation F14.

Layer 13 superimposed upon L5 and L6 (Fig. 10 and 12). L5 is north-south oriented, north slightly westward 3 degrees on the compass. It consists of northern and southern two sections. The northern section is 1.45 m in width and 2.55 m in length. Its center is slightly higher than the two sides. The road is paved by black brick. The central part 92.5 cm in width is paved by slab brick in diagonal course. Single slab bricks pave the two sides along the road direction, 15 cm in width. The two edges pave with vertical slab bricks in stagger joint, 8.5 cm in width. The southern section is 13.55 m in length. Its east side is higher than its west side and the present width is about 3 m. The paving method of the road surface is identical with its northern section, only one or two parts paved in herringbone pattern. A brick trough measured $1.4 \times 0.15 \times 0.1$ m is in between the two sections of L5. The outer ground of L5 is covered by river sand, one coin bore “Kaiyuan tongbao 开元通宝” was recovered from it. The unearthed artifacts from the stratigraphical deposit show that L5 dated to the Tang period.

Layer 9 superimposed upon F14 (Figs. 11 and 13). 10 post bases arranged in 3 rows from the east to the west and 4 lines from the north to the south were recovered. The layout of the post bases illustrates that F14 is only the southeast corner of the pavilion. It consists of the southern side of the east corridor, the eastern side of the south corridor, and the end bay of the eastern pavilion. The distribution of the post bases illustrates that the whole construction is north-south oriented. The post base is square shaped, 2.9 m each side. The shortest side is 2.6 m. Due to damage, their opening height varied. The profile of the post base shaped like *dou*-measurement. For example, No. 7 post base is 2.6 m deep to present. From Layers 1–7, its width is 2.88–2.96 m; from Layer 8, its width curved to 2.4 m; and continuously curved to the bottom 1.9 m in width. Since Layer 8 downward, the post base is round shaped. The rammed layer varied and is often 12–20 cm in thickness. Each layer mixed with brick, tile, pebble, and loess solidly rammed; only the bottom layer lay with a big stone.

2. Artifacts comprise of ivory seal, bronze coin, fragment of glass wear, architectural material, broken porcelain, and lead coin.

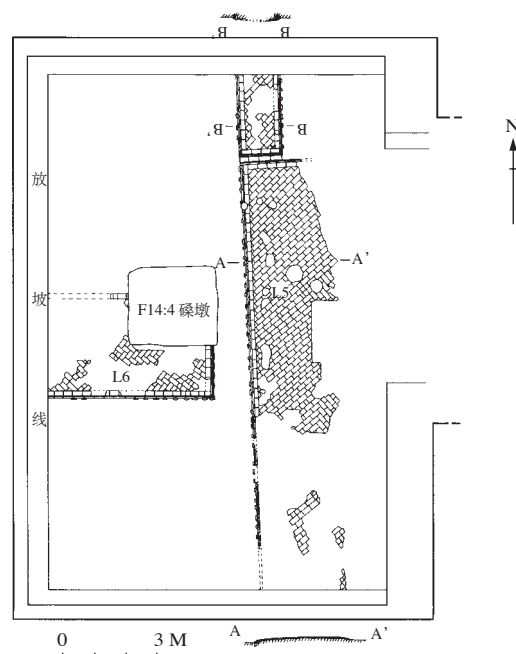


Fig. 10 Plan and elevation of L5 and L6

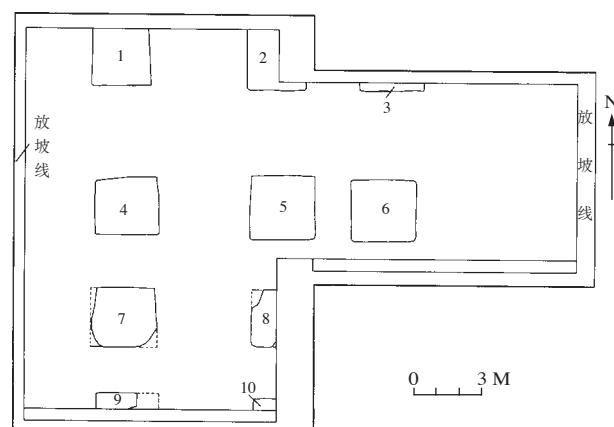


Fig. 11 Plan of F14
1–10. posts

One ivory seal attached with human head was found. The seal surface is of oblong shape, slightly polished, and not carved yet. Its knob is a human head with high nose, deep eyes, and short hair drooping to his shoulder and curled back near his ears (Fig. 14). One foot of celadon bowl with “Guan 官” (official) inscription (F13:7), covered with fine and glossy glaze, and ash color body was found. Its exterior and interior body, and the exterior foot are all covered by celadon which is identical with that of C9:4.



Fig. 12 Vestige of L5 and L6



Fig. 13 Distribution of posts of F14



Fig. 14 Ivory seal in human figurine (C13:24)

III. Conclusion

1. The date and nature of F24

F24 was intruded into by a water well dated to the eleventh year of Taiyuan 泰元 reign (AD 386), therefore, its building date should be earlier than that year. The architectural material of F24 is close or identical with those of the Nanyue State unearthed in Guangzhou. The construction technique and material is basically the same with those of the palace of Minyue 闽越 State in Chong'an 崇安, Fujian 福建, and even their chronological features matched. The present debris after a heavy fire preserved on the apron of F24 was matched with historical document that Panyu 番禺 of the capital of Nanyue State was destroyed by a heavy fire. Consequently, we propose that F24 belonged to Nanyue State.

F24 is of a large-scaled building with foundation, wide and exquisite aprons, and high-level architectural material. Judging by its structure, scale, and material and referring to historical document, F24 might be palace or government office. The analysis of the location of F24 to the stone laid canal of the Nanyue State discovered in 1997 illustrates that F24 is not the major one in the palace and government office complex. The location of the major architectural complex is waiting for further excavation.

2. The date and nature of F14

The Song period layer superimposed upon F14 and

Note: The original report is published in *Kaogu Xuebao* 考古学报 2002.2: 235–260, with 33 figures and 8 pages of plate, written by Liu Rui 刘瑞 and Li Zaoxin 李灶新. The present version, an abridgment from the original, is prepared by the original authors, English-translated by Yi Nan 亦囡, and revised by Cao Nan 曹楠.

No. 10 post base. The unearthed artifacts from the latter one include typical fragments of celadon and shadowy blue glazed porcelain; therefore, its lower limit is no late than the Song period. The lead coin “*Qianheng zhongbao* 乾亨重宝” recovered from the post base superimposed upon by F14 informs that F14 is no early than the second year of Qianheng (918)—the first year starting to mint that type of coin. Due to no specific historical record and no more artifacts, the building date of F14 can not be fixed to present; it is possible to belong to the Southern Han 南汉 or Song period. The document said that the palace complex of the Southern Han State to the south of the Five Ridges 五岭 was in the vicinity of Children’s Park. In view of its location, date, and scale, F14 might be one of many palaces of the Southern Han State. However, the Children’s Park area was in the scope of Guangzhou zicheng 子城 (small city) of the Song period, the center of Guangzhou. Though there was no fixed record said that there was a large-scaled building like F14 in this area, the document written that there were magnificent buildings in Guangzhou and even greater than those of the Central Plains, which propose that there were high level buildings of the Song period existed in Guangzhou. Consequently, F14 is quite possible of the Song architecture. To present, we conclude that F14 belongs to the Five Dynasties to Song period. F14 should be a pavilion. Limited to small test excavation and no drilling survey, the nature of F14 is undetermined.

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