

Earth-Mound Burials at Guanjiucun, Pucheng County, Fujian Province

Fujian Provincial Museum and Fujian Min-Yue Wangcheng Museum

Key words: Burial mounds—Pucheng County (Fujian) Tombs—Pre-Qin Period

From January 2005 to December 2006, as parts of the rescue archaeology for the Pucheng-Nanping Highway, Fujian Provincial Museum and Fujian Min-Yue Wangcheng Museum jointly excavated the earth-mound burials at Guanjiucun, Pucheng County. Pucheng County is located on the boundary among Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangxi Provinces. The earth-mound burials excavated this time are located at Guanjiucun, northern Xianyang Township, Pucheng County. All burials are on the northwest areas of the Guanjiucun lands. The altitude is 319–331m, and their relative heights are 15–50m. To the southeast of the burials are a wide basin and the upper reaches of the Nanpuxi River (Figure 1).

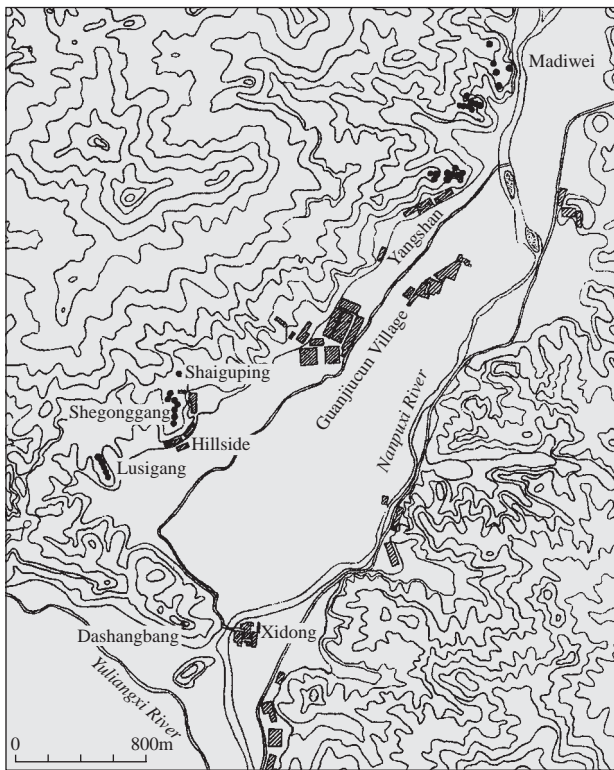


Figure 1. The Distribution of Earth-Mound Burials at Guanjiucun

Earth Mounds and Burial Structures

Most earth mounds are 1–2m higher than the adjacent ground, and their shapes include rectangular, square, oval, circular and irregular. None of them was rammed.

In total, 47 burials were excavated on 33 mounds at 5 localities. Most mounds just have one burial. However, six mounds have two burials (the two burials are intruding stratigraphically on five mounds, and one mound has two parallel burials), and one mound has multiple burials (black-slipped pottery wares were found inside these burials).

The structures of the burials include surface level burials without pits, rectangular shallow pits, and vertical earth (rock) pits with a ramp. The building process of these earth mound burials includes first clearing the ground to the weathered bedrock level and then leveling the ground either by refilling reddish brown clays or just cutting the rocks. A rectangular pit and/ or ramps were dug out later.

About 280 grave goods were found in these burials, including 67 proto-porcelains, 146 potteries with impressed geometric designs, 55 bronzes, 7 jade tubes and pendants, and 7 stone artifacts. The proto-porcelains include pedestal bowls, jars, *zun*-urns, *weng*-urns, *yu*-basins, and plates. The geometrically decorated potteries include jars, *gui*-vessels, *dou*-pedestal bowls, *zun*-urns, and goblets. The bronze artifacts include *zun*-jars, *pan*-plates, cups, daggers, spearheads, *ge*-dagger axes, adzes, knives, stabbers, and arrowheads (Figures 2–5).

Shegonggang

Shegonggang is located on the west of Shanxia sub-village of Guanjiucun. Six earth mounds were excavated. Three of them are described as following:

1. Mound No. 1 (PSD1), located in the middle south



Figure 2. Bronze Zun-jar (PYD11M1:1)



Figure 4. Bronze Pan-Plate (PYD11M1:2)



Figure 3. Bronze Dagger (PYD3M1:4)



Figure 5. Bronze Cup (PYD11M1:3)

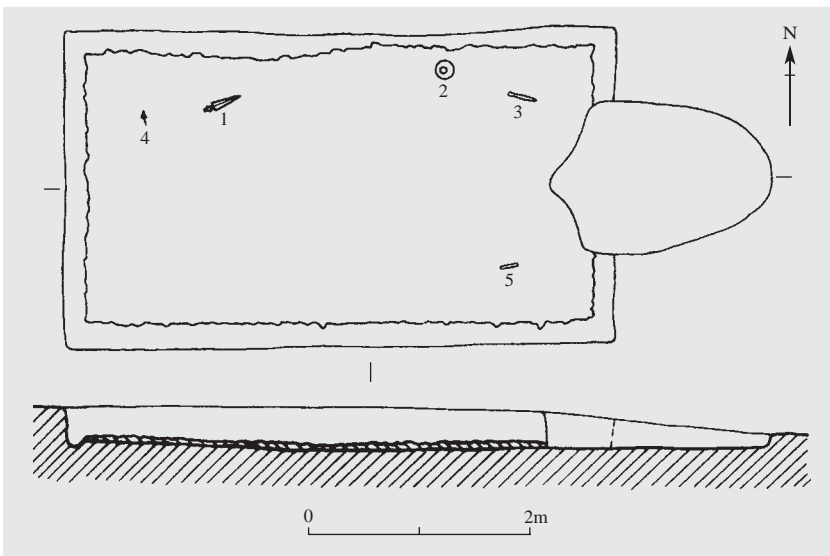


Figure 6. PSD1M1 (Plan and Section)

1. Bronze Dagger 2. Proto-porcelain Jar 3. Bronze Spearhead 4. Bronze Arrowhead 5. Bronze Knife

of the mound

Burial D1M1, rectangular shallow pit, in the middle of the mound, 90 degree, east-west orientation. The pit is 4.8m long, 2.7m wide, 0.2m deep. The bottom of the pit was paved with pebbles. A shallow ditch of 0.18m wide and 0.05m deep was dug out on the bottom of four sides of the pit wall. Five grave goods were found inside the burial, including one bronze dagger, one bronze spearhead, one bronze arrowhead, one bronze knife, and one proto-porcelain jar with three handles (Figure 6).

2. Mound No. 2 (PSD2), located in the south of the rounded square

mound, 22m east-west, and 20m south-north

Burial D2M01, rectangular pit, in the middle of the mound, 255°. The pit is 5.6m long, 2.2m wide, 0.75m deep. The bottom is fully paved with pebbles, and a shallow ditch of 0.14–0.2m wide and 0.14m deep was dug out on the four sides of the pit wall. 15 grave goods were found, including pottery *zun*-jars, proto-porcelain *dou*-bowls, bronze *ge*-dagger axes, spearheads, adzes, arrowheads and whetstones (Figure 7).

3. Eight early burials were excavated around Burial D2M01, and most of them are ground burials or burials with irregular shallow pit. The grave goods are mostly black-slipped pottery and pottery with geometric decorations. There are also few reddish-brown slipped pottery. These pottery artifacts were placed in groups or in a line. The pottery vessels include jar, *dou*-bowls, basin, *yu*-bowls, *gui*-vessel, and small cups. Marks are found on some *dou*-bowls. The designs include rhomboid patterns, checks, lines and basket impressions (Figure 8).

Shaiguping Earth Mound Burial

Shaiguping Mound No. 1 (CPSGD1), located in the middle of the mound. Irregular circle, diameter 9–11m, and height 1.2m.

Burial D1M1, vertical pit burial with a ramp. Located in the middle of the mound, 255°. The ramp is on the west, 0.9m long, 0.8m wide. The pit is 4.2m long, 2.1m wide, 0.8m deep. A ditch of 0.15–0.2m wide and 0.1m deep was dug out along the bottom of the pit walls. Four pieces of grave goods were found, including three pottery jars and one bronze dagger. The pottery jars are all in the south of the chamber, and they are decorated with mat impressions. The bronze dagger is in the rear of the pit (Figures 9 & 10).

Yangshan Earth Mound Burials

Yangshan is located to the northeast of the Yangshan sub-village of Guanjiucun. Ten earth mounds were excavated. The following are some of the typical burials.

1. Mound No. 1 (PYD1). Located in the middle of the hill. There are two modern rectangular looting pits

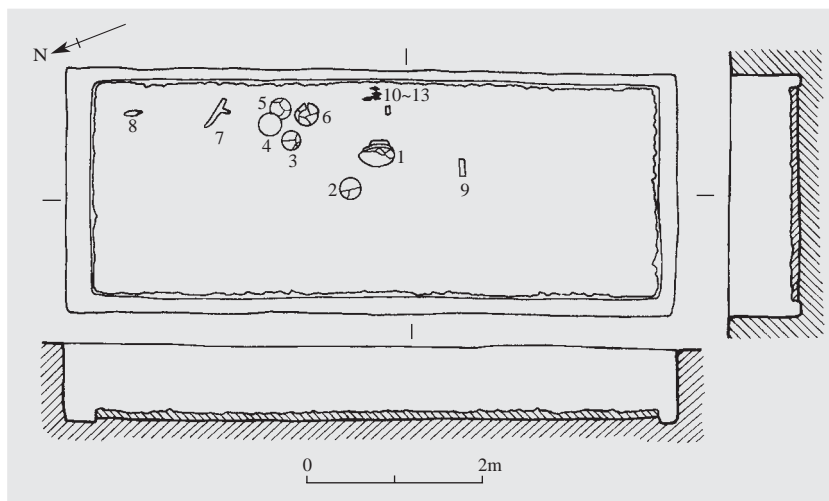


Figure 7. PSD2M01 (Plan and Section)

1. Pottery *Zun*-jar 2-6. Proto-porcelain *Dou*-bowls 7. Bronze *Ge*-dagger Ax 8. Bronze Spearhead 9. Bronze Adze 10-13. Bronze Arrowheads

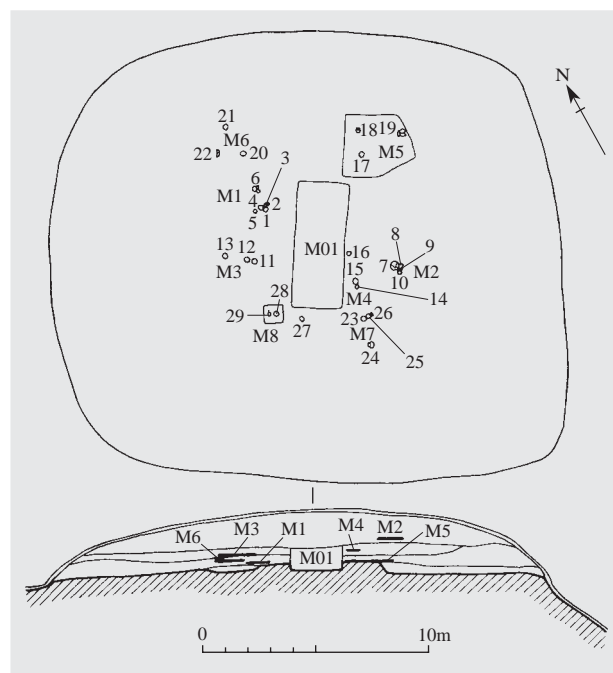


Figure 8. The Distribution of the Burials on Mound No. 2 at Shegonggang (PSD2)

1. Pottery Jar with Straight Rim 2, 5, 8, 11, 15–17, 21, 22 and 24–26. Pottery *Dou*-bowls 3. Pottery *Yu*-bowl 4. Pottery Jar with Single Handle 6. Pottery *Zun*-jar 7, 10, 12–14 and 27. Pottery Jars 9. Pottery Cup 13 and 23. Pottery *Fu*-cauldrons 18 and 28. Pottery *Gui*-vessels 19 and 20. Pottery Basins 29. Pottery Potter Tool (1–6. Grave Goods of M1 7–10. Grave Goods of M2 11–13. Grave Goods of M3 14–16. Grave Goods of M4 17–19. Grave Goods of M5 20–22. Grave Goods of M6 23–27. Grave Goods of M7 28 and 29. Grave Goods of M8)

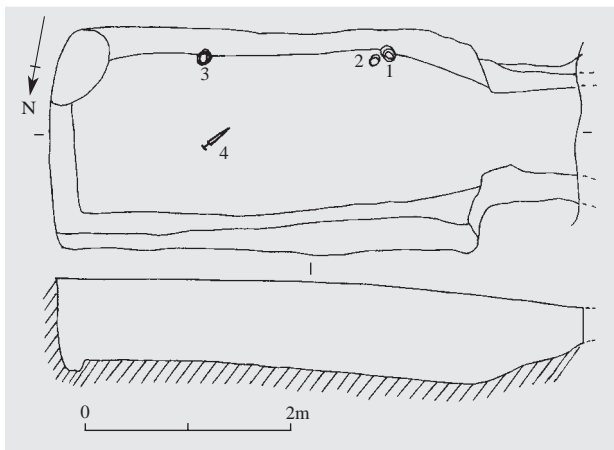


Figure 9. CPSGD1M1 (Plan and Section)
1-3. Pottery Jars 4. Bronze Dagger



Figure 10. CPSGD1M1 (West-East)

in the middle of the mound. The mound is rounded square, 10m long, and 16m wide.

Burial D1M1, rectangular shallow pit, located in the middle of the mound, 250°, 5.7m long, 4m wide and 0.2m deep. The bottom of the pit was fully paved with pebbles. A shall ditch of 0.2m wide and 0.1m deep was dug out along the pit walls. Eleven charcoal posts were found along the northern wall, and four of them are on the northwestern corner. The diameters of these posts are 0.12–0.18m, and the space between these posts is about 0.1–0.2m. These posts were burnt to different

degrees, and they also have different heights. On the basis of these traces, these posts were likely the remains of the outer coffin. The unburned parts of the coffin have completely dissolved. Fourteen grave goods were found, including bronze spear heads, knives, arrowheads, daggers, proto-porcelain *zun*-jars, *gui*-vessel, *dou*-bowls and jars, pottery jars with and without lids and duck-shaped flasks. Proto-porcelains and potteries are in the mid east and northeast, while the bronzes are in the west middle and north of the pit (Figure 11).

2. Mound No. 3 (PYD3). Located about 20m to the west of the Mound No. 1. The mound is highly visible, and its eastern side is damaged by a modern tomb. It is a rounded square mound, 15m long east-west, and 13m wide.

Burial D3M1, located in the middle of the mound. It has a shallow rectangular pit, 30°, 4.6m long, 2.7m wide and 0.1m deep. The flat bottom of the pit is fully paved with pebbles. A shallow ditch of 0.16m wide and 0.1m deep was dug out along the pit wall. Eight pieces of grave goods were found, including pottery jars with spiral designs, proto-porcelain *yu*-basin, and bronze dagger, spear, knife, and arrowheads. Except the pottery jar which is on the southwestern corner of the chamber, the

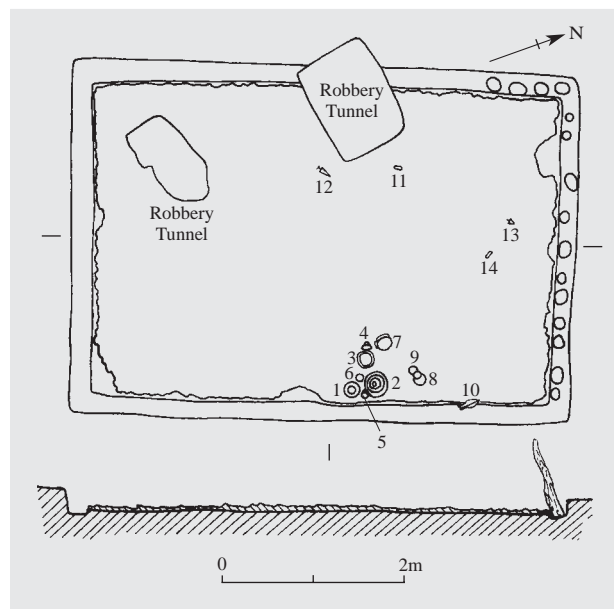


Figure 11. PYD1M1 (Plan and Section)

1 and 8. Proto-porcelain Jars 2. Pottery Jar with Lid 3. Proto-porcelain *Gui*-vessel 4. Proto-porcelain Dish 5 and 6. Pottery Jars 7. Proto-porcelain *Dou*-bowl 9. Pottery Duck-shaped Flask 10. Bronze Spearhead 11. Bronze Knife 12. Bronze Dagger 13. Bronze Arrowhead 14. Bronze Adze

rest of the grave goods are in the northeastern side of the pit (Figures 12 & 13).

3. Mound No. 7 (PYD7). Located on the top of the western side of the hill, this mound is slightly visible from the ground. It has an irregular oval shape, about 20m long north-south, 16m wide.

Burial D7M1. Located in the south of the mound, this burial has a vertical rectangular rock pit, 165 °, 5.4m long, 4.7m wide and 0.5–1.6m deep. The bottom of the burial pit was paved with pebbles. However, the pebbles on the southeast are missing, suggesting this burial was likely disturbed before. A shallow ditch of 0.15–0.2m wide, 0.1m deep was dug out along the pit wall. There are three rounded square postholes on one line on the pit bottom, each one is 0.6m long and 0.9m deep. Inside the middle posthole, there is charcoaled post of about 0.25m in diameter, and 0.37m high. The remains of burnt coffin were found on the northwestern side of the chamber. Twenty-two grave goods were found, includ-

ing proto-porcelains, geometrically decorated potteries, jade tubes, and whetstones. The proto-porcelains include urns, jars and *dou*-bowls, all in the east and north

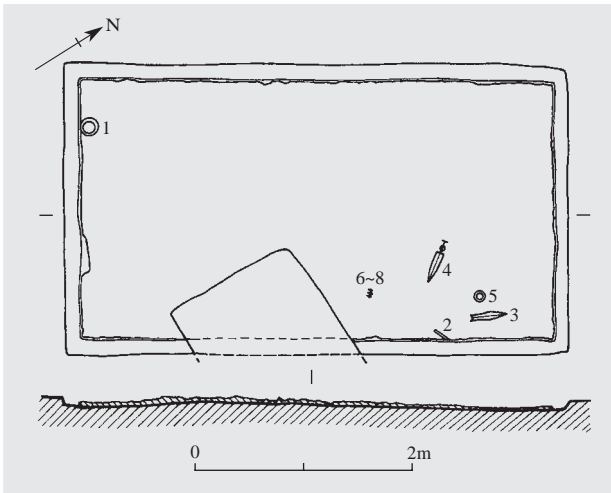


Figure 12. PYD3M1 (Plan and Section)

1. Pottery Jar
2. Bronze Knife
3. Bronze Spearhead
4. Bronze Dagger
5. Proto-porcelain Yu-basin
- 6–8. Bronze Arrowheads



Figure 13. PYD3M1 (East–West)

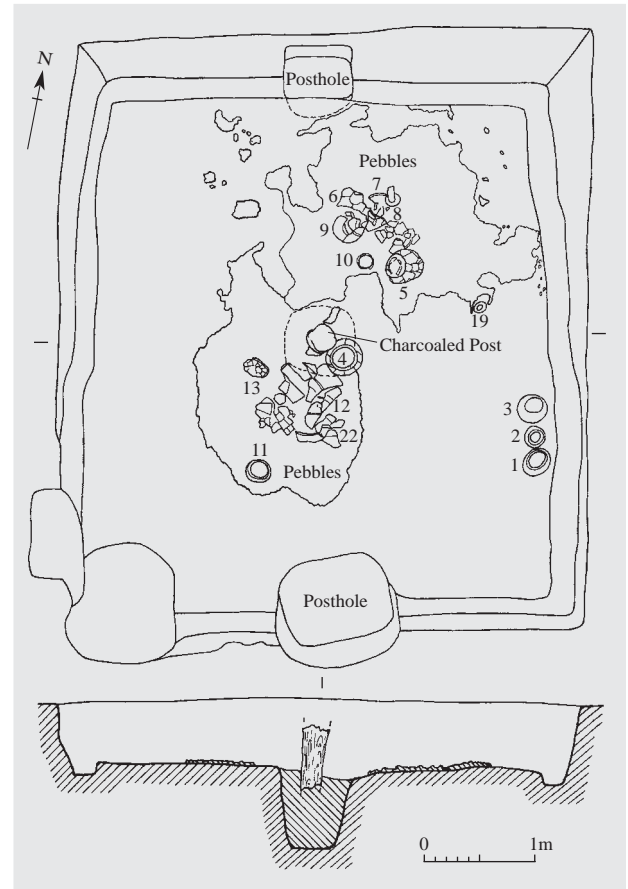


Figure 14. PYD7M1 (Plan and Section)

- 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11 and 13. Pottery Jars
- 2 and 4. Proto-porcelain Jars
- 7, 9 and 10. Proto-porcelain Dou-bowls
12. Proto-porcelain Urn
- 14–18, 20 and 21. Jade Tubes
19. Pottery Dou-bowl
22. Whetstone (Jade tubes are covered by other grave goods and invisible on the diagrams)



Figure 15. PYD7M1 (South–North)

of the chamber (Figures 14 & 15).

Madiwei Earth Mound Burials

Madiwei is located to the north of Yangshan sub-village of Guanjiucun. It is a “U”-shaped hill. Twelve earth mound burials were excavated. Two of them were introduced as following:

1. Mound No. 7 (PMD7). Located on the northern platform of the hill, slightly higher than the ground, about 13m in diameter.

Burial D7M1. Located on the east of the platform, this burial used the weathered rock cliff as its pit wall, about 0.75m below the surface. Thirteen black-slipped pottery wares with geometric designs were found lining up or piling up in a south-north orientation. The vessels include jars and urns, and most of them are jars. The mouth of some high vessels was damaged by later activities (Figures 16 & 17).

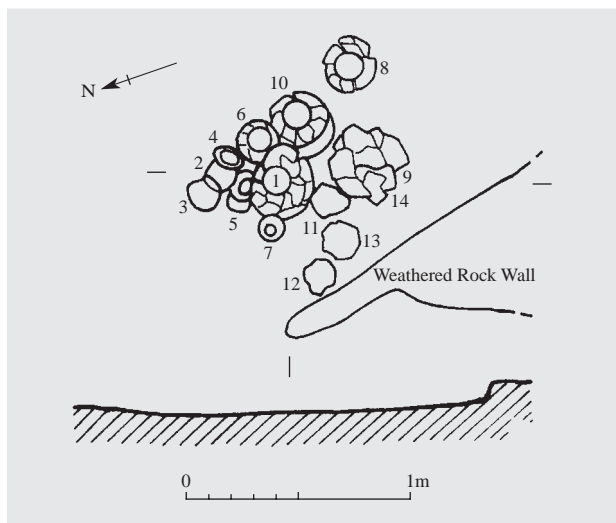


Figure 16. PMD7M1 (Plan and Section)
1. Pottery Urn 2–13. Pottery Jars



Figure 17. PMD7M1 (North–South)

2. Mound No. 11. Located on top of the southwestern hill, this mound had a truncated pyramid-shape, the bottom is 17 by 17m, and the top is 10 by 10m.

Burial D11M1. This burial has a shallow pit, 5.4 by 3m, and 0.15–0.42m deep. The pit bottom is slightly dipping to the south, fully paved with pebbles. A shallow ditch of 0.15–0.2m wide and 0.15m deep was dug out along the pit wall. Twenty-one grave goods were found. The pottery jars and proto-porcelain jars are in the southwest corner of the pit, the bronze dagger is on the west of the pit, and the rest of bronze artifacts such as *ge*-dagger axes, spears, adzes, knives, and arrowheads are in the southeast of the pit. The pottery and proto-porcelains are decorated with impressed checks and zig-zag designs. Four stone blocks were regularly put in the west of the pit, and these were probably the supporting stones for boxes (Figure 18).

Lusigang Earth Mound Burials

Lusigang is located on the western hill between Xidong sub-village and Shanxia sub-village of Guangjiucun. Three mounds were excavated.

Mound No. 2 (PLD2). This mound was in a rectangular truncated pyramid shape. Its west and east sides have two tiers, the lower tier is 19.8 by 14m, and the top is 12.5 by 8.5m. It is about 2m high. Two burials (D2M1 and M2) were found superimposing each other.

D2M1, a pit burial with a ramp, orientation 165°. The

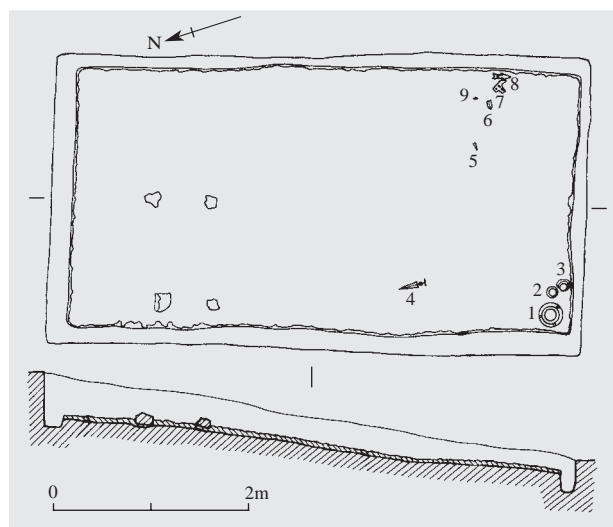


Figure 18. PMD11M1 (Plan and Section)
1 and 3. Proto-porcelain Jars 2. Pottery Jar 4. Bronze Dagger 5. Bronze Adze 6. Bronze Knife 7. Bronze *Ge*-dagger Ax 8. Bronze Spearhead 9. Bronze Arrowheads (11 Pieces)

sloping ramp is in the south, 3.2m long, 0.75–0.45m wide. The tomb pit is 4.8 by 2.3m, and 0.6m deep. Six grave goods were found. The plain or mat-impressed pottery jars are in the south, and the bronze sword is in the rear west (Figure 19).

D2M2. This is vertical pit burial with a ramp, orientation 145°. The ramp and the eastern pit wall were intruded by Burial M1 for about 0.35m deep. The ramp is in the south, trapezoidal, 1.3m long, 0.35–1.5m wide. The mouth of the burial pit is rounded rectangular, 4.9 by 3m, and 1m deep. The southern bottom sunk in about 0.2m, and it was mostly paved with pebbles. A ditch of 0.15–0.2m wide and 0.1m deep was dug out along the wall. Six grave goods were found on the southeast of the pit, all of them were pottery and proto-porcelains (Figure 20).

Chronology and Periodization

On the basis of the burial structures and the comparative study of the grave goods, these 33 earth mound burials can be divided into three periods.

Period One. This includes the eight burials on the bottom of Shegonggang D2 and Maweidi D7.

These burials have black-slipped and soft potteries, similar to those found in the Period One of the Jiantounong site, Jiangshan County, Zhejiang Province. These potteries are widely found in northern Fujian, and they are identical with those found in the kilns at Mao'ernongshan, Pucheng County, Fujian Province. The C-14 date of the charcoal from the eight burials at Shegonggang D2 is 4600 BP. However, the 10 C-14 dates from the Mao'ernongshan kilns are 3465–4070 BP. Therefore, the age of the eight burials under Shegonggang D2 and Madiwei Mound No. 7 is between 3500–4600 BP, about the period of Xia and Shang Dynasties.

Period Two. This includes Shegonggang D1M1, D2M01, D3M1, D5M1, D6M1, Yangshan D1M1, D3M1, D4M2, D5M1, D6M1, D7M1, D8M1, D10M1, D11M1, Madiwei D9M1, D10M1, D11M1, D8M1, D2M1 and D12M1.

These burials either have shallow pits or they are surface burials. The bottoms are mostly paved with pebbles. The bronzes are Western Zhou style, and the proto-porcelains are similar to those found in the Western Zhou period mound burials in southern Zhejiang and Anhui provinces. The C-14 dates of the charcoals from Yangshan Mound No. 1 and No. 8 are 2920 ± 40 BP

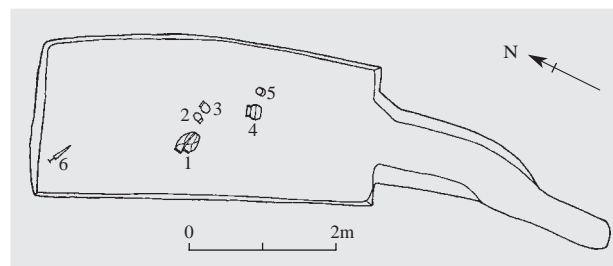


Figure 19. PLD2M1 (Plan)
1–5. Pottery Jars 6. Bronze Sword

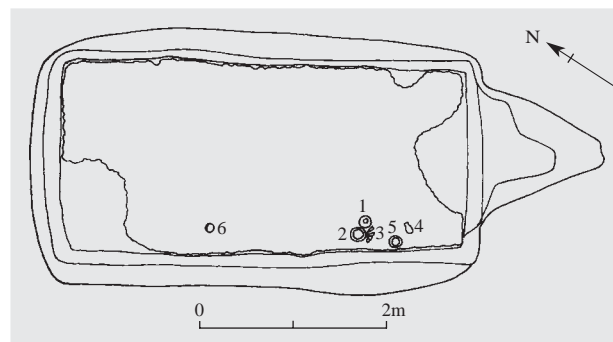


Figure 20. PLD2M2 (Plan)
1 and 3–6. Pottery Jars 2. Proto-porcelain Jar

and 2975 ± 40 BP, indicating they are in the early Western Zhou.

Period Three. This includes Shegonggang D4M1, Shaiguping D1M1, Yangshan D4M1, Madiwei D1M1, D3M1, D5M1, Lusigang D1M2, D2M2, D3M1, D1M1 and D2M1.

On the basis of the styles of bronze swords, proto-porcelains, geometrically decorated pottery and the burial structure with ramps, these burials are in the Spring-and-Autumn Period.

A number of burials, such as Madiwei D8M1, D2M1, D12M1 and Lusigang D1M2, D2M2, D3M1, show transitional features between Period Two and Period Three, suggesting they are in late Western Zhou and early Spring-and-Autumn Period.

Conclusion

1. These earth mound burials are the first group of its kind found in Fujian Province, filling a regional gap in southeastern China.

2. These burials produced a group of pottery assemblage, including black-slipped pottery, proto-porcelains, and hard potteries with impressed geometric designs. The assemblage of bronze artifacts is the richest discovery of bronzes so far found in Fujian.

3. The age of these burials ranges from Xia, Shang, Western Zhou, and Spring and Autumn Period, filling a chronological gap of Fujian archaeology.

4. The Yue-style bronzes, the weapons in particular, carry significant implications for study the history of the pre-Qin societies in Fujian.

5. The burials with black-slipped pottery are impor-

tant for searching the origin of the earth mound burials in south China. The changes of burial structures from surface burial to shallow pit, and finally to deep pit, demonstrate the transformation of the earth mound burials in Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn Period. This change carries general implications for understanding the transformation of earth mound burials in southern China.

Postscript: This report was published in *Kaogu* 考古 (Archaeology) 2007. 7: 28–37, written by Yang Cong 杨琮 and Lin Fandi 林繁地. The present version is prepared by Yang Cong and translated into English by Tianlong Jiao 焦天龙.