Researching the Cultural History of Xiangyang through Archaeological Remains

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This paper summarizes the results of several years of study on the archaeology and history of Chu expansion into the Xiangyang region. Focusing on a portion of archaeological evidence excavated from the cemetery site of Bianying, it outlines two conclusions regarding the nature of Chu cultural influence on the area that have significant implications for how we look at the history of early state expansion during the first millennium BCE. In doing so, it also introduces several methodological and theoretical innovations in the study of early China that can be made when semiotic interpretations of material culture are paired with quantitative data analysis and close reading of excavated and transmitted texts.

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