

On Korean Peninsular Historical Linguistics: A Review of Recent Studies on the Languages of Early Korea

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Abstract

This paper is a review of four recent monographs published on the historical linguistics of the early Korean Peninsula. I provide an overview of merits, shortcomings, and suggestions for improvement in this vastly important—and in some ways, nascent—field of Northeast Asian linguistics. Although some of my comments may seem critical, they are intended to be constructive, with the goal of improving our understanding of the languages of early Korea. I also wish to emphasize from the beginning that, despite their shortcomings, these publications are to be commended, as few studies have been published in this area of research, and as the prerequisite philological work and relevant methodologies have not yet been firmly established in this area of Korean studies. My comments in this review should not be taken as criticism of any individual scholars, but rather, as criticism of certain approaches and trends in analyzing and interpreting the earliest linguistic data of the Korean Peninsula.

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General Remarks

Despite the fascinating and rich ethnolinguistic history of the early Korean Peninsula, the methodological shortcomings of the currently dominant research paradigms have hampered progress in analyzing the earliest data on the languages of the Korean Peninsula. Many issues need to be addressed, especially the current trends toward homogenizing the languages and cultures of the early Korean Peninsula, denying the existence of the conservative frontier dialect or dialects of Chinese spoken on the Korean Peninsula in the pre-Unified Silla period, and the fact that standard philological techniques and mainstream approaches to historical-comparative linguistic reconstruction have not yet been firmly established in this area of study.¹

1. Homogenizing the Languages of the Early Korean Peninsula

In the field of Korean studies, there is a widespread misconception that all languages spoken on the Korean Peninsula in the past are related to the of-

¹ For additional discussion of these and other problems, see Beckwith (2006, 2007, 2005, 2010a, 2010b), Shimunek (2017, 2021), and others.

ficial language of modern Korea. It has been convincingly demonstrated that this view is incorrect, as the ancient Korean Peninsula was characterized by multilingual and multicultural diversity.²

A tradition of homogenization has pervaded most work on pre-Koryŏ early Korean Peninsular historical linguistics and ethnolinguistic history. This is not necessarily due to a conscious *decision*, but because of not challenging or testing tradition-based approaches, adhering to methodological approaches which diverge significantly from mainstream historical-comparative linguistic methods, and because of a tendency to omit or not directly consult pre-translated original works by foreign scholars on early Korean Peninsular languages. Early Korean Peninsular historical linguistics is an open frontier for fruitful research, although the field itself requires fundamental revision before we can move forward.

It has been known since 河野六郎 Kōno Rokurō (1987) that the early Korean Peninsula was characterized by at least two very different languages, i.e., 扶餘 Puyŏ languages³ and 韓 Han languages.⁴ Beckwith (2004/2007) conclusively demonstrates that the Koguryŏ language is a Puyŏ language, divergently related to Japanese to the exclusion of other languages. Some scholars, confronted with Beckwith's revolutionary findings, have attempted to suppress this discovery in pursuit of modern revivals of the tradition-based theories.

The Puyo-Koguryoic languages and the Koreanic languages were spoken in the area that later became the modern states of Korea, so they are both certainly connected with the ethnolinguistic *heritage* of the Korean Peninsula—no one should ever dispute this—but that does not mean that the languages themselves are divergently related to Korean, i.e., that they are daughter languages of a common proto-language. In fact, the extant data suggests quite the contrary: Based on the *linguistic data* alone, it is more appropriate to speak of the Puyo-Koguryoic *branch* of the Japanese-

² On the linguistic diversity of early Korea, see Kōno (1987), Beckwith (2005, 2007, etc.), Kiyose & Beckwith (2006, 2008), Shimunek (2021), and others.

³ Hereafter: 'Puyo-Koguryoic.'

⁴ Hereafter: 'Koreanic.'

Koguryoic language family as spoken in Manchuria and on the early Korean Peninsula.⁵ The Koreanic language family is an entirely separate and unique language family, so far unrelated to any other identifiable languages on Earth,⁶ apart from the extinct Koreanic languages of Antiquity, and certain conservative and progressive modern daughter languages such as Cheju, Yukchin, and divergent Hamgyōng dialects, perhaps treating Tashkent Korean and other Koryōmal 高麗말 varieties⁷ as languages, too.⁸

2. Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese

As demonstrated by Beckwith (*KLJ*), the Middle Chinese dialect or dialects of the Korean Peninsula before the middle of the Unified Silla period were highly conservative, retaining phonological characteristics of Late Old Chinese.⁹ I term this ‘Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese.’¹⁰ It is apparent that none of the authors of the four books under review read Beckwith’s groundbreaking work on this topic.

3. Philology: A Science Not Yet Firmly Established in Northeast Asian Linguistics

Many studies on early languages of Northeast Asia are marred by philological shortcomings: Few scholars check the original sources, identify copyist errors, attempt text-critical notes, identify all known early text variants, attempt archetypes, identify errors in text transmission, or analyze the textual data itself before proceeding to linguistic analyses. This is true not only of studies in Korean Peninsular historical linguistics, but of many studies on other early languages of Northeast Asia in general. In the case of

⁵ Beckwith (2005, 2007).

⁶ The Altaic language family theories have been thoroughly disproven (*q.v. infra*).

⁷ in Russian: Корёмар *Koryomar*.

⁸ For a groundbreaking fieldwork-based study of Tashkent Korean, see Ross King (1987).

⁹ For details on the phonology of this dialect of Chinese, see *KLJ* (93-105 et passim).

¹⁰ *q.v. LASM* (xxiv, 81-82, 84-88, 145) and Shimunek (2021).

Korean Peninsular philology, original source materials are now freely available online to the public—for example, on the indispensable website <db.history.go.kr>. As anyone who has worked with the 三國史記 *Samguk Sagi* and the 三國遺事 *Samguk Yusa* will know, even the earliest extant editions of these vastly important texts—i.e., the 1512 Kyujanggak editions (SS1512 and SY1512)—are rife with scribal errors that must be corrected before undertaking linguistic analyses.

Reviews of the Books

Yi Wŏnhŭi [李元熙]. 2018. *Ilbon yŏldo-ŭi Paekcheŏ* 日本列島の百濟語 [The Paekche Language of the Japanese Archipelago]. Sŏul: Churyusŏng ch’ulp’ansa. 616 pp. ISBN 978-89-6246-354-5.

This book attempts to address an exciting topic, the basic thesis of which I agree with—i.e., that early Korea had a fundamental ethnolinguistic impact on early Japan. Yi begins his book as follows:

“우리는 고대 한국어에 대하여 알지 못하고 있다. 백제어나 고구려어는 물론 통일신라 시대의 언어에 대하여도 캄캄한 실정이다. 고려시대의 말조차도 거의 모르고 있다. 우리들은 한국어를 자유자재로 사용하여 의사소통을 하고 있지만, 이 한국어를 삼국시대 이전으로 계속하여 거슬러 올라가면 어떻게 될까? 즉 한국어의 기원은 무엇인가에 대하여는 더더욱 캄캄하기만 하다.” (IYP 7)

[We do not know about Old Korean. The reality is murky, not only for Paekche and Koguryŏ, but also for the language of Unified Silla. Even the language of the Koryŏ period is almost unknown. We communicate freely in Korean, but what happens if we trace this Korean language back to before the Three Kingdoms period? As for the origin of the Korean language itself, we are mostly in the dark.]

Yi is using the word 古代 韓國語 ‘Old Korean’ in the traditionalist sense referring to all languages and dialects of the early Korean Peninsula. It is more accurate to use this term to refer only to the 韓 Han (Koreanic) lan-

guages and dialects of that time.¹¹ *Pace Yi*, we have significant data on the languages of Silla, Paekche, Koguryō, and even Kara (Kaya); much of this data has just not been adequately studied yet, aside from Koguryō (q.v. *KLJ*).

“왜 일본의 방언에는 수많은 고대 한국어가 숨어 있을까? 백제 멸망 이후 백제와 고구려의 유민들이 대거 도왜 하였기 때문일까? 그것도 하나의 이유이지만, 4세기 후반부터 5세기에 걸쳐 많은 가야인들이 집단으로 도왜 하여 왜지를 정복하였던 점에도 큰 원인이 있다고 생각한다.” (*IYP* 8)

[Why are there so many Old Korean words hiding in Japanese dialects? Is it because Paekche and Koguryō people who were displaced after the fall of Paekche emigrated to Japan? That is one reason, but I think the biggest reason is that from the late 4th century to the early 5th century, many Kaya people collectively emigrated to Japan and conquered Japanese territory.]

Early Korean Peninsular cultural, linguistic, and technological influence on Yamato Japan is certain, but Yi provides no historical documentation of this here, nor of any of his above-mentioned claims.¹² The majority of lexical comparisons (*IYP* 12-599) deviate from established historical linguistic methods. One comparison is in fact a Chinese loanword into both Korean and Japanese, as I will demonstrate below. Some proposals also include onomatopoeic words, nursery words, and other words known to be non-distinctive for comparative linguistics.¹³ Chapter 17 “삼국사기 지명과 일본의 방언” [The *Samguk Sagi* Toponyms and Japanese Dialects] (*IYP* 547-60) reveals that Yi did not consult *KLJ*, the most methodologically sound linguistic study of the Koguryō toponyms.

The book’s title and Yi’s comments above suggest that in his usage, 百濟語 *Paekcheō* ‘Paekche language’ ambiguously and inclusively denotes

¹¹ q.v. Shimunek (2021: 81 n.54).

¹² For example, Gisaburo N. Kiyose’s identification of early Korean Peninsular elements in Japanese toponyms (2004).

¹³ On non-distinctive words in lexical comparisons, see Campbell (1999) and *KLJ* (234-35).

the languages of Koguryō, Paekche, and Kara (Kaya). This is in stark contrast to nearly all previous studies on the languages of these states and does not accurately reflect the known ethnolinguistic diversity of the early Korean Peninsula.

A few of the words are indeed likely to be early Koreanic loanwords in Japanese.¹⁴ For example, Yi compares modern South Chōlla (Jeolla) dial. *사살* in the phrase *사살래* ‘long tobacco pipe (긴 담뱃대)’ and its LMK etymon with MSJ *sasa* ‘Northern bamboo’ and Jpn Shimane dial. *sasara* ‘bamboo’ (*IYP* 173-74). This etymology is likely to be correct, but more details are needed. Specifically, LMK **sāsár* ‘branch of bamboo’ is first attested in 1481 in the 杜詩諺解 *Tusi Ōnhae*, one of the earliest Hangul texts.¹⁵ On the Japanese side, MSJ *ささら sasara* ‘bamboo whisk’ should also be mentioned. This is likely to be a Koreanic loanword into Japanese, although the historical development of the Japanese forms, relevant archaeological finds (if any), and a plausible historical context need to be clarified before fully accepting this etymology.

Another probable etymology is given by Yi in his comparison of MSK 떡 and North P’yōngan (Pyeonggan) dial. *시더구* ‘rice cake,’ their LMK etymon, and putative Old Japanese “*sitoki*,”¹⁶ the latter glossed by him as “神에게 바치는 떡” [rice cakes offered to deities],¹⁷ as well as Kagoshima and Kumamoto dial. “*sitoki*,” glossed as a specific kind of rice cake, and Yamaguchi and Shimane dial. “*o-sitoki*” ‘id.’; Yi correctly explains *o-* 御 as an honorific prefix (*IYP* 214, 562). This lexical comparison requires additional discussion. Specifically, the attested LMK form is **sták* ‘rice cake.’¹⁸ 小倉進平 Ogura Shinpei attests early 20th-century North

¹⁴ I have not been able to check any separate sources for the Japanese dialect forms cited by Yi, as I did not have many Japanese sources available to me at the time of writing, so in this paper, I take Yi’s Japanese dialect forms at face value, assuming they are correct—which remains to be independently verified with other sources.

¹⁵ Nam (2021: 797b-798a).

¹⁶ Yi’s “*si-to-ki*” (*sic*). I have been unable to consult *JDB* to check the OJpn form myself.

¹⁷ A similar proposal is offered by Toh, who compares “*sták*” (i.e., LMK **sták*) with Jpn “*sitoki*” (2004: 465).

¹⁸ My phonetic reconstruction of the LMK Hangul form given by Nam (2021: 969b).

Hamgyōng (Hamgyeong) dial. 시덕 [sidək] and Kangwŏn (Gangwon) dial. 시더기 [sidəgi] ‘rice cake.’¹⁹ The attested MSJ form is *sitogi* しとぎ (菜). If the OJpn form can be verified, and if a plausible historical or archaeological background can be clarified in detail, this may indeed be a Koreanic-Japanese loanword.

Many of Yi’s other lexical comparisons are improbable and require careful reconsideration from the point of view of diachronic semantics, diachronic phonology, loanword relationships, philology, history, and archaeology. Moreover, comparisons of non-distinctive words must be excluded.²⁰ Due to time and space limitations, I will discuss only a few here.

For example, Yi proposes that MSK 쥬레 *k’yŏlle* ‘pair of shoes or socks’ and its dialectal variant 쥬리 *k’ŏri* are related by convergence to Jpn dial. *keri* ‘shoes, dress shoes, straw shoes’ (*IYP* 240). However, as demonstrated by Lee Dongseok, 쥬레 *k’yŏlle* is a modern semantic and phonetic innovation from earlier 쥬리 *kyŏri* ‘plow pulled by two oxen.’ The semantic extension to denote ‘pair’ (usually pairs of shoes or socks) is a very recent modern change.²¹ The Korean word is thus unlikely to be related to the Japanese dialect word.

One of Yi’s proposed Koreanic-Japanese loanwords is in fact a Chinese loanword. For example, Yi compares LMK 퉁~퉁 ‘pig’ and Jpn Kyōto dial. *don-*, the latter attested in *donko* ‘young wild boar’ and *dondoro* ‘trap for catching wild boars.’ Despite noting the obvious connection with Chinese 豚 (MSC *tún*, MSK *ton*, MSJ *ton*), Yi claims that ‘wild boar’ and ‘domesticated pig’ are fundamentally different, speculating that the Japanese word is a borrowing from Korean (*IYP* 131).

In fact, the bound morphemes MSK 豚 *ton* ‘pig,’ MSJ 豚 *ton* ‘pig,’ and Jpn Kyōto dial. *don* ‘wild boar’ are all reflexes of a Middle Chinese loanword in Korean and Japanese, from Middle Chinese 豚 (cf. tradition-

¹⁹ Cited here from Yi Sanggyu and Yi Sunhyōng’s redaction of Ogura Shinpei (2009 [1944]: 227 #90322).

²⁰ On non-distinctive words in historical-comparative linguistics, see Campbell (1999) and *KLJ* (234-35).

²¹ Lee Dongseok (2015).

based MChi ☆dwən, Pul. 313).²² The Kyōto dialect form is probably a later semantic innovation within Japanese and is certainly not a borrowing from Korean.

MSK 돼지 *twaɛji* ‘pig’ and LMK 돌~돋 ‘pig’ are reflexes of a borrowing from an earlier, Late Old Chinese form of the same Chinese word, as I demonstrate below:

MSK 돼지 *twaɛji* [twædʒi] ‘pig’ <도야지 (1908)²³ <되야지 (1891)²⁴ <되야지 (18th c.)²⁵ <도다지 (late 16th to early 17th c.)²⁶ <돋 (1461)²⁷ ~돋 (1447),²⁸ i.e., LMK *tòt ~ *tòt^h ‘pig’ + *-atsi ‘diminutive suffix denoting the young of certain domesticated animals.’

LMK 돋 *tòt ~돋 *tòt^h ‘pig’²⁹ <unattested Old Korean³⁰ ← 豚 LOC northern dial. *dont(ã)~central dial. *don(ã)>MChi (cf. Pul. 313: ☆dwən) → unattested mid- or late Unified Silla Sino-Korean >> 豚 돋 MSK *ton* ‘pig.’

²² Sino-Korean *ton* also occurs in recent borrowings from Japanese, such as 돈가스~돈까스 *tonkkasū* ‘pork cutlet’ ← MSJ 豚カツ *tonkatsu*, from 豚 *ton* ‘pork’+カツ *katsu*, abbrev. カツレツ *katsuretsu* ‘cutlet’ ← English *cutlet*.

²³ Attested in 兒學 (Nam 2021: 415b). For this and other sigla of early Hangul texts, see Nam (2021: 14-18 and 附錄 [appendix]: 12-41).

²⁴ Attested in 雅言 (Nam 2021: 431a).

²⁵ Attested in 物譜 (Nam 2021: 431a).

²⁶ Attested in 馬解 and 癸丑 (Nam 2021: 409b).

²⁷ Attested in 楞解 (Nam 2021: 420b-421a).

²⁸ Attested in 龍歌 (Nam 2021: 429b-430a).

²⁹ The LMK word 돋 ‘pig’ was retained as late as the early 20th c. as the 돋 element in Kwangju (Gwangju) dial. 맏돋 [met-tot] ‘boar, wild pig’ (Ogura [1944] 2009: 375 #17565), i.e., 맏<맏<맏 ‘wild’ (<되 ‘mountain’+<入 ‘genitive-attributive’) + 돋 ‘pig.’

³⁰ Although no pre-Chosŏn Koreanic words for ‘pig, boar’ are phonetically transcribed in extant texts, the earliest historical records from the Korean Peninsula and archaeological evidence suggest a long tradition of pig husbandry. On this tradition among the early Puyo-Koguryoic peoples, see *KLJ* 29. Note also 豬加, i.e., Pig *Ka [加], one of the four zoonym-based titles of the top officials of 夫餘 Puyŏ (later written 扶餘) below the sovereign according to the 三國志 *San Guo Zhi* (q.v. *KLJ* 42). Although 豬 ‘pig’ is semantically rendered, it is clear from this passage that the Puyŏ engaged in pig husbandry and had a word for ‘pig,’ cf. attested OKog *o ‘pig,’ cognate to OJpn *wi ‘pig, boar’ (*KLJ* 78, 140, 141), unrelated to Koreanic. On the Puyo-Koguryoic title *ka ‘official, minister’ see *KLJ* (122).

Thus, MSK 돼지 *twaeji* ‘pig’ is a progressive reflex of the diminutive form of LMK 들 *tòt~들 *tòtʰ ‘pig,’ which is a Middle Korean reflex of an unattested Old Korean word borrowed from a partially oralized dialect of northern Late Old Chinese.³¹ Modern Sino-Korean and Sino-Japanese *ton* are borrowed from the Middle Chinese reflex of the same word, i.e., 豚 ‘young pig.’

Other early Koreanic loanwords in Japanese could be included. For example, MSK 가마 *kama* ‘cooking pot’ (as in 가마솥 *kamasot* ‘iron cooking pot’) and MSJ 釜 (*kama*) ‘iron pot’ (also in kamado 竈 ‘traditional Japanese stove’) certainly indicate a Koreanic loanword in Japanese, supported by linguistic and archaeological evidence.

For a book on a topic of potentially profound implications, the prose is terse, and very little historical discussion is given, the main body of the work consisting primarily of lexical comparisons of modern Japanese dialects to Modern Standard Korean or to Korean dialects, sometimes including Late Middle Korean and putative Old Japanese forms.³² This is perhaps due to the fact that, in the author’s words, this book is a “자매편” [companion volume] to 일본 천왕과 귀족의 백제어 *Ilbon ch’ōnwang-gwa kwijok-ūi Paekcheō* (IYP 602), which I unfortunately have been unable to consult, but even as a companion volume, the paucity of philological, historical, and linguistic discussion often leaves the reader feeling perplexed.

In short, Yi’s book contains some intriguing comparisons, although the reader must carefully distinguish the genuine data from the abundant non-data, and each proposal must be meticulously reevaluated and revised in accordance with mainstream historical-comparative linguistic and philological methods. Yi’s lexical comparisons offer a preliminary step toward future work.

³¹ On partially oralized nasal codas in northern Late Old Chinese, see Beckwith & Kiyose (2018), *LASM* (389), Beckwith (2010b: 12-14), and others.

³² I will not discuss the concomitant issues of Yi’s lack of restricting comparisons to the earliest attested data. I encourage readers to read Campbell (1999) for a useful introduction to basic methods, techniques, and problematic data to be avoided in any comparative linguistic study.

Lee SeungJae = Yi Sŭngjae 이승재 [李丞宰]. 2017. *Mokkan-e kiroktoen kodaе hangugŏ* 木簡에 기록된 古代韓國語 [*The Old Korean Language as Documented on Wooden Tablets*]. Sŏul: Iljogak. 615 pp. ISBN 978-89-337-0736-4.

This is the strongest of Lee SeungJae's recent books on the early languages of the Korean Peninsula, and one of the most detailed books published in recent years on Silla and Paekche linguistic data. The merit of this book is that it addresses the wooden tablet text fragments from Silla and Paekche, an essentially untapped source of early Korean Peninsular linguistic data. The important textual data collected in this book, if reexamined, can be used for reconstructing Paekche and Silla lexemes and grammatical morphemes. Lee's book is a useful collection of early linguistic data from Silla and Paekche which have survived the test of time in archaeological sites, mostly in repositories in Buddhist monasteries, such as the Mirŭk Monastery collection and the Ham'an wooden tablet fragments. Lee identifies Paekche and Silla words, grammatical morphemes, phrases, and texts among the wooden tablet corpora, although his phonetic and semantic reconstructions are frequently exceedingly speculative and often deviate from mainstream historical-comparative linguistic methods.

Future analyses of this important source of linguistic data will enrich our knowledge of the ethnolinguistic history of early Korea and Northeast Asia. The photos of original text fragments reproduced by Lee are especially useful tools in this endeavor.³³

I offer comments on specific parts of the book below:

1) Lee gives an overview of 木簡 *mokkan* 'wooden tablets' and a history of their study (MKT 22-69), including a table of excavated *mokkan* organized

³³ Lee's table of contents (pp. 13-15) does not list the page numbers of these plates, so I will list them here: pp. 59-61, 65, 67, 71, 73, 77, 79, 82, 85-86, 120, 123-124, 129, 131-138, 141, 143, 145, 148, 150-151, 155, 164, 166, 169, 171, 173, 197, 198, 200, 203, 205, 210, 213-216, 223, 226, 228, 230, 319, 335, 337, 344, 346-347, 349, 352-354, 356, 390, 392.

by archaeological site and approximate dates (*MKT*, 29-30) and photos of the wooden tablet text fragments themselves. Most striking are the 咸安 Ham'an wooden tablets, which Lee dates to ca. 561 A.D. (*MKT* 30).

2) Lee devotes a full chapter to what he considers to be evidence of “數詞” [numerals] attested among the wooden tablet text fragments (*MKT* 70-114). I agree that these are indeed early words transcribed in Chinese characters, some of which may include Korean Peninsular orthographic innovations, but *pace* Lee, these words are of unknown semantic value and his phonetic reconstructions likewise require reconsideration.

3) “單位名詞와 普通名詞” [Unit Nouns and Common Nouns] (*MKT* 115-61). Lee identifies some useful semantic data in this chapter. Although the majority of the phoronyms discussed herein are not phonetically decipherable, they provide clear evidence of early Koreanic pseudopartitive (i.e., phoronym) phrasal order, i.e., ([NOUN] [NUMERAL] [CLASSIFIER]), as in modern Korean.³⁴

4) In “文書” [Official Records] (*MKT* 162-207), Lee attempts to decipher official texts written on the following four wooden tablets: 咸安 城山山城 221호 목간 Ham'an Söngsan Sansöng Wooden Tablet No. 221 (*MKT* 162-91); 경주 月城垓子 2호 목간과 20호 목간 Kyöngju Wölsöng Haeja Wooden Tablets No. 2 and No. 20 (*MKT* 191-99); and 경주 (傳)仁容寺址 1호 목간 Kyöngju (Sön) Inyong Monastery Site Wooden Tablet No. 1 (*MKT* 199-207).

5) “詩歌” [Poetry] (*MKT* 208-50) presents Lee's attempt to decipher poetry on Silla wooden tablets.

6) “表記法” [Transcription Methods] (*MKT* 251-304) presents Lee's inter-

³⁴ On the grammatical category phoronym (classifiers, measures, and related terms) and the pseudopartitive constructions (“classifier phrases”) in which phoronyms occur, see Beckwith (2007b).

pretation of the transcription methods employed in the wooden tablet texts. As examples of transcriptions identified in this chapter, note the following: 文尸 ‘writing,’ 蒜尸 ‘garlic,’ and 糸利 ‘thread’ (*MKT* 40, 264, 265), which Lee reconstructs as “*kær, *manær, *siri” (*MKT* 108).³⁵ Lee connects these with medieval and modern Koreanic words, but with only 尸 *r and 利 *ri as phonetic clues, I prefer to cautiously read these words as 文尸 *...r ‘writing,’ 蒜尸 *...r ‘garlic,’ and 糸利 *...ri ‘thread.’ For the word 蒜尸 ‘garlic,’ we cannot rule out a possible connection with OKog *meyr ‘garlic.’³⁶ Moreover, the word for ‘writing’ is attested in Old Koguryō and is likely to be a loanword from Puyo-Koguryoic into Koreanic.³⁷ The word for ‘silk thread’ is an Old Chinese loanword in early Koreanic.³⁸

For the character 尸, Lee follows the Middle Chinese value “si^L” (e.g., *HPP* 318, *HPK* 732) but correctly notes that in early Korean Peninsular transcriptions 尸 denotes a coda *r. *Pace* Lee’s claim that “이 대응관계는 한자음으로는 해결할 수 없다” [This correspondence cannot be resolved using Chinese character readings] (*MKT* 324), Beckwith offers a straightforward solution with explanatory power—i.e., that 尸 should be read in KPEMC as *iir, capable of transcribing foreign *r codas in languages of the early Korean Peninsula.³⁹ Beckwith’s reconstruction is further supported by other transcriptional characters indicating KPEMC *l corresponding to Tang Middle Chinese *s, and by the attested sound change of *l > *s in certain Chinese dialects.⁴⁰

Lee also identifies the following forms for ‘bamboo’ in the Ham’an tablets: 竹尸, 竹伊, and 竹利, which Lee reconstructs as “*다리” (i.e., *tari), and identifies the Modern Korean reflex 래 ‘bamboo’ (*MKT* 272-73). In fact, the only phonetic clues in these orthographic forms are the final pho-

³⁵ In an earlier paper, Lee treats these as “/*kil/,” “/*manʌl/,” and “/*siri” (Lee 2014: 177).

³⁶ On Old Koguryō *meyr ‘garlic,’ see *KLJ*, 82, 100, 116, 131, 174, 252.

³⁷ *KLJ* 174. On other Koguryō loanwords in Koreanic, cf. *KLJ* (133, 175), Shimunek (2021), and Lee Ki-Moon (1964).

³⁸ Beckwith (2010b: 7-11 et passim).

³⁹ *KLJ* (60, 61 n.38, 84, 91n.94, 99-101 et passim).

⁴⁰ q.v. *KLJ* (99-101 et passim).

netic elements; I reconstruct these as 竹尸 *...r, 竹伊 *...i, and 竹利 *...ri, all ‘bamboo.’

The Ham’an tablets attest the numeral 四卍 ‘four’ in the context 酒四卍瓮 ‘four jugs of wine’ (MKT 285, 407). This is a clear example of a classifier construction. Lee reconstructs “*neri” (MKT 453); I reconstruct *...ri and, speculatively, *nəri ‘four.’

Lee discusses Silla phonetic characters in the Silla *hyangga* (MKT 262), mostly repeating the traditional views. Lee’s phonetic reconstructions require reexamination, but to adequately address them would require many separate articles. As one example, Lee treats the Silla word 星利 ‘star’ in the 淸星歌 *Hyesōngga* ‘Song of the Comet’ as “벼리” (no asterisks given by Lee, MKT 262). Although the value “리” (i.e., *ri) is correct,⁴¹ it is more likely that the word in full should be read *iri, considering the glossed Han-Kara⁴² word *iri [一利] ‘star (星)’ among the Silla toponyms⁴³ (SS1512 34: 12a, line 3; see image on right), cognate to *iri-* in the South Ch’ungch’ōng (Chungcheong) dialect word *iri-ne* ‘Milky Way,’⁴⁴ composed of *iri* + 벼 *ne* ‘river.’ The South Ch’ungch’ōng dialect word is analyzable as an inherited calque of Literary Chinese 星河 ‘Milky Way’ (lit. ‘star river’).



7) “韓國字” [Korean National Characters] (MKT 305-42) aims to identify certain graphemes as uniquely Korean innovative orthographic elements in the wooden tablet text fragments. Lee is likely correct that some of the non-standard characters among the Silla and Paekche wooden tablets may indeed be genuine Korean Peninsular innovations.

8) “韓國字의 日本 傳播” [The Transmission of Korean National Characters

⁴¹ For examples of 利 rendering Old Koguryō *ri, see *KLJ* (89, 139 et passim).

⁴² I use the term ‘Han-Kara’ to refer to the Koreanic language spoken in Kara territory.

⁴³ Geographically identified by Toh Soo-Hee (1987: 327) as a Kara toponym.

⁴⁴ q.v. Lee & Ramsey (2011: 52).

to Japan] (*MKT* 343-61). Many would agree that Chinese writing reached Japan via the Korean Peninsula, undoubtedly through intensive Paekche influence on Yamato Japan, and Lee attempts to demonstrate this with paleography.

Lee proposes that the characters 畚 ‘rice paddy,’⁴⁵ 畝 ‘dry field,’ and others, are Korean Peninsular innovations (*MKT* 330, 344-45 et passim). His most eye-catching claim is that the character 畝 is first attested in Korea, whence it was transmitted to Japan (*MKT* 344-45). According to Lee, 畝 is attested among the 羅州 Naju tablets, apparently datable to 610 (*MKT* 30, 344). However, the single putative attestation of 畝 (*MKT* 151 image 31) is difficult to verify from the blurry image. A high-quality image must be examined before accepting this exciting proposal.

Some of the characters in this chapter have corresponding variants in Chinese, e.g., 叻, which Lee treats as “𠂇” (*MKT* 330), is a known orthographic variant in Chinese for 旨 ‘delicious.’⁴⁶ One would like to see more discussion of the highly diverse contemporaneous regional variants used in China on the advent of Chinese characters in Korea.⁴⁷ Comparisons with the Chinese character variants employed in early medieval states of North China could be enlightening. For example, the easily available 異體字字典 *Yitizi Zidian* compiled by the National Academy for Educational Research (<dict.variants.moe.edu.tw>) could be consulted. The proposed phonetic values for the characters in this chapter also require reassessment.

9) Chapter Ten: “音韻論” [Phonology] (*MKT* 362-403). Lee’s reconstruc-

⁴⁵ As shown by Lee, 畚 is attested among the 宮南 Kungnam tablets, apparently datable to the 7th c. (*MKT* 30, 344).

⁴⁶ Attested at least as early as the 篇海 *Pian Hai*, a lexicographical work dating to the Jurchen Empire, cited in the 康熙字典 *Kangxi Zidian* (cited here from 異體字字典 *Yitizi Zidian* [*Dictionary of Chinese Character Variants*], <dict.variants.moe.edu.tw/>, accessed September 11, 2021). If this variant appears in Chinese first in the Jurchen Empire, it could be the result of Korean orthographic influence on Jurchen-period Chinese writing.

⁴⁷ A similar sentiment is expressed by Kim Byung-Joon, who has convincingly demonstrated that the Literary Chinese inscriptions of Koguryō, such as the Kwanggaet’o Stele of 414 A.D., are written in completely normal Literary Chinese, and do not exhibit Koreanic linguistic elements (2010: 25-29).

tions here diverge from mainstream international approaches to historical-comparative linguistic reconstruction.

10) Chapter Eleven: “系統論” [Relationship Theories] (*MKT* 404-15). In this chapter, Lee, primarily based on his comparison of numerals (*MKT* 410-15), acknowledges that the “남방 韓系語” [Southern Han languages] and the “북방 扶餘系語” [Northern Puyō languages] are distinct from each other. He then proceeds to link the Han 韓 (i.e., Koreanic) languages with the Puyō languages as deriving from a common source node, i.e., his “扶餘·韓祖語” [Proto-Puyō-Han language] (*MKT* 414), but this family tree proposal contradicts his own numeral comparisons, which undeniably link the Puyō languages to Japanese.⁴⁸

11) Chapter Twelve: “결론” [Conclusion] (*MKT* 416-54). Lee’s comments here on early numerals (*MKT* 452-54) require reconsideration and revision. First, as mentioned above, it is not certain that Lee’s putative Paekche ‘numerals’ in Table 31 on page 453 are indeed numerals. Certainly, they are words from one of the two main languages of Paekche, phonetically transcribed in KPEMC, but the semantic values are unknown, as they are attested in a list with no other details, and the phonetic values are only partially reconstructible.

Lee’s reconstructions of the Silla numerals also require reexamination. Although I agree with his *semantic* analyses of the *Samguk Yusa* Silla numerals 一等 as ‘one’ and 二尸 as ‘two,’ the phonetic values of these words are only partially reconstructible. Lee’s “*hədən” and “*tubər” (*MKT* 453) are not fully supported by the data. Cautiously, following KPEMC readings, we can partially reconstruct 一等 ‘one’ as *...tə(ŋ), or more likely *...tɿ(N), and 二尸 ‘two’ as *...r.

In fact, there is a phonetically more complete transcription of the Han-Silla numeral ‘two’ in the 處容歌 *Ch’ōyongga* in 三國遺事 *Samguk*

⁴⁸ q.v. *KLJ* (14, 61, 73, 79, 110, 115, 132-33, 142-43, 159, 180-181, 252, 254).

Yusa as 二[勝],⁴⁹ which I reconstruct as *...yir ‘two’ below (characters used for their phonetic values are indicated in brackets):

二[勝隱]	吾	下	[於叱古]	二 勝 隱 吾 下 於 叱 古
*...yir-in	*...	*...	*itś-ko	
☆tu _{yir} -in				
two-TOP	my	below	exist-CVB	
‘Two of them were below me, and...’				
(SY1512 2: 18a, line 4). ⁵⁰				

(Image on the right from the 1512 Kyujanggak edition, adapted from <db.history.go.kr>)

Lee could include other early attestations of Koreanic ‘one’ and ‘two’ here, such as the following:

EMK *haton ~ *hatan [河屯] ‘one (一)’ (KYS)

EMK *hatan [カタナ] (MJpn *katana)⁵¹ ‘one (一)’ (NCR 7: 46b)

LMK *hanah* ‘one’

MSK *hana* ‘one’ ~ bound form *han-* ‘id.’

EMK *tuβur [途孛] ‘two (二)’ (KYS)

EMK *tuβur [ツフリ] (MJpn *tuβuri) ‘two (二)’ (NCR 7: 46b)

EMK dial.⁵² *toβu(r) [トフ] (MJpn *toβu) ‘two (二)’ (NCR 7: 46b)

⁴⁹ KPEMC 斤, 兮, 勝, and 支 were phonetically “close enough that they could be used to transcribe the same Old Koguryo syllable” (KLJ 101). I reconstruct 勝 as KPEMC *yir, capable of rendering foreign *kir ~ *yir sequences, e.g., OKog *kir [斤] (KPEMC *kir) ~ [斤乙] (KPEMC *kirir) ~ [勝] (KPEMC *yir) ‘tree, wood (木)’ (see also KLJ 80-81, 101, 251) and above, the Han-Silla sequence *yir.

⁵⁰ My analysis differs significantly from previous attempts at deciphering this song.

⁵¹ Note that OJpn and MJpn did not have [h], a segment which could be approximated with *k. Likewise, OJpn and MJpn did not have coda *n*, so foreign coda *n* would be rendered with *n* + vowel sequences, as Japanese moraic *n* (i.e., hiragana ん and katakana ン) is an early modern innovation.

⁵² This EMK dialect is labeled in Japanese as 貴賀國語 ‘the language of the Kika Country’ (NCR 7: 46b).

LMK : 𪛗 *tūr ~ : 𪛗ᄃ *tūrh ‘two’

MSK 𪛗 *tur* [tu] ‘two’ ~ bound form 𪛗 *tu-* [tu-] ‘id.’

Lee’s treatment of the Koguryō numerals could have been greatly improved if he had consulted the original 1512 Kyujanggak edition of the *Samguk Sagi* text, and if he had consulted Beckwith’s detailed philological treatment of the *Samguk Sagi* toponyms (*KLJ*). Specifically, *pace* Lee (*MKT* 453), Old Koguryō [密] is not “*mit”⁵³ but *mir ‘three,’ [于次] is reconstructible as OKog *ūtsi ‘five,’ and [難隱] is not a single morpheme but two morphemes, i.e., OKog *nan [難] ‘seven’ + OKog *-in [隱] ‘genitive-attributive suffix.’ Examples of this genitive-attributive suffix in Old Koguryō include the following:

難隱	別
*nan-in	*piar
seven-GEN	times
七重 ‘seven-fold’ (<i>KLJ</i> 61).	

要隱	忽次
*ya-in	*kuartsī
willow-GEN	mouth
楊口 ‘willow mouth’ (<i>KLJ</i> 78).	

Lee SeungJae follows 李基文 Lee Ki-Moon’s proposal that 那旦, which appears in the Kwanggaet’o Stele of 414 in the toponym 那旦城 *Nadan-sōng*,⁵⁴ i.e., ‘Nadan Fortress,’ is a variant transcription of the Koguryō numeral ‘seven’ (*MKT* 411); however, the semantic value of this toponym is

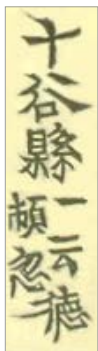
⁵³ Lee’s “*mit” here is in direct contradiction with his earlier interpretation of this word as “mil” (*HPK* 726).

⁵⁴ One of the first scholars to read characters 7-8 in line 4 of the 4th Face of the Kwanggaet’o Stele as 那旦 seems to be Chōng Inbo 鄭寅普 (1930, cited from Yi Ch’angu 2020: 253). Based on the photos and lithic impressions of the text as reproduced by Yi Ch’angu (2020), I fully agree with Chōng’s 那旦 reading, which Lee correctly follows.

not discernible from the text itself as it is not accompanied by any gloss. Lee Ki-Moon’s proposed reconstruction *nadan ‘seven’ (cited by Lee SeungJae) is primarily an attempt to match Tungusic *nadan* ‘seven,’ and contradicts the *Samguk Sagi* toponym gloss, which unambiguously indicates OKog *nan [難] ‘seven (七),’ cognate to Japanese *nana* ‘seven.’⁵⁵ More likely, the toponym Nadan-*sōng* 那旦城 in the Kwanggaet’o Stele renders early Old Koguryō *na *tan, the first element of which is OKog *na ‘bamboo,’ *na ‘land,’ or, less likely, *na ‘in, inside,’ and the second element of which is OKog *tan ‘valley,’ all of which are well attested in the *Samguk Sagi* glossed transcriptions of Old Koguryō toponyms.⁵⁶ This early Old Koguryō toponym thus denotes ‘Bamboo Valley,’ ‘Land Valley,’ ‘Earth Valley,’ or, less likely, ‘Inner Valley.’

Moreover, *pace* Lee (*MKT* 453), Koguryō 德頓 is not simply ‘ten.’ This sequence occurs in the *Samguk Sagi* in a Koguryō toponym phonetically transcribed 德頓忽, semantically glossed as Sipkok-*hyōn* 十谷縣 ‘Ten Valley County’ (*SS*1512 37: 4b, line 2; see image on the right), composed of OKog *tək [德], glossed as ‘ten (十),’ OKog *tan [頓] ‘valley (谷),’ and OKog *χuər [忽] ~ *kuər [骨], here corresponding to ‘county (縣),’ the latter also attested in the basic meaning ‘fort, fortress, walled city (城).’ These Koguryō words have unique cognates in OJpn *tə ~ *təwo ‘ten,’ OJpn *tani ‘valley,’ and probably OJpn *kura ‘storehouse, treasury.’⁵⁷

Lee also discusses 小川環樹 Tamaki Ogawa’s proposal



⁵⁵ *KLJ* 61, 110, 133, 143, 180-81, 252.

⁵⁶ Cf. OKog *na ‘bamboo’ (*KLJ* 85-86, 132, 252), OKog *na ‘land’ (*KLJ* 53-55, 67, 75, 88, 132-33, 167, 176, 252), and OKog *na ‘inside, in’ (*KLJ* 53-55, 90-91, 110, 116, 132, 135, 252).

⁵⁷ On OKog *tək ‘ten,’ OKog *tan ‘valley,’ OKog *kuər [骨] ~ *χuər [忽] ‘city (城), county (縣)’ (from AKog *kuru [溝婁] ‘city’), and their Old Japanese cognates, see *KLJ* (4-5, 41, 41n, 52, 53n, 56-58, 61, 64-65, 68, 70, 72-73, 77, 80-83, 85-87, 89-92, 95, 102, 109-10, 114-16, 126-28, 128n, 136, 138, 153-54, 170-71, 238-39, 250, 252-54). On OKog *kuər ~ *χuər, Beckwith notes that “Here it glosses the Chinese political term 縣 ‘county,’ so the gloss gives a Koguryō equivalent of it, suggesting that the ‘cities’ were the county seats of their counties, and had the same name, as in Chinese practice” (p.c., Christopher I. Beckwith, September 2021).

that 別 in certain Northern Wei Chinese texts is a loanword from Taghbach,⁵⁸ and that this word is to be connected with Written Mongol *būri* ‘each, every’ (*MKT* 454); Lee further argues that this is the same word as Koguryō 別, which he claims is connected with Silla and Late Middle Korean. Although I agree with Lee’s *motivation* to look for Serbi-Mongolic elements in Puyō languages,⁵⁹ Old Koguryō *piar [別] ‘times, -fold; layer’⁶⁰ is phonetically and semantically very different from Mongol *būri* ‘each, every,’ and no comparable words are attested among the extant Taghbach lexical corpora.⁶¹

OKog *piar [別] ‘times, -fold; layer (重),’ on the other hand, is cognate to OJpn *pe ‘-fold, times; layer,’ from reconstructible Common Japanese-Koguryoic *pira ‘layer; times, -fold.’⁶² Beyond Japanese-Koguryoic and Koreanic, OKog *piar, CJK *pira, and LMK *paŕ ‘id.’ are probably *convergently* related (i.e., in a loanword relationship) to Chinese 倍 *bèi* (from OChi *pere ~ *pele) and, more distantly—also by convergence—to Indo-European *pel- ‘-fold; to fold.’⁶³

12) The “參考文獻” [Sources Consulted] (*MKT* 455-67) includes works written in Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and English.

⁵⁸ On Taghbach ~ Tabghatch ~ Tabghach (拓跋 Tuoba ~ T’o-pa), an early medieval Serbi-Mongolic language, see *LASM* (121-68 et passim).

⁵⁹ Serbi-Mongolic elements in Japanese-Koguryoic languages (including, if not especially, the Puyo-Koguryoic branch) are likely given the historical fact that early Japanese-Koguryoic peoples are documented in the *Hou Han Shu* as being subject peoples of the Serbi (鮮卑 Xianbei), q.v. *LASM* (413 et passim), *KLJ* (34-35, 39, 41), and Kiyose (2001: 136-37). On identifiable early Serbi-Mongolic loanwords in Japanese-Koguryoic, cf. *LASM* (327n.132, 391-94, 403-04, 458). For a LOC → early Japanese-Koguryoic → Serbi-Mongolic loanword, see *LASM* (400-02). For an early Japanese-Koguryoic and Serbi-Mongolic loanword correspondence of unknown directionality, see *LASM* (410). For a study of Puyo-Koguryoic loanwords in Jurchen-Manchu, a language neighboring Serbi-Mongolic, see Shimunek (2021).

⁶⁰ *KLJ* 59, 61, 109, 117, 134-35, 180, 182, 253.

⁶¹ For a near complete listing of Chinese transcriptions of Taghbach words, see *LASM* 165-68.

⁶² *KLJ* 134-35.

⁶³ *KLJ* 180.

13) “英文抄錄” [English Abstract] (*MKT* 469-519), translated by Marjorie Grace Burge.

14) The book also provides a detailed “日文抄錄” [Japanese Abstract], translated by 伊藤貴祥 Itō Takayoshi (*MKT* 521-61).

Lee’s decision to have native speakers translate his abstract will certainly help spread the book’s findings to scholars outside Korea, and both the English and Japanese abstracts are very detailed. I only have one comment on Burge’s English translation of the Korean philological term 末音添記 *marŭm ch’ōmgi* as “final sound affixation” (*MKT* 474). From the point of view of modern morphological theory, this translation is imprecise, as these are not ‘affixes’ in the true morphological sense of the word, but rather are ‘annotations,’ as 記 *ki* denotes. I prefer to translate 末音添記 as ‘[word-]final phonetic annotations,’ as many of these phonetic annotations are the final part of a single morpheme.

Lee SeungJae = Yi Süngjae 이승재 [李丞宰] 2016. *Hanjaŭm-ŭro pon Koguryŏ ūmunch'egye* 漢字音으로 본고구려어 음운체계 [The Phonological System of the Koguryŏ Language as Seen from Chinese Character Transcriptions]. Söul: Iljogak. 754 pp. ISBN 978-89-337-0725-8.

This is the most recent—and the heaviest—book published on the Koguryŏ language, comprising a large collection of lexical and onomastic data. The amassed data itself is the main contribution of this work. Lee SeungJae describes his approach as follows:

“고구려어를 연구할 때에는 고구려의 人名, 地名, 官名 등이 중요한 연구 대상이다. 이들은 어휘단위이기 때문에 고구려어의 문법을 연구하는 것은 불가하다. 고구려어 연구에서 그래도 접근 가능한 연구 분야가 있다면 그것은 語彙論과 音韻論 분야이다. 어휘론에서는 고구려어의 어휘를 찾아내어 모든 다음에 이것을 후대의 중세 한국어나 알타이 제어와 비교하게 된다. 이것이 너무나 힘들고 버거운 일이므로 우리는 어휘론을 논의 대상에서 제외한다. 그 대신에 음운론 분야에 집중한다... 고구려어 표음자를 분석할 때에는 한어 중고음이 가장 좋은 기준이 된다.” (HPK 15-16)

[When studying the Koguryŏ language, the main data consist of personal names, toponyms, and official titles. Since these are lexical units, it is impossible to study Koguryŏ grammar. There are, however, accessible fields of research in Koguryŏ linguistics, namely, the lexicon and phonology. As for the lexicon, one must find and collect Koguryŏ words and then compare these with Middle Korean or the Altaic languages. Since this is such a difficult and daunting task, I have excluded the lexicon from my study. Instead, I focus on the field of phonology... When analyzing the Koguryŏ transcriptional characters, Middle Chinese readings are the best standard.]

Lee is correct that the data is lexical—specifically consisting, in the most tangible corpus of data—the 三國史記 *Samguk Sagi*—of individual words and morphemes in the form of semantically glossed and phonetically tran-

scribed toponyms. However, *pace* Lee’s statement that “고구려어의 문법을 연구하는 것은 불가능하다” [it is impossible to study Koguryŏ grammar], the *Samguk Sagi* provides solid data on phrase-internal morphosyntax, including inflectional and derivational suffixes, as well as clear evidence of object-verb syntactic order.⁶⁴ Furthermore, *pace* Lee, the Altaic language family theory has been thoroughly disproven.⁶⁵

Despite acknowledging the fact that individual lexical items comprise the only source of data on the Koguryŏ language, Lee proceeds to present a reconstruction of Koguryŏ phonology without first undertaking detailed philological, phonetic, or semantic analyses of individual words and morphemes. The appendix (*HPK* 709-40), which provides Lee’s interpretations of Koguryŏ syllables, does not analyze complete words and morphemes, and the phonetic reconstructions there and throughout the book require major revision.

Although Lee categorizes the data by source, little attempt is made to undertake the necessary philological work on this data. As shown by Beckwith (*KLJ*), the majority of Koguryŏ toponyms are phonetically transcribed and semantically glossed, but some of the Koguryŏ toponyms are semantic glosses with no corresponding phonetic transcription, some are reduplications and imitations (including phonetic imitations, semantic imitations, or a mixture of the two),⁶⁶ and there are many textual errors. Each of these toponyms must be meticulously analyzed one by one—as Beckwith (*KLJ*) has done—before moving ahead with reconstruction. Lee gives a verbose chapter on Koguryŏ phonology, but his lexical data—i.e., the basis of the data used in the chapter—was not analyzed first at the philological, morphological, or lexical levels. Some of the data he takes as “고구려어 表音字” [Koguryŏ phonetic transcriptional characters] is in fact not transcriptional at all: Although the majority are indeed attested in phonetic tran-

⁶⁴ q.v. *KLJ* 1, 7, 60-61, 67, 71-72, 81, 117-20, 160.

⁶⁵ *LASM* 1, *KLJ* (164-94 et passim), Beckwith (2006), Georg (2004), Clauson (1956), Abel-Rémusat (1820: 138) and others.

⁶⁶ See Shimunek (2021: 67-68) for an example of an inexact phonetic imitation and partial semantic imitation.

scriptions of Koguryŏ words, some are characters used as semantic glosses,⁶⁷ some are graphic errors,⁶⁸ graphic or phonetic imitations in semantic glosses,⁶⁹ and other non-transcriptions. These have been systematically addressed in *KLJ*.

Lee does not offer a chronological periodization of the Koguryŏ lexical data, even though the transcriptions span around five centuries, comprising three identifiable phonologically distinct periods of the Koguryŏ language, periodized by Beckwith (*KLJ*) as follows:

Archaic Koguryŏ (ca. 3rd c. A.D.), attested in Late Old Chinese transcriptions in the 三國志 *San Guo Zhi*, the 後漢書 *Hou Han Shu*, and other sources.⁷⁰

Early Old Koguryŏ (ca. 5th c. A.D.), attested in onomastic data in the 414 Kwanggaet'o Stele and other contemporaneous inscriptions.⁷¹

Old Koguryŏ (written down in 755 A.D.),⁷² transcribed in Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese⁷³ in the 三國史記 *Samguk Sagi*.

Lee's reconstructions—for example, his discussion of Koguryŏ 溝婁 and 骨 (*HPK* 283), his reconstructions in the appendix (*HPK* 709-40), and else-

⁶⁷ E.g., 國 (*HPK* 715: “kuk”) is, *pace* Lee, not a phonetic transcription, but a *semantic gloss* of OKog *piy ‘country, nation (國),’ which is also the OKog form of the ethnonym Puyŏ (q.v. *KLJ* 53, 135).

⁶⁸ E.g., 升 (*HPK* 732: “sinH”) is, *pace* Lee, not a phonetic transcription, but a graphic error for 斗 (q.v. *KLJ* 52).

⁶⁹ E.g., 守 (*HPK* 732: “siuH”) is, *pace* Lee, not a phonetic transcription, but a phonetic or graphic imitation of the character 遊 (of unknown meaning), used as a semantic gloss of OKog *kara (q.v. *KLJ* 86).

⁷⁰ Cf. *KLJ* 29-30, 32, 37, 39, 41-42, 46, 118-19, 120-27, 129-31, 139-40, 142-43, 250, et passim.

⁷¹ Cf. *KLJ* 29n-30n, 103, 130-31, 140.

⁷² On the periodization of Old Koguryŏ, see *KLJ* 2-3 et passim.

⁷³ My usage of this term is equivalent to ‘Archaic Northeastern Middle Chinese’ (q.v. *KLJ* 2-3, 93-105).

where—could have greatly benefitted from consulting Beckwith’s notes on Koguryō periodization and diachronic phonology.⁷⁴

If we apply Beckwith’s important findings to the mostly raw data amassed in Chapter 2 of Lee’s book, we will certainly expand and refine our diachronic understanding of the different periods of Koguryō lexical and morphological data.

I discuss specific chapters of Lee’s book below:

In Chapter 2 “고구려어 표음자” [Koguryō Transcriptional Characters] (HPK 41-118), Lee provides a useful list of lexical data from the Kwanggaet’o Stele (HPK 47-52). The early Old Koguryō toponym data here requires a separate lexical study.

The next major source of data in this chapter is a list of the *Samguk Sagi* toponyms (HPK 72-80). Consulting *KLJ* could have avoided repeating certain mistakes here. For example, Lee gives “買谷縣, 善谷縣” (HPK 76 #080). Beckwith has emended “買谷” in the *Samguk Sagi* original to *買吞,⁷⁵ rendering the well-attested words OKog *mey [買] ‘good (善),’ cognate to OJpn *mi ‘exalted, honored,’ and OKog *tan [吞] ‘valley (谷),’ cognate to OJpn *tani ‘valley’; OKog *tan ‘valley’ is also transcribed [旦] and [頓] in other toponym correspondences.⁷⁶



One important Koguryō toponym in the *Samguk Sagi* is not listed by Lee. This is 刀臘縣 ‘Torap County,’ semantically glossed as 雉嶽城 ‘Pheasant Crag city,’ rendering OKog *tawr ~ *tawl ‘pheasant,’ cognate to OJpn *tewri ‘bird’ > MSJ *tori* ‘bird’ and OKog *ap, ~ *aip ~ *fiaip ‘high mountain, crag,’ from AKog *yapma, cognate to AJpn and OJpn *yama ‘mountain’ > MSJ *yama* ‘mountain.’⁷⁷ This toponym correspondence is attested in the 1512 Kyujanggak edition of the *Samguk Sagi* (SS1512 37: 4b, line 3; see image on the left).

⁷⁴ e.g., *KLJ* 5, 41, 41n, 57, 82, 93-143, 171, 238-50, 252 et passim.

⁷⁵ *KLJ* 77.

⁷⁶ q.v. *KLJ* 130-31, 136, et passim.

⁷⁷ *KLJ* 72, 121, 138.

Lee's lists of Koguryŏ onomastica in Japanese sources (*HPK* 86-88),⁷⁸ early Koguryŏ titles (*HPK* 91),⁷⁹ and all other Koguryŏ data listed by Lee requires reconsideration. If the prerequisite philological work is undertaken on this data, it has the potential to increase our understanding of the Koguryŏ lexicon and Koguryŏ phonology.

Due to the idiosyncratic methods employed by Lee, his analyses in Chapter 3 “음절별 음운 분석” [Phonological Analysis by Syllables] (*HPK* 119-222), Chapter 4 “聲調” [Tone] (*HPK* 223-67), Chapter 5 “子音” [Consonants] (*HPK* 268-408), and Chapter 6 “母音” [Vowels] (*HPK* 409-653) are difficult to follow and deviate from mainstream historical-comparative reconstructions.

Lee reads Chinese characters in a now-superseded Karlgren-based theoretical reconstruction of central Middle Chinese, but *pace* Lee, the Koguryŏ data is transcribed in two different dialects: The Archaic Koguryŏ data (dating to the 3rd c.) is transcribed in northeastern Late Old Chinese and the Old Koguryŏ data (written down in 755) is transcribed in Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese.⁸⁰ It would have been better to consult *attested* Tang Middle Chinese for the most accurate Tang Middle Chinese forms,⁸¹ but these readings, too, are not accurate for most of the extant Koguryŏ data, as *Tang* Middle Chinese did not form the basis of Sino-Korean until sometime *after* the Tang-Silla alliance unified the Korean Peninsula. Before that time, the dominant Chinese dialect of the peninsula was Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese (KPEMC). The shift from Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese to Tang Middle Chinese as the standard way of reading Chinese characters on the Korean Peninsula was probably not immediate, and most of the toponyms phonetically transcribed in the *Samguk Sagi*, although written down in 755, clearly represent local conservative frontier dialects of Chinese retaining features of Late Old

⁷⁸ To Lee's list we should add the OJpn transcription マカリ *makari* (q.v. *KLJ* 47).

⁷⁹ q.v. *KLJ* 43, 47 et passim.

⁸⁰ See discussion above.

⁸¹ q.v., Csongor (1952, 1954, 1960, 1962), Takata (1988, 1993), Takeuchi (2008), and many other studies.

Chinese phonology.⁸²

In Chapter 4, Lee proposes that Koguryŏ had “聲調” [tone], rendered as “pitch accent” in the English abstract (*HPK* 690). Lee claims that “聲調에서만 차이가 나는 표음자가 의외로 많다” [there are surprisingly many transcriptional characters that differ only in tone] and further claims to identify “最小對立 쌍” [minimal pairs] which he believes indicate contrastive pitch-tonal distinctions in Koguryŏ (*HPK* 223). However, Lee’s analyses are based on data which has not undergone the prerequisite philological work (*q.v. supra*).

It is also important to remember that although Tang Middle Chinese is widely believed to have been tonal, we have no idea what kind of pitch or tonal system (if any) existed in Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese, which was a conservative frontier dialect retaining many phonological characteristics from Late Old Chinese, a decidedly *non*-tonal language.⁸³

Beckwith’s work on Old Koguryŏ phonology does not support Lee’s view that Koguryŏ was a pitch-accent or tonal language: As Beckwith notes, “there is no information available on pitch accents in Koguryo” (*KLJ* 160). The periodization is also important here, as some of the data included in Lee’s tone chapter date to the 3rd c. and thus are Archaic Koguryŏ words transcribed in Late Old Chinese (see comments above on the periodization of the Koguryŏ language).

Although Lee’s “참고문헌” [Sources Consulted] (*HPK* 677-83) lists Beckwith (*KLJ*)—the first book written specifically on the Koguryŏ language—Lee’s single reference to *KLJ* is a single word on page 401, cited not directly from *KLJ*, but through 鄭光 Chŏng Kwang’s misinterpretation.⁸⁴ It should also be noted that Lee does not consult 崔南熙 Ch’oe

⁸² For details on the phonology of this dialect, see *KLJ* (1-2, 93-105 et passim).

⁸³ It has been demonstrated, however, that Late Old Chinese was characterized by distinctive lexical stress, *q.v.* Beckwith & Kiyose (2018).

⁸⁴ In fact, *pace* Lee’s comments on research claiming that “고구려어에 유성자음이 있다고” [the Koguryŏ language has voiced consonants] (*HPK* 401), Beckwith has demonstrated that “Old Koguryo shows no phonemic distinction between voiced and unvoiced stops” (*KLJ* 57). Beckwith

Namhŭi (2005), the first Korean book on the Koguryŏ language, published after the 2004 first edition of *KLJ*.

In the English abstract (*HPK* 685-708), Lee follows the traditional date of the founding of the Koguryŏ kingdom as 37 B.C. (*HPK* 685). However, *pace* Lee, “the earliest historically solid references to Koguryo appear to be... events in 12 A.D. ... and a ‘tribute’ mission sent by the Koguryo king to the Chinese court in 32 A.D.” (*KLJ* 45). The earliest *linguistic data* on the Koguryŏ language is datable to the 3rd century A.D., i.e., the Archaic Koguryŏ period (*q.v. supra*).

As for the appendix “고구려어 表音字의 音價와 出典” [The Phonetic Values and Attestations of Koguryŏ Transcriptional Characters] (*HPK* 709-40), readers are advised to consult *KLJ* for the most accurate reconstructions of the Koguryŏ language.

reconstructs the word in question as *puk (*KLJ* 135), not “/*buk/” as Lee claims. Readers who wish to delve deeper into Koguryŏ philology and linguistics are encouraged to consult Beckwith’s original work in English (specifically the 2007 revised second edition), *not* Chŏng Kwang’s Korean translation nor his review, which both misinterpret the important findings of Beckwith’s book.

Lee SeungJae = Yi Sŭngjae 이승재 [李丞宰]. 2013. *Hanjaŭmŭro pon Paekcheŏ chaŭmch'egye* 漢字音으로 본 백제어 자음체계. 서울: 태학사 [*The Consonantal System of the Paekche Language as Seen from Chinese Character Transcriptions*]. Sŏul: T'achaksa. 392 pp. ISBN 978-89-5966-627-0.

This book follows much the same methodology as *HPK*. As such, many of my comments above on *HPK* can be applied here. Due to space and time limitations, I will only address a few points.

First, it is clear that “백제어” [百濟語, the Paekche language] for Lee is a *single* language. Lee’s bibliography does not list 河野六郎 Kōno Rokurō’s (1987) seminal work on Paekche bilingualism—an absolute *sine qua non* for any study of the languages (in the plural) of Paekche—nor does Lee address Paekche multilingualism in his book. As a result, Lee inaccurately treats the two distinct languages of Paekche—i.e., Han-Paekche (a Koreanic language) and Puyō-Paekche (a Puyo-Koguryoic language distantly related to Japanese)—as a single language.

The chapter “백제어 표음 자료” [Sources Phonetically Transcribing the Paekche Language] (*HPP* 33-127) presents the main data of the book. However, as in his Koguryō book, no significant attempt is made to do the prerequisite philological work on this data, which is essentially taken at face value with few, if any, significant revisions. (See my comments above on textual problems in the *Samguk Sagi* toponym corpora).

Lee’s “백제어 수사” [Paekche numerals] (*HPP* 36) are later discussed in *MKT*. See my comments above on these Paekche words, which are, *pace* Lee, of unknown semantic value.

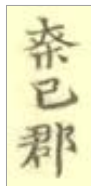
Lee lists and briefly discusses some of the Paekche non-onomastic lexical data in the 日本書紀 *Nihon Shoki* (*HPP* 65).⁸⁵



⁸⁵ Several Old Japanese transcription variants should be added to the list, e.g., [茂梨] ‘mountain’ (Kōno 1987: 76).

Although Lee briefly addresses the Late Middle Korean cognate of Han-Paekche (for Lee, undifferentiated Paekche) 厶レ ‘mountain’ (*HPP* 65), one should add the *Samguk Sagi* transcription of the clearly related Han-Paekche word *mora [毛良] (KPEMC *mawlia⁸⁶ ~ *molia⁸⁶)⁸⁶ ‘high (高)’ (*SS1512* 36: 9b, line 1; image on preceding page) to his comparative lexical discussion.⁸⁷

In his treatment of the Paekche toponyms in the *Samguk Sagi* (*HPP* 94-99), Lee lists the majority of Paekche toponyms attested in the *Samguk Sagi*, although one stray Paekche toponym is missing, i.e., “奈靈郡本百濟奈已郡” (*SS1512* 35: 8a, line 2; image on right).⁸⁸ This correspondence correlates with the unglossed Paekche toponym “奈已郡” (*SS1512* 37: 10a, line 4; image on right), suggesting that either 已 or 巳 (probably both are copyist’s errors for 己 *ki) transcribe a Han-Paekche or Puyō-Paekche word for ‘spirit (靈).’ This remains to be studied in detail.⁸⁹



The first appendix, “百濟語 表音字의 音價와 出典” [The Phonetic Values and Attestations of Paekche Transcriptional Characters] (*HPP* 297-331), presents Lee’s phonetic interpretations of the Chinese characters used in transcriptions of Paekche linguistic data. My comments above on *HPK* are relevant here, as Lee follows the same approach here as in *HPK*.

The second appendix, “7世紀 末葉의 韓國語 資料” [Sources on Late

⁸⁶ Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese appears to have lost the velar nasal ŋ in syllable codas. I indicate this with a superscript ʰ (Shimunek 2021: 67 n. 8). In some instances, ŋ was oralized to *k (q.v. *KLJ* 102-05).

⁸⁷ For a parallel in the Puyo-Koguryoic languages, note OKog *tar, denoting both ‘high, tall’ and ‘mountain’ (*KLJ*)

⁸⁸ Lee discusses this toponym correspondence in his Koguryō book, treating the ‘Paekche’ designation as an error (*HPK* 76 n.35). Whether Koguryō or Paekche, it should be discussed in this chapter of Lee’s Paekche book as well.

⁸⁹ If the phonetic transcription is revised to *ki [己], corresponding to the gloss ‘spirit (靈),’ it could be a loanword from Middle Chinese 氣 ‘breath, air, vapor; life force; spirit,’ cf. attested Tang Middle Chinese in Old Tibetan orthography *khe* ~ *ki* (Tak. #0388).

Seventh Century Korean] (*HPP* 333-92), includes discussion of the 無量壽經連義述文贊 *Muryangshugyōng Yōnūsulmunch'an*, a commentary composed by the Paekche or Unified Silla Buddhist monk Kyōnghūng⁹⁰ on the 無量壽經 *Wuliangshoujing* [*Sukhāvātivṛyūha Sūtra* ‘Infinite Life Sutra’]. Kyōnghūng seems to have been active in the 7th century (*HPP* 336) or during the Unified Silla period (*EKC*), but the extant variant of this text is a 1699 woodblock reprint.⁹¹ If Kyōnghūng’s text was indeed transmitted from Paekche, one may imagine it has the potential to reveal important information about early Korean Peninsular Chinese phonology; however, as noted by Lee, Kyōnghūng explicitly cites 陸法言 *Lu Fayān*’s 切韻 *Qie Yun* and other Chinese texts in his work (e.g., *HPP* 353). Lee correctly states that it is necessary to determine if Kyōnghūng’s 反切 *fanqie* spellings are copies from Chinese texts such as the *Qie Yun* (601 A.D.) or 玄應 *Xuanying*’s 一切經音義 *Yiqiejing Yinyi* (640 A.D.), or if these are Kyōnghūng’s own *fanqie* (*HPP* 352-53). Considering the high probability that Tang Middle Chinese readings were adopted and promulgated in Unified Silla by Silla Buddhist monks, many of whom are known to have been educated in Tang China,⁹² it seems likely that the *fanqie* in Kyōnghūng’s text do not represent local Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese pronunciations, but rather, are copies, imitations, or Kyōnghūng’s own spellings of the prestigious Tang Middle Chinese pronunciations which eventually formed the basis of Sino-Korean sometime in the mid- to late-Unified Silla period. Future work comparing the *fanqie* of this important text with 王仁昫 *Wang Renxu*’s redaction (706 A.D.) of the 切韻 *Qie Yun* and with Beckwith’s reconstruction of Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese may help determine the value of Kyōnghūng’s data.

⁹⁰ The name is written by Lee as “璿興” (*HPP* 336 et passim) but by Kwon Inhan (2021) and *EKC* as “椽興.” I have not been able to check the original text to determine which is correct.

⁹¹ q.v. Kwon Inhan (2021).

⁹² On Silla Buddhist monks educated in Tang China, see: <http://dh.aks.ac.kr/Korea100/wiki/index.php/Tang_and_Unified_Silla:_Originality_of_Silla_Culture_and_the_Influence_of_Tang_China> (Accessed September 2021).

Concluding Remarks on the Four Books

The future of Korean Peninsular historical linguistics will depend on our willingness to revise the tradition, to acknowledge the fact that ancient Korea was a multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic place, and to dispel the myth of a homogeneous Korea. It will require a complete revision, and steps must be taken to firmly establish rigorous philological techniques and mainstream historical-comparative linguistic methods in this area of research. Only then can we truly understand the ethnolinguistic history of the early Korean Peninsula. The authors of the books reviewed herein have made contributions which will provide other scholars with some of the raw data to proceed in this meticulous endeavor.

Abbreviations and Sigla

abbrev.	abbreviation
AJpn	Archaic Japanese (3rd c., Beckwith, 2007a, Kiyose, 2001)
AKog	Archaic Koguryō (3rd c., Beckwith, 2007a)
c.	century
ca.	circa
cf.	confer, compare, see also
CJK	Common Japanese-Koguryoic (Beckwith, 2007a)
CKor	Common Koreanic
CSM	Common Serbi-Mongolic (Shimunek, 2017)
CVB	converb
dial.	dialect, dialectal
<i>EKC</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Korean Culture</i> 한국민족문화대백과사전 (Academy of Korean Studies)
EMK	Early Middle Korean
et passim	and throughout
GEN	genitive
HK	Han-Kara
HP	Han-Paekche
<i>HPK</i>	Lee SeungJae (2016)
<i>HPP</i>	Lee SeungJae (2013)
HS	Han-Silla
id.	<i>idem</i> , the same
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is
infra	below
<i>IYP</i>	Yi Wōnhūi (2018)
JK	Japanese-Koguryoic
Jpn	Japanese
<i>KLJ</i>	Beckwith (2007a)
KPEMC	Korean Peninsular Early Middle Chinese (<i>KLJ</i> ; <i>LASM</i> ; Shimunek, 2021)
<i>KYS</i>	<i>Jilin Leishi</i> 雞林類事 (<i>Kyerim Yusa</i>)
<i>LASM</i>	Shimunek (2017a)
lit.	literally
LMK	Late Middle Korean
LOC	Late Old Chinese
MChi	Middle Chinese

MJpn	Middle Japanese
MKT	Lee SeungJae (2017)
MSC	Modern Standard Chinese
MSJ	Modern Standard Japanese
MSK	Modern Standard Korean
n.	footnote
NCR	<i>Nichū-reki</i> 二中曆 (images from the National Diet Library Digital Collections database)
OJpn	Old Japanese
OKog	Old Koguryō (cited from Beckwith 2007a)
Pul.	Pulleyblank (1991)
q.v.	<i>quod vide</i> , which see
supra	above
SS1512	<i>Samguk Sagi</i> (1512 Kyujanggak edition, <db.history.go.kr>)
SY1512	<i>Samguk Yusa</i> (1512 Kyujanggak edition, <db.history.go.kr>)
Tak.	Takata (1988)
TOP	topic marker

Symbols

*	scientific reconstruction based on mainstream historical-comparative linguistic methods
☆	reconstruction based on traditional readings, 反切 <i>fanqie</i> , or rhyme tables
...	undecipherable sequence (in phonological reconstructions)
//	phonemic representation
[]	phonetic transcription (in IPA or other writing systems)
-	morpheme boundary
~	linguistic variation between two or more forms (free or conditioned)
←	loanword across languages
<	language-internal change
á	stressed vowel (in reconstructions of Old Chinese)
á	high pitch (in transcriptions of early and modern Korean)
à	low pitch (in transcriptions of early and modern Korean)
ǎ	rising pitch (in transcriptions of early Korean)
ǣ	reduced vowel
V	unspecified vowel

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