

Correspondence

Reply to B. Bronson's Review

Sir,

In his review of my book, *The Ancient Pyu of Burma. Vol. I: Early Pyu Cities in a Man-Made Landscape* (Cambridge & Singapore, 1990; 2nd ed. 1991), B. Bronson left the legitimate role of critical, even hostile reviewer, by making what I am advised are defamatory statements [*JSEAS* 23, no. 2 (Sept. 1992): 435–38]. His statements are set out below and refuted by the evidence in my book:

1. "... The chapters that describe the structures and artifacts of Beikthano form the core of Stargardt's argument. They are based closely on the report by Aung Thaw, a fact which Stargardt does not underline sufficiently. . . ." (p. 436).

The *Notes and Bibliography* of my book contain no fewer than 64 detailed acknowledgements to the work of U Aung Thaw (Emeritus Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of Burma), his publications and his figures (pp. 379–404). I acknowledge his work (and that of other Burmese scholars) in my Preface (pp. xxiv–vi), and repeatedly in the main text of my book (Chaps. IV, V, VI). I also state that one of my principal objectives is to draw international attention to the Burmese work (pp. xxvi, 146, 396).

2. "... While she [Stargardt] thanks Aung Thaw 'for permission to reproduce photographs and drawings', she fails to indicate that all of her illustrations of Beikthano finds have been copied from Aung Thaw's publication. . . ." (p. 436).

In the *Table of Contents* of my book, the *List of Figures* is immediately followed by *Acknowledgements of Figures* (p. xviii). This acknowledges the source of every figure in the book not originating with me as author. It contains a list of every figure in my book based on U Aung Thaw's publications, among others.

3. "... She [Stargardt] has had to depend almost entirely on U Aung Thaw's . . . *Excavations at Beikthano*. Her only other source of data was a set of aerial photographs of various Pyu sites, presumably taken by the Royal Air Force during World War II and now in storage somewhere in England. . . ." (p. 435).

The *Notes and Bibliography* of my book contain references to six excavation reports specifically on Beikthano (in English and Burmese), nine directly related works, six collections of related inscriptions, chronicles and dynastic records, and references to 243 archaeological and environmental reports on comparable sites or data ranging from India, through mainland South East Asia to South-West China (pp. 379–408). These list the sources of the extensive new and comparative data on the Pyu presented in the book itself for the first time. Of eight chapters in my book, five deal with major subjects — including my discovery of the Pyu irrigation systems and their environmental niche — never mentioned in U Aung Thaw's study. Three chapters deal with the work done by U Aung Thaw and other Burmese scholars: those chapters present the Burmese excavation data first, with acknowledgements, and then move onto new analyses and comparisons, new cartography, hitherto unpublished aerial photography and other new illustrations.

4. "... She [Stargardt] includes all of Aung Thaw's structural plans, often redrawing

them with straightened walls [sic], and about two-thirds of his artifact drawings, not redrawn. . . .” (p. 436).

In *Acknowledgements of Figures* in my book (p. xviii), immediately under the caption there appears the correct statement that “all figures have been drawn or re-drawn by the author and, unless otherwise acknowledged, are her own.” Every acknowledgement notes the exact sources of my figures and states where selections and rearrangements of the items grouped in the original figure have been made. The 138 figures appearing in my book were drawn by me, used in printing my book, and bear the printers’ marks. Readers interested in archaeological-architectural drawings will be aware, as the reviewer apparently is not, of the styles and norms of monumental plans set by the Archaeological Survey of India and the Ecole française d’extrême-orient for South and South East Asian archaeology.

5. There are a considerable number of inaccurate or unsupported assertions in this review, but one sample will suffice: “. . . She [Stargardt] was apparently not able to see sites or finds of the early Pyu. . . .” (p. 435).

I visited Burma (Myanmar) in 1962, annually from 1970–80, and in 1983, studying Iron Age, Pyu and Pagan sites and, where they exist, site-museums with finds. My publications on these subjects appeared from 1968 onwards. This is mentioned in the *Preface* and in the *Notes* of my book. In 1979, with the Director of the Archaeological Survey of Burma and the Curator of the National Museum, I studied and photographed excavated objects from the Pyu sites, Beikthano, Halin and Sri Ksetra, in the reserve collection of the National Museum, Rangoon (Yangon). At the request of the Archaeological Survey of Burma, I arranged a number of tests of Burmese archaeological specimens in both Cambridge and Oxford, without charge, under my regular programme of research and co-operation. There are brief references to these contributions in my book on pp. xxvi, xxvii, 16, 18, 28 among others.

I invite readers to compare the review with the contents of the book.

Yours faithfully,

Janice Stargardt

Director,

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