

Overview: Japanese Archaeological Research Trends 2020¹

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Fiscal³ 2020 was the year when the novel coronavirus infection spread in earnest, with all of Japanese society frightened at its horror, and how to protect society became the greatest issue. A national state of emergency was twice declared, and many social activities were forced to cease or be postponed.

Japanese archaeological research also confronted this crisis situation. The Japanese Archaeological Association was forced to adopt irregular measures such as conducting a vote by mail for the agenda of its 86th General Meeting, which had been scheduled for June, and it could not hold the research presentations. Further, the Association's 2020 Autumn Meeting scheduled for Kanazwa was postponed. Many other academic associations and research societies were similarly forced to cease or postpone their activities.

Meanwhile, archaeological research on the part of individuals, research groups, and research institutes has been steadily progressing, and producing results. There were also many publications of research monographs delving into those results.

What follows will outline the results of research published in the 2020 fiscal year for each period in turn.

1. Paleolithic period

The existence of a Lower and Middle Paleolithic in the Japanese archipelago was debated. The direct subjects of discussion are materials that were recovered from the Iriguchi⁴ site in Nagasaki prefecture and a stone tool collected from the

¹[*Trends in Japanese Archaeological Research, 2020*, is a partial translation of “Nihon kōkogaku kenkyū no dōkō” 日本考古学研究の動向, in *Nihon kōkogaku nenpō 73 (2020 nendoban)* 日本考古学年報 73(2020年度版) (Archaeologia Japonica 73 [2020 Fiscal Year Issue]) (Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai, 2021), pp. 1–37. This essay appears on pp. 1–4, under the Japanese title “Sōsetsu” 総説. It was translated by Walter Edwards, and published by the Japanese Archaeological Association (Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai 日本考古学協会) online in 2023. To streamline the text, characters for Japanese names and terms, and bibliographic information have been placed in footnotes. When an English translation of the name of an organization or publication (or symposium, etc.) is supplied by the party responsible, this is used with minimum changes in capitalization etc. to conform to the style followed by *Trends in Japanese Archaeological Research*. Romanized names of individuals are given with the surname followed by the personal name.]

² 辻 秀人

³ The fiscal year begins on April 1 of each calendar year.

⁴ 入口

Hatchōdaira⁵ site in Shizuoka prefecture, with the contents of debate involving their chronological assessments, technological basis, determinations of authenticity, and so forth. Discussions have proceeded with caution, due to critical reflection following the Paleolithic Hoax that occurred in 2000. The direction of debate remains undetermined at present, and future developments will be carefully watched. It is hoped that a comprehensive understanding may be built up that will encompass other materials discussed thus far, such as those recovered from the Sunabara⁶ site in Tottori and the Kanadori⁷ site in Iwate prefectures.

There is deepening debate over the chronological position of stone tool assemblages assessed as dating from the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic. The main issues are conditions at the start of the Upper Paleolithic, the relations and timing of any derivation from Central Asia, the relationship with the spread of *Homo sapiens*, and so forth. There are also articles that discuss the possibility of the existence of stone tools belonging to the Middle Paleolithic.

For the period of transition from the Paleolithic to the Jōmon, there was debate on the relationship between the climatic change that has been clarified in recent years and the appearance of earthenware, the form of residence, changes in the form of stone tools, etc. There is also research advancing discussion of exchanges between social groups from the perspective of ceramic petrology and stone tool manufacturing technology, and future developments are anticipated.

The results of long-continuing research on use-wear analysis have also been published. The framework of the research conducted thus far was systematically presented, and the foundations of research put in order. New understandings created from the results of use-wear research are hopefully forthcoming.

2. Jōmon period

For the Jōmon period, a variety of research unfolded on artifacts, and in studies related to settlements and to the Jōmon people.

In ceramics research, the search for the oldest stage of pottery, and interregional relations based on constructions of wide-area chronologies were discussed.

Regarding the oldest Jōmon pottery, questions were raised about *mumon*⁸ or plain pottery, which has been assessed as the oldest stage. Also, the age of the appearance of pottery for East Asia as whole was examined, providing a new basis for discussion of the date of the emergence of Jōmon pottery.

There were a number of attempts at creating wide-area chronologies. One of

⁵ 八丁平

⁶ 砂原

⁷ 金取

⁸ [Translator's note: 無文土器, *mumon doki* (literally, undecorated or "plain" pottery). There is growing recognition among Japanese archaeologists of the possibility that undecorated pottery found at the Ōdai Yamamoto I (大平山元 I, Aomori prefecture) site and elsewhere is the oldest ceramic stage in Japan. Despite being represented by the same Chinese characters when written in Japanese, this must be distinguished from the Mumun pottery of the Korean peninsula, chronologically much newer and associated with the spread of intensive agriculture.]

these was constructed for the central portion of Honshu, from the Tōhoku to the Kinki regions, using as its axis the Moroiso⁹ style of assemblages from the latter portion of the Early Jōmon phase. Also, a wide-area chronology was provided for the middle portion of the Late phase, in which differences between the eastern and western portions of the archipelago and their backgrounds were discussed, based on compositions of assemblages, settlement structure, shapes of dwellings and so forth. Further, for the northern Tōhoku region a presentation was made of the transition from the Ōbora A' style to the Nimaibashi style of the Yayoi period, along with an examination of dwellings and the system of trade, and multi-layered social and cultural changes in the period of transition from the Jōmon to the Yayoi were discussed.

These are likely to be important studies that will put the results of chronological research to use in clarifying the actual conditions of Jōmon society.

In discussions regarding pottery utilization, which had been an issue since the *Hidabito* debate,¹⁰ there is the approach of lipid residue analysis of the contents of pottery. On the one hand, indices for marine fauna were detected in the contents of Umataka¹¹ style pottery from Niigata prefecture, while indices characteristic of millet were found for Final phase Jōmon pottery on the other, pointing to the cultivation of cereals for this period.

These results show that lipid analysis is effective for considering the dietary habits of Jōmon people. It is possible that even greater results can be obtained through comparative examinations with stable isotope analysis, which has become widespread in recent years.

In research on clay figurines, special journal features and collections were published, and the distributions and other attributes of these materials were discussed.

For stone tools, systematic and comprehensive summaries were made of research. Stone tool-making techniques were also discussed.

Regarding stone tool use, ground stone tools and stone plates were examined with use-wear trace analysis, and an inference was made of the mode of utilization of deer antler axes from comparison with folk examples.

Systematic classification was conducted for wooden tools and implements, and examination made of their various uses.

In research on recovered skeletal materials, DNA analysis has become widely used. Also, there is research approaching burial systems through the analysis of

⁹ 諸磯

¹⁰ ひだびと論争 (*Hidabito ronsō*) [Translator's note: The *Hidabito* debate was an exchange, regarding the study of artifacts, which unfolded over the pages of the regional studies journal *Hidabito* (literally, "Hida [飛騨, the region that is modern Gifu prefecture] folk") in 1937–38 between archaeologists Kōno Isamu 甲野勇 and Yawata Ichirō 八幡一郎, who prioritized chronological studies of artifacts as the basis for further research, and the proletarian novelist Ema Shū 江馬修, who asserted rather the value of artifacts lay in what they could reveal about economic and social relations through studies of their utilization.]

¹¹ 馬高

skeletal remains.

There were also many examinations made of the relationships between Jōmon people and the natural realm.

The actual conditions of use of the sika (Japanese) deer were discussed, and the relations with cultivation and methods of use were examined based on the identification of excavated legume seeds.

There were many reports of results based on the method of silicone replica studies of impressions in pottery, which has rapidly become widespread in recent years. Using the replica method, from the size of seeds of *shiso* (genus *Perilla*), the existence of examples showing characteristics intermediate between pristine *shiso* and *egoma* (*Perilla frutescens*) has been pointed out, and the temporally and regionally biased distributions of pottery with large amounts of these seeds admixed was discussed. Also, it was clarified that many examples of a previously unidentified bulb resemble the Japanese jacinth (*Barnardia japonica*). Analyses utilizing X-rays are also being advanced.

3. Yayoi period

As the understanding that the beginning of the Yayoi period goes back becomes widespread, research is underway to reconsider what is the Yayoi period and Yayoi culture. In addition, with the adoption of oxygen isotope dendrochronology and spread of the use of AMS radiocarbon dating, it has become possible to know detailed chronologies. As a result, investigations are being made of climate change, settlement dynamics, and so forth based on a fine chronological axis.

In addition, with the increase in data, research is being published that examines trends in specific regions from multiple perspectives such as pottery, stone tools, wooden implements, and settlement dynamics, receiving high praise.

The silicone replica method is being utilized, and concrete conditions of livelihood and agriculture in Yayoi society are being elucidated. The true state of paddy farming in the northern part of the Tōhoku region, and the livelihood of the Middle Yayoi period and so forth are being pursued bit by bit. In addition, a realistic picture of Yayoi agriculture is under examination with the methodology of experimental archaeology. The detailed shape of Yayoi livelihood is gradually coming to light, and further results are anticipated.

In settlement debate, reexamination was made of highland settlements from an analysis of stone tool assemblages. In addition, relationships with the Korean peninsula were pointed out based on the analysis of archaeological features such as the structure of earthen stoves in northern Kyushu. All of these issues will be further examined in the future.

For burials, there was discussion of burial norms, and consequently of relations between and within social groups that maintain cemeteries.

Ritual practices such as the smashing of votive pottery in connection with mortuary rites were taken up, and interregional exchanges were examined. For

coffins, a comprehensive typological classification was made for wooden and composite stone coffins, with regional differences etc. discussed. A symposium on the theme of east-west wide-area exchange was jointly held by research groups from eastern and western Japan, and the resulting papers were published.¹² This is drawing attention as an endeavor indicating future research approaches. Also, international relations were discussed based on pottery of Chinese derivation, and further developments are anticipated.

Regarding recovered artifacts, there are examinations being made about the existence of balance beam weights. Also, a search is being carried out for inkstones. Either of these pose significant issues about the nature of Yayoi society, and their confirmation and verification are required.

In ceramics research the period of transition from the Jōmon to Yayoi was taken up, with chronological studies continuing to be conducted.

For research on stone tools, the clarification of relations among items made from the same stone material, relations of the compositions of stone tool assemblages with forest resources and settlements, harvesting tools made of stone, stone axes with projecting spurs, and so forth were discussed. Also, the issue of conversion to iron tools as seen through an analysis of whetstones is being debated, and is drawing attention.

In research on iron objects, the technology of iron tool production in eastern Japan is being pursued. Also, in recent investigations features of iron forging have been ascertained, and along with the concrete conditions of iron tool manufacture being clarified, the work of detecting iron production features in older site reports is being carried out.

In bronze implement research, work was advanced on the analysis of bronze whorl ornaments, on comparative examinations with the Korean peninsula and China, on conditions of bronze implement production, and so forth.

There were also plentiful results of research related to beads. Examinations are being made of the state of bead production and circulation in the Hokuriku region, of the circulation of cylindrical beads of crystalline quartz used as grave goods, of the circulation of cylindrical beads in the Tōhoku region, and of jasper cylindrical beads in northern Tōhoku. There is also research aimed at reading social trends from changes in the circulation of beads between the Yayoi and Kofun periods in western Japan.

4. Kofun period

In debate over the monarchy, which aims at the social structure of the Kofun period, there are treatises seeking out the nature of the monarchy through comprehensive analyses of bronze mirrors or the structure of mounded tombs. The debate should

¹² Nishi Sagami Kōkogaku Kenkyūkai 西相模考古学研究会 (Nishi-Sagami Archaeology Research Society) and Hyōgo Kōkogaku Danwakai 兵庫考古学談話会 (Hyōgo Archaeological Discussion Group), eds., *Yayoi jidai no tōzai kōryū: Kōikiteki na rendōsei o kangaeru* 弥生時代の東西交流: 広域的な連動性を考える (Yayoi period east-west exchange: Considering wide-area interconnections) (Rokuichi Shobō, 2020).

be deepened, including through comparative examination of the grounds for argument of existing theories of the monarchy. Also, through reconstructions of images of various regions, their separate conditions and the diversity of their relations with the monarchy are being discussed. This direction should probably be advanced in the future.

In research on tombs, highly precise reports were published, providing a wealth of information. Among these, a comprehensive report on mounded tombs and subterranean horizontal tombs of southern Kyushu, the southernmost extent of Kofun culture, drew attention.

Opinions were exchanged at a symposium on the Higashinomiya tomb in Aichi prefecture,¹³ and an exhibition was held on the occasion of the completion of conservation and preservation work on the Watanuki Kannon'yama tomb in Gunma prefecture, with the results compiled in the catalog.¹⁴

In the Hitachi region, research on regional tombs continues to be advanced, and the results are being summarized.

In the Tōhoku region, preliminary results of investigating the Haizukayama¹⁵ tomb were reported,¹⁶ and opinions were exchanged. The Haizukayama tomb has become basic material for research on the Middle Kofun period as the first example for which the entire scope of the tomb has come to light in the Tōhoku region.

In addition to the above, a variety of studies were carried out in every region, including research on the morphology and planning of mounds, the regional development of tombs, their special characteristics and their grave goods, the process of transition to the ritsuryō era, tombs in the form of piled stone mounds, and immigrants.

In work on horizontal (tunnel) tombs, there was research from the new perspective of approaching the political structure from tunnel tombs. Also, along with discussion of the derivation of house-shaped tunnel tombs, their characteristics were pursued for each region. Papers were also published on practices of reburial, on intergroup relations, and on relations with local topography and geology.

For burial facilities, horizontal stone chambers were mainly taken up, and their regional characteristics, use of space, and the derivation of specialized forms were discussed.

With regard to mortuary practices, multiple burials within a single sarcophagus,

¹³ “Higashinomiya kofun no kenkyū wa doko made susunda no ka” 東之宮古墳の研究はどこまで進んだのか (How far has research on the Higashinomiya tomb progressed?), Tōkai Kofun Jidai Kenkyūkai Dai 4-kai Kenkyūkai 東海古墳時代研究会 第4回研究会 (4th Research Meeting, Tōkai Kofun Period Study Group) (Inuyama, Aichi, 7 March 2021).

¹⁴ Gunma Kenritsu Rekishi Hakubutsukan 群馬県立歴史博物館 (Gunma Prefectural Museum of History), ed., *Watanuki Kannon'yama kofun no subete: Kokuhō kettei kinen Dai 101-kai kikakuten* 綿貫観音山古墳のすべて: 国宝決定記念第101回企画展 (All about the Kannon'yama tomb: Planned exhibit no. 101 commemorating designation as National Treasure) (catalog of exhibit held 18 July–6 August 2020).

¹⁵ 灰塚山 (Fukushima prefecture)

¹⁶ [Translator' note: Six articles dealing with aspects of the Haizukayama tomb appeared in a special feature on Middle Kofun period tombs of the southern Tōhoku region, carried in the journal *Miyagi kōkogaku* 宮城考古学 (The Miyagi Archaeology), no. 22, 2020.]

acts of burial, and the mortuary process and so forth were discussed.

Many studies of artifacts were also published.

For mirrors, comparative examinations were made of the lead isotope ratios for same-mold triangular rimmed mirrors, and for mirrors that were buried simultaneously in Early Kofun period tombs. In addition, examinations were made of the technology of production and of repair.

In research on weapons and armor, there were discussions such as reexaminations of the derivation of decorative swords, of the problem of bent iron implements,¹⁷ and of leather-sewn triangular iron plate cuirasses.

For personal ornaments, the handing down of comma-shaped beads, and the pattern of decoration of the crown recovered from the Sanmaizuka¹⁸ tomb in Ibaraki prefecture were discussed. For stone objects (of jasper, steatite), there was research on separate types of item, and regional developments were discussed.

In *haniwa* research, in addition to examinations of individual groups of *haniwa*, enclosure-shaped *haniwa*, and the expressions on the faces of human-shaped *haniwa* were the subjects of research. Also, the production system of *haniwa* and the meaning of *haniwa* placements were pursued.

In research on Haji¹⁹ ware, investigations into ceramic conditions at the start of the Kofun period were continued, with debate on the relations in parallel between regions. There were also many studies exploring the utilization of pottery from use-wear traces and vessel capacity, and so forth.

In Sue²⁰ ware research, the conditions of regional pottery productive systems, relations between the chiefdom system and the social division of labor, interregional comparative research, the conditions at the time of appearance of Sue ware per region, the initial stage of Sue ware, and so forth were discussed. Also, the dates of Sue ware, and rituals of offering were examined.

In debate regarding settlements, from the perspective of the supply of iron materials and iron implements at the Hakata site group of northern Kyushu, a systematic understanding, and the relationship with the process of formation of the Yamato monarchy, were discussed. There were also examinations of the development of settlements in each region. The concrete conditions of littoral settlements, which have gathered attention in recent years, and of settlements damaged by the eruption of Mt. Fuji, were also discussed.

Regarding the products of immigrant culture, steaming pots with multiple holes, beads, Korean-style earthenware and so forth were taken up, and their significance considered. In exchange with the Korean peninsula, the parallel relations between northern Kyushu and the Yeongnam region, mounded tombs of Japanese

¹⁷ [Translator's note: The reference is to discoveries from graves of the Late Yayoi through the Early Kofun period of weapons (swords) and tools (knives, spear-planes) that appear to have been intentionally bent in either the blade or tang portions. Similar finds are known from the Korean peninsula and China.]

¹⁸ 三昧塚

¹⁹ 土師

²⁰ 須恵

derivation, interregional exchange, and so forth, were discussed by Japanese and Korean researchers.

5. Ancient period

In ancient capitals research, a comprehensive collection of papers centered on the Naniwa palace was published.²¹ Although it is not possible to elaborate on the details, the date of construction of the Former Naniwa palace, relationships with Chinese capitals and with foreign diplomacy, ritual space, the structure of the Latter Naniwa palace, problems regarding the Heijō (Nara) capital and palace, the use of residential land in the capital, the relation between capital construction and mounded tombs, problems involving the Nagaoka capital, and so forth—various issues from the construction of the Naniwa palace to the Heian period are discussed by front-line researchers in archaeology and ancient history. It has become an indispensable collection of papers for research on ancient capitals. In addition, other comprehensive articles have been published, marking one of the high points of achievement in ancient capital research.

Multiple problems regarding the Nagaoka capital were debated in a research meeting held online, due to the coronavirus pandemic, by the *Jōri* Field System/Ancient Urban Research Society.²² Also included were reports on the Miyataki²³ site, Saikū Historic Site,²⁴ Shigaraki Palace²⁵ site, Dazaifu²⁶ site, and so forth.

For government office sites, features of the Dazifu site, and the characteristics of ninth century fortresses of the Tōhoku region were discussed.

In research on provincial headquarters, research results were summarized by regions (seven circuits),²⁷ clarifying the levels of attainment for various provinces.

In research on district headquarters, aspects of ancient seats of local government and regional society were summarized. The relationship between the establishment of district headquarters and immigrants, reconstructions of large-scale buildings, approaches from documentary materials, and trends in regional society in the Asuka period were discussed. In addition, various issues related to ancient Tago²⁸

²¹ Nakao Yoshiharu 中尾芳治 ed., *Naniwa no miya to kodai tojō* 難波宮と古代都城 (Naniwa palace and ancient capitals) (Doseisha, 2020).

²² “Nagaokakyō chōsa kenkyū no saizensen” 長岡京調査研究の最前線 (The front line of Nagaoka capital research), Dai 37-kai Jōrisei/Kodai Toshi Kenkyūkai Taikai 条里制・古代都市研究会第 37 回研究大会 (34th Research Meeting of the Jōri Field System/Ancient Urban Research Society) (held online by Zoom, 6–7 March 2021).

²³ 宮滝 (Nara prefecture)

²⁴ 史跡齋宮跡 (Mie prefecture)

²⁵ 紫香楽宮 (Shiga prefecture)

²⁶ 大宰府 (Fukuoka prefecture)

²⁷ [Translator’s note: The reference is to a collection of articles featured in Issue No. 152 of *Kikan Kōkogaku* (Archaeology Quarterly), July 2020, titled “Kodai kokufu: Saishin kenkyū no dōkō” 古代国府・最新研究の動向 (Ancient provincial headquarters: Trends of recent research). A total of 24 contributions are grouped along the lines of the ancient system of *goki shichidō* 五畿七道 (the five home provinces of Kinai plus the seven “circuits,” i.e., Tōkaidō, Tōsandō, Hokurikudō, San’indō, San’yōdō, Nankaidō, Saikaidō) by which the ancient provinces were organized.]

²⁸ 多胡 (Gunma prefecture)

district were debated at a symposium concerning the Three Stelae of Kōzuke.²⁹

For transportation there was discussion from the standpoint of documentary history on urban street grids and the *jōri* field system, the system of post stations and planned roads, water transport and the distributive economy.³⁰ It is necessary to examine the consistency of these observations with the results of archaeology. In addition, discoveries based on excavation of ancient roads were reported. Also, based on high-precision topographical observations the existence of ancient road cuts was pointed out. This is a method that is worth consideration in the future.

In research on temples, based on nationwide examinations of ancient temples, the nature of regional temples as clan temples was debated anew. This theme will probably see further discussion in the future. Also, research results related to Tōdaiji³¹ were systematically summarized, and provided as a basis for subsequent research.³²

Regarding handicraft production, the topics of regional development and Sue ware, and charcoal and salt production were discussed. The perspectives of salt production and distribution and the resettlement of Emishi were also presented. The results of many years of research related to the Kosai³³ kiln group have been summarized and discussed with regard to the social division of labor.

There was wide-ranging research on artifacts. In ceramics studies, there was a special collection on the dishes used for votive lamps, with examples from various locations examined.³⁴ Also, there was a report on glazed pottery from the Taga fort site.³⁵ In tile research, manufacturing technology was pursued, and based on the results, the activities and lines of derivation of the artisans were discussed. In addition, there were discussions of ceramic inkstones, recoveries of wooden tablets, and tiles inscribed with personal names.

In research on migrants, there was comprehensive discussion from the perspectives of both documentary history and archaeology on the establishment of

²⁹ “Kodai Tagogun no jitsuzō: Tago gunke to Kōzuke sanpi” 古代多胡郡の実像: 多胡郡家と上野三碑 (True image of Ancient Tago district: Tago district headquarters and the Three Stelae of Kōzuke), lectures and panel discussion recorded 31 October 2020, and broadcast via the Internet by the city of Takazaki 高崎, Gunma.

³⁰ Nakamura Taichi 中村太一, *Nihon kodai no tojō to kōtsū* 日本古代の都城と交通 (Ancient Japanese capitals and transport) (Yagi Shoten, 2020).

³¹ 東大寺 (Nara prefecture)

³² Tsurumi Yasutoshi 鶴見泰寿, *Tōdaiji no kōkogaku: Yomigaeru Tenpyō no daigaran* 東大寺の考古学: よみがえる天平の大伽藍 (The archaeology of Tōdaiji: The great temple of the Tenpyō era is resurrected) (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2021).

³³ 湖西 (Shizuoka prefecture)

³⁴ Nara Bunkazai Kenkyūjo 奈良文化財研究所 (Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties) ed., *Tōmyōzara to kanga/shūroku/jiin* 灯明皿と官衙・集落・寺院 (Lamp dishes and government offices/settlements/temples), report from the Dai 23-kai Kodai Kanga/Shūroku Kenkyūkai 第23回古代官衙・集落研究集会 (23rd Research Meeting of the Ancient Government Offices/Settlements Research Society) (Nara Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, 13–14 December 2019).

³⁵ Takahashi Eiichi 高橋栄一 et al., “Tagajō shutsudo seyū tōjiki no kenkyū” 多賀城出土施釉陶磁器の研究 (Research on glazed high-fired ceramics recovered from the Taga fort), *Nihon Kōkogaku Kyōkai Dai 86-kai sōkai kenkyū happyō yōshi* (Abstracts, JAA 86th General Meeting, 2020).

immigrant districts, Kudara-gun³⁶ in the west and Koma-gun³⁷ in the east, the date of establishment of Kudaradera³⁸ temple, developments of the Baekje royal clan, the forced displacement of settled immigrants to the eastern provinces, the establishment of Koma-gun and the development of handicraft production, immigrant settlements, and so forth.³⁹

6. Medieval period

For the Medieval period, many archaeological excavations were conducted.

At the Tokusada A/B⁴⁰ site in Fukushima prefecture, the entire image of the settlement from the Heian into the Kamakura periods has been clarified in terms of embedded-pillar buildings and pit-shaped features, etc., and other settlement-related sites are also being investigated.

For the Muromachi period, diverse artifacts were recovered from the Nagasaki⁴¹ site in Fukui prefecture, and it is regarded as the residential grounds of a powerful figure. Other long-term settlements spanning the Late Heian to the Muromachi periods have been ascertained.

Trade ceramics were recovered from the Shirayama⁴² site in Hiraizumi,⁴³ and features were found that consist of large-scale embedded-pillar buildings, wells, and fences, thought to be the residence of a powerful person. At the Hakata⁴⁴ site group, an extremely large piled stone feature yielding great amounts of trade ceramics was detected, and is thought to be a feature related to the harbor. Other features related to cities and settlements have been discovered as well.

There were also many investigations of mansions and castles. Starting with National Historic Sites such as the Shōjūjodate Castle,⁴⁵ Kunohe Castle,⁴⁶ and Nanao Castle⁴⁷ sites, investigations at many mansion and castle sites yielded results. Also, in addition to land surveying results, airborne laser (lidar) scanning is being utilized, and new results have been obtained. In addition, the remains of garden ponds have been found at Odawara Castle⁴⁸ and other places.

Articles were published summarizing the status and results of research on castles and fortified mansions. Castles related to the Nanbu clan were examined and

³⁶ 百濟郡 (in modern Osaka prefecture)

³⁷ 高麗郡 (in modern Saitama prefecture)

³⁸ 百濟寺 (Nara prefecture)

³⁹ Suda Tsutomu 須田勉 and Arai Hideki 荒井秀規, eds., *Kodai Nihon to toraikei imin: Kudara-gun to Koma-gun no seiritsu* 古代日本と渡来系移民: 百濟郡と高麗郡の成立 (Ancient Japan and foreign immigrants: The establishment of Kudara and Koma districts) (Koshi Shoin, 2021).

⁴⁰ 徳定A・B

⁴¹ 長崎

⁴² 志羅山

⁴³ 平泉 (Iwate prefecture)

⁴⁴ 博多 (Fukuoka prefecture)

⁴⁵ 聖寿寺館 (Aomori prefecture)

⁴⁶ 九戸城 (Iwate prefecture)

⁴⁷ 七尾城 (Ishikawa prefecture)

⁴⁸ 小田原城 (Kanagawa prefecture)

summarized from both documentary history and archaeology.⁴⁹ In Mino⁵⁰ and Owari,⁵¹ changes in the spatial structure of cities during the Sengoku period were indicated,⁵² arousing debate. In Kyushu, a compilation was made on the castles of each region with an eye towards conditions of the local environment and the samurai.⁵³

Regarding the burial system and religion, research on stone monuments has been accumulating.

For stone monuments from the late Medieval into the Early Modern period, the stone materials and differences in morphology and so forth from Kyushu to the Tōhoku region were debated. Also, the perspective was offered that influences to stone monuments emerged among exchanges with the East Asian realm. Research is being advanced in each region, and from the analysis of stone stupas distributed from the Tōhoku to the Chūbu regions the diffusion and regional aspects are being debated according to the type of item. In Kyushu, in addition to stone stupas, the conditions of religious belief and temples, and of temple bells and so forth were comprehensively examined, and the special characteristics of Kyushu and its regionality were discussed.

Regarding production and distribution, various issues concerning ceramics were discussed. Multiple routes for the circulation of trade ceramics were posited, and the possibility was touched upon of smuggling with regards to celadons and white porcelain. There was also discussion on the production and circulation in the Hokuriku and Tōhoku regions of ceramics derived from Tokoname⁵⁴ ware.

7. Early Modern period

In settlement research, in conjunction with the construction of the Yanba⁵⁵ Dam, a village that was buried by the Tenmei Mudflow⁵⁶ was excavated, yielding abundant artifacts and features, and providing precious materials for the reconstruction of an Early Modern village.⁵⁷

For burials, the history of research on Early Modern grave markers was

⁴⁹ Saitō Toshio 齊藤利男, ed., *Sengoku daimyō Nanbushi no ichizoku to jōkan* 戦国大名南部氏の一族と城館 (The family and fortresses of the Sengoku daimyo Nanbu clan) (Ebisukosyo, 2021).

⁵⁰ 美濃 (southern Gifu prefecture)

⁵¹ 尾張 (western Aichi prefecture)

⁵² Suzuki Masataka 鈴木正貴 and Niki Hiroshi 仁木宏, eds., *Tenkabito Nobunaga no kiso kōzō* 天下人信長の基礎構造 (The basic structure under Nobunaga, ruler of the realm) (Koshi Shoin, 2021).

⁵³ Ōba Kōji 大庭康時, Saeki Kōji 佐伯弘次, and Tsubone Shin'ya 坪根伸也, eds., *Sengoku no shiro to yakata* 戦国の城と館 (Sengoku castles and mansions), vol. 3 of *Kyūshū no chūsei* 九州の中世 (Medieval Kyushu) (Koshi Shoin, 202)

⁵⁴ 常滑

⁵⁵ 八ツ場 (Gunma prefecture)

⁵⁶ Tenmei deiryū 天明泥流

⁵⁷ [Translator's note: The Tenmei Mudflow resulted from the volcanic eruption in 1783 (Tenmei 3) of Mt. Asama 浅間山, causing widespread destruction and contributing to a major famine in that year. A brief English summary of the excavation is available (<http://archaeology.jp/remains/higashimiya>) as one of the "Noteworthy Archaeological Sites" featured on the website of the Japanese Archaeological Association.]

summarized, along with their transitions based on a classification according to form.⁵⁸ Also, there was an examination of barrel-style coffins, and their relations with urban characteristics was discussed.

Regarding production, there were examinations made of Imari⁵⁹ ware, Karatsu⁶⁰ ware, Kyō⁶¹ ware, Hizen⁶² porcelain, and Ōborisōma⁶³ ware, and the circulation and influence of Chinese porcelain and so forth were also discussed.

For coins, issues concerning the Kan'ei Tsūhō⁶⁴ were examined. In addition, the utilization of metal, production technology, and so forth, for the Early Modern city of Edo were discussed.

8. Modern period

In an investigation within an area planned by the East Japan Railway Company for redevelopment in conjunction with renovations to the Yamanote rail line, the Takanawa Chikutei⁶⁵ site, where part of Japan's first railway was laid, was discovered. The site contains an embankment (*chikutei*) discovered directly beneath the tracks used for the Yamanote line until immediately before the investigation, which was in an extremely good state of preservation. The embankment was built atop a stretch of shallow water, and being extremely important as a symbol of modern Japan from which the technology of the modern period can be clearly read, it has been judged of exceedingly high historical value. The Japanese Archaeological Association is in the midst of ongoing efforts, such as through issuing official proclamations, for its wholesale preservation, in order that its historical value is not degraded.

Conclusion

Archaeological research in the 2020 fiscal year, based on an abundance of accumulated results of individual studies, is being systematized and summarized, and appears to be headed in the direction of making interregional comparative examinations. Also, with the introduction of the replica method, and the evolution of chronological measurement and various other types of analysis, it has become possible to obtain a wealth of information, which combined with archaeological research results is gradually enabling social reconstructions. It is hoped that this will further develop research through sufficient criticism of studies in other fields including documentary history.

Despite the trying conditions of the coronavirus pandemic, which unfortunately

⁵⁸ Miyoshi Yoshizo 三好義三, *Kinsei bohyō* 近世墓標 (Early Modern grave markers) (Nyū Saiensusha, 2021).

⁵⁹ 伊万里

⁶⁰ 唐津

⁶¹ 京

⁶² 肥前

⁶³ 大堀相馬

⁶⁴ 寛永通宝

⁶⁵ 高輪築堤 (Tokyo prefecture)

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render direct exchanges of opinion difficult, I would like to commend the tremendous results that have been produced.

In the future, it is hoped that with increased utilization of newly acquired tools for communication, there will be lively exchanges of opinion, and new images of history will be created.