

Introduction

At the beginning of the Common Era in East Asia, it is the culture of the Chinese mainland that maintained the position of an advanced civilization. And it is there that the first written reports on the cultures living in the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago took shape, reflecting both the growing interest on the Chinese side in things going on east of their borders and the fact that trade and interaction among the various “barbarian” cultures, including the northern steppe cultures, and with Chinese civilization, had brought about major changes with regard to social developments, hierarchies, political self-awareness, and initial state formation in Korea and Japan.

Increased archaeological data from excavations in Korea and Japan indicate that trade, contacts and conflicts changed drastically during the early centuries. Archaeological research in the area of course closely connected to the study of ancient history, illuminate and embellish the fragile fabric of textual evidence from China, and from much later periods. Thus, the current issue of *Crossroads* not only focusses on trade and interaction in ancient northeast Asia – the Chinese mainland, the northern steppe region, the Korean peninsula, and the Japanese islands, but also utilizes two major bodies of evidence, the archaeological data available from countless excavations, and historical information as given in the early texts, thus reassessing relevant archaeological and documentary sources on trade routes and exchange in the early centuries CE.

The present CR volume combines the enhanced versions of three papers (Gilaizeau, Seyock, Tamura/Oga) presented at the Sixth Worldwide Conference of the Society for East Asian Archaeology (SEAA) in the panel “Trade and Interaction in Northeast Asia” (organized by Dennis Lee, Nakamura Daisuke and Barbara Seyock), which took place in Ulaan Bataar (Mongolia) in June 2014, and two additional essays (Nelson, Byington/Barnes) which also centre on the patterns of interaction in the early centuries in East-Asia and the information available from documentary sources.¹

1 For their invaluable support during the editing process I would like to express my gratitude to Gina Barnes, James Lankton, Sarah Nelson, and Sascha Priewe.

Cultural influences originating both from Chinese and northern steppe cultures are illustrated in the first essay (Barbara Seyock: *Memories from Abroad: Han 漢 Chinese and Nomadic Heritage in Korean and Japanese Archaeological Contexts*). The author traces the Han-Chinese and nomadic heritage in Korean and Japanese archaeological contexts and matches them with information coming from early Chinese historical sources. In order to secure Han-China's north-eastern borders and pacify the (semi-)nomadic tribes, at times marauding Chinese territory, four commanderies were established in the north of the Korean peninsula in 108 BCE. The presence of Chinese culture brought new technologies and material culture to the peninsula and beyond, and the trade and interaction between the so-called "barbarian" cultures and China also contributed to the development of increasingly stratified societies beyond the Chinese borders. The impact of Han-Chinese culture is reflected in richly furnished burials. Chinese bronze mirrors and horse-and-carriage equipment are typical grave goods of the centuries between 100 BCE and 300 CE in southern Korea and western Japan, while at the same time elements of nomadic culture reached this region, recognizable by animal style bronzes and the spread of the bird-motif. The cultural elements, that were transmitted down the Korean peninsula and further on to the Japanese islands, however, were apparently already separated from their original setting or traditional usage. In the preformation stage of states they nevertheless contributed greatly to the status of their owners.

A typical feature of Yayoi 弥生 period (c. 800 BCE–250 CE) Japan, the jar burial, is discussed in the next essay. Linda Gilaizeau (*Diplomacy from the Grave: Interactions between Western Japan and the East Asian Continent from a Burial Point of View*) analyses burial goods, cemeteries' structures and distribution of the Middle and Late Yayoi period in order to reveal information relating to technological, political, cultural, human and ideological developments which were inspired by events and trends on the Asian continent. It is the specific distribution of richly furnished tombs in the area of northern Kyūshū that is under scrutiny here, revealing patterns of prestige goods' acquisition and redistribution, and thus, leadership and client relations. Burial areas differ in size and structure, with numbers of tombs varying from a few to several thousands. A reliable and precise relative chronology of jar burials has been provided by typological analysis of the coffins. In combination with the study of the inventories of relevant burials a picture emerges that reflects a generally constant evolution of elite

structures through time. With regard to spatial studies it appears, though, that the deposit of numerous burial goods in one tomb seems to shift from area to area through time. However, a couple of sites constitute an exception from this pattern. The apparent standardization of prestige good deposition during the main parts of Middle Yayoi, and again from the beginning of Late Yayoi, suggests that these goods functioned as indexes of a religious or social meaning rather than as symbols of wealth, which differs from the situation in late Middle Yayoi, when exceptionally rich tombs appear, furnished with large numbers of bronze mirrors and bronze and iron weapons. In this phase, so it seems, the display of wealth was intended, rather than a simple deposit of object symbolizing a social or religious function.

The mounded tombs period (c. 250–700 CE) that followed the Yayoi culture, or – on the Korean side – the Proto Three Kingdom period respectively, brought about another level of intercultural linkages between the emerging kingdoms in the Korean peninsula and Yamato Japan. Sarah Nelson (*Relationships between Silla 新羅 and Yamato 大和*) focusses on the impact of the kingdom of Silla on the state formation process in the Japanese islands and places special emphasis on the question of female rulership in both areas and their possible connections. While interactions between the kingdoms of Paekche 百濟 and Koguryō 高句麗 and Yamato Japan have been studied at length, it is the parallels of Silla and Yamato women rulers and their possible antecedents which are addressed here. To reach an understanding of Silla's interaction with early Japan three categories of evidence are considered, the archaeological data, comprising tombs and artefacts, the documented history, and the social structures of the ruling elites. For each category Nelson draws upon a broad catalogue of material. Elements of material and spiritual culture are traced to their possible or apparent origins in the north-eastern steppes, in China, and Central Asia. It is concluded that leadership roles of women were possible in Yamato as well as Silla, and that family affiliations counted stronger than individual abilities, or gender, in the formation of early states in the peninsula and the Japanese islands.

A specific find type is in the focus of interest of Tamura Tomomi and Oga Katsuhiko's essay on the "Distribution of lead-barium glasses in ancient Japan". Glass beads constitute one of the typical burial goods in Yayoi and Kofun 古墳 period (c. 250–700 CE) Japanese tombs, though they are also collected from settlement sites. Interestingly, the most common kind of bead, a tubular bead coloured by Chinese blue pigments, does not exist in

Korean archaeological contexts as of yet. Lead-barium glass beads as such, however, indicate trade relationships between Japan, China, and Korea from the third century BCE onward. After analysing the chemical composition and production techniques of samples of various glass bead types, their chronological position and their respective distribution, it is possible to reconstruct trade routes and shifts in the distribution and consumption of glass beads in the area. The actual production area of the different types of lead-barium glass beads is not always clear, but considering the distribution areas and routes, as well as the correlations to bronze artefacts, the production areas might have been located in different locations in China, Korea, or Japan. So far, however, it is difficult to match each bead group to a certain mine. Future research, as a result, will have to narrow down the production areas of lead-barium glass artefacts on the basis of a comparative study of finds from the Korean peninsula, mainland China, and Japan.

Concluding our compilation of articles related to trade and interactions in protohistoric East Asia, Mark Byington (transl.) and Gina Barnes (comp.) provide us with a “Comparison of Texts between the Accounts of Han 韓 in the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, in the Fragments of the *Weilue* 魏略, and in *Hou-Han shu* 後漢書”. The differentiation between historic and prehistoric periods commonly relates to the presence, or absence, of written evidence. History, in this sense, is considered as the study of the past making use of written records, documents or inscriptions, while archaeology focuses on the material evidence of early cultures. For Korea and Japan, however, historical material exists outside their own cultural sphere – namely on the Chinese side. It is in this case that we speak of a proto-historical culture, a culture with no indigenous script nor other written accounts, but with outside observers who already had accomplished a tradition of historical records and who took an interest in recording what was going on beyond their borders. These early Chinese texts provide a lot of pieces of information on societies in the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago. The Samhan culture in the south of the peninsula is the focus here. Correlations and variations in the record of three different texts are highlighted by aligning them for comparison. The significance of the historical records for an understanding of the early societies in the area, their conflicts and interactions, has to be explicitly emphasized.