

Words from the Inaugural Chief Editor

Outside Japan, Japanese archaeology is perhaps mainly known for its scale and emphasis on detail. The former is epitomized by photographs of vast areas stripped for rescue excavations, often showing large albeit temporary excavation facilities, and the latter by excavation reports containing large numbers of fiendishly detailed line-drawings and sharply-focused black and white photographs, both standardized to a degree rarely seen anywhere else. The aims of Japanese archaeology, however, and how its practices have been mediated methodologically and theoretically, have received less exposure outside Japan. Instead, Japanese archaeology is all too often discussed in terms of clichés and stereotypes about typo-chronology and culture-historical description. This is despite pioneering efforts by a number of scholars, both Japanese and non-Japanese who have striven, often through their own original research, to introduce overseas the fruits of Japanese archaeology, much of which is highly theoretical and methodologically distinctive.

However, my very writing in this manner may in itself be reproducing these clichés, taking it for granted that an entity called ‘Japanese archaeology’ actually exists. Many Japanese archaeologists work abroad and publish the outcomes of their research in local languages as well as in English. Their works are often well known, cited and discussed overseas. There is also a gradually increasing number of archaeologists based outside Japan (i.e. non-Japanese archaeologists) who are working on Japanese materials and publishing in their mother tongues as well as in English. Some choose to stay in Japan for various lengths of time as academic tourists, students, or visiting researchers. They do archaeology in their own way, often influenced by the multiple archaeologies practiced in Japan, and sometimes, conversely, influencing Japanese archaeologists. In addition, a number of overseas colleagues are involved in projects organized by Japanese archaeologists abroad. And there are archaeologists like our co-editor, Simon Kaner, and myself who are working on both Japanese and overseas materials and publishing in Japanese and in English.

Reality may already be far ahead of us: there may be no such thing as *Japanese* archaeology any longer. There may just be various archaeologies practiced by Japanese archaeologists on various materials from all over the world, in an increasing number of cases in collaboration with overseas colleagues. Or perhaps there are just archaeologies practiced by archaeologists the world over that have various degrees of relevance to

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archaeologies investigating Japanese materials. In any case it appears to me safe and proper to say there does not exist an entity definable in universally acceptable terms called 'Japanese archaeology'. Hence, not the 'Journal of Japanese Archaeology' but the '*Japanese Journal of Archaeology*'. Japanese Journal of Archaeology ('*JJA*') is open to all, open-access, and welcomes contributions reflecting and/or embodying the reality which is described above.

I need to add a little, however, to what I just said. Any cliché can be shared as a cliché as long as it reflects reality. While wishing to avoid caricaturing the state of the discursive space of Japanese archaeologies, it can be said that there are some things that are especially distinctive about 'Japanese archaeology', that have been generated as historical contingencies out of the trajectory of the history of Japan as a modern nation state. This is not the place to go into the detail of this process and its causes, but they have resulted in Japanese archaeologists affording archaeological materials as ancestral relics and treat them with 'respect' of some sort: such elements are not grasped in a discursive manner but rather are internalized, and in that sense, work as strong constraints upon the way we dig, classify, conserve, write, draw and talk about things from the past. In that sense, that *JJA* has come to exist in the discursive space of Japanese archaeology/archaeologies will inevitably make Japanese archaeologists aware about the distinctiveness of the ways in which we do archaeology, and in that sense, the existence of *JJA* also offers opportunities for our overseas colleagues to become aware of theirs.

I wholeheartedly welcome your contributions which will make *JJA* an lively arena for international interaction and knowledge generation in archaeology. Thank you very much.

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