

Early Modern

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‘We live in their future’ are words noted on the homepage for an exhibition ‘Meiji no Kokoro: Mosu ga Mita Shomin no Kurashi (Heart of Meiji: Life of Common People Observed by Morse),’ held at Edo-Tokyo Museum from Sept. 14 to Dec. 8, 2013. (<http://www.asahi.com/event/morse2013/>) The early modern and modern are indispensable periods in order to consider our present; truly ‘we live in their future.’ For example, development that took place in the early modern and modern eras would have had a big influence on preexisting sites, so it is hard to know if an archaeological site did not exist or was destroyed, or how it was destroyed. As there is a big difference between “inexistence” and “came into inexistence,” in order to understand archaeological sites that may have existed previously, we cannot ignore this factor considering pre early modern sites. It has been over 40 years since Shigeo Nakagawa and Shinpei Kato advocated early modern archaeology at the 35th General Meeting of the Japanese Archaeological Association in 1969. Now its study trends are discussed in the Annual Report of the Association as one field of archaeology, thanks to the efforts of boards of education, buried cultural properties research centers, universities, and early modern archaeology societies in various places. As for museum exhibitions, modern sites and artifacts are sometimes the main feature of exhibitions and early modern archaeology often plays an important role in exhibition themes outside archaeology. While early modern archaeology’s subdivision is progressing for artifact and feature study as in archaeology of other periods, special feature articles are being published in magazines and so on, and joint research is conducted with other academic fields, such as document history.

Categories of main articles included: 1. Books/magazines, 2. Academic societies, 3. Exhibitions: topics of different fields were mentioned as long as it involved sites and artifacts handled by modern archaeology. 4. Feudal lords’ residences: taking Mito-han (the Fief of Mito) as an example, it introduced Tokugawa Museum, museums in Ibaragi Prefecture, non-government organizations, and organizations engaged in research on the Mito-han residence in Edo, and mentioned that their network is being promoted. 5. Gardens: an example of the excavation of a feudal lord’s garden was indicated. 6. Sites

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of modern/contemporary: this pointed out the need to conduct research on the modern/contemporary period, as it was once for early modern archaeology. After excavation examples from modern archaeology were mentioned, activities of the 'National Network for Preservation of War Sites' were mentioned, which included sites handled by early modern and modern archaeology. It is a national organization formed in 1997 mainly by Matsushiro Daihon'ei no Hozon wo Susumeru Kai (Organization for Promotion of Preservation of Matsushiro Underground Imperial Headquarters), Bunkazai Hozen Zenkoku Kyogikai (National Council for Preservation of Cultural Properties), History Educationalist Conference of Japan, and so on. 7. Utilization of sites: it proposed a way of city development that would take research results and nature of the place into consideration, such as including research results into 'open empty grounds.' 8. Preservation movement for sites: this mentioned preservation movements for Yanba Dam for which excavation is still continuing.