

## Kofun Period

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Research trends of fiscal 2019 Kofun period study saw strong empirical research based on careful observation, as in the past few years. Especially there were many theses on bronze mirrors, horse harnesses, and clay figurines (*haniwa*), showing profoundness of the study. Also, studies that demonstrate effectiveness of three-dimensional measurements (SfM) became more frequent. While SfM still seems to be used to supplement traditional methods which use measured drawings as basic data, it will probably be the main method in the near future.

Movements to discuss nation formation and reconstruct sovereignty structure and society are active. While the author often comes across conflict or fusion of the old and new theories, one interesting change of interpretation was from “ostentation and symbol of power” to “maintenance and expansion/regeneration of power” regarding the significance of building mounded tumulus which symbolized sovereignty. Research attitudes to pay attention to palaces and settlement sites rather than just focusing on royal mausoleums and mounded tombs seems to be a trend in recent years. However, since information on palaces and settlement sites that could be yielded by excavation research is so much less compared to information from royal mausoleums and mounded tombs, systematic study that unifies both studies will have to be left to the future.

The total number of Kofun period related theses published this fiscal year seems around 200. Considering just the mere number, the Kofun period seems to have drawn the most interest. However, it is somewhat a concern that many of them are short theses with a remarkably limited target of discussion. They seem to lack adequate presentation of data and process of demonstration. Under the present situation of subdivided research and so many theses published, it is not easy to keep grasping multiple research histories. While narrowing of specialized fields may progress development of individual studies, it may delay systematic study.

In recent years, there have been many publications of pocket books and introductory books that tell specialized knowledge in an easy-to-understand manner and makes general readers feel closer to mounded tombs. As utilization of cultural properties for local communities and tourism resources are being accelerated, this trend seems to be one aspect.

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