

Decorated Tombs in Southwest Japan

Behind the Identity and the Socio-Political Developments of

the Late Kofun Society in Kyūshū



Claudia Zancan

Cover page: Motifs from Kyūshū decorated tombs (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993)



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Preface

The first time I have heard the word “kofun tomb” was when I was 18 years old at the ancient Japanese history class during my Ba. The professor could catch my attention with only three words that forever changed my academic future: Japan, royal tombs and mystery! Before that class I was not aware of the importance these tombs had for the Japanese state formation and for the Japanese identity. The fact that there were still many mysteries about the identity of those buried in the mounded tombs triggered my interest and since the first year of my Ba the Kofun Period became my topic.

At the age of 20 I went back to Japan to improve my language skill. In one of my tours I could visit the magnificent tombs and I had the feeling that there are still many unanswered questions surrounding them. This idea was confirmed once I arrived in Leiden and my supervisor, Dr. I.R. Bausch showed me a catalogue about the decorated tombs in Kyūshū. Here the mystery was even harder to reveal since not many studies have been carried out so far. Nonetheless, this was the main reason why I decided to write my Ma thesis about the decorated tombs in Kyūshū: to give voice to these amazing tombs which can tell us a lot about the society during the Late Kofun Period and also about the role the Continent had on it.

There are many people who helped me with my work that I would like to thank. In the first place I want to thank my parents who gave me the possibility to study in one of the most prestigious universities in the world; Dr. I.R. Bausch who taught me what it means to be an archaeologist and who has always helped me with my many questions (like Virgilio for Dante during his tour in the circles of the Inferno); professors M. Bale, J. Best, and B. Seyock for the material and their personal opinion about my topic; my colleague A. De Benedittis for his opinion; my Ba professor of Japanese archaeology Dr. F. Salviati who has always believed in me; all of my big Italian family for their support; my best friend/colleague F. Poortman for his great help, his friendship, and support; my Leiden friends; my Italian friends: E. Urpi, J. Restrepo, C. Picchioni (love you girls) who participated with their great suggestions; M. Giannella and M. Tataranni: thanks for being the wonderful girls that you are; L. Maurella, A. Tognetto, C. Scarciolla, V. Cifarelli, F. Martella, and A. Tenshi di Rosa, and for their support.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the thesis

Being on two opposite sides of an inland sea area, Korea and Japan have had a long history of both economical and cultural contact. Even though in the contemporary political situation, we are used to seeing Japan and Korea as two very different cultures, the cross cultural influences still very much visible today in the archaeological record, serve as an indicator of this peer polity interaction in the past.

These interactions did not only help the state formation in Japan, but also created a homogeneous material culture with a shared symbolic meaning among China, South Korea—with Paekche kingdom, and Japan—especially in Kyūshū island (See map in Fig. 1).



Figure 1: Japan in East Asia with a focus on Kyūshū and Paekche (after Caroli and Gatti 2004, 312)

This thesis will discuss the topic of interactions and their influences on material culture by using as case-study Japan during the Late Kofun Period (475-710 AD). In particular the focus will be on the influences that the Korean kingdom of Paekche had on the Kyūshū mortuary architecture of the decorated tombs, and

what this might have meant for the identity and the socio-political developments within Japan.

Through the discussion of the literature and research carried out so far, it will first address the development of the Japanese mortuary architecture, followed by the history of the relations it had with the continent and the nature of these interactions, and the material culture created in this interaction-sphere. Fundamental for this case-study will be the study carried out by Barnes (2007) concerning the Peer Polity Interaction theory expounded by Renfrew (1986) in the specific case of Japan/Kyūshū and southern Korea.

1.1. Introduction to the Japanese archipelago

The Japanese archipelago (See map in Fig. 2) consists of four main islands, Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyūshū, and Shikoku, and 2456 smaller islands. It is situated at the edge of the Asian political borders between the North Pacific Ocean, Sea of Japan, and a part of the Korean Peninsula. Japan is separated from the mainland by the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea, creating a sort of natural barrier which helped the development of the Japanese isolation but in the same time increased the interactions among the several countries (Imamura 1996, 1).

It is generally said that Japan combined some elements brought from the mainland—China and Korea—with its autochthonous tradition. In some points the distance between the Japanese archipelago and Korea measures only 200 km. The island of Kyūshū, indeed, is situated in a central area among China, Korea and the island Honshu, becoming an important gateway (*Ibid.*, 1). This makes this island very interesting for archaeological research, since it was a central point for interactions between Japan and the mainland. The first relevant interactions are dated back to the Yayoi Period (300 BC-300 AD), when Kyūshū exchanged prestigious goods with Han China (Barnes 2007).

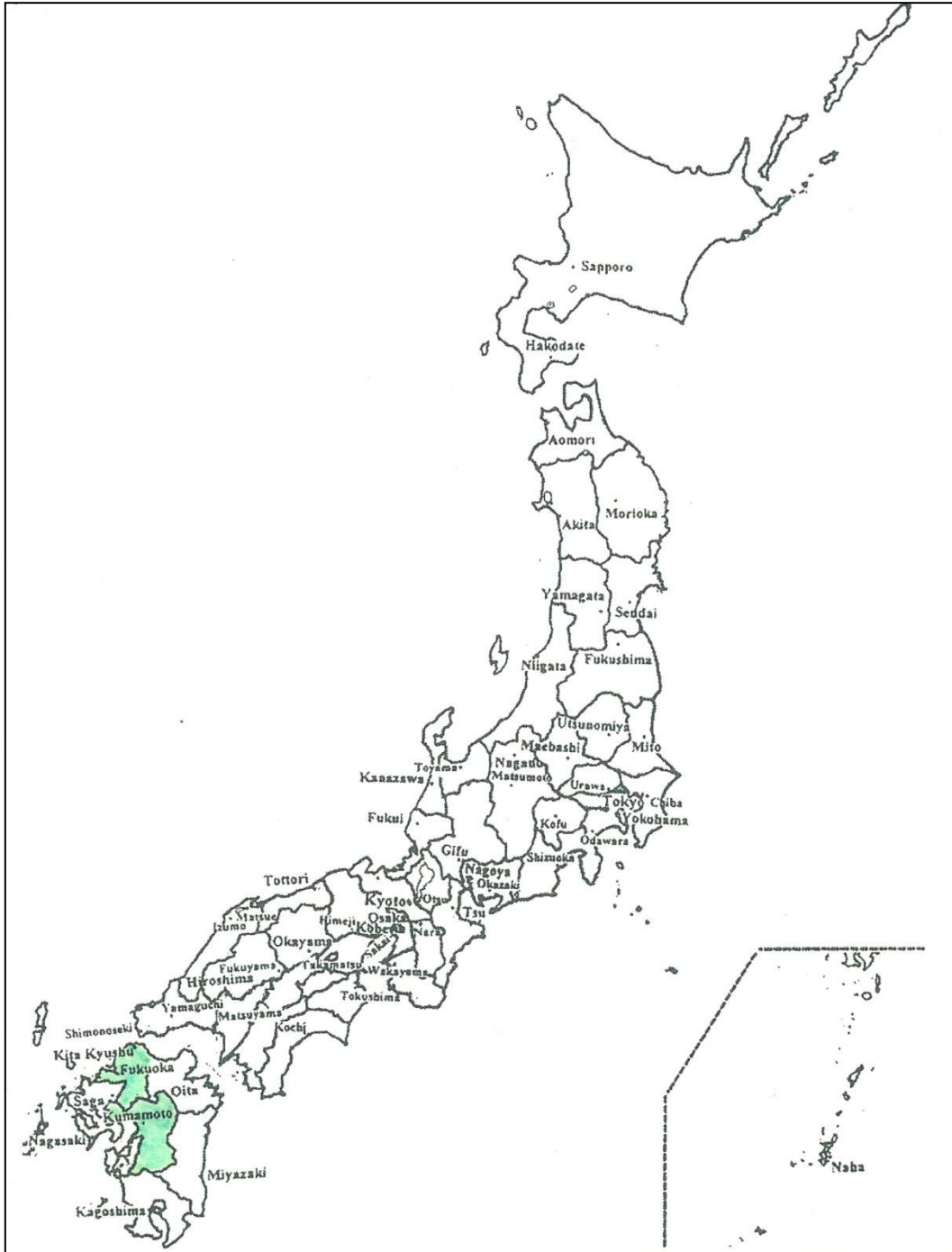


Figure 2: Map of Japan: the case-study areas (Kumamoto and Fukuoka) for this thesis are shown outlined in green (after Corradini 2003, 24)

Date	CHINA	KOREA	JAPAN
300	221 BC	EARLY IRON AGE	
200	QIN	LATE BRONZE AGE	Early
100	206 BC		AD 100
0	Early		YAYOI
AD 100	Interregnum (Middle)	Proto-Three Kingdoms	AD 100
200	HAN	LATE IRON AGE =	Middle
300	Late	AD 300	Late
400	3 KINGDOMS	THREE KINGDOMS	AD 300
500	6 DYNASTIES	(Paekche, Shilla, Koguryo)	AD 400
600	(Wei, Wu, Shu Han)		AD 475
700	(Jin, N & S, N. Qi, N. Wei, N. Zhou)		Late Middle Early
800	AD 581	AD 668	KOFUN
900	SUI	AD 918	AD 645
1000	AD 618	UNITED SHILLA	ASUKA
1100	TANG	AD 906	AD 710
1200	AD 960	KORYO	NARA
1300	5 DYNASTIES	AD 1392	AD 794
1400	AD 960	YI	HEIAN
1500	SONG		AD 1180
1600	AD 1279		MEDIEVAL
1700	YUAN		(Kamakura, Muromachi, Momoyama)
1800	AD 1368		AD 1603
1900	MING		EDO
2000	AD 1644		AD 1868
	QING		
	AD 1911	AD 1910	AD 1912 MEIJI
	AD 1949 REPUBLIC	AD 1945 COLONIAL	AD 1925 TAISHO
	PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC	North PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC	AD 1988 SHOWA
		South REPUBLIC	HEISEI

Table 1: Historical table about China, Korea, and Japan (Barnes 1993, 25)

1.2. Introduction to the topic

The Kofun Period (250-710 AD) is the period when Japan began its state formation through a process of political hierarchy based on a system of several clans. This process had already started during the previous phase, the Yayoi Period, when the interaction with the mainland triggered the process of creation of a complex and stratified society. This socio-political development is visible in the material culture shared with the mainland and in the development of the mounded tombs typical of the Kofun Period, used for the emerging elite. The background developments will be treated in more detail in Chapter 3.

The periodisation generally accepted for the Kofun Period sees three sub-phases: Early (250-400 AD), Middle (400-475 AD), and Late (475-710 AD) (See Table 1).¹ This division is mainly based on changes in tomb structures and contents, but it also covers important socio-political developments in the Japanese archipelago of that period such as changes in settlement patterns and dynastic succession (Barnes 2007, 9; Tsude 1987, 55).

The mortuary architecture mainly consists of keyhole shaped burial mound tombs, which developed in Japan from the Middle/Late Yayoi Period (ca.100-300 AD) to the Late Kofun Period (ca.475-710 AD). It can be considered as the materialisation of the socio-political changes that occurred within the archipelago in that time-frame, which led to the affirmation of a hierarchical political structure. These changes are mainly visible in changes in size and shape of the tombs. Indeed, at the end of the Yayoi period, Japan was dominated by several clans exercising power over their region. According to the later, historical source of the *Nihon Shoki*, one of these clans—the Yamato clan—believed they were descended from the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, the most important deity in the Shinto religion, and wanted to assert their supremacy over the other regional chieftains (Caroli and Gatti 2004, 17-18; Corradini 2003, 36-37).

The development of the size of the giant keyhole mounds undeniably coincided exactly with the time when the Yamato clan came to power. During the 5th century, when the Yamato lineage demanded recognition as the predominant clan in the Japanese territory, the size of the keyhole tombs peaked whereas at the

¹ In this thesis the periodisation of the Kofun Period follows the model used by Barnes (2007) which includes the Asuka Period into the Late Kofun Period.

end of the period, when their supremacy had been accepted by all the clans, the size decreased and more simple shapes began to be used (Tsude 1987, 55).

Nevertheless, the development of the hierarchical structure—thus also the development and the characteristics of the Japanese mortuary architecture—needs to be discussed in a broader context: the interactions among the Yellow Sea. From the Middle Yayoi Period (ca. 100 BC-100 AD), the island of Kyūshū began important relations with the Chinese Han Empire. This latter included Japan in its tributary system, creating an “elite” within the Kyūshū society made up of those who could have access to the tributary gifts such as bronze mirrors, gold seals, and weapons (Barnes 2007). Therefore it is from this interaction that Japan first began a sort of hierarchical system by creating many regional chieftains who sought the symbolic items from the Han Empire.

The material culture from these interactions symbolised the higher position of China towards Japan and the symbolic political status acquired by some of the Japanese chieftains. Furthermore, Japan had always had interactions with southern Korea, mainly for trade.

Nonetheless, the material culture shows evidence that these interactions also happened on the basis of a Peer Polity Interaction sphere. Indeed, there is a homogeneous repertoire of burial items which symbolised a specific political status shared by both Kyūshū (and later also other areas of Japan) and contemporaneous states in southern Korea, in specific with Paekche (Barnes 2007). Therefore, Kyūshū has always experienced frequent interactions among the Yellow Sea sphere, not only during the time-frame of this case-study—the Late Kofun Period—but also from the Middle Yayoi Period onward.

To sum up, all these interactions helped the affirmation of the Japanese state and they characterised its material culture and mortuary system with elements which showed the nature of the several relations.

By taking into account this background, the case-study of this thesis aims to argue how the interactions during the Late Kofun Period operated on a specific typology of burial mounds found firstly in Kyūshū: the decorated tombs. In this thesis the term “decorated tombs” refers to all those which present decorative motifs, both painted or in relief.

1.2.1. Relevance of the topic

The interactions among the Yellow Sea led to the Japanese state formation and created unique material culture and mortuary architecture which clearly show the different natures of these interactions.

The seminal research of Barnes (1993; 2007) on the state formation in Japan has made important contributions to our understanding of the background of the interactions among China, Korea, and Japan from the earliest times (around 10,000 BC) to the beginning of the Japanese historic times (around 800 AD), particularly concerning the development of the mounded tomb culture. Barnes' (2007) application of the Peer Polity Interaction hypothesis to the Japanese context forms the inspiration for this thesis.

However, there is a lack of information about the social development of the Late Kofun Period, the interactions during this period, and how this is reflected in the material culture. Barnes has well described the interaction between Kyūshū and Paekche from the Late Yayoi until the Middle Kofun Period, but she has not taken into account the Late Kofun Period and the changing influences seen in its mortuary system and material culture; issues which will be addressed in this thesis.

Of a different approach is the research done by Edward (1983) and Farris (1998) who have concentrated their studies mainly on the reasons why there is evidence of Korean influence on the Japanese material culture during the 6th century. They have both well explained the migration from Paekche to Kyūshū during the 5th-6th century, as well as the Paekche influence on the Kyūshū tombs. Nevertheless, this influence is explained only as elements brought to Japan directly by Paekche immigrants, without taking into account the possibility that the tombs from this period also might have been a shared tradition within the Peer Polity Interaction sphere.

Regarding the research about the decorated tombs in Japan, only few studies have been published so far. The research carried out by Kidder (1964) is quite outdated since at the time of his study, many of the decorated tombs had not been discovered yet. Thus, this thesis has added also those tombs that have recently been discovered, broadening the research field. However, his research has been useful in terms of the structure of the tombs and disposition of the motifs. A part of his research aimed to understand the meaning behind the motifs, which

was not very convincing. He sought a connection with some motifs and elements found in the Japanese historical/mythological first sources—the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki*. The events recorded in these two sources cannot be considered reliable due to their strong mythological nature. The majority of the events and aspects treated in the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki* have not been archaeologically supported and Kidder’s connections with the meaning behind the motifs seem far-fetched.

Other research about decorated tombs in Japan has been carried out by Shiraishi (1993a-b), who collaborated on the publication of the catalogue “Special Exhibition Decorated Tombs in Japan” published in 1993. In his research he sought to see the development of the decorated tombs in Japan as an indigenous tradition which began in Kyūshū and spread to other areas of the archipelago. Moreover, in his research he states that there might have been a strong aspect of identity behind the motifs of the decorated tombs, mainly based on the belief system of that time. However, his approach does not take into account the role played for a long time by symbols in the Japanese mortuary tradition, stemming from the interactions among the Yellow Sea, thus weakening his ‘indigenous development’ theory.

Interpretations of the research carried out so far regarding the case-study of this thesis, seems to lean either towards a mere imitation of the Paekche decorated tombs tradition or to a complete autochthonous phenomenon of the Japanese archipelago.

The decorated tombs in Kyūshū have never been studied as another stage of the results had from the interactions with Paekche, thus connecting both elements. In particular, there are no studies considering the decorated tombs in the context of the identity/symbolic meaning the mortuary architecture had always had in Kyūshū, a context actually created through the interactions with Paekche and linked to the social development within Japan at that time. Even studies (e.g. Barnes 2007) that do acknowledge the important role played by interaction with Paekche in the identity and the socio-political developments of Kyūshū do not take into account the Late Kofun Period and the possibility of shared elements between Kyūshū and Paekche decorated tombs.

A much-discussed topic (e.g. Kidder 1964; Shiraishi 1993a) is the meaning of the motifs of the Kyūshū decorated tombs, since many of them are abstract. Nonetheless, no research has focused on the fact that symbols and symbolic

objects have always been crucial elements in the Japanese mortuary tradition since they aimed to show the identity and the role played by who had them. These prestige goods were, in fact, symbols of the identity of the elite on both sides of the Japan Sea: members of the social stratum could recognise each other through the possession of the right goods (Barnes 2007, 170). Considering the importance the interactions with the continent have always had for the Kyūshū society, a re-evaluation of the main research carried out so far, would give a new insight into the less-studied Late Kofun Period and into the role of the decorated tombs.

1.2.2. Social relevance of the topic

Monuments are a real and vivid witness of the past and identity, reminding us of the importance of our history and the meaning it has for our modern society (Rowlands and Tilley 2006, 500). They have a strong power because they can convey feelings and other intangible aspects such as ideology, values, and culture (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996, 16), and as such they are a materialisation of the world around the society. Behind monuments there is often a collective memory (Rowlands and Tilley 2006, 501) which is consequently connected to the identity evoked by the monument to the affiliated group.

Collective memory is created by all the elements shared by the same group, thus a memory shared by everybody contextualised in the present. Monuments remind the society that it is bound to a specific place, thus to a specific identity. Therefore, the society identifies in these monuments their own heritage. Heritage is, in fact, defined not only as the physical remains of our past (archaeological heritage), but also includes the intangible values (cultural heritage) and how the present society re-uses and re-evaluates them (Skeates 2000, 9-11).

Moreover, heritage is part of the collective memory since it is “*what people want to save, collect or conserve*” (Howard 2003, 148). Since heritage plays important functions in the society, such as symbolic functions, heritage managers assign different values (like cultural, historical, social, and/or economic values) which can change through time in order to make the best conservation decisions (Mason 2008, 100). The theoretical framework concerning the relation between identity, symbols, and style will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 2.

In the case-study discussed in this thesis, the mortuary architecture of both Korea and Japan is perceived by the modern society as a vital witness of the past of these two countries. The royal decorated tombs site situated in Northern Korea,

the tombs of Koguryo (3rd century BC-7th century AD), is considered almost the only testimony of the Koguryo culture. They include 63 tombs probably made between the 5th-6th century AD; around 20 tombs from this site, containing also painted and decorated tombs with scenes of the daily life of that period,² have been added in 2004 to the UNESCO World Heritage List as an important representation of the Koguryo culture and for the important influence it had on other cultures such as Japan (<http://whc.unesco.org>).

In Japan, the Ōsaka plain hosts the largest mounded tombs of the Kofun Period: the Mozu-Furuichi tumulus clusters. The mounded tombs from this site were built between the late 4th and early 6th century and the different shape and size of the tombs show the socio-political development which occurred in that area during that time-frame. This site is on the tentative list of the UNESCO (<http://whc.unesco.org>), showing the importance the tombs have, also for the identity of the Japanese people, since they represent a unique tradition which led to the formation of the Japanese State.

It becomes clear that the values assigned to the tombs by both societies are based on not only cultural and historical values as vivid remains of a glorious past, but also on the fact they convey a certain social value as they represent a strong identity for the present Japan and Korea.

In fact, there is still a lot of controversy regarding the influence both countries had on each other, in particular the influence Korea had on the Japanese mortuary architecture. The controversy is mainly focused on the interpretation of specific events and processes among the Yellow Sea (China, Korea, and Japan) during the time-frame also analysed in this thesis (Middle Yayoi Period – Late Kofun Period) (Nelson 2006, 38).

The first archaeological studies in Korea were carried out by Japanese surveyors and scholars during the Japanese imperialism (end of 1800-1945) (Corradini 2003). Because of their nationalistic political agenda, the archaeological discoveries by Japanese archaeologists aimed to show that Koreans were in reality Japanese, thus the excavations were mainly focused on the early historic periods, such as the mounded tombs period (Nelson 2006, 39). Therefore, for a long time the Korean people had a loss of identity actually caused by a wrong interpretation of discoveries, especially those connected to the tombs.

² For further information about the Koguryo decorated tombs see Appendix 3.

Hence, nowadays Korean archaeology is taking on the role of giving identity, coherence, and self-reliance to the Korean people through a re-evaluation of the archaeological discoveries (*Ibid.*, 38).

Furthermore, during the Second World War, the Japanese society strongly believed in its mythic ethnological and cultural homogeneity (Howell 1996, 171). It was believed that the Japanese people had never been mixed with other populations, and were thus considered pure (*Ibid.*, 172). Modern Japanese archaeology still tends to see a strong evidence of the immutability of the Japanese people (*Ibid.*, 172).

A better understanding of the nature of the interactions during the Late Kofun Period through the decorated tombs, might be socially relevant for both parties, since it will be discussed how Korea and Japan have always had a reciprocal influence-sphere. Therefore, they were not two completely separated entities.

1.3. Research questions

The point that will be researched and discussed in this thesis considers to what extent the continental influence is visible from the mortuary architecture during the Late Kofun, by taking as main case-study the decorated tombs of Kyūshū, and what this influence might mean for identity and socio-political developments within Japan. The discussion on this main topic will be based on the following research questions:

- To what extent is the Paekche/Continental influence visible in the decorated mortuary architecture of the Late Kofun Period in Kyūshū?

The stylistic aspects taken into account will be the tomb shape, the tomb structure as well as the decorations such as narrative/abstract motifs.

In order to answer this question, there will be a short evaluation of the points expounded throughout this thesis about the most influential interactions among mainland China, Paekche, and Kyūshū from the Late Yayoi Period to the Late Kofun Period, how these interactions are visible in material culture, and their real meaning. In particular, the Korean-Paekche influence on the Kyūshū decorated tombs will be discussed, in order to identify common aspects as well as

differing aspects. Therefore, the main common and different aspects between the decorated tombs in Paekche and Kyūshū will be listed.

- What can the similarities and differences with Paekche/Continental decorated tombs tell us about the identity and socio-political developments in Japan?

Taking into account the long history of relations and interactions between Kyūshū and Paekche, how they have been crucial for the socio-political development within Japan, and how they led to the formation of a specific identity—the elite who was in charge during these interactions—the possible reasons why certain continental elements have been absorbed into the Kyūshū decorated tombs traditions and why others have been changed will be evaluated here.

A main point of discussion focuses on the differences in the style used for the motifs and theories about the role the style can play in conveying information about identity—in this case the identity of those who controlled the interactions with Paekche at that time. The similarities regarding the shape and structure of the tombs will be another crucial focus of discussion in the context of the Peer Polities Interaction adaptation expounded by Barnes (2007).

- Are the motifs represented on the walls connected with symbolic objects? Can these motifs and their spread tell us anything about the society around the decorated tombs?

Throughout the thesis it will be discussed how symbolic objects have been crucial in defining the identity of who was in charge of the interactions among the Yellow Sea and especially with Paekche. Starting from information gathered from the database compiled on the basis of recent research (e.g. Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp/>), the connection between motifs and symbolic material culture will be discussed.

This research has (e.g. Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp/>), in fact, analysed similarities between the motifs on the walls of the tombs and some artefacts from the Japanese traditional grave-goods. These symbolic motifs/objects will be discussed with theories (e.g. Shelach 2009) regarding the function symbols can have in conveying identity information. The outcomes will be argued in a broader context in order to find out if the symbolic motifs—as it was for the symbolic objects from the Middle/Late Yayoi Period until the Middle

Kofun Period—can also tell us anything about the socio-political situation of Kyūshū during the Late Kofun Period.

1.4. Method and Material

This thesis is mainly based on literature analysis, and on an analysis of the data about the decorated tombs gathered so far. Moreover, a large part of the discussion is based on an evaluation of the two databases personally compiled by using the data from literature (e.g. Okauchi 1987), recent research (e.g. Shiraishi 1993a-b), and the ongoing project of the National Museum of Kyūshū, the Sōshoku Kofun Database (<http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp/>).

The first database shows a general overview of decorated tombs from Kyūshū such as location, dating, shape, and the presence of special features like the antechamber and what kind of general representations they have. This data has been gathered from the literature (e.g. Asahi Shinbunsha 1993) and from the online database of the National Museum of Kyūshū (http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp).

The second database shows in detail the motifs found on the walls of the tombs based on the data from the literature (e.g. Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; Kidder 1964) and the National Museum of Kyūshū database (http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp). The National Museum of Kyūshū database contains a plan of each decorated tomb, with pictures in case the tomb had already been opened.

This online database is an on-going project developed by the independent National Museum of Kyūshū, and with the help of scholars and archaeologists such as Hiroshi Ishimaru, Miyoko Shiraishi, and Isao Ishiyama (http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp). The database has been very useful in understanding a tomb's shape, its date, the presence of an antechamber, and the tomb motifs.

Another useful tool has been the “Special Exhibition Decorated Tombs in Japan”, a catalogue published by Asahi Shinbunsha containing pictures and explanations of the exhibition held in Japan in 1993. Many pictures in this thesis are from this catalogue. In the exhibition, replicas of the tombs were created in order to let the visitors have a better idea of the vivid colours of that time and also to be able to experience entering the tombs in person. This catalogue also contains articles and research from important Japanese archaeologists working on the

Kofun Period (e.g. Shiraishi), thus presenting an important point of view for the aims of this thesis.

1.5. Theoretical approaches

In this section, the theoretical approaches used in this research will be briefly outlined. A better discussion of the theory that will be used for the discussion, is expounded in Chapter 2, together with the definitions and concepts of culture and Japanese/Korean definition, before the start of the discussion.

The main theory used for this case-study is that of the so-called Peer Polity Interaction by Renfrew (1986) and the points of this theory outlined by Barnes (2007) for the case-study of Japan. This thesis aims to analyse the interactions among the Yellow Sea sphere and in specific the nature of these interactions with the Korean kingdom of Paekche. Many studies (e.g. Edwards 1983; Farris 1998) have analysed the interactions only as mere “exchanges” of goods, whereas Barnes (2007) expounded the real nature of these interactions by basing her research on Renfrew’s theory of Peer Polity Interaction. This thesis will evaluate the research carried out so far with the ideas expounded by Barnes regarding the role played by the interactions with southern Korea for the identity and socio-political development of Japan, and in particular of Kyūshū.

Style will be discussed in terms of the main definitions attributed to it by scholars in the last fifty years (e.g. Sackett 1977; Wiessner 1983; Wobst 1977). In particular, theories on style will be discussed to see to what extent the different styles used in mainland and Japan can tell us about the identity of the society behind the decorated tombs during the Late Kofun period in Kyūshū. Therefore style will also be associated with theories regarding identity. Hence, the *information-exchange theory* of Wobst (1977) and the model of Wiessner (1983) will be discussed, as well as whether the style chosen by the Kyūshū people can be considered as an *isochrestic variation* as defined by Sackett (1985). Although their research seems outdated, it still expounds valid points for this thesis. These points will be discussed in the Chapter 2 with an evaluation with the aid of more recent criticism and using more recent theoretical approaches.

Connected to these definitions of style, the concept of identity will be briefly introduced. Identity covers too broad a field to discuss all aspects, thus

only identity in general terms and collective/social identity will be taken into account. Studies carried out by Meskell and Preucel (2004), Schwartz *et al.* (2011), and Spears (2011), will be used in order to define identity and outline the concept of collective identity. Identity will be discussed in connection to the role style can play in exchange information.

In conclusion, the information regarding the identity conveyed in symbols will be discussed through theories about symbols (e.g. DeMarrais *et al.* 1996; Shelach 2009). In this thesis the importance that symbolic objects had in defining the identity of the people of Kyūshū and in explaining the nature of the important interactions occurring from the Middle Yayoi Period to the Middle Kofun Period will be argued. Moreover, the role played by symbols during the time-frame under review, the Late Kofun Period, and what kind of information about the society they can convey, will be explored.

1.6. Problematic issues regarding this topic

As has been explained in previous sections of this introduction, little research has been carried out so far about the Late Kofun Period and decorated tombs in specific. Therefore, it has been very difficult to have access to literature and data of both traditions of the decorated tombs: the Paekche and Kyūshū regions in Korea and Japan respectively.

One more problem is the lack of studies on the grave-goods, also due to the fact that Kyūshū decorated tombs do not contain remarkable burial objects probably due to looting. Nonetheless, the burial repertoire would have been an important tool for the evaluation of the nature of the interactions between Paekche and Kyūshū, since much information on the previous periods has come from the symbolic objects found in tombs.

Furthermore, there is a lack of material by western scholars. This does not mean that Japanese studies are not reliable, but they have a strong Japanese vision of the facts, due to the struggling modern situation with Korea, which started during the Second World War. Therefore, some of these studies (e.g. Shiraishi 1993b) tend to take the indigenous origin and development of the decorated tombs for granted, without considering a different nature of the interactions with the continent.

One more problem was that this material was in Japanese. Despite my knowledge of the Japanese language, some passages were not very easy to translate, because of the lack of some ancient ideograms in the modern dictionary. In the same way, the material written in Korean was neither easy to find nor to understand.

Summary

Kyūshū and its archaeology can be considered as a vivid witness of the bountiful interactions among the Yellow Sea throughout a long frame of time. The mortuary architecture in Japan is closely connected to the development of a hierarchical structure and the socio-political changes which occurred from the Middle Yayoi Period. These aspects are visible from the changes in tomb size and shape, and from the burial repertoire.

They show how these elements need to be considered in a broader context of the interactions among the Yellow Sea, revealing an important identity for the society of Kyūshū behind a homogeneous material culture.

The case-study of this thesis will discuss the topic of the interactions and their influence during the Late Kofun Period through a specific typology of mounded tomb—the decorated tomb—and what this influence might have meant for the identity and the socio-political developments within Japan.

Chapter 2: Definitions and Theoretical approaches

Identity can be visualised in several aspects of material culture. Two of them—style and symbols—are strongly connected to identity and collective identity in particular. Throughout the whole thesis, these aspects will be discussed in connection to the role played also by the interactions with the continent for the affirmation of the identity behind the mounded tomb culture.

In this Chapter, an evaluation of the research previously conducted regarding identity, style, and symbols will be discussed. The main points of this research will be further argued in Chapter 6.

2.1. Definition of culture in this thesis

In this thesis, culture will be used as it has been defined by Ingold (1994). That is to say that culture is made up off all those elements shared by a community. Those elements are not only tangible but they can also be intangible. Both are well recognised by the community and by all those who feel to be part of it. Nonetheless, culture is not unchangeable. Indeed, peoples have always interacted, influencing and adopting aspects of different cultures. Therefore, culture can always change and incorporate new aspects (Ingold 1994, 329). This is a very interesting definition for the social relevance of the case-study discussed in this thesis. As stated in section 1.2.2., there is the trend in modern Japanese archaeology to consider Korea and Japan as two different and separate cultural identities also for what concerns the past.

2.2. Japanese, Chinese, and Korean: a definition

An important focus of this thesis is Japanese, Korean, and Chinese identities, and how these were not as well-defined in the past as they are today (Barnes 1993, 8). Therefore, when this thesis talks generally about “Japanese, Chinese, and Korean” it will refer to its geographical area. Specific political entities, such as the Korean kingdom of Paekche or the Kyūshū culture will be named with their specific term and location.

2.3. Peer Polity Interaction

The core of the Peer Polities Interaction theory, expounded by Renfrew in the 1980s, is to consider the socio-political development and changes of complex society (during state formation) as the results of interactions among “peers” in neighbouring societies. The emerging political groups developed in clusters and their changes and developments are usually materialised in similar social organisation (e.g. burial practise), type of artefacts (e.g. prestige goods), and monumental buildings (e.g. tombs) (Cherry 2005, 198). This is connected to the theory expounded by DeMarrais *et al.* (1996) regarding how intangible aspects of social life, such as ideology and hierarchy, can be materialised in material culture; for instance: monuments. This theory will be treated in more details in section 2.5.

Furthermore, early forms of states–like Japan and Korea during the Yayoi-Kofun period–are usually in the same region and the changes within them usually happen at the same time. Since these changes tend to be at the same time, they are not caused by an imposition of a single influence, but they can be considered as the results of various interactions among equal polities. These interactions usually begin through intensive trade and production (*Ibid.*, 198).

Renfrew (1986) claims that in order to talk about “Peer Polity Interaction” there should be other visible contacts–like movement of goods–and already individualised changes possibly triggered by interactions during the previous stages of the period under analysis (Renfrew 1986, 7). The list below composed by Renfrew (1986) shows possible cases where the Peer Polity Interaction theory can be successfully used:

- 1) When one society recognises a “polity” surrounding societies may also adopt the same scale and organisation polity;
- 2) When a society undergoes changes especially in increasing complexity, it is likely that nearby polities also face the same transformations;
- 3) As a consequence of point 2, changes are often materialised into particular material culture such as monumental buildings, or reinforced practises such as the burial system;
- 4) [...] Interactions among peer polities can also lead to the following points:
 - a. Competition (also military) and competitive emulation;
 - b. Symbols entrainment and transmission of innovation;
 - c. Increased flow in exchanging goods

- 5) In those societies where there is an intensive interaction of symbols and material but which are not highly organised internally, it is likely that they will undergo a development of the hierarchical structure (*Ibid.*, 7-8).

Very relevant for the case-study of this thesis, is the concept of the development of a hierarchical society triggered by interactions. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, a case of Peer Polity Interaction has already been expounded by Barnes (2007) for southern Korea and the island of Kyūshū. Nonetheless, the interactions that occurred during the time frame of this thesis—the Late Kofun Period—have never before been considered in the view of a Peer Polities Interaction sphere where similarities in the burial system, the decorated tombs, might give us a new insight into the nature of these relations.

2.4. Style and Identity

Identity

Identity is a broad field which includes different issues such as ethnicity, sex, gender etc. Due to the limits of this Master thesis only social identity will be discussed.

Recent approaches (Meskell and Preucel 2004) tends to look more at the different kinds of identity (*Ibid.*, 121). It is problematic to define the identity of an individual because some identities are clear from the beginning such as sex and class, whereas others are more complex to define, for instance social identity (Meskell 2001, 188-189). In order to better understand social identity, Meskell recognises two different levels of operation. The first works on a broader social level where identities are defined by formal associations. The second is based on a personal level, namely those personal experiences which form the personal identity of one individual (*Ibid.*, 189). Thus, identity cannot be defined as a fixed characteristic of an individual since we have several and different experiences that might modify the identity (Meskell and Preucel 2004, 122). Identity is not only made up of general characteristics of individuals, but also by those elements used by society to describe us. That is to say social identity, “who we are” for society and not only who we are for ourselves (Schwartz *et al.* 2011, 3). Very important for the discussion of the outcomes of this case-study is the definition of collective identity: when an individual identifies himself with a group and/or social categories (*Ibid.*, 3).

This last typology of identity is connected to the aforementioned social identity. A first step in this social identification is to recognise yourself as part of the group you belong, which will tell you who you are and who you are not. The core of this theory is the self-identification as a member of a specific group. Afterwards, members of this group compare themselves with members from different groups (*Ibid.*, 3). All the groups must distinguish themselves—also with material culture—from the groups they do not consider “member” (Spears 2011, 203). Here material culture is often used as a “symbolic” demarcation, thus it is also possible to archaeologically identify its affiliated social group (Shelach 2009, 77).

The aforementioned studies carried out by Meskell and Schwartz *et al.* do not well-expound how the social identity is recognizable in material culture; it is not outlined if the choice to show the identity-affiliation in material culture is conscious or unconscious. However, this can become a fundamental point in understanding the dynamics of a society, because in the case of a conscious choice it also means that the elements which characterise a specific identity are all well-known and understood by the community. This would change the meaning and the function of that specific material culture.

Affiliation to a specific identity can also be shown in *objectification*. Tilley (2006, 60) claims that objectification serves as “*self-knowledge of individuals and groups*”. Members of a specific identity-group identify the elements of the objectification as elements of their shared identity. There is a tendency nowadays to see a sharp difference between people and things. However, the concept of objectification is strongly connected with the definition of Schwartz *et al.* (2011) of collective identity. It shows again that humans and things are both active protagonists in creating a social identity. This is relevant since, as will be discussed in the following chapters, it might be assumed that behind the use of a specific style in the decorated tombs in Japan, there is a connection with a collective-social identity.

Therefore, objects, and material culture in general, are often used as a main means to legitimise and reproduce values and ideas (Tilley 2006, 61). As such, they also show different identities. Central to the purposes of this thesis and case-study, is Tilley’s (2006, 61) concept that personal, social, and cultural identity is objectified in our things. The world is objectified into different forms which are used in specific contexts and aim to show different identities (*Ibid.*, 67).

This objectification would also be reflected in visual art, such as paintings. It is assumed here that the Late Kofun tomb decorations represented many elements of collective identity that would have been recognised by the communities that made them.

Style

Style, material culture, and identity are strictly connected. Recent studies (e.g. Hegmon 1992) have focused more on what style is and how it can be used (Hegmon 1992, 517). Indeed, for a long time material culture has been studied mainly taking into account the relationship between people and things, rather than things themselves (Conkey 2006, 355). As Conkey (2006, 357-60) has pointed out there has been a shift in research and style is now considered as a part of the means used by humans to make sense of their world and always make new cultural meanings. Thus, style is seen as a component of the human activity (Hegmon 1992, 518), something which is a very important concept for this thesis as style is one of the most visible/easily recognisable remains of identity in the case of the decorated tombs.

The new approach to style is surely helpful in order to have a complete view of style itself. However, one approach should not exclude the previous ones. Conkey has an innovative idea about the active role style has, but style can also be linked to identity. Style can still be used as a material culture variation. The difference between these two functions may not be as big as Conkey (2006) claims. Indeed, in social interaction/exchange style can show an identity affiliation which is important for a self-identification in material culture. Hence, style can also be used in the same time as a material cultural variation. The difference is that it would not be random, but consciously taken. People should still be considered as the main player in this because they can consciously choose and determine the style for their material culture.

In my opinion, contrary to Conkey, it is still important to study the relationship between people and things, in order to understand better why they choose a specific style. As it will be later expounded by Sackett (1977), people can choose which style is more suitable for a specific material culture in a specific context. Indeed, archaeologists have recently understood the advantages to eliminate the gap in considering style either as a component of human activity or

as a material culture variation. They began to see a relation between these two aspects (Hegmon 1992, 519).

In the last decades, scholars have begun to see style with a new active role very connected also to the identity-information it can convey. Even if some of these studies are a bit old (e.g. Sackett 1977; Wobst 1977), some of their main points can still be considered relevant for the case-study in this thesis, and as such will be briefly described next.

Wobst

According to Wobst, it is believed that style has an active role in exchange information through material culture. Style is “*the formal variability in material culture that can be related to the participation of artifacts in processes of information exchange*” (Wobst 1977, 321). Previously, in fact, the functional traits—such as the form of the artefact—were thought to change due to adaptive and practical reasons. On the other hand, stylistic traits, decorations, were thought to change due to random reasons or particular events (Hegmon 1992, 518).

The core of the information-exchange theory as expounded by Wobst (1977) and Wiessner (1983), is that style can convey and transmit information about group affiliation and identity. For the case-study of this thesis, this is relevant in order to understand the role played by the different style used in Kyūshū decorated tombs compared to those in Paekche in transmitting information regarding the society of the Late Kofun Period. Thus, it can be seen how style begins to be considered more than a mere decoration.

In contrast to this approach, Hodder (1993) avoids the idea that style can have a social function. He states that style can convey and transmit information, but this is not its main function (Hodder 1993, 44). While I do not agree with his avoidance of style’s social function, I do agree with his own views on style as they do not exclude Wobst’s views, which shows again how the functions of style should not be so sharply divided, but can be considered complementary.

Moreover, in Wobst’s definition, style is considered to be a component of human activity connected to the material cultural variation. Wobst believes that it is easier to find stylistic information in visible contexts since they are useful in communicative situations where members do not know the sender well (*Ibid.*, 323). Hegmon claims that very visible material is likely to show group or

ethnicity boundaries whereas there might be a link between the material visible only in private context and ritual-belief system (Hegmon 1992, 521). Nonetheless, the information-exchange theory of Wobst does not take into account the role played by the agents that create and use that style (*Ibid.*, 522). Even if things can have their own life (e.g. Appadurai 1986), they will always be connected to people. Moreover, people can change and re-interpret the meaning of the things they make. A recent study carried out by Hodder (2011) explains how humans depend on things, but also how things depend on humans (Hodder 2011, 155-160). In my opinion, the different functions of style should not be separated, since they are both fundamental to understand the material culture.

Sackett

A different nature of style is highlighted by Sackett (1977), stating that “*style is the specific choice made by artisans who want to convey the same information*”. That is to say, that style cannot be considered as a random trait since artisans choose a specific style among many different styles which have the same function (Sackett 1977, 370-371). Here again, we can see how style can convey special meaning and how it can be considered by the same community as a way to express specific information. He termed these choices *isochrestic variation*, which means “equivalent in use” and refers to the options potentially available to the artisans (Sackett 1985, 157). Still, he claims that these choices are socially transmitted like all cultural behaviours. However, as the style is learnt within the group, it is likely that this way of doing things can change through time. Thus what is transmitted through style may not be an intentional transmission of information about group affinity (Sackett 1977, 371).

Once again, Hodder refuses the concept of *isochrestic variation* in the definition given by Sackett. He states that is the choice which has a style and not vice versa (Hodder 1993, 45). I disagree with Hodder’s definition as in my view it is the thing that depends on the human. In both cases, the relation between people and things plays again a key role, since it is the artisan who can choose what kind of information to transmit.

On the other hand, Sackett identifies another kind of style that he calls *iconological style* (Sackett 1982, 80-81). That is to say that the style is consciously used, and it conveys specific information of a given social identity.

The concepts expounded by Sackett more closely link people with things, but in the meantime style can still convey conscious or unconscious social information. These concepts will be very important for the discussion of the case-study of this thesis in Chapter 6.

Wiessner

Another model of style has been expounded by Wiessner (1983). She defines style as “*the formal variation in material culture that transmits information about personal and social identity*” (Wiessner 1983, 256). Moreover, style uses the fundamental human cognitive process of identification via comparison (*Ibid.*, 257). She proposes two very different aspects of style: the *emblematic style* and the *assertive style*. The former recalls the definition expounded by Wobst about style and is defined by Wiessner as “*the formal variation in material culture that has a distinct referent and transmits a clear message to a defined target population about conscious affiliation or identity*” (*Ibid.*, 257). The *assertive style* is seen as formal variation in material culture which is personally based and which carries information supporting individual identity. It does not directly show an individual identity and it can be used in a conscious or unconscious way (*Ibid.*, 258). Furthermore it can also contain information that shows a potential contact, thus it is complementary to that of the emblematic style. One case is the ease of replication and complexity of design. According to Wiessner, the replication of simple design elements over a large area indicates a weak possibility of interaction, while that of contrary complex design may indicate stronger contacts (*Ibid.*, 258). I do not completely agree with this statement because if the simple design has a strong symbolic meaning it can be said that the contact has been strong as well.

Hodder

Hodder (1993) has rejected the ideas expressed by Wobst and Sackett who both sought to give style a more active role in social life. Hodder defines style as “*a way of doing in relation with other events*” (Hodder 1993, 45). Still, Hodder claims that we consider style as a pattern that we create in specific events. This style is well-known by the community as it recalls similarities and differences. “*Style only exists in these repetitions and contrasts*” (*Ibid.*, 45). In that way, style

creates social rules, norms of behaviour, and economic practise (*Ibid.*, 46). Who controls style can also control those social aspects. Style can be connected to power: style is created by the society, thus it has its own power by creating the illusion of fixed rules and relations. Who controls style can also control this aspect (*Ibid.*, 46). The last definition is similar to what Hegmon has expounded (1992). Style can, in fact, be manipulated by elite as a part of a larger power strategy typical of complex societies. Thus, elite status is often reinforced in iconography (Hegmon 1992, 528).

Hodder adds to the previous definitions of style, the concept that style can be interpreted. First there is the choice made by the artisan which already includes a “*way of doing*” in creating that specific style. This style is read and understood by the community according to the single interpretation and changing meaning due to the context. I agree with Hodder’s definition and view of style for the role played by humans into the style concept, especially for the fact that style is not a fixed aspect but it can change meaning and function according to the context.

From this section, it has become clear that style and identity are strictly connected. Behind a specific style, there might be the affiliation to an identity group. Apart from the style, information about a specific identity-affiliation can be also expressed in symbols. This aspect will be discussed in next section.

2.5. Symbols

Throughout the whole thesis, symbols will be shown as important players in conveying specific information regarding identity.

Symbols characterise humankind since we can all use and understand them (Renfrew 2001, 129). Renfrew suggests a model where X (symbol) represents Y (signified) in C (the context) (*Ibid.*, 130). Thus it is possible to understand the symbol only in its context. Surely the most obvious and clear form of symbols are the verbal ones. However, material culture is rich with symbols and sometimes it is only thanks to material symbols that the concept acquires a meaning (*Ibid.*, 130). Furthermore, Renfrew states that symbols can be self-referential (*Ibid.*, 131). It is also important to outline that in non-literate societies, symbols are vital means of transmission of particular information (*Ibid.*, 131). Indeed, as for style, it is generally thought that symbols can convey information and specific messages

(Shelach 2009, 81). This is very interesting for this thesis since in the time of Late Kofun Period, the Japanese society did not have a writing system yet.

An anthropological approach defines symbols as a “thing” with a material reality that can be used in several contexts and which shows meaning related to the culture and relationships it deals with. It is thought to be a “thing” because it is an object it represents (LeCron Foster 1994, 366). According to this definition, the only symbols we can find are material objects, archaeologically visible, which show several patterns of social, economic and political activity. Moreover, symbols convey information and meaning that will be transmitted to the viewers (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996, 16).

A special theory connected to symbols and their possible representation in material culture, has been expounded by DeMarrais *et al.* (1996): the materialisation of ideology. The core of this theory sees the possibility of a materialisation of an intangible aspect of society, ideology, into more tangible and visible aspects such as ceremonies, objects, and beliefs. In this way, beliefs and values can be shared and understood more broadly by a large part of the population. For instance, ceremonies are ideal to show symbolic objects to a large group. Ceremonies, and public events in general, are a good means to strengthen power and the affiliation to a specific identity group (*Ibid.*, 17). Therefore, political leaders can easily strengthen and legitimise their position and power through this form of materialisation (*Ibid.*, 16).

Symbols are also connected, according to Shelach (2009), to identity: the symbolic realm is a fundamental factor in helping the creation of identity (Shelach 2009, 78). The role played by symbols is that to indicate the affiliation to a specific group and its boundaries, but also it is through symbols that we think about such identity (*Ibid.*, 78). Symbols are often materialised, thus they can also be identified archaeologically. In order to understand the role played by symbols, visibility plays a decisive role. It is thought that these symbols are consciously placed in order to show the membership among several groups. Symbols are not important only for viewers, but also for their owners (*Ibid.*, 79). Symbols can have different meanings and it is unlikely that all of them will be ever completely understood. For this reason a major focus should be on the general meaning-giving sphere given by the community (*Ibid.*, 80).

For the case-study of this thesis, the definitions expounded by Shelach regarding the connection between identity and symbols, are fundamental. Indeed, from the Late Yayoi Period symbols have been used to define political status and political position inside and outside the Japanese archipelago.

2.6. Application

The theories expounded in previous sections will be used to further discuss the data gathered in Chapter 6.

At the basis of the discussion of this thesis, there is Renfrew's (1986) "Peer Polity Interaction" theory and how this has already been applied by Barnes (2007) for the previous two phases of the Period analysed here, the Kofun Period. As in this thesis the concept of "identity" plays a major role, the data gathered will be discussed to see to what extent they can tell us something about the identity of those connected to the decorated mounded tombs of Kyūshū. The definition expounded by Meskell (2001) and Schwartz *et al.* (2011) gives a good basis in order to understand if the data we have can give us information on this collective identity. Connected to this, Tilley's (2006) theory of *objectification* can be used to see if the representations on the Late Kofun decorated tombs can be discussed in its terms.

Since in this thesis there is a special focus on "murals", a form of art where different styles are very visible and easily recognisable, it has been important to outline Hegmon's (1992) and Conkey's (2006) ideas on the role that style can have in a specific society in showing its own characteristics and meanings.

Very relevant for this case-study is the information-exchange theory (Wiessner 1983; Wobst 1977). Since recent study (e.g. Barnes 2007) has already argued that a style can provide information about identity (see Chapter 4), this theory will be applied to the new data gathered in order to see what kind of information the Kyūshū Late Kofun decorated mounded tombs can give us about the socio-political situation of that time. Also, Sackett's (1977) *isochrestic variation* will be taken into account as it is known (e.g. Farris 1998; Nelson 1993; Portal 2000) that at least two different styles were accessible in Kyūshū (See section 4.3.). Following Sackett's definition it can be argued that Kyūshū artisans made a conscious choice.

Connected to this discussion, symbols will be largely discussed in terms of DeMarrais *et al.*'s (1996) and Shelach's (2009) definitions. The meaning of the symbols found on the walls of the decorated tombs will not be discussed in this thesis, as it would widen its scope too much and as there is not enough information on this topic available yet, but the broader context of the decorated tomb as a symbol of a specific identity affiliation will, as a previous study (Barnes 2007) has already shown in similar terms concerning the Early and Middle Period mounded tombs.

Summary

Style, symbols, and identity are all interconnected. Several studies (e.g. Conkey 2006; Hegmon 1992; Sackett 1977; Wiessner 1983; Wobst 1977) recognise the active role that style can have in transmitting and conveying social information, thus also about identity-affiliation. Of a different approach are the studies carried out by Hodder (1993), who gives more importance to the role played by the humans and to the several possible interpretations of the same style.

This can be linked to the perception the individuals have regarding their affiliation to a particular identity-group. Some studies (e.g. Meskell 2001; Schwartz *et al.* 2011) claim that members of a specific identity-group—also called collective identity—have certain elements in which they recognise their affiliation. These elements may also be style and symbols.

Symbols can also be considered in their materialised form (e.g. DeMarrais *et al.* 1996; Renfrew 2001). As such, they can represent in a concrete form—material culture—also intangible elements such as identity (e.g. Shelach 2009).

The studies discussed in this chapter are very relevant in order to answer the three main research questions of this thesis. Indeed, through style and symbols it will be possible to argue the identity behind the Kyūshū decorated tombs in order to add more information to our understanding of the Late Kofun society.

Chapter 3: The Kofun Period, an archaeological overview

The development of the Japanese mortuary architecture is not a casual event begun on the basis of a mere imitation of the continent. Modern studies (e.g. Barnes 2007; Kidder 2007; Kiyotari 1987; Kondo 1987) have expounded how the burials of the Kofun Period are now considered a development of the mounds that appeared during the Late Yayoi Period (100-300 AD).

The presence of increasingly large numbers of mounded tombs and increasingly large-sized mounded tombs needs to be connected to the society behind them and to the socio-political development of the Japanese state formation. The hierarchical society emerged during the Late Yayoi period and become firmly established during the Kofun Period. This is reflected in the mortuary architecture.

3.1. The Japanese mortuary architecture

This section will briefly show the development of the Japanese mortuary architecture (mounded tombs) during the periods before the Late Kofun Period (Late Yayoi Period and Early/Middle Kofun Period). This information will be used as background for the main characteristics of the Late Kofun Period mounded tombs.

3.1.1. The Japanese mortuary architecture: Late Yayoi Period (100-300 AD)

The history of the Japanese mortuary architecture can be traced back at the Yayoi Period when small and large mounds appeared. The Yayoi Period is described by Mizoguchi (2002) as “*the period when the function of symbolic items of the Yayoi material culture are always connected with something “political”*” (Mizoguchi 2002, 34). This is due to the fact that a social stratification was growing for the first time and this is also reflected in the mortuary architecture and in goods from that period.

During the Yayoi Period important technological innovations were brought from over the continent: rice agriculture and metals. The former utterly changed the social organisation, since a large number of labourers was required in order to control the irrigation system. Hence, a collaboration among several villages began

and the coordinator of the whole irrigation system came to be perceived as a leader by the communities. From this point onwards—the 1st century BC—many little regional kingdoms arose all over Japan, ruled by their own chieftain (Takeshita 2005, 24). Furthermore, as will be argued in Chapter 4, the relations between Kyūshū and the Chinese court, and relations between Kyūshū and southern Korea, each also played a crucial role in stimulating hierarchisation processes in Kyūshū (Barnes 2007, 167).

It is nowadays accepted (e.g. Kondo 1987) that the first Japanese large mortuary architecture made its appearance during the Late Yayoi Period (See Fig. 3). Taking as example the Tatetsuki tomb in Okayama prefecture, it is possible to outline the main features of the first large mounds. Tatetsuki tomb is a square-shaped mound with each side measuring 45 metres and four~five metres high. It also has projections starting from each corner. Two encircling rows of standing stones of the dimensions of one~two metres high have been found on the slope of the mound. Regarding the structure of the tomb, it has been possible to recognise a rectangular wooden chamber hosting a long wooden coffin. The grave goods repertoire includes: jadeite necklaces with a comma-shaped bead, jasper cylindrical beads, agate beads, and an iron sword (Kiyotari 1987; Kondo 1987).

These large burials with projections have been discovered in different Japanese prefectures. A crucial characteristic of the Late Yayoi mortuary architecture is that the burial of the chieftain was independently built at a distance from the communal cemetery and away from the village (Kiyotari 1987, 60). This can be explained, as stated previously, as visible proof of the development of a new social stratification with the emergence of a local elite people perceived differently by the community. Nonetheless, Kondo (1987, 345) claims there are still many regional differences—shape, size, coffins, presence of grave-goods—among the several Yayoi mounds, so we cannot talk about a unified phenomenon as in the case with keyhole-shaped tombs of the Kofun period.

This reflects the existence of a very different social stratification between Late Yayoi and Kofun. The enormous variety among the tombs of the former indicates a strong independence among the regional chieftains system where there was no single more powerful ruling clan yet, whereas the Kofun Period has one standard shape: the keyhole. Furthermore, its variety in shape and size all over

Japan shows the existence of a hierarchy of status and the relations between regional chieftains and a centralised power: the Yamato clan (Kiyotari 1987, 63).

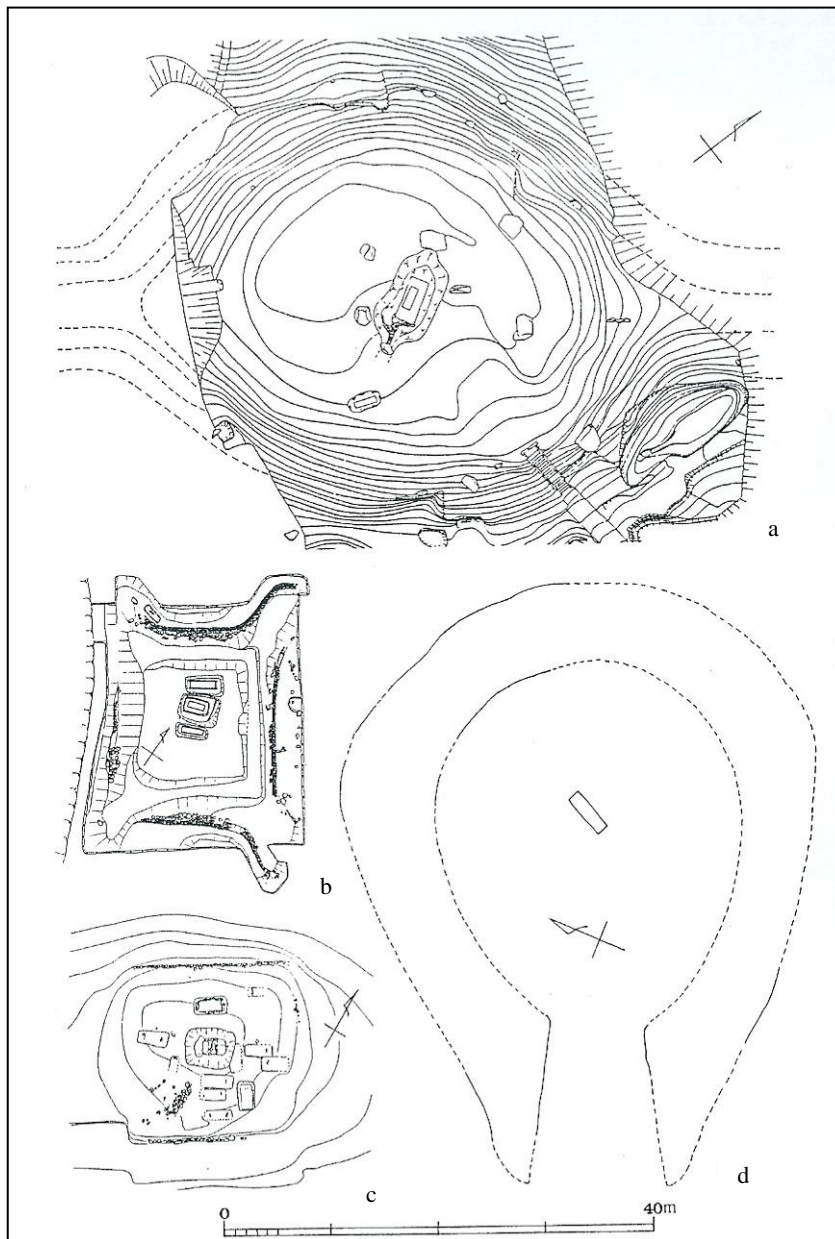


Figure 3: Burials of chieftains in the Late Yayoi Period: (a) Tatetsuki, Okayama Prefecture; (b) Chusenji, Shimane Prefecture; (c) Totsuki No. 2, Okayama Prefecture; (d) Gondo, Chiba Prefecture (Tsude 1987, 59)

3.1.2. The Japanese mortuary architecture: Kofun Period general overview

Throughout the three phases of the Kofun Period (300-710 AD)—Early, Middle, and Late—it is possible to recognise visible changes in the size of the mounds, their shape, and the grave-goods contained within, which are connected to the affirmation of the Yamato clan over the other regional chieftains. The several

regional kingdoms—or clans—were unified under the control of one single clan, the Yamato clan, thus creating a more complex social stratification. Therefore, each phase of the Kofun Period reflects the dominance of the Yamato clan over the regional clans in the mortuary architecture (See Fig. 4).

As Barnes states (1988, 6-7; 16-17), the connection between the development of the Kofun Period mounded tombs and the appearance of a social hierarchy is visible in the following four points:

1. Only one person was buried inside the mound showing a preferential burial treatment only for specific people;
2. The graves were giant monuments placed on hills dominating the surrounding area;
3. The tombs were isolated and far from residential areas;
4. The grave-goods were considered as prestigious and symbolic items according to specialists.

3.1.3. The Japanese mortuary architecture: Early Kofun mounded tombs (250-400 AD)

The tombs from the Early period (See Fig. 5-a) are characterised by the presence of small keyhole mounds built for regional leaders (Barnes 2007, 10). This shape was not only used by the Yamato clan but also by very powerful regional chieftains (Tsude 1987, 55). During this period, the Yamato clan had not totally affirmed its power yet. Nevertheless, its power was growing as can be seen from the keyhole-shaped mounds which were a little bigger compared to those used for the regional chieftains (See Fig. 4). Therefore, during this period the keyhole shape became a sort of status symbol for the regional leaders.

The distribution of the tombs is particularly dense in the Inland Sea region. The specific shapes found among 4th century mounded tombs are keyhole, square, and round shapes. The keyhole mounds and the round mounds are very common and they are placed on the hilltops or ridges (Barnes 1988, 5). Inside, a stone chamber was built and which hosted a wooden coffin.

The grave-goods (See Fig. 6) of these tombs are mainly iron tools and weapons, bronze mirrors, jasper, and green tuff ornaments (Barnes 2007, 10). It is thought that these prestige goods from this early period were material emblems of authority (Barnes 1988, 5), used to prove membership of the elite class (Barnes

2007, 164). Therefore, the Early Kofun material culture aimed to show the political status of the deceased (See section 4.2.3. for more details).

The presence of bronze mirrors is very interesting, since it is thought that they were symbolic objects used by regional chieftains to show their alliance to the Yamato clan (Kidder 2007, 183). Therefore this is another indication of the development of a political hierarchy through the tombs and their grave-goods. Indeed, the bronze mirrors disappeared in mounds from the later phase, when the Yamato power was undoubtedly recognised and accepted by the regional clans.

3.1.4. The Japanese mortuary architecture: Middle Kofun mounded tombs (400-475 AD)

During the Middle Kofun Period (See Fig. 5-b) the tombs are mostly giant keyhole mounds located especially around the Osaka area. A fundamental innovation is the spread of tombs towards the eastern seaboard, Kanto plains, and northern coast of western Japan (Barnes 1988, 5). The monumental tombs from this period aimed to symbolise the affirmation of the Yamato power (Tsude 1987), thus they needed to be easily recognised and perceived differently from the other burials by the subjected clans.

This is the reason why in this phase their size peaked and the keyhole shape was predominant (See Fig. 3). During this phase, the distribution of the keyhole mounds and the different repertoire of grave-goods were again symbols of the differences in status and power. For instance, large mirrors and jasper bracelets were buried only in the tombs of powerful chieftains (Okauchi 1987, 142).

Among the grave-goods (See Fig. 7) deposited were iron armours, weapons, and tools, as well as *Sue* stoneware, numerous gilt-bronze ornaments and gold jewellery, and bronze mirrors (Barnes 2007, 10). Horse gear was also introduced in this period, and was considered a symbol of the wealth and power of the deceased (*Ibid.*, 142). Between the Middle and Late Kofun Period, due to a massive migration from Paekche to Kyūshū (See section 4.3.1.), new objects such as gold or silver belt hooks, waist decorations, and earrings appeared in the burial goods repertoire (*Ibid.*, 142).

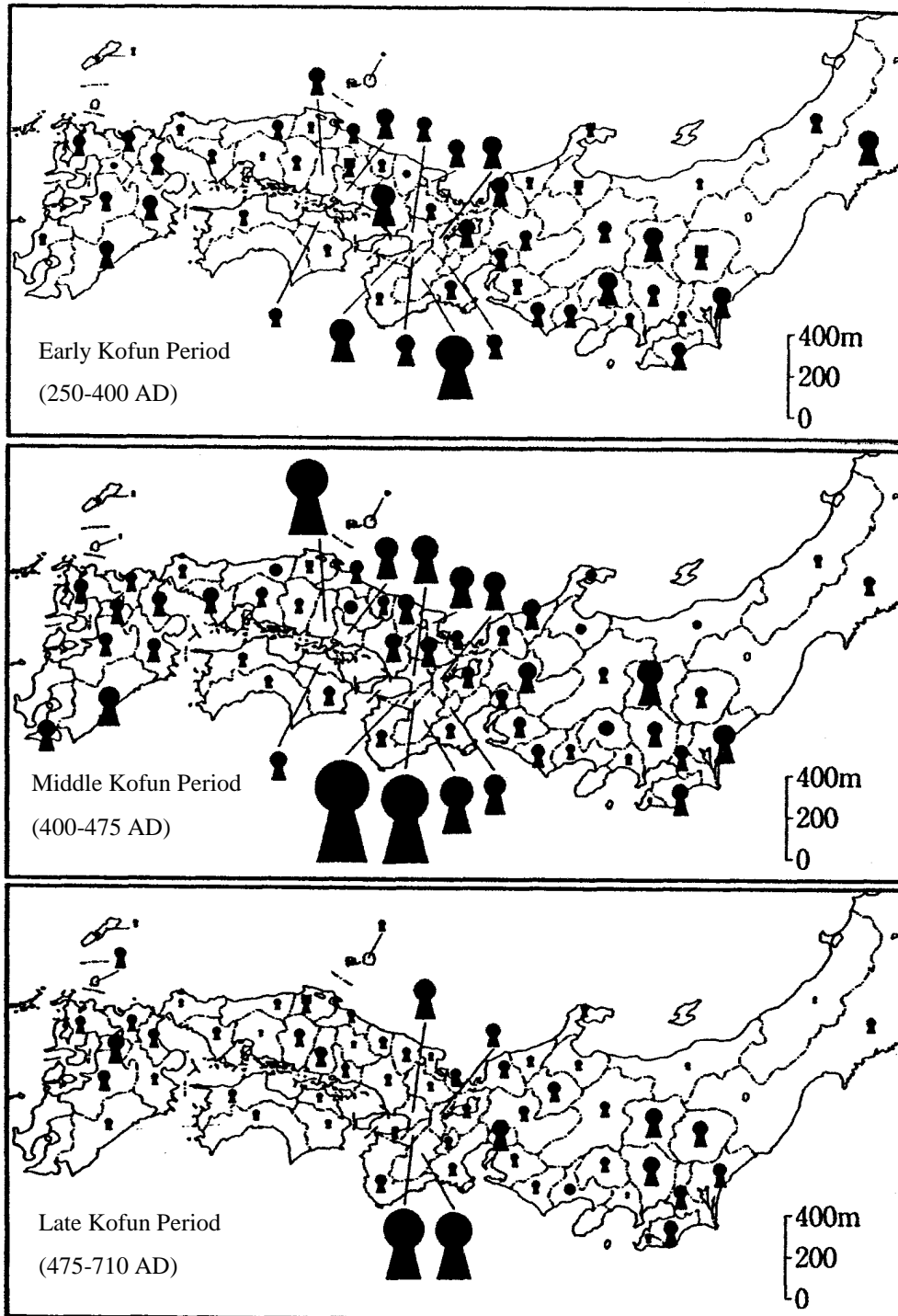


Figure 4: Distribution of the mounded tombs during the three phases (Mizoguchi 2002, 222 after Shiraishi 1999)

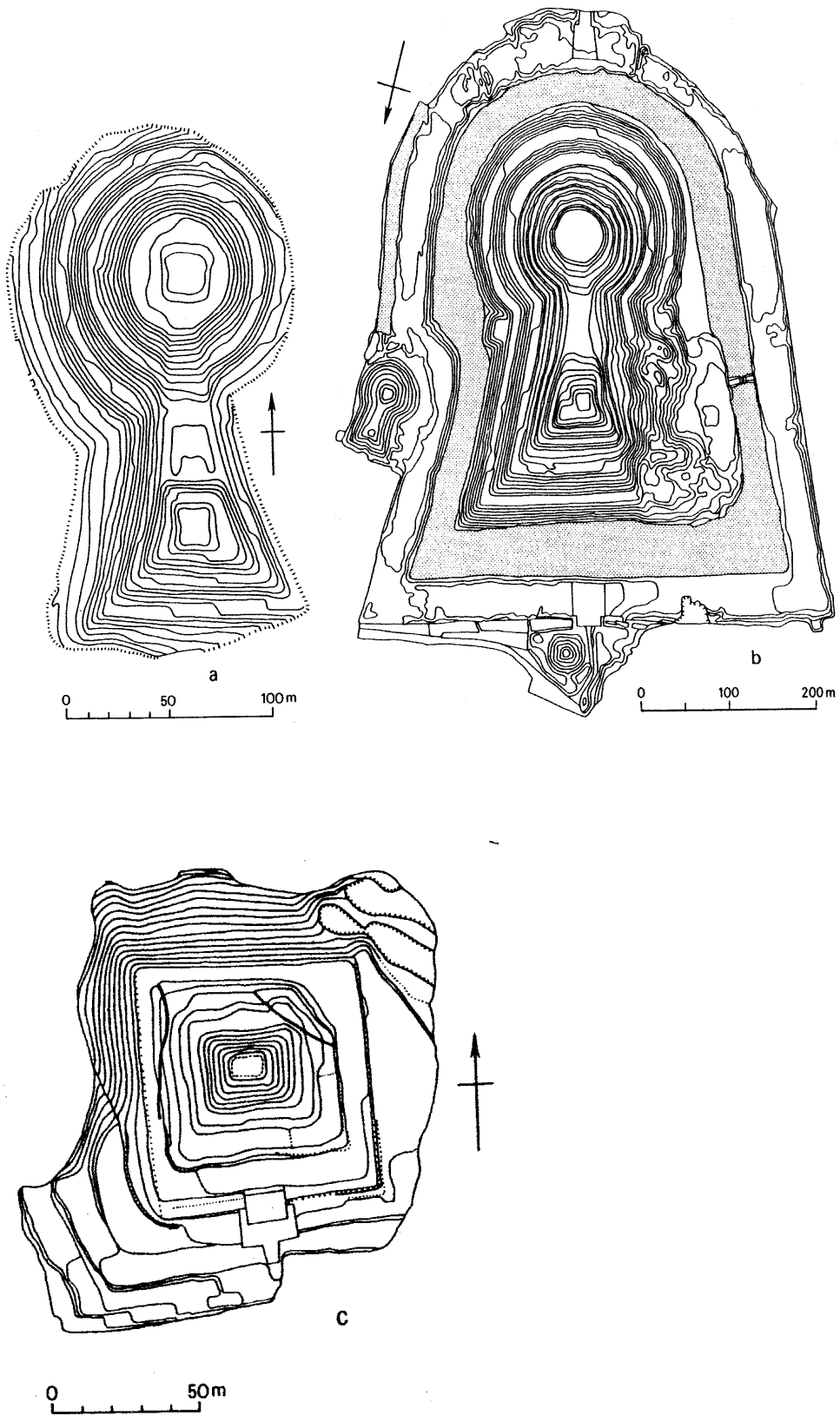
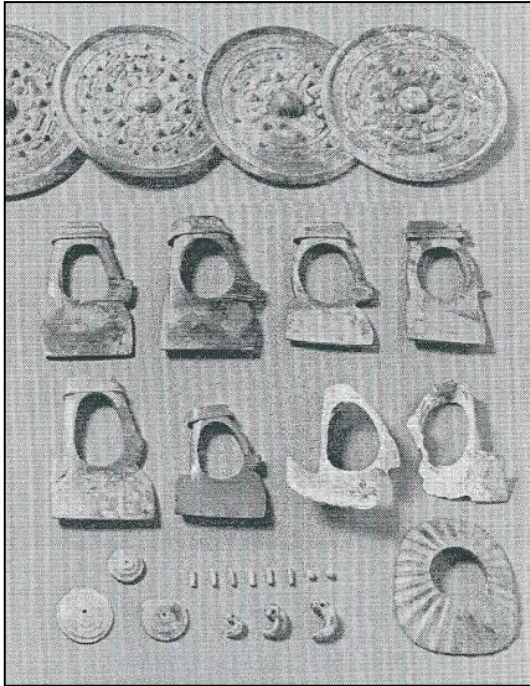


Figure 5: Development of the shape and size of the mounds during the 3rd century (a), 5th century (b), 6th century (c) (Aikens and Higuchi 1982, 256)



4 Chinese mirrors;

8 hoe-shaped bracelet-shaped
objects (6 made of
jasper/green tuff and 2 of
shell);

3 spindle-whorl-shapes

Figure 6: Standard Early Kofun grave goods from Shikinzan Tomb, Osaka (Barnes 2007, 163)

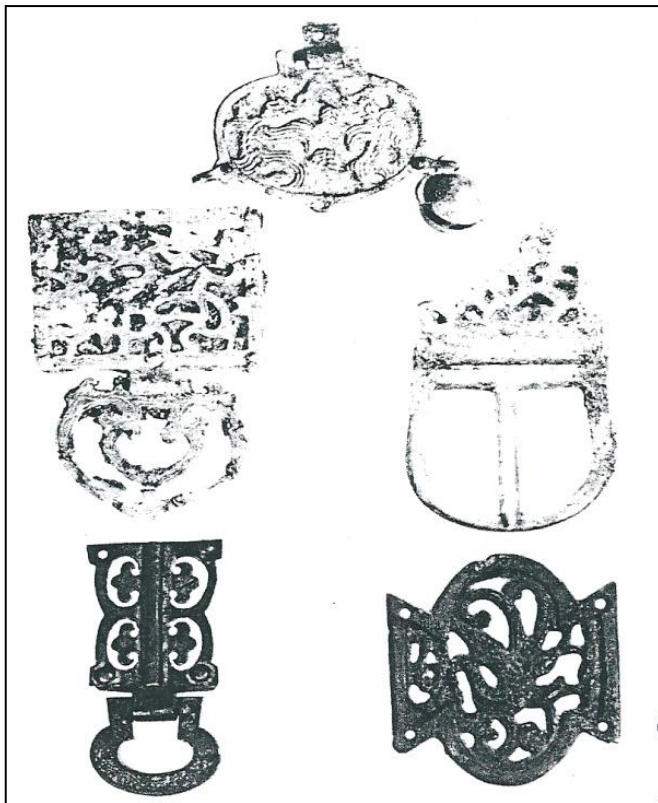


Figure 7: Imported open metal-work horse trappings of the Middle Kofun Period, Hichikan kofun, Osaka Prefecture (Aikens and Higuchi 1982, 280)

3.2. Late Kofun mounded tombs (475-710 AD)

The Late Kofun Period is dated to the 6th and 7th century AD (also including the Asuka Period; See Table 1), when the mounded tombs were not only reserved for the chieftains anymore, but common people also began building their own tombs (Tsude 1987, 55). Hence, the giant keyhole shaped mound, which had characterised the first two periods, disappeared little by little and was replaced by smaller tombs.

The mounded tombs continued to be in use until Buddhism became predominant in the 7th century and cremation replaced the practice of burial. Therefore, even if smaller, the keyhole mound was also used during the Late Kofun Period (See Fig. 4). A first important characteristic of the tombs of the Late Period is the decrease in size (See Fig. 5-c). Indeed, after the affirmation of the Yamato power during the 5th century, there was no longer the necessity to build giant tombs (Mizoguchi 2002, 215; Tsude 1987, 55, 70). The tombs dated to this period are much smaller, more numerous, and not only concentrated in the Osaka-Kyoto-Nara area but distributed throughout Japan (Tsude 1987,70).

The second characteristic was the reduction of tombs into simple graves. As has already been explained above, the giant tombs had been replaced by smaller mounds. From the middle of the 6th century the tombs were built far from open plains in contrast to the giant tombs of the 5th century. Moreover, it was common to build many mounds together on hills or on mountains slopes. Nevertheless, more than one person could be buried in the same mound, thus they were not only reserved for leaders (Okauchi 1987, 143).

These mounds are characterised by the absence of a moat, and the knoll tends to be rounded at the end. Typical from this period is the stone passage-way which can be considered as a corridor that leads to one or more rooms (Kidder 1959, 152, 158) (See Fig. 8). It is believed that this corridor-chamber tomb was introduced from the Korean Peninsula (Barnes 2007, 14) (See section 4.3.2.). As will be discussed in Chapter 4, relations between Japan and Paekche were not only numerous, but also very peaceful. Due to this sort of entrance, it was possible to have access to the inside of the room repeatedly, even if it could host only a limited number of people at the same time (Mizoguchi 2002, 218).

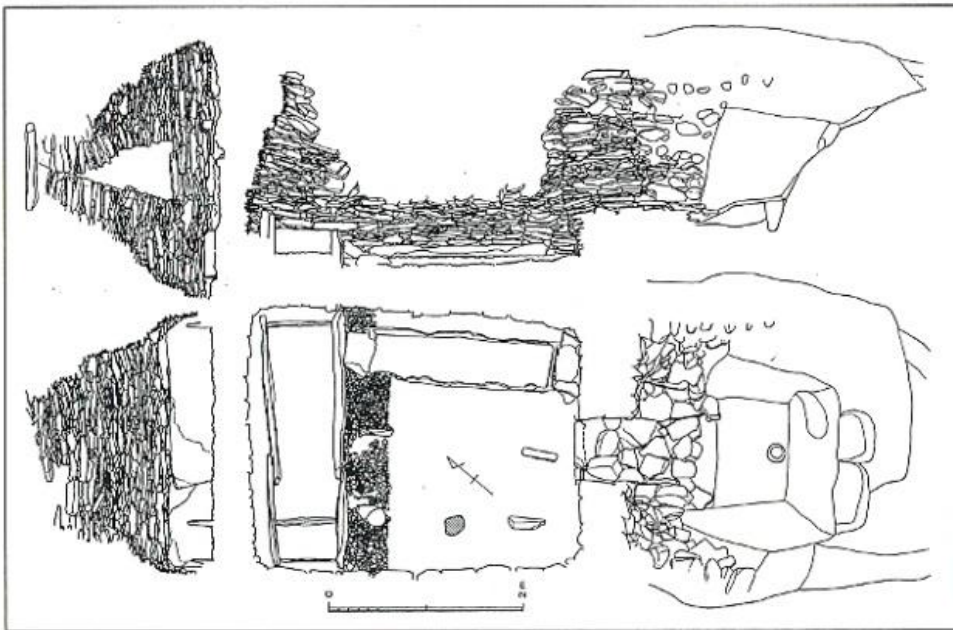
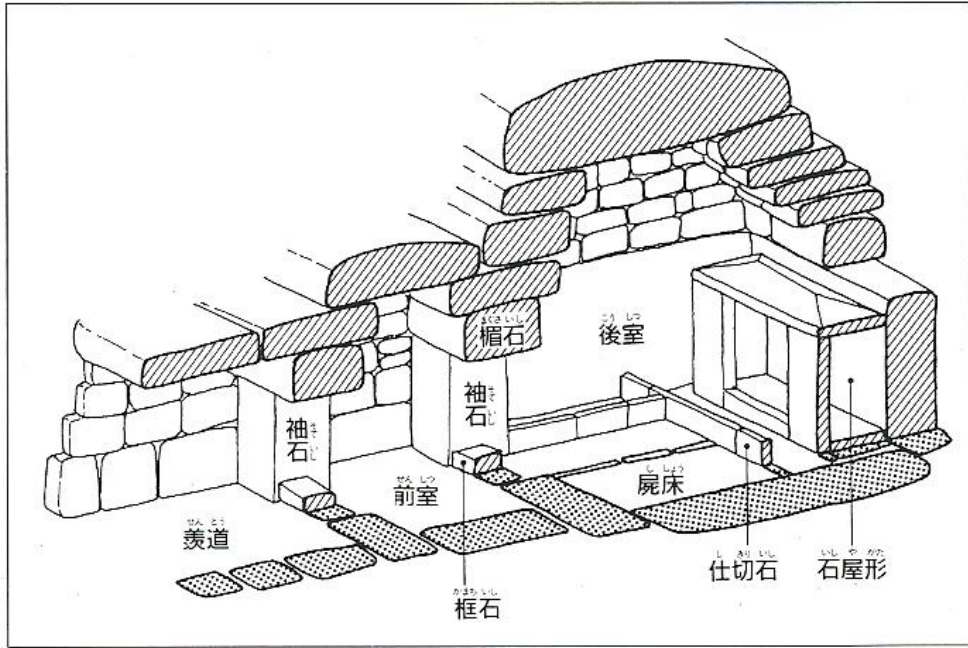


Figure 8: Stone passage-way typical from the Late Kofun Period (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 10, 18)

The fact that tombs were really numerous during this period and easy to find everywhere in the archipelago, has led archaeologists to believe that they might have mainly been used for Yamato government officials (Okauchi 1987, 143). Nonetheless, the 7th century saw a dramatic decrease in mounded tombs due to the Buddhist custom of cremation (Kidder 1964).

Concerning the shape, around the end of the 6th and the early 7th century, some keyhole mounded tombs were replaced with a rock cut tomb. It is believed the powerful Soga clan—whose origins were Korean—and the emperors with close Soga connections were buried in these tombs, whereas the round mounds were used by non-Soga nobility. After the middle of the 7th century the tombs were built with an octagonal shape and only used by the royal family (Tsude 1987, 70). From the Late Kofun Period another new feature appeared: decorations that could be painted and in relief, on the tomb wall surfaces and/or on the coffins.

Summary

From the information discussed in this chapter, it can be argued that the development of the Japanese mortuary architecture is due to the socio-political changes which occurred from the Late Yayoi Period until the entire Kofun Period. The point is easily visible in the differences in shape and size of the tombs during the several stages. Nonetheless, this statement is not exhaustive enough in order to fully understand the dynamics of the development of the Japanese mounded tombs and especially of the Late Kofun Period. Indeed, the changes that occurred from the Late Yayoi and Kofun Period need to be discussed in relation to a broader context: the Yellow Sea sphere of interaction. Therefore, Chapter 4 will discuss these interactions among China, Korea, and Japan; the real effect these interactions had on the Japanese state formation; and how they are visible in material culture and mortuary architecture.

Chapter 4: Interactions in the Yellow Sea: Kyūshū and the Continent

The development of the Japanese mortuary architecture is closely connected to the internal political changes from the Yayoi Period to the Late Kofun Period. Nevertheless, the affirmation of a hierarchical structure is also linked to external factors, namely the interactions that happened in the Yellow Sea between North Kyūshū and Han China and between North Kyūshū and southern Korea. These interactions were of a different nature, but both had a great impact not only on the mortuary architecture, but also on the Japanese material culture, socio-political changes, and identity.

4.1. The role played by the Yellow Sea

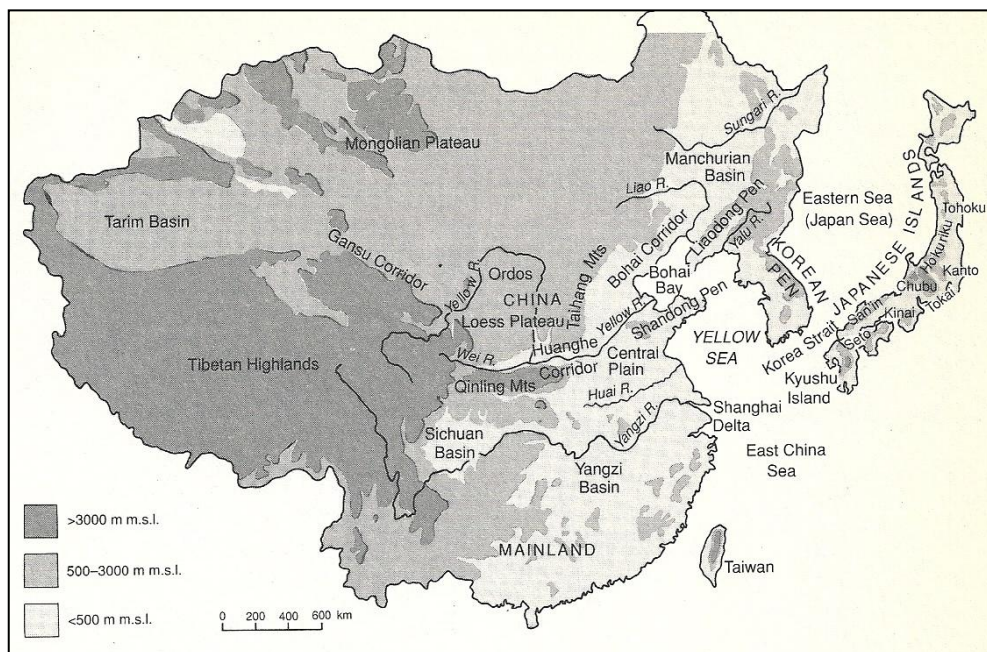


Figure 9: The geography of East Asia centering on the Yellow Sea (Barnes 1993, 9)

The Yellow Sea flows through what we now call China, Korea, and Japan (See map in Fig. 9). Nonetheless, the modern concept of fixed political boundaries was unlikely to be perceived in ancient times. A major characteristic of the recurring pattern in the history of the Japanese archipelago is to have a period of intense interaction with the continent and importation of its culture, followed by a period of isolation where the continental cultural influence was passive and modified by indigenous elements (Imamura 1996, 1). The interaction among these countries

saw a lively period which began in 500 BC and ended in 500 AD (Barnes 1993, 208). It can be said that the core of this interaction sphere was Han China with its tributary system. That is to say the policy for “divide and conquer” to maintain peace and stability in the Han empire influence sphere. As Barnes states (2007, 51), the tactic used was that to create a social hierarchy within the Kyūshū Yayoi people by giving special “gifts” such as fine fabrics, jewels, and bronzes. Furthermore, “honour” was given by integrating the Kyūshū chiefs into the Chinese hierarchy through the Han court titles as well as legitimising their new political status which must have been recognised as such also by the society around the regional chief. This is at the basis of the Han-Yayoi tributary exchange.

The northern Korean Peninsula was first under the Han control during the 2nd and 1st centuries BC when the Chinese invaded the Korean region of Choson. After the defeat of Choson in 108 BC, a Han commandery in the Korean region of Lelang was established (Barnes 1993, 209). It is known from the Chinese chronologies, the *Houhanshu* and *Weizhi*, that Japanese people, described with the name of Wa, sent envoys to the Han probably through Lelang in 57 AD and 107 AD, and between 238 and 247 AD. Lelang played a crucial role in transmitting elements of Chinese culture through the Korean Peninsula and further to Japan (Seyock 2003, 66).

4.2. History of interactions before the Late Kofun Period

The interactions among Kyūshū and the Continent have always had a great impact on the archipelago’s material culture and society. A first important interaction can be dated back to the Yayoi Period, with the Han empire. For what concerns trade, they exchanged local products—jade, pearls, cinnabar, and bows and arrows—receiving silk, gold, swords, bronze mirrors, and nephrite in return. Especially in North Kyūshū, in Middle Yayoi cemeteries, many objects deriving from the Yellow Sea trade have been found (Barnes 1993, 218; Seyock 2003, 71).

It is important to outline that because of its isolated position, Japan was neither militarily occupied nor conquered by the Chinese empire, thus the Yayoi regional chieftains could acquire more autonomy compared to what happened in Korea (Barnes 2007, 51). Therefore it can be argued that the small kingdoms explained in section 3.1. acquired power and political status partly due to the

interactions with the Han empire. Moreover, in order to gain a good status position in the political hierarchy, some of those kingdoms might have engaged in some sort of competition against the other regional chieftains (*Ibid.*, 51; Renfrew 1986).

This is the reason why we see the development of more powerful regional kingdoms until the utter affirmation of a single regional clan: the Yamato. As will be shown in section 4.2.3., the interactions with the Han empire influenced not only the Kyūshū Yayoi society but also the material culture connected with the mortuary system of this period and the Kofun Period.

Another important interaction is that between the Kyūshū Yayoi people and the southern part of the Korean Peninsula around the 2nd century BC. This interaction brought the technology of bronze-working into the archipelago (Seyock 2003, 70-71). As Barnes (2007, 64) states, the interactions with Korea aimed to enhance Kyūshū's individual status through core-periphery diplomatic trade. Furthermore, from the Chinese historical sources it is known that iron (important for producing efficient tools to increase rice cultivation productivity) was also procured from Korea—another technology imported from the Peninsula (Imamura 1996, 170).

To sum up, it can be argued that during the Yayoi Period the interactions between North Kyūshū and the Yellow Sea led to two very important processes:

1. Stimulation of a complex hierarchisation, visible in prestige grave-goods, gold seals, and metal weaponry (Barnes 2007, 65), but also of the later giant mounds of the Kofun Period which reflect this change of the socio-political structure;
2. Important trades with Korea on the basis of a Peer Polity Interaction (See section 4.2.2.), which would cause changes and similarities in both cultures, also visible in the mortuary architecture and material culture.

The interactions presented here need to be considered not only as mere trade, but as the trigger of the formation and development of the Japanese State. Furthermore they can be seen as a continuum of relations between the two areas of interest of this thesis, Kyūshū and southern Korea, in order to show how strong their connection since earlier periods is. At the same time, these interactions also show the particular affiliation Japan had always had with the Chinese empire,

visible through a specific symbolic material culture. Section 4.2.1. will give a better insight into the real role played by the Yellow Sea interactions for the development of the Japanese mortuary architecture.

4.2.1. Behind the interactions

Recent studies (e.g. Barnes 2007) show how the interactions during the first centuries AD among Japan, China, and Korea were at the basis of what is called Peer Polity Interaction. In section 4.2., it has been discussed that the Japanese regional chieftains, mainly from Kyūshū, had a great interest in the continental bronze and iron, and a great exchange of prestige goods occurred from the first stages of interactions. Therefore, as Barnes (2007) states there were economic-political relationships on three different levels:

1. With the Chinese court which was a hierarchical relationship (See section 4.1.1.);
2. With the Korean Peninsula among equivalent regional chieftains;
3. Among other Japanese regional clans (Barnes 2007, 32).

According to Barnes (2007), the last two points are a good example for Renfrew's (1986) model of Peer Polity Interaction, in particular for the different use and imitation of material goods. This interaction brought about a transformation within the social-system through:

- a. Competition and competitive emulation. This has usually led to a will to show the achievement of a higher political status—mainly through the gift-giving system—by also erecting particular buildings;
- b. Symbolic entrainment and transmission of innovation;
- c. Increased flow of exchanged goods (Renfrew 1986, 8).

Point (a) leads to a homogenisation of the material culture among interacting elites, since they all use the same symbolic types of goods (Barnes 2007, 35). These prestige goods aimed to identify the persons controlling the interaction as the elite group and differentiating them from social inferiors (*Ibid*, 35). Therefore, the nearby Peer Polities groups tended to use the same kind of symbolic objects in order to identify themselves but they also sought a competitive emulation. In the Japanese case, this is true for the Yayoi Period (See Table 1), but during the Kofun Period also the presence of a mound-culture can support this statement. As previously expounded, the development of the mortuary architecture is closely

connected to the achievement of power by a single regional clan who needed to be identified as the elite group.

Barnes (2007) identifies different stages of the Peer Polity Interaction (for this division Barnes used the term “peer” as equal in structural terms) in Japan:

- I. Early-Middle Yayoi (175-100 BC): interactions between North Kyūshū chiefs and the Korean Peninsula for procurement of iron and bronze;
- II. Late Middle Yayoi-Early Late Yayoi (100 BC- 200 AD): the same interactions as the first stage did not bring only raw iron and iron objects but also the forging technique;
- III. Middle Late Yayoi-Early Kofun (AD 100-350): procurement of bronze and iron from Korea;
- IV. Mid 4th century-Middle Kofun: craft technologies imported into the Japanese archipelago by Paekche and Kaya immigrants;
- V. 6th century: introduction of Buddhism (*Ibid.*, 36-37).

From this list, it is clear that the focus period of this thesis, late 5th / 6th century, began at a time when the Peer Polities Interactions had just introduced an important cultural flow from Korea into the island.

For this case-study this is relevant because it shows a correspondence of interchanges between Kyūshū and Paekche which was reflected also in the decorated mortuary architecture. Furthermore, in this thesis it will be proposed that the decorated tombs are a further element of the Peer Polities Interaction sphere as expounded by Renfrew in point (a): a homogeneous material culture—in this case the decorated tombs with their motifs—which aimed to be a symbol of identification. This point will be discussed in Chapter 6 in this thesis.

4.2.2. Visible remains of the interactions

Last section showed how the finds found in Kyūshū dating back to the Middle/Late Yayoi and Early/Middle Kofun Periods must be considered not only as trade goods but also as symbols of an arising social hierarchy and identity—symbols of the interacting group. The following examination of material cultures will give an insight into the characteristic of the interactions among the Yellow Sea.

China-Kyūshū

The interactions between China and Japan were characterised by a hierarchical relation (Barnes 2007, 51). Japan was under the Han tributary system, thus politically subordinate to the Chinese court, and it had to show them its alliance. As a result, the material culture derived from this interaction aims to show this situation.

The gold seal (See Fig. 10) dated back to the Yayoi Period, clearly shows the alliance the Japanese people had with the Han court. This particular object represents the hierarchical position of Japan which was not at that time a peer with China. The same can be said concerning the bronze mirrors (See Fig. 11) that were given by the Han court to the Yayoi regional chieftains to show their allegiance to the Chinese empire (Barnes 2007, 180; Kidder 2007; Seyock 2003). At the same time, these mirrors were symbols of recognition of a particular political status.

Who could obtain a bronze mirror from the Han court, was also recognised by his society as a member of “the elite”. Furthermore, during the Late Yayoi and Early/Middle Kofun the bronze mirrors came to be used within the Japanese society as a symbol of alliance with the ruling Yamato clan. It is important to outline that China was considered by Japan as a sort of cultural role-model which influenced both material culture and political organisation.



Figure 10: Gold seal with inscription "The King of Na of Wa (Japan), affiliated with Han" (Barnes 2007, 52)

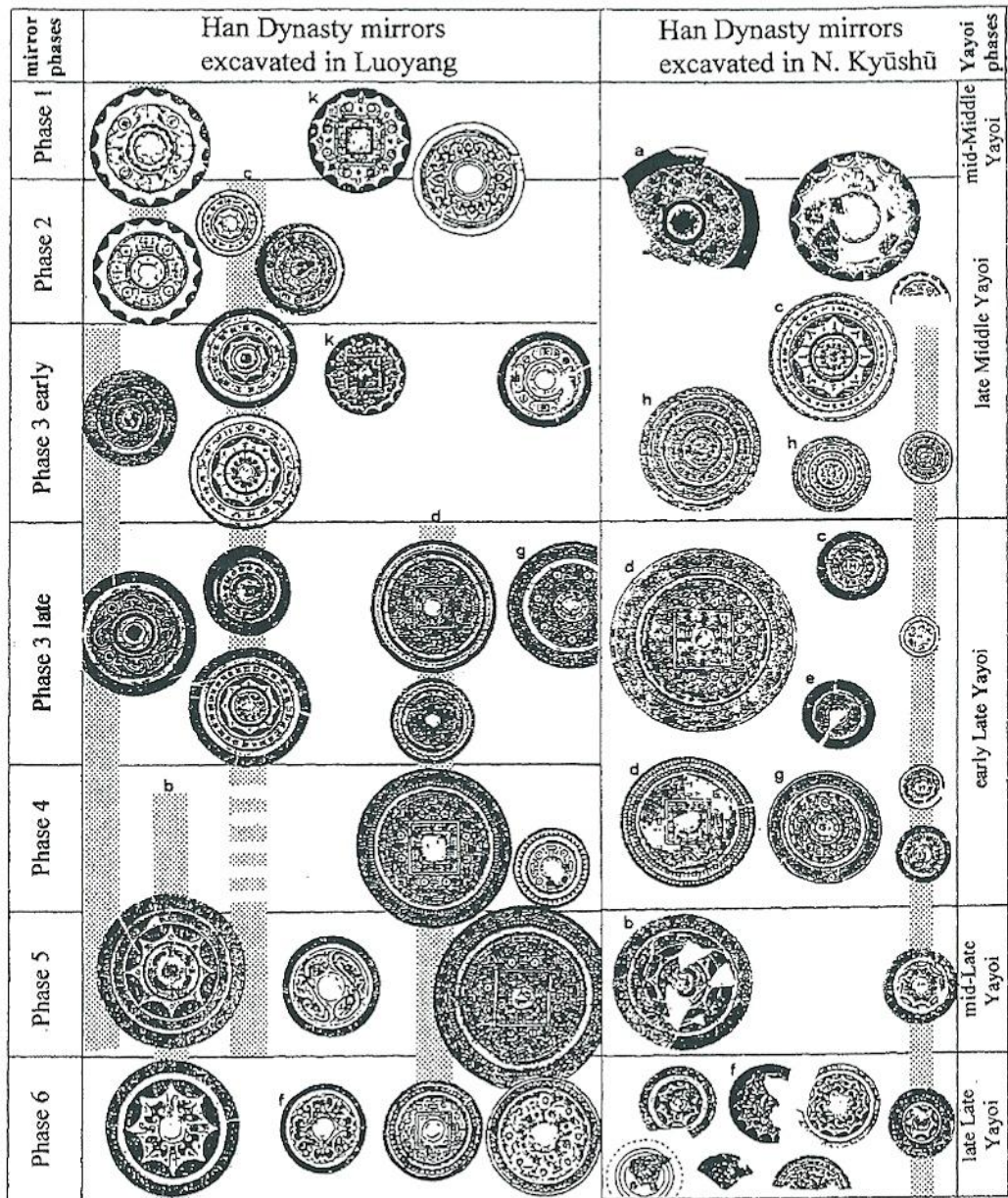


Figure 11: Han-Dynasty bronze mirrors as found in Luoyang and North Kyushu between the late 1st century BC and the early 3rd century AD (Barnes 2007, 63)

Southern Korea-Kyūshū

Contrary to the relation between China and Kyūshū, here the interaction was on the basis of a Peer Polities Sphere. From the homogeneous material culture shared by both, it is possible to argue, as recent studies claim (e.g. Barnes 2007), that Kyūshū people and southern Korean people considered each other on an equal level. As previously explained, this similar material culture needs to be considered as symbolic objects used by an elite group to identify themselves. Both peoples' material culture is similar to each other because there was a sort of standard repertoire among the peers which symbolised that specific political status.

Therefore, the high-ranking grave-goods from South Korea and Kyūshū (See Fig. 12; and Table 2) clearly show this Peer Politics Interaction. It can be argued that in both cases the buried person was considered and perceived by his society and by the foreign society as a member of that hierarchical elite that was arising. This can be assumed from special objects such as the mirror, the comma-shaped beads, and the sword.³

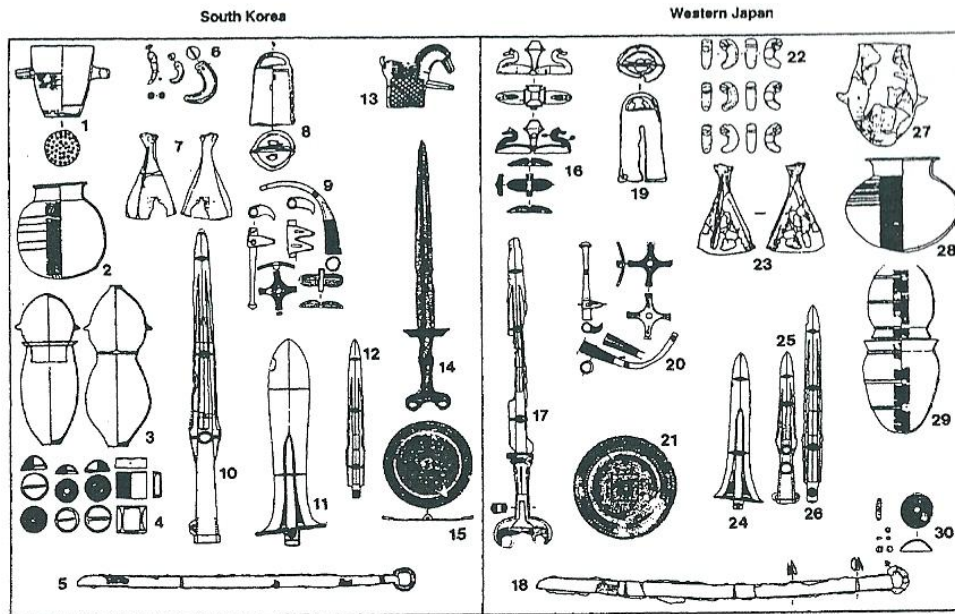


Figure 12: Artefacts common to high-ranking burials in the southern Korean Peninsula and northern Kyushu in the 1st century AD (Seyock 2003, 86)

³ These three objects are still considered as the Imperial Regalia of Japan.

Table 3.2 Comparative artefact repertoires of burials in the southern Korean Peninsula and North Kyūshū during the Commandery Period (compiled from Seyock 2003)

<i>Proto-Three Kingdoms burials in southern Korean Peninsula</i>	<i>Middle-Late Yayoi burials in Tsushima, Iki and N. Kyūshū</i>
<i>Local ceramics:</i> Wajil pottery (1, 3), some paddled stoneware (2)	Yayoi pottery (29)
<i>Non-local ceramics:</i> Yayoi pottery	Wajil pottery, Mumun pottery (27) stoneware (28)
<i>Weapons:</i>	
<i>Chinese-style:</i>	
halberds (11)	bronze and iron halberds (24)
socketed spearheads, iron and bronze (10)	socketed bronze and iron spearheads (25)
iron arrowheads	iron arrowheads
ring-pommel 1-edged iron sword (5)	ring-pommel 1-edge iron sword (18)
<i>Peninsular-style:</i>	
narrow bronze 2-edged swords (12)	narrow bronze and iron 2-edged swords (26)
stone arrowheads	
<i>Chinese bronzes:</i>	
Han mirrors (15)	Han mirrors (21)
horse and carriage fixtures (9)	horse and carriage fixtures (16)
	Wang Mang and other coins
<i>Nomadic bronzes:</i>	
animal-style objects (belt hooks (13), hilts)	animal-style objects (hilts)
ornamented buttons (4)	ornamented buttons (30)
antennae 2-edged swords (14)	antennae 2-edged swords (17)
<i>Personal ornaments:</i>	
glass, agate, stone round, cylindrical, curved beads (6) blue, green	glass, agate, stone round, cylindrical, curved beads (22) blue, green
bracelets of different materials	bronze bracelets
<i>Tools:</i>	
stone and clay net-sinkers	net-sinkers
iron spade shoes	iron spade shoes
small iron knives, axes	small iron knives
stone reaping knives	stone reaping knives
stone & iron sickles	iron sickles
iron or bone fish hooks	harpoons, iron fish hooks
stone & iron adze	iron adzes
<i>Ritual objects:</i>	
animal scapulae oracle bones (7)	wild boar scapulae oracle bones (23)
imitation bronze mirrors	imitation bronze mirrors
bronze bell (8)	bronze bells (19)

Table 2: Comparative artefacts repertoires of burials in the southern Korean Peninsula and north Kyushu during the Commandery Period (Barnes 2007, 74)

China-Korea-Japan

The following material culture (See Fig. 13 and Fig. 14) represents the cultural influence-sphere in the Yellow Sea. The fact that similar objects have been found in all three countries can be explained as a sort of chain of reciprocal influence. Japan and Korea both had relations with China as part as the tributary system, thus they had direct access to the source of Chinese material culture. Furthermore, Japan and Korea had Peer Polity Interactions among each other which influenced

their own material culture (Barnes 2007). Therefore what we have here is the result of a direct contact with China and at the same time of the reciprocal influence-sphere of the Japanese-Korean interactions.

Very significant for the study of this thesis is Fig. 14. This is one of the few accessible examples of visible proof of abstract decorations on Paekche tombs. Here, the only recognisable similar patterns are those between China (number 1) and Paekche (number 3), which are similar as far as the flower motifs are concerned. Nonetheless all four areas (China, Koguryo, Paekche, and Japan) have in common the fact that those decoration are on walls or on the ceiling, directly realised on the rock as was the case for Japan, or created first on tiles as was the case for Paekche. Furthermore, both Paekche and Japan also have some decorations representing geometrical patterns, though they differ between the two areas (Okauchi 1987).

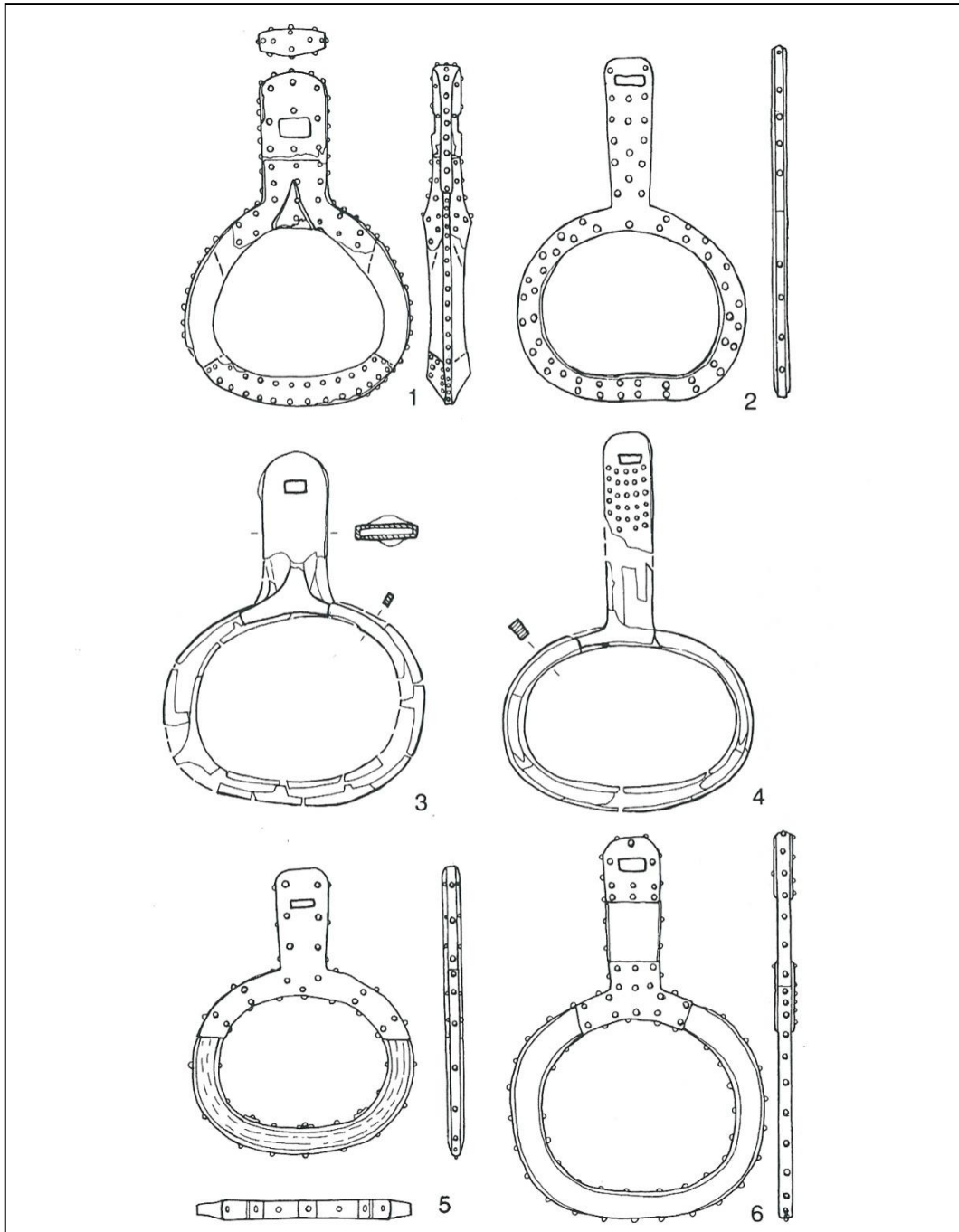


Figure 13: Stirrups from various tombs in East Asia. 1: from the tomb of Feng Sufu at Beipiao; 2: from Mound 96 at Ch'ilsong-san, Chiban; 3: from Mound 106 at Hwangnam-dong, Kyongju; 4: from Mound 14 at Hwang'o-dong, Kyongju; 5: from Shingai kofun, Shiga Prefecture; 6: from Shichikan kofun, Osaka (Okauchi 1987, 131)

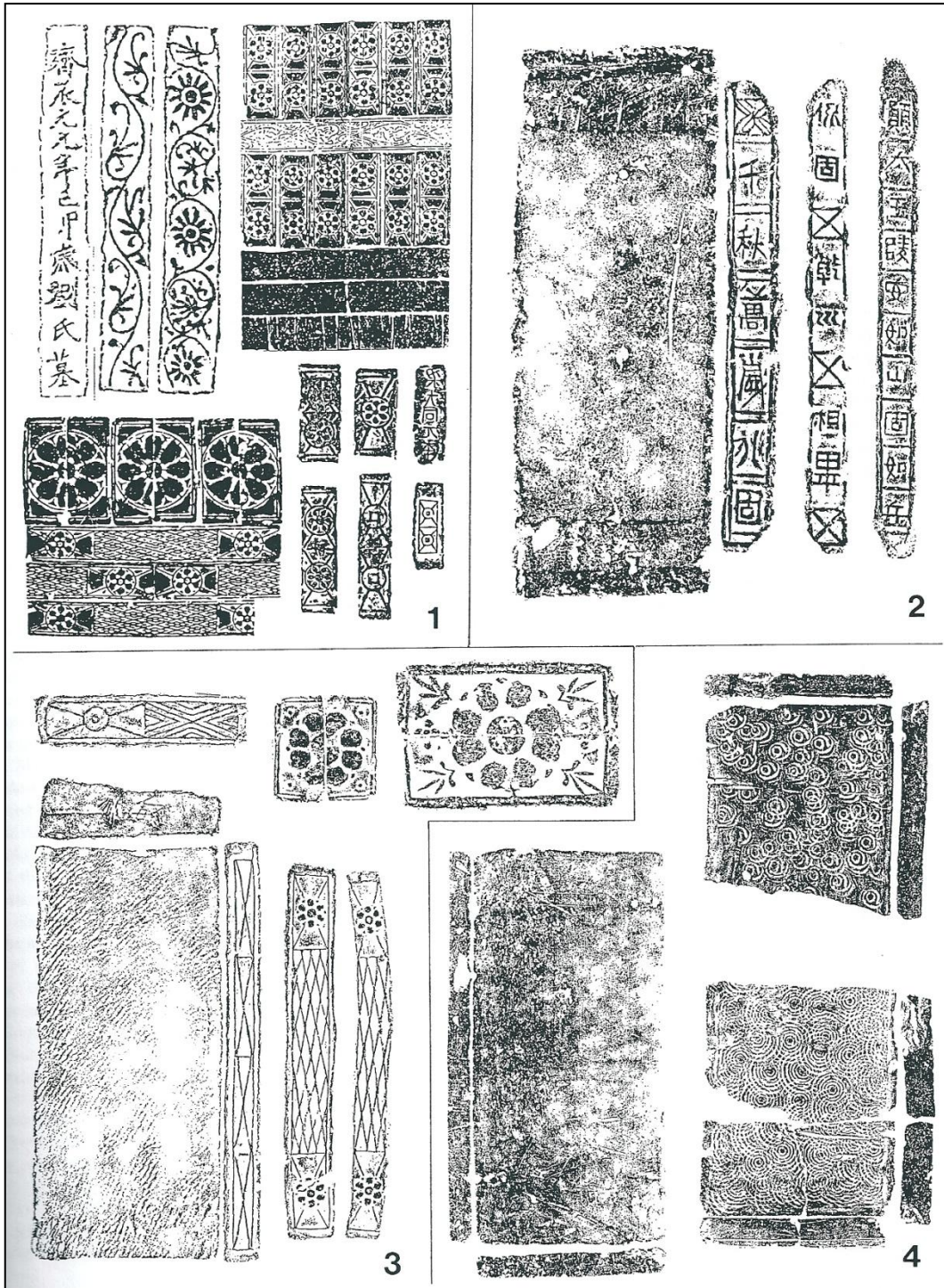


Figure 14: Tiles with designs, characters, or without decorations. 1: Southern Dynasty (China); 2: Koguryo (Korea); 3: Paekche (Korea); 4: Wa (Japan) (Okauchi 1987, 135)

4.3. Interactions during the Late Kofun Period with Korea

As argued in the previous section, the relations between Kyūshū and southern Korea were not only for trade, but they were within a sort of reciprocal influence sphere that led to the state formation in Japan (Barnes 2007). This is the reason why we find many similar symbolic objects which represent this interaction sphere. Nevertheless, during the Late Kofun Period, apart from the Peer Polity Interactions, Kyūshū saw a lively migration from Paekche which also brought new elements to the mortuary system.

A very old and controversial study from the post-war years (Egami 1967) argued that at the beginning of the Late Kofun Period, horse-riders from Korea invaded Japan and they imposed their culture on the inhabitants. In that way, there was no difference between the Korean and Japanese culture of that time: material culture and tomb-structure were, indeed, the same (Egami 1967 in Ledyard 1975, 222-223). As has been expounded in the previous sections, we now know that all these similarities between Korea and Japan are caused by the influences of Peer Polities Interaction. Nonetheless, this brings an important point of discussion: the presence of Korean-Paekche people on the Japanese lands, particularly in Kyūshū, and the influences they might have had on the material culture and the mortuary architecture of that time.

Barnes (2007), like the majority of modern scholars (e.g. Edwards 1983), rejects the theory of Egami, but she outlines how strong the interaction between Korea and Japan was during the Late Kofun Period. This aspect can be seen from the horse equipment, like horse gear, found in the tombs from the middle 5th century (See Fig. 13). From the 5th century, an intensive migration from the Korean Peninsula began and skilled craftspeople, scholars, and elites arrived in the Japanese archipelago (Barnes 2007, 18). During this period the role played by the Korean immigrants was important: not only objects, crafts, and new techniques, but also Buddhism entered Japan through Korean immigrants (Imamura 1996, 224).

Invasion is not the only means to let a culture enter into a different society. In this case, Korean culture may have reached the Japanese islands through trade and migration (Farris 1998, 108). Archaeological evidence of trade-exchanges between Korea and Japan dates back to the Yayoi time (See section 4.2.1.). The exchange was bilateral, not only from Korea towards Japan but also vice versa.

During the 5th century, goods and techniques from Japan entered the Korean Peninsula, in Kaya,⁴ in the archaeological site of the Jinsan-dong royal tombs group. In particular the so called night-shining-shell production (Park 2009, 19). Although the quantity of Japanese items found in Korea is not as impressive as that of the artefacts found in Japan with a Korean origin, there is archaeological evidence for a vivid trade during the Kofun Period (Farris 1998, 108).

Edwards divides the Korean influx into a first cultural borrowing from the higher cultures of the continent and the emergence of an elite through the process of domestic unification (Edwards 1983, 290). According to Edwards, the Yamato elite wanted to reach out to the continent to obtain the same symbols and means of power. This is especially recorded in Chinese chronologies where diplomatic relations with Japan are reported from the 3rd century. Thus, there was a great exchange of powerful and symbolic objects.

The Japanese records, on the other hand, also recorded the contacts with Korea. Japan absorbed new techniques in textile, pottery, and weaving as well as new ideas from the continent (*Ibid.*, 291). This is again an element usually caused by the Peer Polities Interaction: transmission of innovation.

Farris (1998, 109-110) states that the influx of Korean culture was caused by four factors: trade, immigration, the foreign policies of Paekche, and plunder by Japanese soldiers. Trade and immigration has already been explained above. Regarding the foreign policies of Paekche, Farris claims the goods that entered Japan might have been political gifts from Korea, especially from Paekche, in order to get Japanese troops in return. Still, some technology might have been transferred into the archipelago during the wars in Korea instead.

The list below has been made by Farris (1998, 68-69) and is based on international scholarly consensus regarding different aspects which arrived in Japan from Korea. He has listed the items in order of their appearance in ancient Japan:

- Iron and ironworking techniques including riveting;
- Pond and canal digging technology;
- Wheel-thrown, kiln-fired stoneware;
- Ovens for households;

⁴ According to the historical sources of *Nihon Shoki*, Kaya was a Japanese colony situated in the southern area of the Korean peninsula between Paekche and Silla kingdoms. For further information see Appendix 1.

Stone-fitting technology (including stone corridor and chamber tombs and decorated tombs);

Aristocratic accoutrements;

Methods of statecraft;

And possibly:

Keyhole tumulus;

Court ranking system;

Units producing goods and services for the court;

Stamped-earth building techniques.

Some items were transmitted from China, through Korea, to Japan, resulting in a long interval between their invention and their arrival in Japan. It is likely that the Japanese inhabitants altered or refined them (Farris 1998, 70).

4.4. Visible evidence of the Paekche interactions on the Japanese mortuary architecture

Before introducing the main changes in the Japanese mortuary architecture caused by the interactions with Paekche, it is important to define the Paekche mortuary architecture at that time, in order to show which elements have been absorbed into the Japanese mounded tombs traditions.

Paekche, for its central favourable position in south-western Korea, often received important cultural influences from China: northern Chinese elements reached Paekche through Koguryo kingdom whereas southern Chinese ones entered through the East Asian seas (Kim 1986, 264).

The Paekche tombs were strongly influenced by the Koguryo and Han Chinese mounded tombs (Kim 1986; Nelson 1993; Okauchi 1987; Portal 2000) whose main characteristics are shown in Appendix 3 as this is not the main aim of this thesis.⁵ Briefly, it can be said that Koguryo tombs were made of stone formed into large-size bricks and the murals were painted directly on the walls (Choe 2004, 9). The subjects of Koguryo decorated tombs were mainly scenes of daily life, decorative designs, and the four deities (*Ibid.*, 9). The Korean decorated tombs show important differences and similarities with the Chinese and Japanese

⁵ See Appendix 3.

ones, being an important expression of the Korean art (Kim 1986, 223). Many elements, from the structure to the decoration motifs, were similar.

4.4.1. Paekche mortuary architecture: Tomb shape

The main shapes used for the first Paekche mounded tombs are the square and the round shapes. They were mainly built on the tops of hills and mountains. A reason why many of these mounds were small and round is because there was sufficient space on the slopes, and a lack of abundant soil. Later Paekche tombs were almost all square in shape (Okauchi 1987, 139).

4.4.2. Paekche mortuary architecture: Tomb structure

Paekche tombs were usually cut stone tombs and brick tombs, like the mounds from China and Koguryo (Nelson 1993, 264). Like Koguryo tombs, Paekche burials also have the typical feature of a horizontal antechamber which connected the entrance with the main room (Portal 2000, 50). It is also possible to find interior structures with horizontal chambers with side openings (Okauchi 1987, 139). A characteristic is the presence of decorated tiles, as well as plastered and painted murals (*Ibid.*, 139).

The most important Paekche decorated tomb, the tomb of King Munyong, consists of a main chamber and a smaller frontal passageway. The walls were made of bricks as well as the arched doorway façade; both the passageway and the chamber were shaped like a tunnel with arched ceilings (Kim 1986, 194).

4.4.3. Paekche mortuary architecture: Murals

Even if there are not numerous surviving examples of the murals from Paekche tombs, it is known that tiles, ceilings, and walls were often painted (Okauchi 1987, 139; Portal 2000, 51). The motifs of Paekche murals were of a dual nature: narrative motifs and decorative motifs. Regarding the narrative motifs, it is known that in Munyong Tomb Mound 6 (Songsan-ri tomb), the walls were painted with the four deities motif, using a very similar style as Koguryo (See Fig. 15-a). Furthermore, as Fig. 15 shows, decorations on tiles also represent lotus flowers, slanted checker, and medallion patterns (Okauchi 1987, 139). A very important point for the further discussion of the aims of this thesis is the fact that Paekche tombs also have geometric motifs on the brick walls (Portal 2000, 51) (See Fig.

15-b). Also, the lotus motif is present both in relief and painted on the wall surfaces (Kim 1986, 194).

4.4.4. Paekche mortuary architecture: Symbolic objects

Important symbolic objects have been found in the Munyong tomb. Many of these objects have Chinese origins such as iron coins, a sword with a dragon-decorated ring pommel, a bronze mirror, gold jewellery, and a smoothing iron (Kim 1986, 195; Okauchi 1987, 140). A stone animal guardian has been found as well at the entrance of the tomb (Kim 1986, 195).

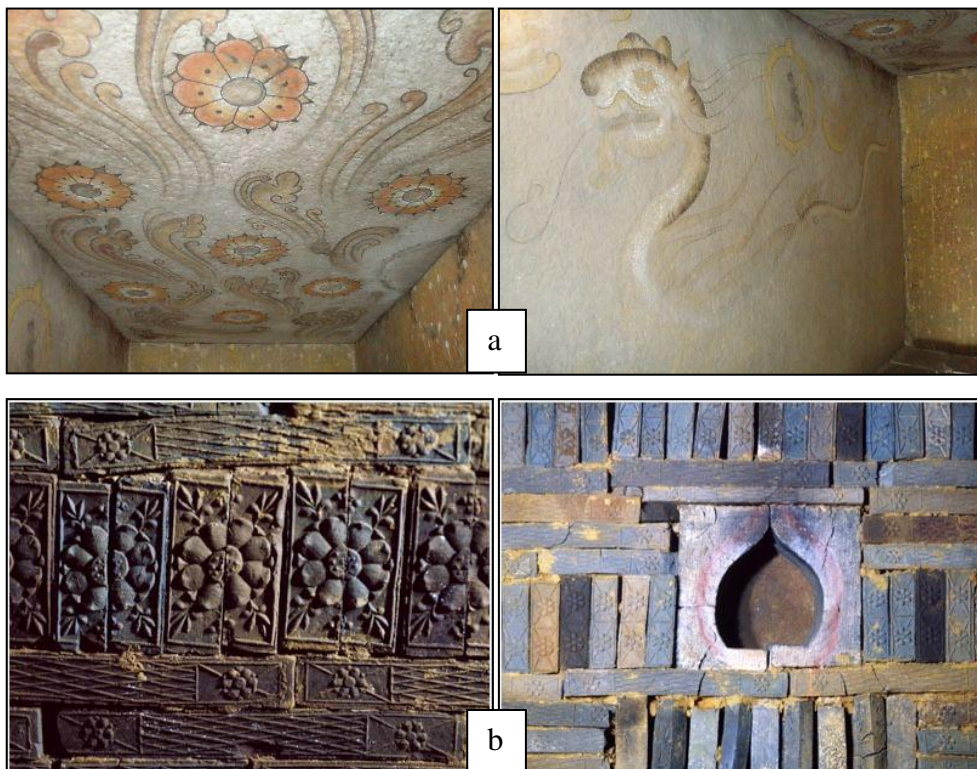


Figure 15: Murals from Paekche tombs: (a) Songsan-ri Tomb, Paekche; (b) Royal Tomb of King Munyong, Paekche (<http://english.visitkorea.or.kr>; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp/>)

4.4.5. Characteristics absorbed by Japan

Ōzuka tomb

As case-study in order to show some characteristics of the Kyūshū decorated tombs the Ōzuka tomb will now be briefly described.

Situated in Kaho-gun, Keisen-machi in Fukuoka prefecture, the Ōzuka tomb (See Fig.16) has been discovered in 1934 and it is one of the most representative examples of Kyūshū decorated tombs (Toyoshima 2004, 257). It is a keyhole shaped mounded tomb measuring 78m in length, probably hosting a powerful chieftain due to its dimensions. Surrounded by a double moat, it consists

of a stone grave chamber with a lateral, horizontal entrance, consisting of an entrance leading to the grave chamber and antechamber, and the main room with the interred person (*Ibid.*, 257). It seems that in Ōzuka tomb four people were buried recalling the common practise of burying more than one person in the same tomb typical of the Late Kofun Period (See section 3.2.). The main motifs represented on the walls and ceiling of the tomb are: ‘horses’, ‘quivers’, ‘shields’, ‘swords’, and ‘bows’, geometric patterns were shown, including ‘circular pattern with two legs’, ‘triangles’, and ‘circles’; the colour used were red, green, black, yellow, and white.

Ōzuka tomb is one of the few examples of decorated tombs where grave-goods have been collected and kept: ceramic vessels, various kinds of pearls, jewellery, a bronze mirror, iron weapons and armour, as well as horse trappings. The bronze mirror, very rare lamellar armour, and horse trapping sets decorated with gold-plated bronze are very rare symbolic objects for the 6th century showing, according to Toyoshima (2004) that the tomb hosted members from an important clan.

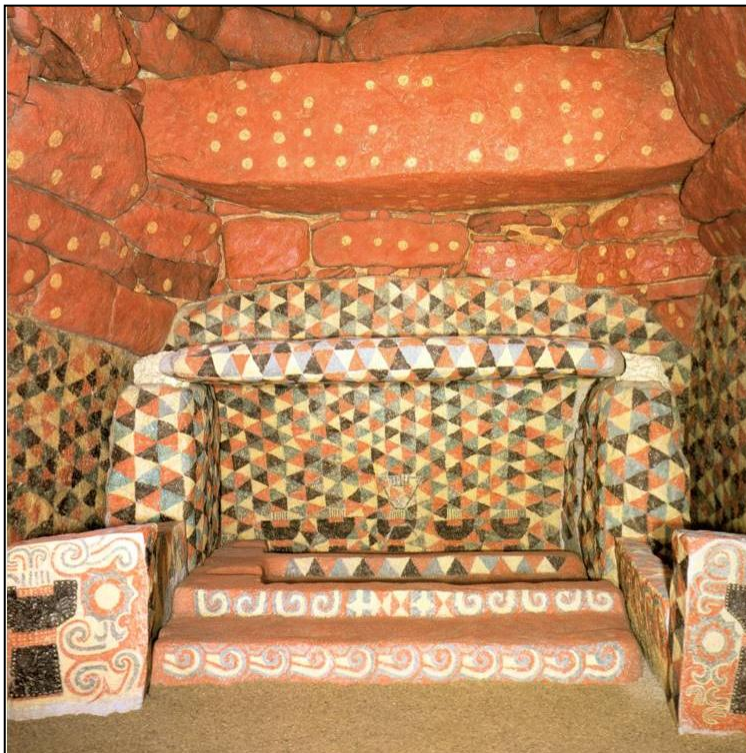


Figure 16: Ōzuka tomb (replica) (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 1)

Generally speaking for the decorated mounded tombs, Farris (1998) points out that one important shift in the tomb-building technique is the stone corridor and chamber tomb features found in some tombs in Kyūshū in the late 4th century (Farris 1998, 92) (See Fig. 17 and Fig. 18).

These elements were common in Paekche and some scholars claim the feature arrived in Kyūshū because of the political relation between the southern Korean state and the Japanese people (*Ibid.*, 92). Stonecutting is another important innovation imported from Korea at the end of the 4th century and in the latter half of the 6th century, when more immigrants from Korea arrived in Japan. During the 6th century, stonecutting helped the spread of the stone corridor and chamber tomb (*Ibid.*, 92). Moreover, Farris claims that Japanese archaeologists consider the decorated tombs from the 5th and 6th century imports from Korea (*Ibid.*, 95). Regarding the motifs, Kim (1986, 193) claims that the Kyūshū subjects are very different as they consist of mystic symbols and conventionalised human figures, supporting the idea of an autochthonous character of decorated tombs development.

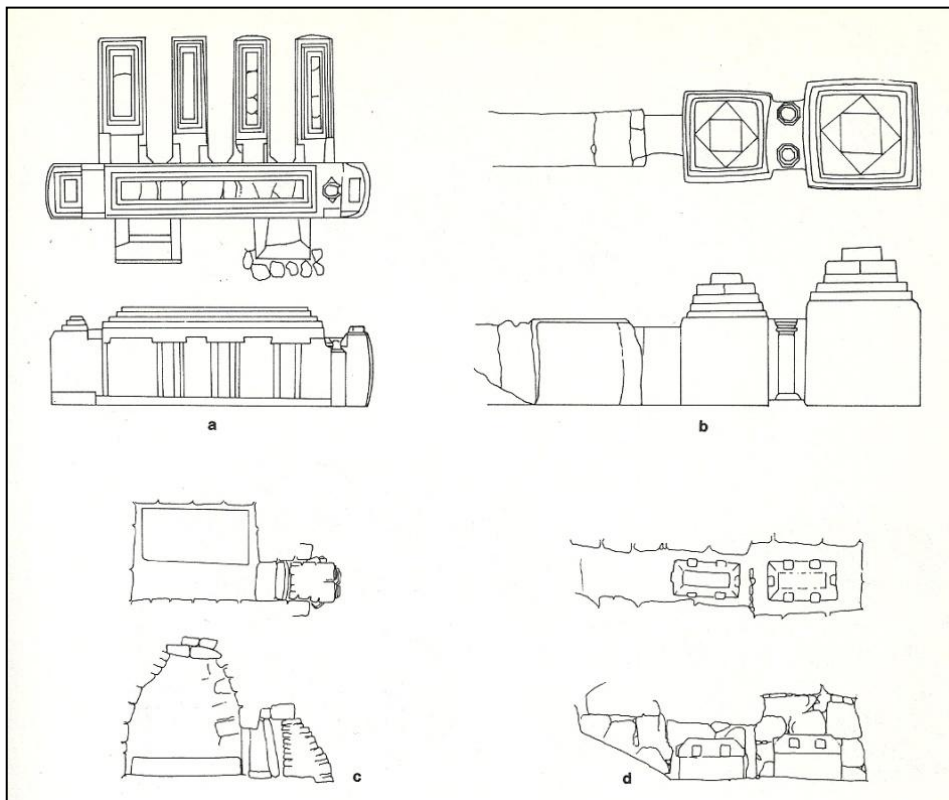


Figure 17: Stone passageway across East Asia. (a) Mainland-style chamber architecture; (b) Koguryo corbelled roof tomb; (c) Silla stone chamber; (d) Yamato horizontal stone chamber (Barnes 1993, 227)

After all the information discussed in this chapter, considering the decorated tombs as a mere “importation” from Korea would not be entirely correct. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, it can be assumed that the decorated tombs might have been part of the “homogeneous-shared” material culture typical of the Peer Polities Interactions linked to the socio-political developments which occurred in Japan at that time. In Chapter 5 the main features of the decorated tombs in Kyūshū will be discussed in order to create the final background before the main discussion in Chapter 6.

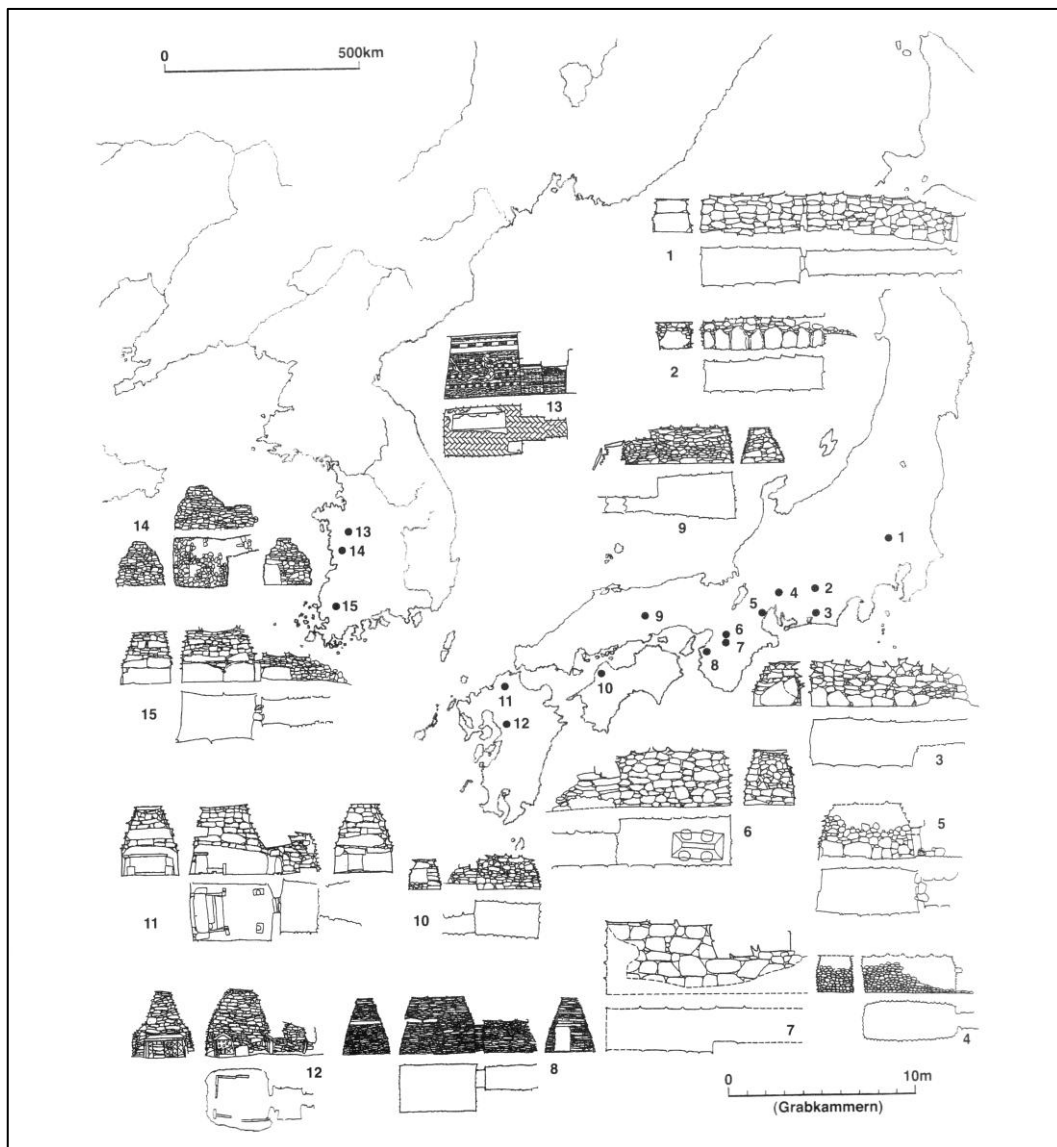


Figure 18: The most important stone chambers with side entrance on the Japanese archipelago and the Korea at the start and the first half of the 6th century AD; relevant for this thesis. (11) Ōzuka tomb in Fukuoka, (12) Chibusa tomb in Kumamoto (Wieczorek and Steinhaus 2004, 353)

Summary

The interactions among the Yellow Sea were of a dual nature: from one point there was the Han tributary system which created a hierarchical consciousness within the Kyūshū peoples. This kind of relation is visible in the prestige goods found in Japan, such as bronze mirrors and golden seals which show the alliance Japan had with China. On the other hand there was a Peer Polities Interaction between Kyūshū and southern Korea which created a homogeneous material culture used as symbol by the elite to show a specific political status. The interactions between Paekche and Kyūshū from the Late Kofun Period saw a direct contact, both those contacts related to elite practices and those between artisans, between the two populations on the Japanese lands, bringing visible influences on the mortuary architecture. If it is true that the shape and structure of the tombs were strongly influenced by Paekche, it is still unclear to what extent this influence was also on the other components of the decorated tombs.

Chapter 5: Decorated tombs in Southwest Japan: a case study

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Decorated Tombs are a phenomenon common in the Yellow Sea sphere, with the greater example of the Chinese Tang tombs and the Korean Koguryo tombs.⁶ In Japan (See Fig. 19) the most famous decorated tombs are those situated in Asuka, nearby Nara (Honshu island) dated back to the very last stage of the Late Kofun Period, but the decorated tombs first appeared in Kyūshū during the late 5th century. Although it is generally assumed that this appearance is connected with the presence of a group of immigrants from Paekche who influenced the structure of the tombs with the horizontal stone-passageway, the real extent of the Paekche influence on this mortuary architecture typical for Kyūshū is unclear (e.g. Shiraishi 1993b).



Figure 19: Takehara tomb (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 24)

This case-study chapter aims to show the main characteristics of 21 decorated tombs found in a specific area—the prefectures of Fukuoka and Kumamoto in Kyūshū—dated from the late 5th century to the first half of the 7th century. The main data from this analysis will be discussed in Chapter 6 in order to see to what

⁶ See also Appendix 3.

extent these mounded tombs have been influenced by the interactions with Paekche and in order to better understand the society around the Kyūshū decorated mounded tombs.

Here, the main characteristic of the 21 sample sites of the Kyūshū mounded tombs will be evaluated firstly with a general presentation of the main characteristics of these mounded tombs (such as origins, location, and the tomb structure). A main focus will be on the motifs of the decorations and on the dimensions, shape, and the presence of the feature of the antechamber. The 21 sample sites analysed are from Fukuoka prefecture (11 samples), and from Kumamoto prefecture (10 samples). The samples are dated from the late 5th century to the first half of the 7th century.

5.1. Decorated tombs

Following Shiraishi (1993a-b) the tombs named “decorated tombs” are defined here as those mounds that have decorations—that might be both painted or in relief—on the walls (inside or outside) or on the coffin. Therefore, it is not related to exterior decorations like ceramic figures—*haniwa*—or sculptures, but only decorations on the surfaces (Shiraishi 1993a, 11). For the case-study discussed in this thesis a division among the several motifs has been made. The motifs are grouped into two main categories: abstract/geometric decorations and narrative decorations. A better description for each category is shown in section 5.1.1.

5.1.1. Decorated tombs: Motifs of the decorations

The motifs taken into consideration for the discussion of this case-study can be summarised in:

- 1) Abstract/geometric designs, which include:
 - ‘Circle’;
 - ‘Triangle’;
 - ‘Arc-and-straight-line pattern (Chokkomon)’;
 - ‘Circular pattern with two legs (Sōkyakurinjōmon)’;
 - ‘Shield’;
 - ‘Quiver’;
 - ‘Sword’;
 - ‘Personal ornaments’;

2) Narrative designs, which may include:

‘Human figure’;

‘Animals’;

‘Boat’;

‘Leaf motif’.

I have selected these motifs for my analysis and argument based on repetitive occurrence, and not unique occurrences such as ‘sun’, and ‘moon’. The analysis and discussion will take into consideration both painted decorations and in relief.

Abstract/geometric designs

This category covers some simple geometric motifs such as ‘circle’ (See Fig. 20-e) (which covers also concentric circles decoration), and ‘triangle’ (See Fig. 20-f), and more complex design such as the *chokkomon* (Fig. 20-a)–‘arc-and-straight-line’ pattern—that Kidder describes as rectangular panels cut by opposed diagonals, where the resulting quadrants are in turn reduced to numerous arcs by intersecting curving lines (Kidder 1964, 121) and the *sōkyakurinjōmon* (Fig. 20-b), ‘circular pattern with two legs’.

In this category there are also recognisable designs such as the ‘sword’, ‘quiver’ (See Fig. 20-c), ‘shield’ (See Fig. 20-d), and ‘personal ornaments’.

Narrative designs

This category covers decorations with a complex scene such as human/animal/boat/leaf motifs with other elements also from the first category. The human figures (See Fig. 21) are all realised in a very stylised way, with no visible physical traits. The same can be said for the boat (See Fig. 21) and animals (See Fig. 22) realised in a very simple way. The repertoire of animals covers mostly horses, with few sample sites with toads and birds. The leaf motif (See Fig. 21) does not represent a specific tree/flower, but it is more an abstract decoration which reminds us of leaves (defined as leaf motifs by e.g. Kidder 1964; Shiraishi 1993a-b; Takaki 2004).

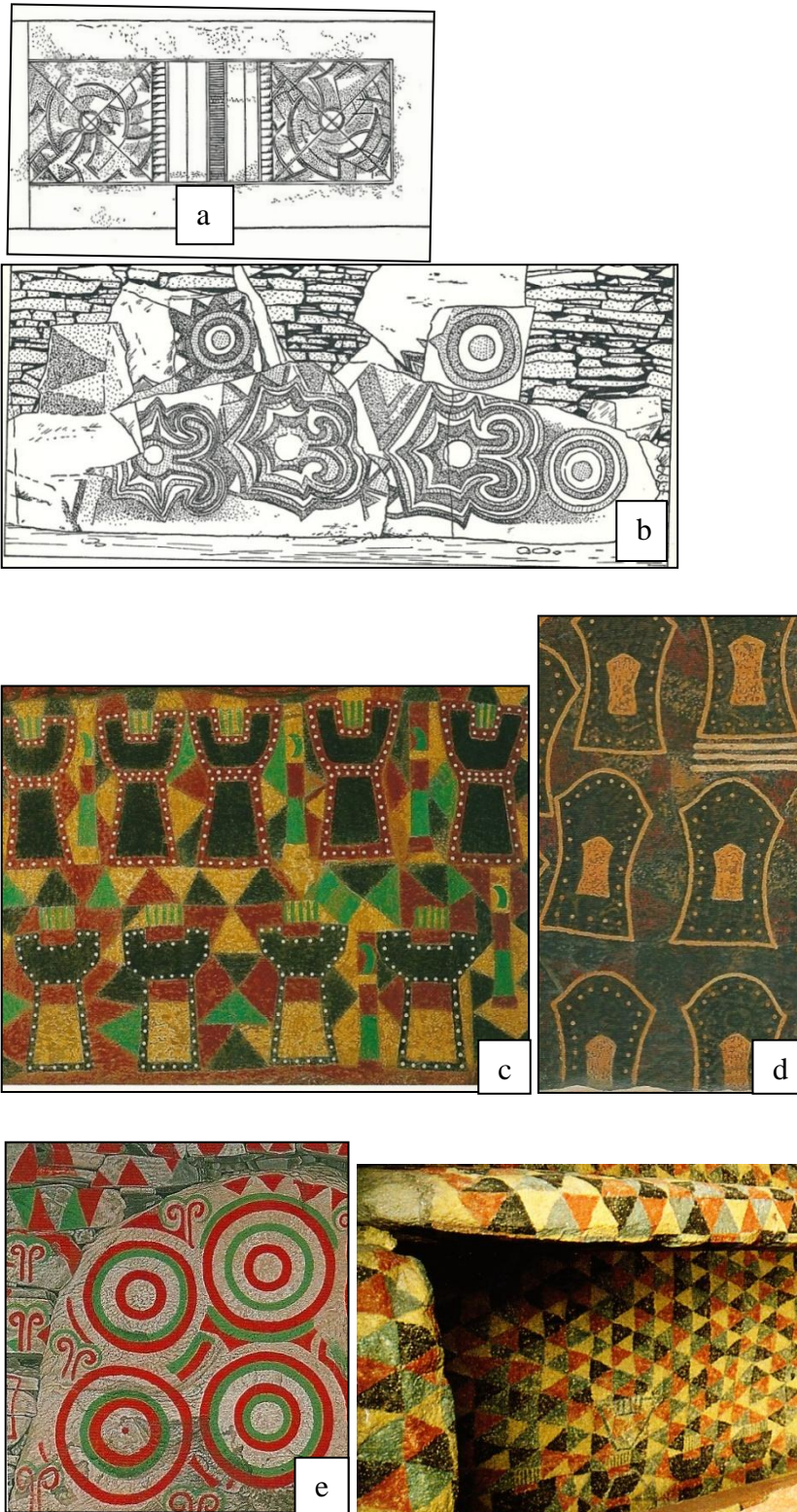


Figure 20: Abstract/geometric decorations: (a) Abstract decorations: chokkomon, arc-and-straight-line pattern (Kidder 1964, 162); (b) Abstract decorations: sōkyakurinjōmon, circular pattern with two legs (Kidder 1964, 287); (c) War motifs: quiver representation in Omura tomb (replica) (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 39); (d) War motifs: shield representation in Omura tomb (replica) (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 40); (e) geometric decorations: circle and triangle representation in Hinooka tomb (replica) (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 48); (f) geometric decorations: triangle motifs in Ōzuka tomb (replica) (Wieczorek and Steinhaus 2004, 378)

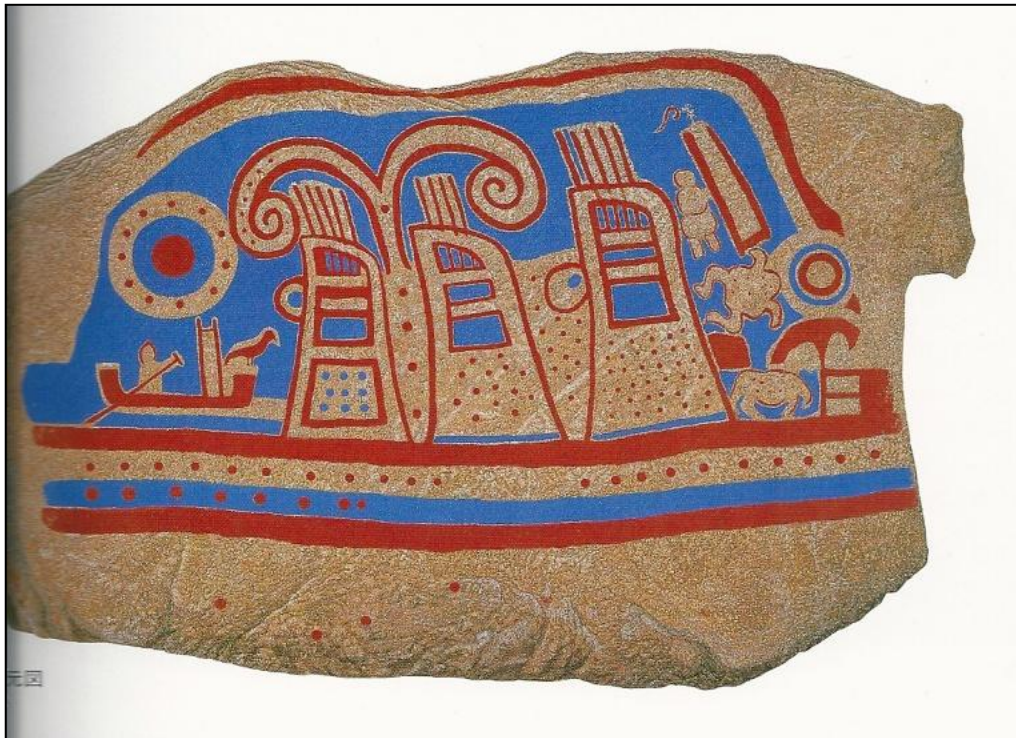


Figure 21: Narrative decoration: human figure, boat, leaf motif, and animals in Mezurashizuka tomb (replica) (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 35)



Figure 22: Narrative decoration: human figure, animals, leaf motif in Ōzuka tomb (replica) (Wieczorek and Steinhaus 2004, 261)

5.1.2. Decorated tombs: Interpretation of the motifs

Although this is not the main aim of this Master thesis, this section will briefly outline the main theories expounded by relevant archaeologists (e.g. Kidder 1964) regarding the meaning behind the motifs. Several studies have been devoted to interpreting the meaning behind these paintings.

According to Kidder (1964), because of the limited repertory of patterns, those motifs (geometric and narrative) may have had a symbolic meaning, probably connected to the indigenous cult (Kidder 1964, 117).

According to the Japanese scholar Takahashi (1999), narrative motifs, such as boats, that are placed close to the coffin aimed to show information about the dead (Takahashi 1999, 162). Nonetheless, other motifs represent equestrian subjects and objects, thus Takahashi believes that narrative decoration might also represent the voyage of the dead toward the afterlife. Because of the different scenes represented within the narrative paintings, he assumes they might have been different perceptions of what the afterlife was (*Ibid.*, 162). He claims that some particular motifs might also have been used as “prayers” in order to protect the deceased in the afterlife (*Ibid.*, 162). Takahashi sees the decorated tombs in Kyūshū strongly connected with magic and ritual, and he believes that all the symbols together are like a prayer.

A similar theory has been expounded by Takaki (2004) who considers the abstract/geometric decorations an indigenous development, grown from some kind of shamanistic culture as protection against evil.

Nonetheless, there is a lack of material culture which can support his statements. Indeed, there is no archaeological evidence of prayers or objects reliably connected to a belief system in the Late Kofun Period that can be directly connected to the decorations on the walls of the mounds.

5.1.3. Decorated tombs: Origins and function

It is nowadays thought (e.g. Barnes 1993; Kidder 1964; Shiraishi 1993a-b) that the decorated tomb tradition began in Kyūshū and afterwards spread towards Honshu (Fig. 18). The reason of the late appearance compared to the continent, where they appeared in China around the later Han period (around the 3rd century AD), is still unclear. Several hypotheses have been proposed by scholars (e.g. Portal 2000; Shiraishi 1993a-b) often connected to the migration from the peninsula to the archipelago which happened during the 5th century (e.g. Farris

1998; see section 4.3.). Another unclear point is the identity of those buried inside the Kyūshū decorated tombs. The continental decorated tombs were mainly used as royal tombs (e.g. Barnes 1993; Kim 1986),⁷ whereas Shiraishi (1993a) suggests that decorated tombs in Kyūshū were used only for the members from a powerful clan who ruled some areas of Kyūshū or as a manifestation of victory when a clan from a region had defeated another clan from a different area (*Ibid.*, 13). However, there are no reliable sources regarding important victories in Kyūshū. The only historical information we have, is about an important rebellion against the Yamato clan, which began in Kyūshū.⁸

5.1.4. Decorated tombs: Location

The majority of decorated tombs are found in Kyūshū, accumulating especially in Fukuoka and in Kumamoto (See Fig. 23). In Fukuoka prefecture they are concentrated between the Chikugo and Yabe rivers and in the southeast area of Kurume city. In Kumamoto prefecture, decorated tombs are located nearby the Kikuchi river; south of Kumamoto city, the area nearby Matsubate city; south of Yatsushiro city and in the area of Hitoyoshi city (Kidder 1964, 113) (See map in Fig. 24). Although recent discoveries have found more decorated tombs all over the Japanese archipelago (with the exception of Hokkaido island and the Okinawa archipelago) they are not very numerous compared to the standard type Kofun mounds: only a little over 600 decorated tombs have been discovered so far, amidst the total of 300,000 Kofun mounds (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 12) (See Fig. 23).

⁷ See appendix 3.

⁸ See appendix 2.

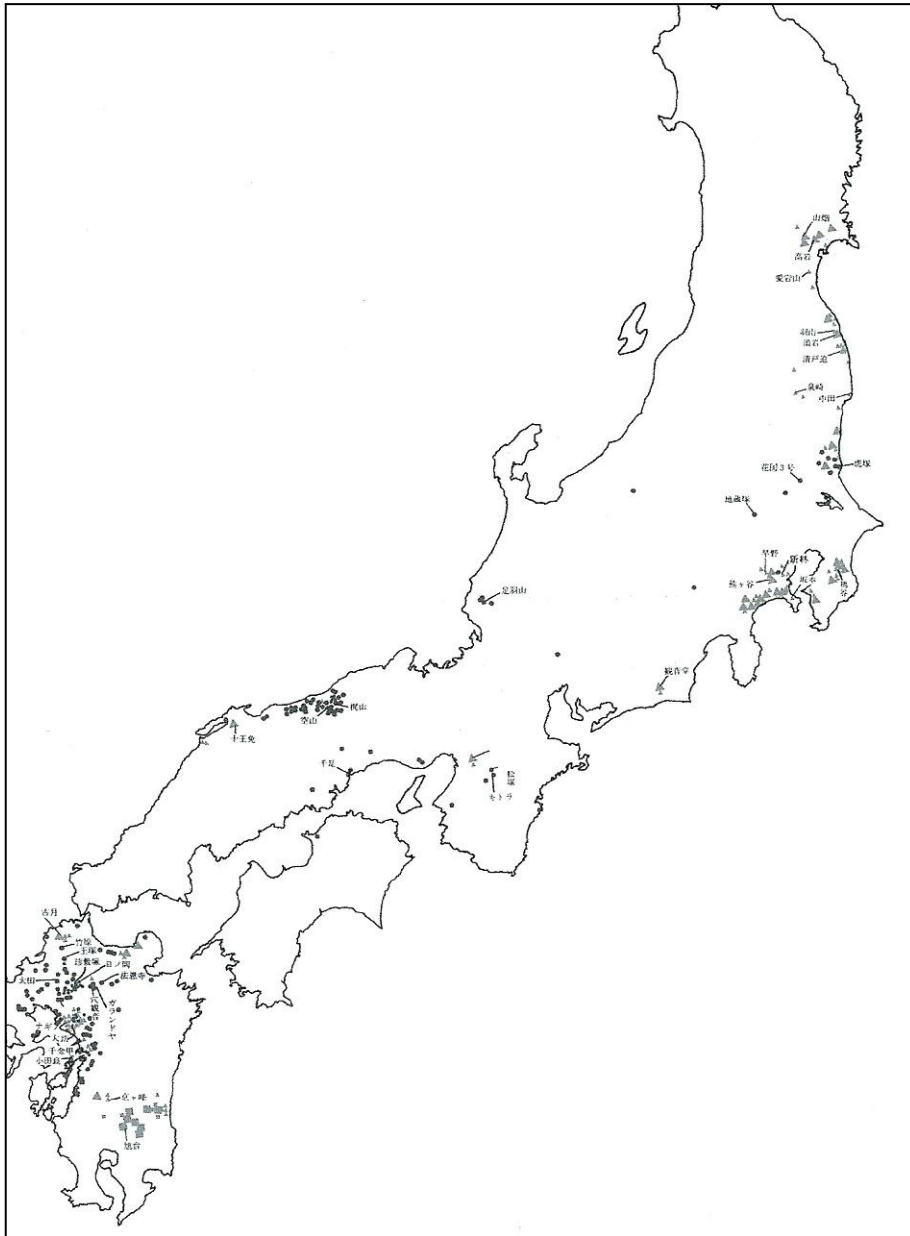


Figure 23: Spread of the decorated tombs throughout the Japanese archipelago (after Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 245)



Fukuoka



1. Takehara
2. Imajōōtsuka
3. Ōzuka
4. Kawashima
5. Gorōyama
6. Nichirinji
7. Mezurashitsuka
8. Shigesada
9. Tsukahanatsuka
10. Kōkadani
11. Hinooka
12. Haghinoo

Kumamoto

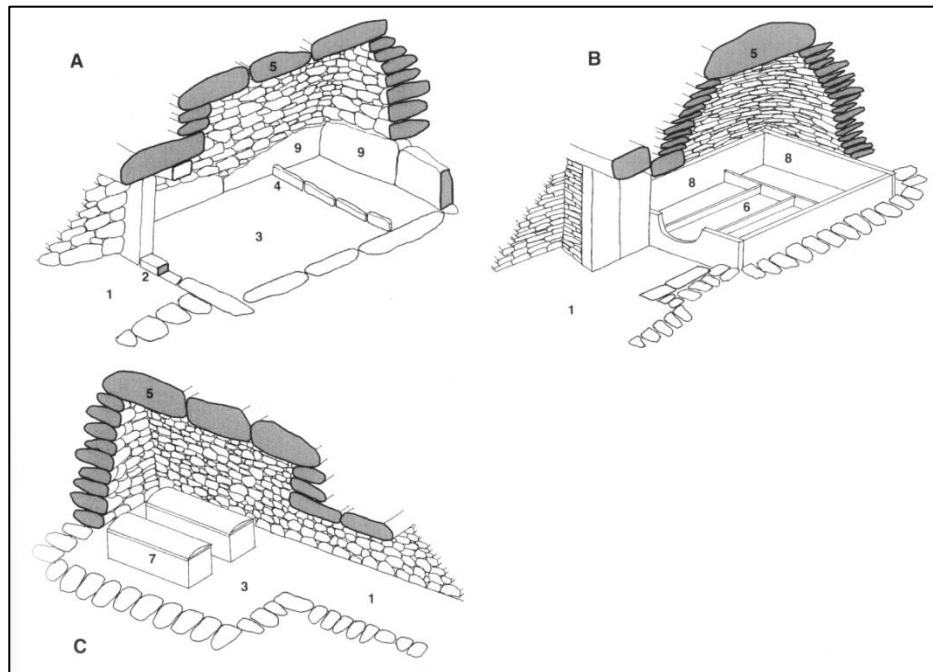


13. Nagaiwa
14. Daibō
15. Eianjihigashi
16. Benkiegaana
17. Obarūchita
18. Segonkō
19. Kamao
20. Idera
21. Ōmura

Figure 24: Map of decorated tombs in Kyūshū (Google maps) (compiled from the data from Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>, and <http://kofun.info/>)

5.1.5. Decorated tombs: Characteristics of the mounds

The architectural aspects which will be taken into consideration in the database and in the discussion in Chapter 6 are: 1) shape 2) length 3) presence of the antechamber. This latter feature is an element in common with the continental decorated tombs (e.g. Barnes 1993; Kim 1986; Portal 2000). There is no scope in this thesis to deal with the decorated coffins found in the stone chambers of some Kyūshū decorated mounded tombs, but see Wada (1987) for further information.



1. Corridor
2. Threshold stone
3. Main room
4. Subdivision of the room floor with upright standing stone slabs
5. Capstones
6. Main room for four interments with subdivisions made of stone slabs
7. Coffin
8. Stone slabs forming a rectangular room to receive the bodies
9. Hip height stone slabs in the lower wall area

Figure 25: Stone grave chambers with horizontal side entrance (Wieczorek and Steinhaus 2004, 351)

Some of the decorated tombs in Japan have two rooms connected with a corridor. The tombs with only one room have a short corridor that is more a deep entranceway, or a stone structure built around the main chamber (Kidder 1964, 110). This feature is called a horizontal stone chamber or stone passageway in English, i.e. a tomb with an entrance followed by a corridor that can lead directly to the main room or to several antechambers (Shiraishi 1993b, 18) (See Fig. 8 and Fig. 25). Almost all the tombs of different shapes from this period have this feature. This characteristic was very popular also in Chinese and Korean decorated tombs (*Ibid.*, 18; see also section 4.4.). This shared element in tomb structure could indicate important contacts between Kyūshū and the states on the Korean Peninsula.

The majority of decorated tombs had the possibility to host three or more bodies. According to Kidder (1964), decorated tombs—in Kyūshū—seem to be a sort of family vault since even the smallest tomb could host more than one body (Kidder 1964, 114).

According to Kidder (1964) many of the decorated tombs do not contain grave-goods (Kidder 1964, 114) which is an innovation and not very common compared to the undecorated mounds. However, Toyoshima (2004) claims the possibility of looting, since many stone chambers of the decorated tombs have been found already opened without the grave-good repertoire. This is a more concrete possibility compared to Kidder's statement since in Ōzuka tomb grave-goods have been discovered (See section 4.4.5.). Nonetheless, as it will be argued in section 6.3, many motifs represent symbolic objects used in the earlier common type of elite burials.

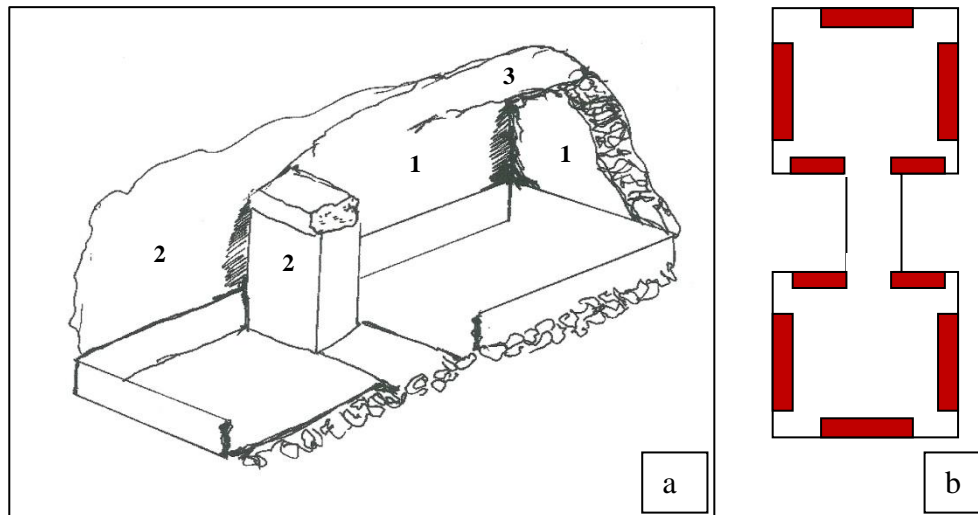


Figure 26: Disposition of decorations (both painted and in relief) inside a mounded tomb; (a) (ill. V. Galante, after Wiczorek and Steinhaus 2004, 351); (b) (ill. C. Zancan)

As for the location of the painted decorations: there is not a preferred wall; decorations are painted on the surface most suitable to be painted. Decorations both painted or in relief have been found: 1) on the four walls of the main room; 2) on the four walls of the antechamber; 3) on the ceiling (See Fig. 26 a-b). Usually decorations on the entranceway are executed both in relief and painted; many decorations are also in the corridors of passageway tombs, on the lintel when entering the main room, and on the walls of the main chamber.

5.2. Database analysis

The databases are personally compiled by gathering and analysing the information available about decorated tombs. Based on this literature and data, the tombs included in the databases have been chosen. As has already been outlined, the only recent sources available about decorated tombs are 1) the ongoing research project on the Japanese decorated tombs developed by the Kyūshū Government, as carried out by the Kyushu National Museum since 2002 (<http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>), and 2) the studies expounded in the catalogue “Special Exhibition: Decorated Tombs in Japan” published by Asahi Shinbunsha (1993).

Subsequently, the tombs have been divided according to their period, and assigned to a specific temporal phase. The dating of the tombs adhered to in this thesis follows the dating assigned by the Japanese archaeologists from the Kyūshū National Museum (<http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>), and from “Special Exhibition: Decorated Tombs in Japan” (1993). The methodology used for their dating has unfortunately not been explained, so for the purpose of this thesis I will assume

that their dating is correct. From this dating, I have created three different phases which cover from the first period where decorated mounded tombs have been found (late 5th century) until the last period of the decorated mounded tombs in Kyūshū (first half of 7th century).

The database sample in this thesis consists of 21 tombs, which are all located in Kyūshū (See map in Fig. 24). The choice of which tomb was included in this sample is based on the availability of data. As mentioned before, the essential information was derived from two main sources: the catalogue “Special Exhibition: Decorated Tombs in Japan” (1993) published by Asahi Shinbunsha for the travelling exhibition made with the help of National Museum of Japanese History (Sakura city), and the online ongoing project Sōshoku Kofun Database (<http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>) carried out by the National Museum of Kyūshū. Although there are also many known decorated tombs located in Honshu, these remain outside the scope of this thesis (but see Asahi Shinbunsha 1993). This thesis has deliberately chosen to focus only on the Kyūshū decorated tombs, due to the importance Kyūshū has always had for the interactions among the Yellow Sea and the lively and numerous relations it had with Paekche.

Taking into account the literature (e.g. Barnes 1993; Edwards 1983; Farris 1998; Shiraishi 1993a-b) about the influences Paekche tombs had on the Kyūshū Late Kofun Period tombs as discussed in section 4.4., the characteristics on which to base the analysis were chosen. These include: 1) shape, 2) size, 3) structure (that is to say the presence of the antechamber) and 4) the typology of decorations. (painted/relief decoration; narrative/abstract). For further information regarding point 4) please see section 5.1.2. The choice of which motifs were included into the analysis is made on the amount of examples there were for each pattern. Repetitive occurrence of a pattern is an important criterion, because the motifs will be discussed in Chapter 6 connected to symbolic objects in order to discuss what these can tell us about the society around the decorated mounded tombs. Patterns like swords and personal ornaments have been included because they were important symbols throughout the Kofun Period, therefore their representation as decorations should also be considered important.

In conclusion, the first database is a general overview of some of the most studied decorated tombs in Fukuoka and Kumamoto prefectures (Kyūshū) (See map in Fig. 24). First, tombs will be divided according to the period and location.

Afterwards shape and length will be taken into account, followed by whether the antechamber is present or not. Finally, the presence of abstract paintings, narrative paintings and decoration in relief will be analysed.

The second database aims to see the distribution in time and space of the most common patterns/decorations. Here tombs will again be divided according to the period and the location. These features will be further discussed in this thesis in relation to the long history of interactions and shared elements/features with the Korean kingdom of Paekche (See Chapter 6).

5.3. General overview of the decorated tombs in Kyūshū

Database 1: General overview of the decorated tombs in Kyūshū

Tomb	Number on the map	Phase	Shape	Length in m.	Antechamber	Abstract paintings	Narrative paintings	Decorations in relief
Fukuoka prefecture								
Hinooka	11	I	Keyhole	74		O		
Kōkadani	10	I	Round	39		O		
Nichirinji	6	I	Keyhole	50				O
Gorōyama	5	II	Round	32	O		O	
Haginoo	12	II	Round	19	O	O		
Imajōtsuka	2	II	Keyhole	?		O		
Kawashima	4	II	Round	15	O	O	O	
Mezurashitsuka	7	II	Round	?			O	
Ōzuka	3	II	Keyhole	78	O	O	O	
Shigesada	8	II	Keyhole	51	O	O		
Tsukahansuka	9	II	Round	28	O	O		
Takehara	1	III	Round	20	O		O	
Kumamoto prefecture								
Daibō	14	I	Keyhole	54		O		
Idera	20	I	Round	28	O	O		O

Kamao	19	I	Round	13		O		
Segonkō	18	I	Round	12				O
Benkiegaana	16	II	Round	15	O	O	O	O
Eianjihigashi	15	II	Round	13		O		
Obarūchita	17	II	Rock cut	?				O
Nagaiwa	13	III	Rock cut	?				O
Ōmura	21	?	Rock cut	?				O

Legend: ? = unknown; O = yes; I = First phase (late 5th C. ~ first half of 6th C.); II = Second phase (middle 6th C. ~ late 6th C.); III = Third phase (late 6th C.-early 7th C. ~ first half of 7th C.)

Table 3: General overview of the decorated mounded tombs (data from Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>)

5.3.1. Division of the tombs based on the time-phase

In order to facilitate the analysis of the decorated tombs phenomenon, the tombs have been divided into three main phases (chronology from Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>) (See Table 3):

- Phase I: starts with the first decorated tombs found in the late 5th century AD and it lasts until the first half of the 6th century. Seven tombs are dated to this phase (Daibō, Hinooka, Idera, Kamao, Kōkadani, Nichirinji, Segonkō);
- Phase II: covers the second half of the 6th century: from the middle 6th century until the late 6th century. Eleven tombs are dated to this phase (Benkiegaana, Eianjihigashi, Gorōyama, Haghinoo, Imajōōtsuka, Mezurashitsuka, Obarūchita, Ōzuka, Shigesada, Tsukahanatsuka, Wakashima);
- Phase III: begins between the late 6th century and the early 7th century and covers the whole 7th century. Two tombs are dated to this phase (Nagaiwa, Takehara).

5.3.2. Division of the tombs based on location

The decorated mounded tombs have been found all over Japan, with the exception of the Okinawa islands and Hokkaido island. In this thesis only 21 tombs from two prefectures of Kyūshū will be discussed (See map in Fig. 24 and Table 3):

- Fukuoka prefecture: is located in the northern part of Kyūshū. Eleven decorated tombs from this prefecture will be taken into discussion (Gorōyama, Haghinoo, Hinooka, Imajōōtsuka, Kōkadani, Mezurashitsuka, Nichirinji, Ōzuka, Shigesada, Tsukahanatsuka, Wakashima, Takehara).
- Kumamoto prefecture: is located in the centre of Kyūshū. Ten tombs from this prefecture will be taken into discussion (Benkiegaana, Daibō, Eianjihigashi, Idera, Kamao, Nagaiwa, Obarūchita, Ōmura, Segonkō).

5.3.3. Shape of the tombs

During the research, three shapes used for the decorated tombs have been found (Barnes 2007; Okauchi 1987):

- Keyhole shape: known in Japanese with by name *zenpōkōenfun* (See Fig. 5-b), this is the most typical shape of the whole Kofun period. It is formed by the union of a circular tomb and a square tomb (e.g. Ōzuka in Fukuoka prefecture, and Daibō in Kumamoto prefecture) .
- Round: called *enpun* in Japanese (See Fig. 5-c), it is simple, with a circle-shape, thought to be used by common people (e.g. Mezurashitsuka in Fukuoka prefecture, and Idera in Kumamoto prefecture).
- Rock cut: this shape, known in Japanese as *yokoana* (See Fig. 8), is typical from the Late Kofun Period (e.g. Obarūchita in Kumamoto prefecture).

5.3.4. Antechamber

As it has been already outlined this thesis, the stone passage-way (See fig. 8) is a typical feature of the Late Kofun mounds. Indeed, the entrance-corridor is in almost all the tombs from this period (Farris 1998). In the database, the word antechamber refers to one or more rooms before the main chamber, called also horizontal stone chamber. The presence of the antechamber is strictly connected to the tomb-shape. Indeed, from the data only half of the tombs have this feature. In particular, the antechamber is found in those smaller tombs with a simpler shape. This aspect shows the trend of the last part of the Kofun Period, that is to say smaller tombs with a stone passage-way imported from Paekche.

5.3.5. Abstract/narrative paintings and relief decorations

In contrast to the decorated tombs in mainland China and the Korean peninsula, which have patterns such as the four deities and portraits of the tomb occupants (Barnes 1993; Choe 2004, 15),⁹ the Japanese painted tombs do not have such explicit motifs, with a clear meaning.

A first division is made between those decorations painted on the wall and relief decorations. They are both popular during the Late Kofun Period. A second division is between the subjects of the paintings: narrative or abstract. With narrative paintings (Fig. 21) (Fig.22) I refer to those paintings with at least one human figure and with an articulate scene with other elements such as animals or

⁹ The most spectacular Chinese painted tombs are those dated to the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). The tomb of Li Xian is one of the most spectacular examples of painted tombs with its representations of scenes of daily life (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; Barnes 1993). Probably the best known painted tombs from the Korean Peninsula are in the royal complex of Koguryo tombs with similar subjects of the Tang painted tombs (Portal 2000). For further information see Appendix 3.

abstract elements. This is because in continental tradition, articulate scenes with humans are very common and they were meant to be a sort of narration (Choe 2004; Portal 2000).

The group of abstract paintings covers geometric figures (Fig. 20 a-b-e-f) and less abstractive elements such as quivers and shield (Fig. 22 c-d).

5.3.6. Evaluation of the first database

Time-phases division

Phase I

It is known (e.g. Shiraishi 1993a-b) that during this period, decorated tombs were only built in Fukuoka prefecture (e.g. Hinooka) and Kumamoto prefecture (e.g. Idera), thus in Kyūshū island. Regarding the shape, both keyhole shape and round shape are used. There are no examples of the rock cut type dated back to this stage. Regarding the length, there are still some mounds, especially the keyhole shape tombs, which have bigger dimensions compared to the other phases (around 50-80m in length).

During the late 5th century and between the late 5th and early 6th century all the decorated mounds have decoration in relief; as yet, there are no painted decorations. Idera tomb in Kumamoto prefecture (site no. 20), as can be seen from the database, is adorned with both painted decoration and decoration in relief. This is due to the fact that its decorations in relief are also coloured, but it does not have mere wall paintings. The human figure as pattern is still not used in this early phase.

A change occurred in the early 6th century and in the first half of the 6th century: the decoration in relief disappears and abstract paintings such as circles and triangles (See section 5.3.) become ubiquitous in all tombs. Yet, the narrative painting is not used yet. The presence of the antechamber is in this phase only seen in one round shaped tomb situated in Kumamoto prefecture (i.e. Idera tomb).

Phase II

During the middle and the second half of the 6th century, both shapes—keyhole and round—are still represented, but the round shape begins to become predominant. The keyhole-shaped mounds still have bigger dimensions (e.g. 50~80 m length) while in contrast the size of the round tombs starts to decrease (to 25~15 m). There is still a certain randomness for what concerns the presence of the

antechamber, but during this time it also becomes a feature of Fukuoka tombs (e.g. Ōzuka).

It is possible to observe a change related to the type of tomb between the second half of the 6th century and the late 6th century: from the late 6th century, the rock cut shape mound increases in number, whereas the keyhole shape tomb shows a decrease.

Regarding the decorations, the reliefs are now only present in Kumamoto prefecture (e.g. Obarūchita) but only limited to a few tombs. During this phase, narrative paintings appear and become often used. The strong presence of abstracted paintings continues also during the whole second phase.

Phase III

The last examples of decorated tombs in Kyūshū are dated back to the end of 6th century and the beginning of the 7th century. Actually, only two examples of tombs, one from Fukuoka (i.e. Takehara) and one from Kumamoto prefecture (i.e. Nagaiwa) were available from this phase.

Another important point is the absence of the antechamber. During this phase, there are only round and rock cut tombs. The keyhole shape completely disappears during this phase as well as the narrative paintings, thus there are only abstract paintings. Decorations in relief are still used in this late phase. For the data gathered so far it is only possible to say that decorations in relief are only in Kumamoto, but with new data and discoveries this statement may be change.

Space division

Fukuoka prefecture

In Fukuoka prefecture keyhole and round shape tombs are equally used in both of the first phases (I and II), and in contrast with Kumamoto, the rock cut tomb is never used. The keyhole shape tombs found in Fukuoka prefecture are the biggest compared to those in Kumamoto. The antechamber is a feature that half of the tombs have, and it starts to be a feature of Fukuoka tombs only from phase II, whereas in Kumamoto there are samples also from phase I.

Regarding the decorations, more than half of the Fukuoka tombs have abstract paintings, whereas the narrative paintings are almost absent. Moreover,

narrative paintings began to be used only from phase II. Contrary to Kumamoto tombs, the decorations in relief are almost absent.

Kumamoto prefecture

In Kumamoto prefecture, the main shape used for the decorated tombs is the round shape. Contrary to Fukuoka tombs, the keyhole shape is almost absent whereas there are few examples of the rock cut tombs. The antechamber is not very common in this prefecture, less than half of these mounds present this feature, but in contrast with Fukuoka, this feature appeared from phase I. Half of the Kumamoto tombs contain abstract paintings, whereas the narrative paintings are almost absent and they appear only from phase II. However, from phase II the abstract paintings are less frequent until a complete disappearance in phase III. Furthermore, here the decorations on relief are very common (six samples).

Summary

These are some main outcomes from the analysis of the first database that will be discussed in more details in the next chapter:

1. Decorated tombs started in Kyūshū (Shiraishi 1993a-b) and they lasted until the late 6th century-early 7th century;
2. The shape and the size of the decorated tombs change through time from the big keyhole tombs to the smaller rock cut tombs;
3. The presence of the antechamber is apparently random, but it is almost always associated with round shape tombs, few samples with the keyhole-shaped tombs, and never present in rock cut tombs;
4. The decorations in relief are almost always present from the beginning until the last decorated mounds, especially in Kumamoto;
5. Abstract decorations—both in relief or painted—are more prevalent than the narrative ones, but if the narrative ones do occur, they are found mostly in Kumamoto prefecture, during phase II.

5.4. Motifs of the decorated tombs in Kyūshū

Database 2.1: Motifs of the decorated tombs: abstract/geometrical decorations

Tomb	Circle		Triangle		Arc-and-straight-line pattern (Chokkomon)		Circular pattern with two legs (Sōkyakurinjōmon)	
	PAINTED	RELIEF	PAINTED	RELIEF	PAINTED	RELIEF	PAINTED	RELIEF
Fukuoka prefecture								
Hinooka	0		0					
Kōkadani	0		0				0	
Nichirinji		0						
Gorōyama	0							
Haghinoo	0							
Imajōōtsuka	0							
Kawashima	0							
Mezurashitsuka	0							
Ōzuka	0		0				0	
Shigesada	0							
Tsukahansuka	0		0					
Takehara								
Kumamoto prefecture								
Daibō			0					
Idera					0	0		

Kamao	0		0				0	
Segonkō		0						
Benkiegaana	0							
Eianjihigashi	0		0					
Obarūchita								
Nagaiwa				0				
Ōmura		0		0				

Database 2.2: Motifs of the decorated tombs: items

Tomb	Shield		Quiver		Sword		Personal ornaments	
	PAINTED	RELIEF	P.	R.	P.	R.	P.	R.
Fukuoka prefecture								
Hinooka	O		O					
Kōkadani			O					
Nichirinji								
Gorōyama			O					
Haghinoo	O							
Imajōōtsuka	O							
Kawashima								
Mezurashitsuka			O					
Ōzuka	O		O					
Shigesada			O					
Tsukahatsuka								
Takehara								
Kumamoto prefecture								
Daibō								
Idera								
Kamao								
Segonkō				O				
Benkiegaana								
Eianjihigashi								
Obarūchita								
Nagaiwa		O		O				
Ōmura				O				

Database 2.3: Motifs of the decorated tombs: figures

Tomb	Animals		Human figure		Boat		Leaf motif	
	PAINTED	RELIEF	P.	R.	P.	R.	P.	R.
Fukuoka prefecture								
Hinooka					O		O	
Kōkadani								
Nichirinji								
Gorōyama	O		O		O			
Haghinoo					O			
Imajōōtsuka								
Kawashima					O			
Mezurashitsuka	O		O		O		O	
Ōzuka	O		O				O	
Shigesada								
Tsukahansuka							O	
Takehara	O		O		O			
Kumamoto prefecture								
Daibō								
Idera								
Kamao								
Segonkō								
Benkiegaana	O		O		O			
Eianjihigashi								
Obarūchita				O				
Nagaiwa				O		O		
Ōmura								

Legend: O = yes

Table 4: Databases 2: Motifs of the decorated tombs (data from Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>)

5.4.1. Patterns and decorations

The main databases related to the space distribution of patterns have been divided into three sub-databases. The first one covers the geometrical decorations (See Fig. 20): circle, which also includes concentric circles, triangle, *chokkomon*, which can be translated in English as pattern of straight lines and arcs that was not regularised or symmetrical, and *sōkyakurinjōmon*, translated in English as circular pattern with two legs. The second sub-database refers to war-related and personal items: quiver, shield, sword, and personal ornaments. The last sub-database covers what was called narrative painting/decoration (See Fig. 21 and Fig. 22) in the first database. Thus: animals (horse, toad, bird), human figures, boats and leaf motif.

5.4.2. Evaluation of the second databases

Time-phase division

Phase I

During the first period of this phase, from the late 5th century until the early 6th century, there was not much diversity in the use of motifs. Regarding the abstract decorations (See Table 4, database 2.1; see also Appendix 4, map 1), the arc-and-straight-line pattern was in use only until the early 6th century (one sample); the circular pattern with two legs is present in two samples. The circle becomes the most frequently used pattern from phase I (at five sample sites). Furthermore, the triangle is present in four tombs from this period and only in painted form. During this early stage (See Table 4, database 2.2., see also Appendix 4, map 1) only one tomb already depicts the quiver (three samples) and the shield (one sample). The other patterns, sword and personal ornaments, are not used yet at all. Regarding the narrative patterns (See Table 4, database 2.3.; see also Appendix 4, map 1), there is only one sample (painted) concerning the leaf motif and the boat, whereas the human figure and animals are not used yet. For what concerns the realisation of the motifs (painted/relief) only three out of seven sample sites present decorations in relief (abstract decorations).

Phase II

Regarding the abstract/geometric designs (See Table 4, database 2.1.; see also Appendix 4, map 2) the circle continues to be the most common pattern: it is represented in almost all the tombs (nine out of 12 sample sites) from the middle

6th century until the late 6th century. Contrary to phase I, during phase II the circle pattern is only painted. Also the triangle pattern (four samples) is only painted and not in relief. There is still one example of the circular pattern with two legs, which is also painted. Five sample tombs from the middle and the second half of the 6th century (See Table 4, database 2.2.; see also Appendix 4, map 2) represent either the shield or the quiver almost in the same amount. The shield has been found only in paintings and not in relief. There is only one example of quiver in relief dated back to this phase.

It is possible to see an innovation during this phase: narrative decorations (See Table 4, database 2.3.; see also Appendix 4, map 2) begin to be represented. The human figure is very common (six samples), both painted (four samples) and in relief (two samples). The boat is quite common (found in five sample tombs) especially painted. There are four sample sites with animal representations (all painted), and three samples for what concerns the leaf motif.

Phase III

It can be said that in general tombs from this period are less decorated. Regarding the abstract/geometric designs (See Table 4, database 2.1.; see also Appendix 4, map 3) the circle pattern is represented in two sample sites. Moreover, the triangle pattern is represented in one sample sites. Both patterns have been found only in painted decorations. Only one example of shield (See Table 4, database 2.2.; see also Appendix 4, map 3) exists in this phase. The quiver is still in use and it has been found in both paintings and reliefs in both representative sites.

The narrative decorations (See Table 4, database 2.3.; see also Appendix 4, map 3) are, in contrast, still common, occurring at both representative sites. Animals are found in both sample sites and only in paintings. The human figure is again found in both sample sites with one sample in relief. There is only one sample of boat (painted), and no sample of leaf pattern. Even during this phase the sword and personal ornaments motifs were not represented at all.

Space division

Fukuoka prefecture

In Fukuoka prefecture the most common patterns are the circle and the quiver. Regarding their representation at Hinooka, Kōkadani, Nichirinji, Gorōyama, Haghinoo, Imajōōtsuka, Kawashima, Mezurashitsuka, Ōzuka, Shigesada, and Tsukahanatsuka (circle), Hinooka, Kōkadani, Gorōyama, Mezurashitsuka, Ōzuka, Shigesada (quiver); it has only been found in paintings with the exception of Nichirinji sample site which has the circle motif in relief. Also the shield has been found in numerous tombs at Hinooka, Haghinoo, Imajōōtsuka, and Ōzuka, and only in paintings. The triangle pattern was less common at Hinooka, Kōkadani, Ōzuka, and Tsukahanatsuka, and it has also been found in paintings. Regarding the other two elements of the geometric figures, only the circular pattern with two legs is found in this prefecture, at Kōkadani and Ōzuka. The sword and personal ornament patterns are not used in this area.

Concerning the narrative decorations, the human figure and animals are represented at Gorōyama, Mezurashitsuka, Ōzuka, and Takehara sites. The boat motif is very common and represented at Hinooka, Gorōyama, Haghinoo, Kawashima, Mezurashitsuka, and Takehara. The leaf pattern is represented at Hinooka, Mezurashitsuka, Ōzuka, and Tsukahanatsuka. All the narrative motifs are only depicted in paintings.

Kumamoto prefecture

In Kumamoto prefecture the most common pattern is the triangle found at Daibō, Kamao, Eianjihigashi, Nagaiwa, and Ōmura. The circle pattern is not very widely represented but we find both decorations painted and in relief at Kamao, Benkiegaana, Nagaiwa, and Ōmura. In Kumamoto, the arc-and-straight-line pattern and the circular pattern with two legs are both present (one sample for each motif) at Idera the former, and at Kamao the latter. The shield pattern is not much used. There is only one example and in relief at Nagaiwa. The quiver, found at Segonkō, Nagaiwa, and Ōmura, is always represented in relief. Here, contrary to Fukuoka prefecture, the decorations in relief are more frequent.

As for Fukuoka, there are no decorations of either sword or personal ornaments. The narrative decorations are less used in this area: animal motifs have been found at Benkiegaana; human figure at Benkiegaana, Obarūchita, and

Nagaiwa; boat at Benkiegaana, and Nagaiwa. The human figure and boat are both painted and in relief. There are no samples regarding the leaf pattern.

Summary

These are some main outcomes from the analysis of the second database that will be discussed in more details in next chapter:

1. The most elaborate geometric patterns, the arc-and-straight-line pattern and the circular pattern with two legs, are only represented during the phase I;
2. Generally speaking, the circle is the most common pattern and it can be found in both paintings and relief decorations;
3. The circle motif is especially well represented in Fukuoka prefecture, whereas in Kumamoto prefecture the main motif is the triangle;
4. The decorations in relief have been found especially in Kumamoto prefecture, whereas Fukuoka prefecture has more examples of paintings;
5. Narrative decorations begin to be used from phase II and they last until phase III;
6. The leaf motif is only present in Fukuoka prefecture.

Chapter 6: Discussion of the research questions

6.1. To what extent is the Continental/Paekche influence visible in the decorated mortuary architecture of the Late Kofun Period in Kyūshū?

As stated in previous chapters of this thesis, the relations among China, southern Korea and Kyūshū were very frequent and very meaningful in terms of the influences they created in material culture and socio-political changes.

One of the most evident results from these interactions is the effect that the Chinese tributary-system during the 2nd century BC had on the Japanese hierarchical structures. Indeed, it created the basis for an “elite” whose position was legitimised by the Chinese court through titles and special gifts such as bronze mirrors and gold seals. Therefore, the new political status of this elite was also recognised by the society in the archipelago, first in Kyūshū and later in the other islands. The fact that a hierarchical structure was rising, triggered the appearance of mounded tombs whose size and shape were strictly connected to the affirmation of specific regional chieftains mainly from the Yamato clan (Barnes 2007).

On the other hand, from the burial repertoire of the Early/Middle Kofun Period, it is possible to recognise the role and impact the relations between southern Korea and Kyūshū had on the mounded tombs culture. They share a homogeneous repertoire of grave-goods (See Table 2) which symbolised their common political status. That is to say they considered each other “equal”, and the homogeneous material culture is a materialisation of their same political status as they operated on the basis of a Peer Polity Interaction (Barnes 2007).

From these points, it seems clear that Kyūshū is the perfect witness of the complex interactions that happened from the Yayoi Period to the very last phase of the Kofun Period. The model of the Peer Polity Interaction expounded by Barnes (2007) has been crucial in defining the role of the interactions. Nonetheless, this model has been applied only up to the Middle Kofun Period, whereas it is recorded that a huge Paekche influence arrived in Kyūshū during the very late phase of the Middle Kofun Period (end of the 4th century-beginning of the 5th century) (Barnes 2007; Farris 1998). From the data gathered in this thesis,

it will now be argued to what extent the interactions between Paekche and Kyūshū are visible in a specific case-study: the decorated tombs.

The following table shows the main characteristics of the Paekche /Continental and Kyūshū tombs in order to define their differences and similarities.

	PAEKCHE	KYŪSHŪ
Shape	Round; square; keyhole	Keyhole; round; rock cut
Structure	Mainly in bricks; very frequent is the stone passageway (the antechamber); many chambers connected to the corridor	Cut-stone tombs; seldom the stone passageway (the antechamber); no more than one room connected to the corridor
Murals	Moulded decorations on the bricks; motifs directly painted on the walls	Decoration on the plastered walls
Abstract motifs	Mainly moulded on the tiles; lotus flowers and few geometric lines	Both painted and in relief; mainly geometric figures such as circles and triangles
Narrative motifs	Painted on the walls and created from the disposition of the bricks; the motifs represent the four Chinese animals of directions	Both painted and in relief; the motifs represent scenes of daily/ritual life
Symbolic objects	Symbolic objects have been found in the grave-goods such as royal gold ornaments, ring-pommel sword.	No symbolic objects found (probably due to looting); motifs on the walls representing symbolic objects such as ceramic figures and bronze mirrors

Table 5: Decorated tombs in Paekche and Kyushu (data from: Kidder 1964; Kim 1986; Okauchi 1987; Portal 2000; Shiraishi 1993a-b)

From the data in the table above (See Table 5) there are some interesting outcomes that will be discussed in detail in the next section. First of all, both tombs from Paekche and Kyūshū use as main shape the round tomb. In Kyūshū, on 21 tombs, 12 had the round shape (data from Asahi Shinbusha 1993; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp/>). Nonetheless, the rock cut tomb seems to be a Kumamoto characteristic, even if only three sample tombs have this shape. Still, five out of 20 tombs in the sample have a keyhole shape. Therefore it can be said that the majority of the shapes for the decorated tombs in Kyūshū share the same shapes with the Paekche tombs.

Regarding the structure of the tomb, the stone passageway (the antechamber) is a predominant element in Paekche decorated tombs (Kim 1986; Okauchi 1987; Portal 2000). On the contrary, in Kyūshū, less than half of the tombs have this feature (nine samples). It is interesting to outline that almost all the tombs with the stone passageway have a round shape (seven out of eight tombs in the sample). Another important element of contrast is that Paekche decorated tombs are mainly built in bricks, an aspect utterly absent in Kyūshū tombs. Yet, in Paekche tombs the corridor connects more than two rooms creating long tombs, whereas in Kyūshū it connects at most two rooms. Therefore, Paekche and Kyūshū do share the stone passageway features but it does not have the same importance in the tomb structure.

Regarding the murals (data from Asahi Shinbusha 1993; Kim 1986; Okauchi 1987; Portal 2000; <http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp/>), the main difference is that Paekche used to have moulded decorations especially for the tiles, an element absent from the Kyūshū tombs. Both Paekche and Kyūshū share the common motifs of geometric patterns. Nonetheless, in Kyūshū these motifs are predominant and more complex (See Fig. 20).

An important element of contrast is the style and the subjects used for the narrative motifs. Indeed, in Paekche, as it was for Koguryo and Tang China,¹⁰ the main subjects are the animals of the four directions (See section 4.4.) This subject is absent from the decorated tombs in Kyūshū. If we compared a shared narrative motif—the plant pattern (See Fig. 27)—it is also possible to distinguish a clear difference in style.

¹⁰ See Appendix 3.

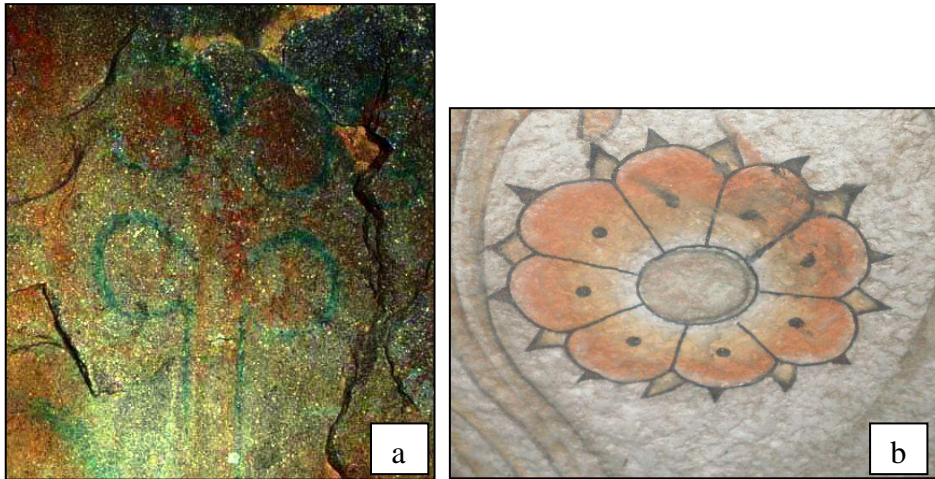


Figure 27: Leaf motifs: (a) Kyushu, Tsukahansuka tomb; (b) Paekche, Songsan-ri tomb (<http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp>)

Concerning symbolic objects, the Kyūshū decorated tombs appear to have been looted (Toyoshima 2004, 257), thus it has not been possible to evaluate the grave-goods repertoire. For what concerns the Paekche decorated tombs (King Munyong's tomb), it is known so far that the grave-goods repertoire (See Fig. 28) consists of gold and symbolic objects such as swords and jewellery.



Figure 28: King Munyong's tomb grave-goods repertoire: gold jewellery (<http://kyuhaku.jmc.or.jp/>)

In particular those objects found at Munyong's site, such as Chinese iron coins, a jar from the Yue kilns, and bronze mirrors (Okauchi 1987, 140) show an affiliation with the Chinese court similar to that in use during the Middle/Late Yayoi period and Early Kofun in Kyūshū. That is to say, these symbolic objects aimed to reflect the long cultural ties between Paekche and China. In Kyūshū symbolic objects have been represented as motifs on the walls. Their meaning will be discussed later in section 6.3.

In conclusion, the shared elements with Paekche can be summed up as follows:

1. tomb shape:
 - round
 - keyhole
 - tomb structure:
 - stone passageway in round tombs
 - corridor that leads to at least one room
2. murals:
 - plant motifs
 - geometric motifs
3. symbolic objects:
 - both present , even if in two different ways

The different elements can be summarised as follows:

1. tomb shape:
 - absence in Paekche of the rock cut tomb
2. tomb structure:
 - absence in Kyūshū of brick tombs
 - absence in Kyūshū of many rooms connected to the corridor
 - seldom use in Kyūshū of the antechamber
3. murals:
 - absence in Kyūshū of moulded motifs
 - absence in Kyūshū of decorated tiles
 - absence in Kyūshū of the representation of the Chinese animals of the four directions
4. symbolic objects
 - absence in Kyūshū of rich grave-goods
 - absence in Paekche of symbolic objects represented as decoration on the walls

6.2. What can the similarities and differences with Paekche decorated tombs tell us about the identity and socio-political developments in Japan?

It has been already discussed in this thesis that southern Korea and Kyūshū for a long time engaged in Peer Polity Interactions which resulted in a homogeneous material culture (visible in the grave-goods) and in a sort of competitive emulation (visible from the erection of giant mounds). Here we have very particular tombs which appeared first only in Kyūshū and later also spread to other areas of the archipelago. These decorated tombs had for a long time been a tradition of the Tang royal tombs and of the Korean royal tombs (Kim 1986; Nelson 1993; Portal 2000).

Therefore, it can be argued that the presence in Korea of these particular mounds was already perceived by the common Korean people as a symbol of a specific status—royal status—transmitted from China. For instance, it is known from the archaeological discoveries that other objects were perceived as symbols of a specific status such as the bronze mirrors, symbols of alliance with China and symbols of power (Fig. 11). Relations between Japan and China continued to be very frequent and China was considered a sort of model for the rising Japanese State also during the Late Kofun Period (Corradini 2003; Takeshita 2005).¹¹ Nonetheless, the absence in Kyūshū of the main motifs of the animals of the four directions and of the nobility—that were the main subjects in the whole Korean decorated tombs tradition (Choe 2004; Kim 1986; Nelson 1993; Okauchi 1987; Portal 2000)—lead to the assumption that in Kyūshū the tradition was only in part influenced by Paekche and the decorations should be considered more a local culture (Shiraishi 1993a-b). Of the same opinion is professor Best (Wesleyan University), who has stated that the influence of the Paekche decorated tombs is visible only on the shape and structure, but not in the tomb décor (Jonathan Best, personal communication, 14 December 2012). Therefore, it would be an autochthonous element (original from Japan), as also expounded in some recent research (e.g. Shiraishi 1993a-b).

Barnes (2007) claims that one of the stages of the Peer Polity Interactions between southern Korea and Kyūshū happened at the end of the Middle Kofun Period (end of the 4th century-beginning of the 5th century) and during the Late

¹¹ See Appendix 1.

Kofun Period with the adoption of Buddhism from Paekche (Barnes 2007, 36-37). Therefore, it can be argued that also during this period a sort of homogeneous material culture was shared on the basis of the nature of this interaction. For the discoveries done so far, it is known that decorated tombs in Kyūshū did not have any rich or remarkable grave-goods probably due to looting (Toyoshima 2004), and there is the assumption that if there are any visible shared aspects of the interactions, then they would be in the structure and other features of the tombs: like the round shape and the presence of the stone passageway in the round-shaped mounds, shared by both traditions.

As Renfrew (1986) states, the erection of particular buildings and transmission of innovations are two elements of the Peer Polity Interaction which are connected to changes in the social-system (Renfrew 1986, 8). Thus, it can be argued that the appearance of decorated tombs (particular building) and the round-shaped mounds with the stone passageway (innovation) of the Kyūshū tombs may represent the *competitive emulation* whose changes are often materialised into particular material culture, as defined by Renfrew. As the decorated tombs of Paekche were royal tombs (Kim 1986; Nelson 1993; Portal 2000) and Kyūshū and Paekche had relations among same political-status peers (Barnes 2007), it can be assumed that also in Kyūshū there was a high ranking clan which was in charge of the Peer Polity Interaction of that period, thus it was perceived as powerful by the Kyūshū society and also by the Paekche society. Hence, this very powerful clan would have shown its status also through a very particular mound: the decorated tomb.

This is what had already happened in the first stages of the Japanese mortuary architecture: a particular tomb—the keyhole tomb—was strictly connected to important socio-political changes (Barnes 2007) (See section 3.1.2. and section 4.2.) whose material culture was strictly connected to the relation with southern Korea.

Regarding the socio-political changes of this period, it is known that the political hierarchy began to be defined with the Yamato clan at the beginning of the State (Corradini 2003; Takeshita 2005). As a consequence, the mortuary architecture was reduced in size, and simpler shapes began to be in use due to identification also of the Yamato clan as the ruling clan from the Kofun society. Yet, the mounds were also built for other powerful clans and common people

(Barnes 2007; Tsude 1987). More important information is provided by the historical sources where a very powerful clan in Kyūshū which rebelled against Yamato is described (Brown 1993, 149).¹² Taking into account the many similarities in tomb shape and structure and the interactions between Paekche and Kyūshū, it can be argued that the decorated tombs phenomenon in Kyūshū could have been triggered by the interaction with similar entities—peer polities—in Paekche. Hence, the tomb would have played the role of materialisation of a specific identity. They would have the same Paekche tomb shape and structure as symbol of identification of a powerful political status.

Nonetheless, the murals are very different in terms of realisations, main motifs, and style (Portal 2000; Shiraishi 1993a-b). It would be expected to also have this in common as it had been for other material culture from the mounds dated back to earlier periods, such as the repertoire of the high-ranking burials (Fig. 12) whose style was very similar.

For what concerns the style, there are many theories (e.g. Wiessner 1983; Wobst 1977) which connect style with the exchange of specific information, often regarding an identity affiliation. Sackett (1977) states that artisans make a choice among all the different styles they can use (Sackett 1977, 370-371). In this case-study, it is known from the historical sources that a large group of Paekche immigrants was in Kyūshū during the Late Kofun Period and thanks to the lively and frequent interactions with southern Korea, it is highly unlikely that Kyūshū artisans were unaware of the style used for the decorated tombs in Paekche. Therefore, if we take into account the theory expounded by Sackett (1977), the Paekche style was a potential choice which has been consciously refused by Kyūshū artisans. Since it is thought that style can transmit social and personal identity (e.g. Wiessner 1983; Wobst 1977) and social identity is often archaeologically identified through a particular material culture (Spears 2011, 203), it can be argued that the decorated tombs in Kyūshū aimed to show a specific political status, probably a strong regional rising power as recent research claims (e.g. Shiraishi 1993a-b).

For many centuries Kyūshū and southern Korea exchanged material culture on the basis of a self-identification with a specific political status creating similar organisational (political hierarchy) and cultural transformations (the

¹² See Appendix 2.

development of the mortuary architecture and its burial repertoire connected to the rising political hierarchy) (Barnes 2007). As shown in the previous section, many aspects of the Kyūshū mortuary system were shared with Paekche. Therefore, even during the first stages of the Japanese state formation, the mortuary system reflected a specific identity: the affiliation with the concept of “elite” through tomb shape, size, structure, and prestige goods which was shared in similar terms with Paekche.

Since in the decorated tombs one aspect—subjects and style of the decorations—is utterly different compared to the Paekche decorated tombs, it can be argued that this difference aimed to transmit a specific information about the society in Kyūshū. Hence, it can be argued that the society behind the Kyūshū decorated tombs still identified itself as an “elite” in connection with southern Paekche due to the shared elements of shape, structure, presence of decorations, geometric and abstract motifs, and the presence of symbols, all in common with the southern Korean decorated tombs.

Nonetheless, it can be argued that the differences in subjects and style of the motifs suggest a desire to differentiate the Kyūshū elite from both Paekche and from the rest of the Japanese mortuary tradition, creating a new feature typical of Kyūshū. Thus they would transmit specific information about the social identity, in the sense of Wobst (1977) and Wiessner (1983)’s definitions. Furthermore, Barnes (2007) states that interactions can also create a separate material culture as if the local grouping (in this case-study Kyūshū) aims to identify itself through specific different material culture giving the idea that it seeks to be in a position of contrast against those with whom it interacts (Barnes 2007, 35).¹³ Also, in the case-study of the Korean island of Jeju¹⁴ expounded by Seyock (2008), she claims that there are also cases where an intensive interaction does not automatically lead to the complete adoption of a specific material culture and identity.

In this case-study, it is known that Kyūshū also had Peer Politics Interactions among the other regional clans as emerging chiefly polities (Barnes 2007, 32) and it is said that Kyūshū had a military contrast (Brown 1993, 149)

¹³ This is an adaptation of the “Balkanization” theory based on Freidel (1981), and used by Barnes (2007) for the Kofun Period.

¹⁴ The Korean island of Jeju is situated in the East Chinese Sea, not far from the Japanese coast. For its particular position, it has for a long time been the bridge between Korea and Japan in transmitting specific material culture and innovations.

with other clans during the period analysed in this thesis. Therefore, it can be argued that the statement expounded by Barnes may be applied also for this specific case. That is to say, the decorated tombs were used as means to transmit a sort of contrast with the regional clans from the other islands. Thus a local identity was rising.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the similarities with Paekche decorated tombs (See section 6.1.) can tell us that:

- a) Also during the Late Kofun Period, the influences on the mortuary architecture can be considered the result of interactions between Kyūshū and Paekche which began from the 2nd century BC. As happened in previous periods, these interactions are materialised in the mortuary architecture as symbols of a change in the socio-political system. These influences are on the shape, structure, presence of decorations, symbols,¹⁵ and they are assimilated in Kyūshū from the royal Paekche tombs;
- b) As a consequence to point (a), the Kyūshū elite which was in control of interaction with the royal court of Paekche must have been very powerful, otherwise it could not have had peer relations with Paekche, but a more submissive relationship, as it had with China during the Yayoi and Early Kofun Period. This is also supported by the Japanese historical sources which mention the existence of very powerful clans from Kyūshū opposing the centralised government in Honshu (Brown 1993, 149);
- c) The majority of the Kyūshū decorated tombs are smaller compared to those mounds from the Middle Kofun Period and the keyhole shape is still used quite often. Thus, connected to point (b), since it is thought that small keyhole mounds were used for regional leaders (Barnes 2007, 10) and the round shape by powerful nobility (Tsude 1987, 70), it can be argued that there might have been a link between the decorated Kyūshū tombs and the elite ruling the Kyūshū island. Thus, this would be a reflection of the developing political hierarchy among the several clans. As both types of elite had power and influence, it can also be argued that there was also a sort of “competition” between

¹⁵ Regarding symbols, see next section.

them. For this reason they would have differentiated themselves by using two different tomb shapes.

Regarding the differences with Paekche decorated tombs, they can tell us:

- a) Despite the identity-elite affiliation between Paekche and Kyūshū, the difference on style and motifs suggests a new rising society in Kyūshū which aims to identify itself through the decorations on the walls of the tomb by using an autochthonous style;
- b) Also, the rare use of the antechamber—a feature used only in royal tombs from China and Korea (Barnes 1993) —in the Kyūshū tradition, can be connected to the fact that the Japanese decorated tombs developed following the needs of the Japanese society. Therefore, they have been adapted to the autochthonous tradition of the Japanese mortuary architecture.

In conclusion, as had already happened for the first interactions, the interaction with Paekche during the Late Kofun Period would have triggered a development of a regional socio-political entity in Kyūshū. Some aspects of its mortuary architecture would have been based on shared elements with Paekche, which arrived in Kyūshū through a Peer Polity Interaction and were thus considered as symbols of a specific elite. On the other hand, the new culture which developed in Kyūshū was characterised by indigenous elements creating the basis for a new mortuary culture which would later also spread to other areas of the archipelago.

These elements were also in contrast to the typical tradition of the Japanese mortuary system, suggesting as expounded in Barnes (2007) and in theories on style (e.g. Wiessner 1983; Wobst 1977) a desire of self-identification strictly connected to a regional rising power which aimed to distinguish itself from the other clans by using a particular and innovating material culture: the decorated tombs.

6.3 Are the motifs represented on the walls connected with symbolic objects? Can these motifs and their spread tell us anything about the society around the decorated tombs?

During this thesis, it has been often discussed that objects shared with the continent from the Late Yayoi Period until the Late Kofun period were “symbols” of the identity of an emerging elite. In Chapter 4, it has been argued how mirrors, swords, gold seals, and personal ornaments were all a materialisation of the relations Kyūshū had with the continent, thus symbols of a specific identity. DeMarrais *et al.* (1996), indeed, consider symbolic objects as an efficient means for long distance relations between elites (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996, 18), thus they convey specific identity information regarding the interacting elite. Furthermore, the symbols themselves can be considered material objects (*Ibid.*, 16), thus symbols can intercommunicate with other objects and humans as expounded by Hodder (2011) co-constituting each other (Hodder 2011, 155).

Therefore, it can be argued that symbols, as it was for style, can convey and transmit specific identity information (e.g. Wiessner 1983). Furthermore, it is said that in order to self-identify a collective identity the group usually uses a sort of “symbolic” demarcation in its material culture (Shelach 2009, 77).¹⁶ Hence, symbols can convey information (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996; Shelach 2009) and they can also be materialised. As stated by DeMarrais *et al.* (1996), also intangible aspects of life such as beliefs can be materialised into material culture (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996, 17).

Symbols play a key role in transmitting information in non-literate society (Renfrew 2001, 131), which Japan was during the Late Kofun Period. From the points discussed so far, it has been outlined that a connection between the decorated tombs and an emerging local elite is possible. Since the whole history of the Kyūshū mortuary mounds tradition has seen a connection between symbols and elite identity, it will now be discussed how this connection can also be found in the case-study of the decorated tombs.

It has already been expounded that in this case-study, the representation of symbolic objects rather than tangible symbolic objects will be discussed, since there are no remarkable grave-goods. Generally speaking, many resemblances

¹⁶ Collective identity: when an individual identifies himself with a group and/or social categories (Schwartz *et al.* 2011, 3).

have been noticed among decorations and objects used in funeral contexts which are typical of the autochthonous Japanese tradition, such as the ceramic figures called *haniwa* in Japanese (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 108). Furthermore, many symbols have also been connected to other important symbolic objects such as swords and mirrors (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 95).

The following motifs represent the main patterns found in decorated tombs in Kyūshū based on Table 4 in Chapter 5 (See also Maps 1-2-3 in Appendix 4). They are patterns typical for the tradition of the Kyūshū decorated tombs, thus absent in Paekche tradition.

Circle

As stated previously, the circle motif was the most common motif. The circle motif is thought to be a representation of the mirror (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; Kidder 1964) (See Fig. 29). The bronze mirror was a very strong symbolic object used to identify a powerful political status of a specific elite in charge of relations with the Chinese court (Barnes 2007, 63; Seyock 2008) and it was a very common grave-good during the Early and Middle Kofun period.

After the 5th century the production of mirrors decreased and they became rare during the decorated tombs period (Kidder 1964, 142). Kidder suggests that as the mirror was for a long time considered an important and magical tool, but it was a rare article during the 6th century, the only way to have its same power was to reproduce it on the walls of the tombs (*Ibid.*, 142). The mirror, in fact, has been connected to the Yamato clan and the sun cult for a long time (*Ibid.*, 142). Therefore for Kidder it would have been a materialisation of the belief-system of Late Kofun Japan.

Nevertheless, Kidder does not take into account that the mirror was first a symbol of the alliance with China, and, as it was in southern Korea, it was also considered one of the symbols used by the elite to identify its political status. Hence, for the points discussed so far in this thesis, it would be better to argue that if it is true that the circle represents the mirror, it is because the mirror was already for a long time a symbol of power and elite-identity instead of considering the circle as a representation of the belief-system.

Moreover, from the data gathered in the database (See Table 4) the circle is a motif always used in Fukuoka tombs from the very first phase, but no sample

has been found so far dated to phase III. It has been found in both prefectures only inside keyhole and round shaped tombs (tombs used for very powerful people). In rock cut tombs, which are both in Kumamoto and dated to the end of the late 6th century and beginning of the 7th, there are no samples of the circle motif.

It can be argued that the non-use of the circle motifs in these particular tombs and dated to that specific period is due to the socio-political development that happened between the late 6th and first half of the 7th century: the recognition of the Yamato clan as the ruling clan. Hence, the object/motif as the mirror, symbol of subordination and alliance, would not be useful anymore.

Arc-and-straight-line pattern (Chokkomon)

Although this motif is not very common as decoration (the only sample site is at Idera, Kumamoto and dated to phase I), it has been found as decoration in many other artefacts during the whole Kofun Period (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993): mirrors (Fig. 31), clay figurines, and sword pommels. Thus its context is mainly funerary. Artefacts with these motifs have also been discovered in Honshu, especially in Kinki (Shitara 1993, 70), thus it was a symbol recognised and used in more than one area of Japan.

It is also important to outline that this particular motif is typical of Japan and no correspondences have been found in southern Korea (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993). As it was used in a funerary context and on objects with very powerful meanings, such as swords and ceramic figurines, scholars (e.g. Shitara) have assumed it was a motif connected to the holy and spiritual sphere of the Kofun Japanese society (Shitara 1993, 70).

Nevertheless, similar to Kidder (1964), Shitara (1993) also has not taken into discussion the idea that it would have been questionable to consider the role these objects had during the history of the Kofun Period as remaining static and unchangeable. Therefore, as discussed previously in this thesis, it is likely that both mirrors and swords were objects used in the interaction sphere with continent symbolising the power and the status of a specific elite. In this case, from the data of the databases (See Table 4) this motif is found in a round shaped tomb of medium size (Idera site). As discussed in previous section, it is believed that round shaped tombs were used by very powerful nobility. It can be argued that a correspondence between the use of the materialised form of this motif and the

possible identity of who was buried in Idera tomb is possible. These are preliminary findings, and more research is necessary to test them.

Circular pattern with two legs (Sōkyakurinjōmon), human figure, animals, boat, quiver, and shield

The ceramic figurines known as *haniwa* began to be used in a funerary context from the Early Kofun period. These funeral objects were made for nobles in order to adorn their tombs, thus they often represent some characteristics of the dead such as rank, special occupation, and personal interest (Kidder 1964, 78). The ceramic figurines were placed around the borders of the tombs. It is thought they might have had the function of protecting the spirit of the deceased (*Ibid.*, 84). Thus they were considered by the society to be very powerful and symbolic objects.

Recent research (e.g. Asahi Shinbunsha 1993) found out that many of the motifs used in decorated tombs can be connected to the ceramic figurines (Fig. 31). It can be argued that the decorations would convey social-identity information and they would have been used as a real materialised object.

The circular pattern with two legs (*sōkyakurinjōmon*) is found in phase I and II in both prefectures, in keyhole and round tombs (See Table 4). Due to the limited data gathered so far regarding this motif, a better analysis is necessary once there are new discoveries and research on the decorated tombs.

From the data gathered in the databases (See Table 4) the human/animals/boat motifs which may correspond to the funerary ceramic figurines were found in both prefectures from phase II to phase III in all the three tomb shapes (keyhole, round and rock cut). It can be argued that these motifs are another form of a materialisation of a widespread belief.

For what concerns the war items motifs—quiver and shield—they can obviously be connected also to the materialised quiver and shield used during battles, but samples of ceramic figurines with these subjects have been found as well. Interesting is the information obtained from the databases (See Table 4) showing that the shield motif is only in keyhole shaped mounded tombs and especially those from Fukuoka prefecture and from phase II. It can be argued that the keyhole shaped decorated tombs in Fukuoka were used for regional leaders, as

the keyhole shape was mainly used for that aim in other areas as well, and this elite might have been in charge of the warrior sphere.

Furthermore, another important piece of information is shown in the databases (See Table 4): the quiver motif is mainly used in round shaped tombs from both prefectures from phase II. Hence, it can be argued that also the powerful nobility might have been in charge of certain parts of the warrior sphere.

More research on other material culture is necessary to test these preliminary statements.

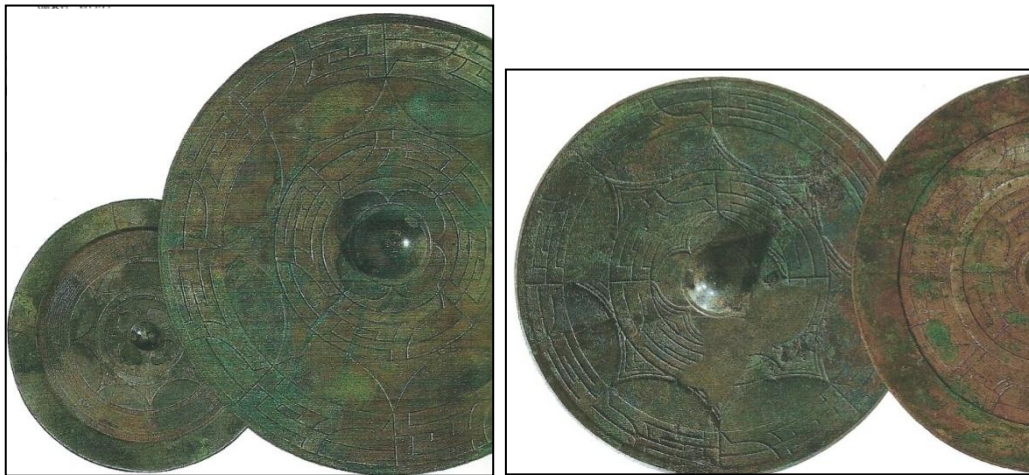


Figure 29: Circle and chokkomon motif on mirrors (after Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 74)



Figure 30: Sword pommel and chokkomon motif (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 75)

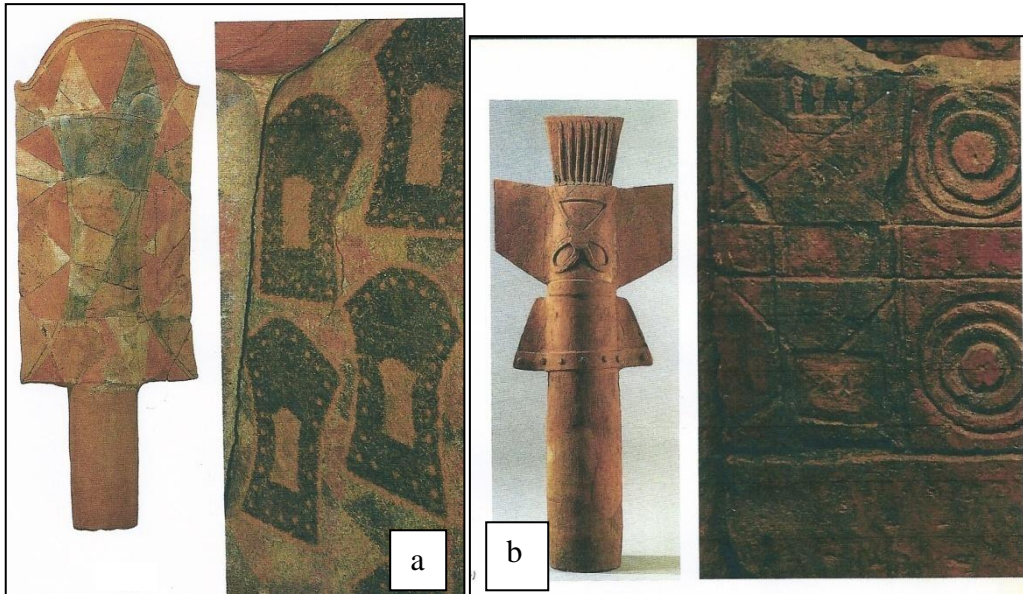


Figure 31: Connection between some motifs and the ceramic figurines: (a) shield (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 111); (b) quiver (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 114); (c) human figure (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 114); (d) circular pattern with two legs (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993, 110)

In conclusion, in the Kyūshū decorated tombs tradition, it seems possible to talk about symbols which represent a hierarchical status and regional power. In contrast to the previous periods, during the Late Kofun Period and in the specific case of the decorated tombs, the symbols are not tangible objects, but representations of them.

From the research carried out so far (e.g. Asahi Shinbunsha 1993), many patterns can be connected to material objects, adding to the argument that the symbols represented on the walls can be considered as a materialisation of an intangible aspect, such as the political status.

In support of the last statement, the role played by symbols from the Late Yayoi Period until the whole Kofun Period can be discussed. These symbols were the materialisation of the rising hierarchical society and the political status gained by some clans through the numerous interactions they had with the continent and among themselves. In the previous sections of this chapter, it has been outlined that the Kyūshū decorated tombs tradition was only in part influenced by Paekche, as some main elements are typical only from Kyūshū (such as the motifs repertoire, and the absence of decorations on bricks). Moreover, it has been discussed that much evidence adds to the argument that there might have been a connection between the decorated tombs and a rising regional power in Kyūshū. Hence, it can be argued that the connections between the symbolic decorations and symbolic material culture aim to convey identity information of the Kyūshū society surrounding the tombs.

Since the symbolic objects connected to the motifs are mainly from funerary context of nobles and from symbolic objects used by the elite during the interactions with the continent, it can also be argued that the identity behind these decorations is connected to a powerful regional clan.

Furthermore, the fact that symbolic motifs are concentrated during phase I and II can lead to the argument that this is due to the socio-political situation during the Late Kofun Period: the end of the recognition of the Yamato hierarchy. The symbolic motifs would have substituted or strengthened the material symbolic objects used since the Early Kofun Period to identify a specific elite. Also, due to the concentration of keyhole shaped tombs, circle and war item motifs in Fukuoka prefecture, the identity of those buried in these decorated tombs can be seen as the elite that had legitimised power through the Yamato

affiliation. Whereas due to the round and rock cut shape, declining tomb size, and less motifs representing symbolic objects used for the Yamato affiliation, the identity of those buried in Kumamoto decorated tombs can be argued to be locally powerful indigenous chiefs.

Summary

The information and data gathered and discussed in this thesis and in particular in this chapter, have produced some important outcomes.

In the first place, the role played by the interaction between Paekche and Kyūshū also during the Late Kofun Period and in the specific case-study of the decorated tombs. In this interaction sphere, Paekche and Kyūshū had exchanged ideas and style (such as the shape, the antechamber feature, and the presence of decorations and symbols), but without taking each other's identity as it had also been for the other periods of interaction.

Furthermore, if the shared elements suggest Peer Polities Interactions, the differences contribute to the argument that the Kyūshū decorated tombs tradition also reflects a local culture and more specifically the rising of a powerful regional clan. This is also supported by similarities with the rising of clans in the previous periods and by the history and nature of the Previous Peer Polities interactions. Another element of support is given by the historical sources where a powerful clan from Kyūshū is described.

Also in the decorated tombs tradition it is possible to identify symbolic objects connected to those symbols used in previous periods to identify the emerging local elite and powerful clans.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

This thesis sought to discuss the topic of interactions and their influences on identity and socio-political developments visible through the mortuary architecture, using as case-study the Late Kofun Kyūshū decorated tombs and the interactions with Paekche. Despite facing some problems during research, the data gathered has yielded new insights, as well as new questions for further studies.

7.1. Aims and research questions

The Late Kofun period has been neglected by many scholars for a long time possibly due to a lack of the giant tombs and rich grave-goods that had characterised the Early and Middle Period. Nonetheless, this final period can still tell us much regarding the role played by the interaction with the continent, and the consequent influences this had on the identity and socio-political developments of the Late Kofun society. The case-study discussed concerns the Late Kofun Kyūshū decorated tombs and the interactions with Paekche. The island of Kyūshū has had interactions with the Chinese Han empire and with the Korean kingdom of Paekche since the Yayoi Period. The interactions and the internal political situation within the Japanese archipelago led to the creation and affirmation of a hierarchy as the research of Barnes (1993), Farris (1998), and Barnes (2007) has shown.

The identity of those who belonged to a particular political status was reflected both in the mortuary architecture developed from the Late Yayoi Period onwards and in symbolic prestige-objects. These objects were also connected to the different nature of the interactions Japan had with China and southern Korea. On the one hand, the alliance to the Chinese empire was materialised in symbolic objects such as golden seals which represented a subordinate position of Japan toward China. On the other hand, the homogeneous material culture between Kyūshū and Paekche suggest an interaction among peer polities which recognised each other as such through the same symbolic objects (e.g. swords, personal ornaments; Barnes 2007).

The research questions addressed in this thesis aimed to discuss these points for what concerns the Late Kofun Period and in specific the Kyūshū decorated tombs, a phenomenon started first in China and Korea and then developed in Japan from Kyūshū.

In particular, the first research question aimed to discuss the influence the continent had during the Late Kofun Period and in specific the influence Paekche decorated tombs had on those in Kyūshū. The second research question sought to argue what the similarities and differences between Paekche and Kyūshū decorated tombs pointed out in the first research question can tell us about the identity and the socio-political developments within Japan during the Late Kofun Period. Finally the third research question sought to find out possible information about the identity of the Kyūshū society by analysing the symbolic motifs on the walls of the decorated tombs, their spread, and the connection they have with other symbolic material culture from the Kofun Period tradition.

7.2. Evaluation of methodology

The methodology used for this thesis was mainly based on literature analysis of the previous research. This thesis used almost all the research published so far about the main topic—the decorated tombs in Kyūshū—and about the history and nature of the interactions between Kyūshū and Paekche from the Late Yayoi Period. This methodology has also included research from different countries: USA, UK, Italy, Japan, and Korea. This is due to the fact that it is important to see how the same topic is discussed by scholars with different backgrounds and approaches. Very relevant for the case-study of this thesis has been the study carried out by Barnes (2007) regarding the Peer Polity Interaction among the Yellow Sea sphere.

The methodology also included an evaluation of two databases personally compiled. These databases have been a very useful tool in order to understand the main characteristics of the phenomenon of decorated tombs.

It can be said that the methodology has generally worked well. Nonetheless, one of the main shortcomings is the lack of recent works about the decorated tombs both in Kyūshū and Paekche. Even if recent studies by Japanese scholars have been included, not many decorated tombs have been studied so far. Regarding the important role always played by symbolic objects throughout the history of interaction for the identity of the Kyūshū society, the lack of research and information about the grave-goods from the Late Kofun phase in general and the Kyūshū decorated tombs in particular has limited the final outcomes of the third research question. Furthermore, all the literature in the Korean language

regarding the Paekche decorated tombs could not be evaluated due to language problems; only sources from Kim (1986); Okauchi (1987), Nelson (1993), and Portal (2000) were available for this analysis.

7.3. Evaluation of the results

One of the most significant outcomes is related to the important role interactions had during the Late Kofun Period on the Kyūshū mortuary architecture. The lively interactions between Kyūshū and the kingdom of Paekche led to the adoption of some features and characteristics typical of the continental mortuary architecture, especially in the context of decorated tombs. In this thesis it has been outlined how the changes and the development of the Japanese mortuary architecture are connected to the affirmation of a political hierarchy which had been triggered by the interactions with China and southern Korea. By taking into discussion these consequences of the interactions, the similarities between Kyūshū and Paekche decorated tombs (See Table 5) can be argued to be yet another result of the same relations. Indeed, there seem to be strong similarities concerning (a) the shape (round) and (b) the presence of an antechamber which characterised only this period and was absent in the previous Japanese mortuary tradition (Early and Middle Kofun Periods) apart from in Kyūshū. In Kyūshū decorated tombs, the antechamber is a feature typical of the round shaped tombs, as it was in Paekche decorated tombs. Shape and structure of the decorated tombs can be considered the main two factors derived from these interactions, but not the decors of the tombs.

Hence, the second important outcome is in fact related to the motifs of the decorated tombs. For a long time scholars (e.g. Nelson 1993) have defined the phenomenon of the Japanese decorated tombs as having been imported from Korea. However, there are very important differences (See table 5) between the two traditions that may change this statement. In the first place, the technique used for the paintings differed: in Paekche decorated tombs paintings were mainly on the tiles whereas in Kyūshū they painted directly onto the rock-walls. Secondly, the motifs repertoire is utterly different. One of the predominant subjects in Paekche decorated tombs is the Chinese animals of the four directions. Contrary to this, in Kyūshū abstract decorations are the main motif. Furthermore, even for common patterns such as the floral/leaf motifs, the style is very different.

The differences and similarities can be discussed again as aspects derived from longstanding interactions and influences between Kyūshū and southern Korea. Similar to what has been seen for the previous stages of the Kofun Period, the similarities derived from the interaction/influence sphere that existed among the Yellow Sea since the Late Yayoi Period. The differences, on the other hand, can be argued to be a manifestation of a regional identity in Kyūshū which had absorbed the idea of “decorated tomb” from Paekche, and developed it in a new way creating a traditional aspect of Kyūshū.

Indeed, the third very important outcome is related to a possible connection between the Japanese mortuary tradition and the decorated tombs. The major focus scholars (e.g. Kidder 1964; Takahashi 1999) had concerning the motifs of the Kyūshū decorated tombs was that to interpret their meaning. Nonetheless, symbols can convey important information about identity affiliation (Shelach 2009) and in the specific case of Japan, symbols have always played a key role in transmitting information, in terms of Wobst’s (1977) and Wiessner’s (1983) definition. It has been studied (Asahi Shinbunsha 1993) how many of the motifs of the Kyūshū decorated tombs are connected to traditional Kofun material culture from a funerary context. Hence, it can be argued that decorated tombs cannot be discussed only as a mere adoption from Paekche, but they can also show a continuation of the tradition of the Japanese mortuary culture. Nonetheless, even if prestige goods from the other phases of the Kofun Period could tell us the role they had and by whom they were used, the symbolic motifs cannot fulfil this aspect yet.

One of the most important preliminary findings obtained from the databases is the correspondence between the tomb shape and size, the motifs found inside, and the tomb dating. The keyhole tombs (with bigger size compared to the round tombs, and usually used by regional leaders) dated to phase I and phase II contain motifs which can be connected to the longstanding symbolic objects used by the elites who had legitimised power through the Yamato affiliation, such as war items and circles (mirrors).

The most surprising result from this thesis is that Kyūshū decorated tombs cannot be considered either as a mere imitation of those in Paekche, adopted by the Kyūshū society through interactions, or as a mere autochthonous element of the Kyūshū mortuary tradition. By using Renfrew’s (1986) theory in combination

with the data I gathered for the Kyūshū Late Kofun decorated tombs, we can see how these mounded tombs can be considered as the result of the longstanding influence-sphere among the Yellow Sea and in particular the interactions with Paekche. Therefore, it can be argued that Kyūshū decorated tombs are a new phenomenon influenced by Paekche but developed following the local mortuary tradition already established in Kyūshū. Taking into account the idea that the decorated tomb is a symbol itself in terms of a materialised aspect of the society, as expounded by DeMarrais *et al.* (1996) and Shelach (2009), the decorated tomb in Kyūshū can be argued to be consciously used as a symbol by a specific part of the Late Kofun Kyūshū population aiming to show their status.

Nevertheless, even if this thesis has brought to light new information regarding the role played by interactions during the Late Kofun Period and the importance they had for the Kyūshū society, there are still some unclear points.

First of all, from the data gathered so far it is still difficult to define the political status of those who were in charge of the interactions with Paekche during the Late Kofun Period. The lack of information regarding prestige goods from decorated tombs does not allow a better analysis on this point. Furthermore, it is unclear why the narrative decorations are limited to only a few tombs and if there is a particular reason why they are only in those specific tombs.

7.4. Suggestions for further studies on the topic

The unclear points expounded in the previous section could not be properly discussed due to the limits of this thesis. Nonetheless, these and other aspects of the Late Kofun society and of decorated tombs would be very interesting for follow-up research. Still using Renfrew's (1986) Peer Polity Interaction theory and Barnes' (2007) application of it to the Kofun Period as main basis, I would formulate as broad research question if after also analysing the decorated mounded tombs from other areas, we can still see a close connection with Paekche or if these mounded tombs are more and more autochthonous.

First of all, I would gather more data regarding the presence of prestige goods both in Paekche and Kyūshū decorated tombs extending to the new areas as well. This material culture would provide for a better discussion on the identity of the Kyūshū society. Moreover, by comparing these symbolic objects with those found in Paekche it would be possible to discuss them in the context of the Peer

Polity Interaction as Barnes (2007) has already done for those from the Early and Middle Period. It would be very relevant to gather more information regarding the grave-goods of the decorated tombs and to see how they differ from those from the previous phases and those from Paekche.

Decorated tombs have been found all over Japan. A study of the phenomenon within the entire archipelago would be very interesting in order to denote the role it had for the Japanese society, how it developed, and why it spread to other areas as well. I think that the databases need to be expanded incorporating statistical analysis also re-connecting the decorated mounded tombs with those in Paekche.

Furthermore, there are also two other types of decorated tombs from the very last stage of the Late Kofun Period and very distant from Kyūshū. They are located in Asuka, and many studies (e.g. Kidder 1972; Nelson 1993) have postulated a connection between their motifs and those in Koguryo (northern Korea). It would be interesting to study why these two tombs have common elements with the Korean kingdom of Koguryo, whose relations with the Japanese archipelago were neither as relevant nor as longstanding as those with Paekche. Whereas Kyūshū and Paekche are quite close, the Koguryo kingdom and Asuka region are very distant. The studies (e.g. Barnes 2007; Farris 1998) carried out so far do not show direct interactions between Koguryo and Asuka, but they talk about a transmission of material culture through either of two different routes: Paekche-Kyūshū-Asuka or Kyūshū/Asuka-mainland China.

I would also like to gather more data in order to test the general assumption that there was a powerful clan in Kyūshū who rebelled against Yamato which was formed on the basis of historical sources. Studies about a connection between this regional clan and decorated tombs could be developed.

For the methodology, apart from the literature analysis based on research used for this Master thesis (e.g. Asahi Shinbunsha 1993; Barnes 2007; Renfrew 1986) I think that it would be very useful to have access to the Korean material regarding the Paekche decorated tombs and if possible also to other Korean sources about the relation Paekche had with Kyūshū during the Late Kofun Period. The mere literature analysis will not be enough, thus I would personally do some fieldwork in Kyūshū as I find it very useful in order to gather more material from museums and books in the Japanese language.

After the evaluation of the literature regarding the interactions and the influence-sphere between Paekche and Kyūshū, the research conducted by Barnes (2007) has emerged as the most valid. The supporting material she has presented and the innovative approach to explain the development of the Japanese State has been fundamental also for this case-study. It would be very interesting to also add to her work a section related to the Late Kofun Period by using the same structure and methodology.

In conclusion, it would be very relevant for the history of the affirmation of the Japanese State to have more studies regarding the Late Kofun Period. As this thesis sought to show, the final stage of the Kofun Period can also be very interesting and relevant in order to understand the dynamics and the identity of the Kyūshū society in connection with the longstanding interactions this island has always had with the continent.

Abstract

English

The interactions among two or more cultures have always had a great importance for what concerns archaeology, since the influences these have had on material culture have often triggered intrinsic processes within the society. As a consequence, a new tradition would have been created where it is not possible anymore to recognise what is a foreign element and what is an autochthonous one.

In the case of the Japanese archipelago, the relations between the Kyūshū island, the Chinese Han empire and the southern part of the Korean Peninsula led to a material culture which shows the different natures these relations had. Furthermore, these relations triggered some socio-political processes which led to a political hierarchy which reflected especially on the development of the mortuary architecture of the mounded tombs typical of the Kofun Period (250-710 AD).

This thesis aims to analyse the nature of the interactions between Kyūshū and the Korean Kingdom of Paekche, as well as the influences these interactions had on the mortuary architecture of the Late Kofun Period (475-710 AD). The phenomenon of the decorated tombs will be taken as specific case study of a shared element between the two cultures. The discussion of the data gathered specifically for this thesis, regarding 21 sample sites from Fukuoka and Kumamoto prefectures, attempts to show how through the decorated tombs it is possible to gain new information regarding the Late Kofun society in Kyūshū, and how interactions not always lead to a complete adoption of foreign element.

Using literary analysis and Barnes' (2007) similar research regarding the two previous phases of the Kofun Period, preliminary results show evidence that the interactions between Kyūshū and southern Korea during the late Kofun Period were not as one-sided as is often believed. The Late Kofun decorated tombs appear to be neither merely a copy of Korean examples, nor a completely indigenous innovation, but rather a combination of the two. Where the differences in decoration show a distinct separate identity base on long previous traditions, the similarities in architecture show evidence of "Peer Polity Interaction", a theory expounded by Renfrew (1986) and evidenced for the earlier two periods in Barnes' (2007) research.

Italian

Le interazioni tra due o più culture hanno sempre avuto molta importanza nel campo archeologico, in quanto le influenze che esse hanno avuto nella cultura materiale hanno spesso attivato dei processi intrinseci nella società creando una nuova tradizione dove non è più possibile riconoscere cosa è derivato dall'esterno e cosa invece fa parte di una cultura autoctona.

Nel caso dell'arcipelago Giapponese, le relazioni che specialmente l'isola del Kyūshū ha da sempre avuto con l'impero Cinese e con la zona più a sud della Corea, hanno portato non solo a una cultura materiale che rispecchia le differenti nature di queste interazioni, ma hanno anche attivato dei processi socio-politici che hanno portato alla creazione di una gerarchia politica riflessa soprattutto nello sviluppo dell'architettura mortuaria di tombe a tumulo che caratterizzarono il cosiddetto Periodo Kofun (250-710 d.C.).

Questa tesi si propone di analizzare la natura delle interazioni tra il Kyūshū e il regno Coreano di Paekche e le influenze che esse hanno avuto nell'architettura mortuaria del tardo Periodo Kofun (475-710 d.C.), prendendo in esame, come caso specifico, il fenomeno delle tombe decorate. La discussione sui dati raccolti appositamente per questa tesi, dati riguardanti 21 siti campione delle prefetture di Fukuoka e Kumamoto, si propone di mostrare come, attraverso le tombe decorate, sia possibile acquisire nuove informazioni sulla società del tardo Periodo Kofun in Kyūshū, e come le interazioni non sempre conducano ad una completa adozione dell'elemento estraneo.

L'analisi della letteratura sull'argomento e la ricerca che Barnes (2007) ha presentato sulla natura delle interazioni nelle due fasi precedenti il tardo Periodo Kofun, ha dato come risultati preliminari che le interazioni tra il Kyūshū e la Corea del sud durante questo periodo non erano così unilaterali come spesso si crede. Difatti, le tombe decorate di questo periodo non sembrano essere né una semplice copia di esempi coreani, né una novità del tutto autoctona, ma piuttosto una combinazione dei due. Se le differenze nelle decorazioni mostrano una diversa identità separata dalle lunghe tradizioni precedenti, le somiglianze per ciò che riguarda l'architettura mostrano evidenze di "Peer Polity Interaction", una teoria esposta da Renfrew (1986) e usata da Barnes (2007) per le prime due fasi del Periodo Kofun.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: The historical situation in the Yellow Sea during the Late Kofun Period

The historical situation in China, Korea, and Japan can give a further point of view regarding the interactions and the development during the period of interest of this thesis: the Late Kofun Period.

China

During the Late Kofun Period China was ruled by the Sui (581-618 AD) and the Tang (618-907 AD) Dynasties. Both Dynasties aimed to create a strong and central empire by enacting laws and tax reforms (Sabatini and Santangelo 1994, 245-246). Regarding the ideology, they both adopted what is called in Chinese *sanjiao* (three doctrines): Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. These three doctrines were syncretized (*Ibid.*, 289). This aspect was an aspect that would also be adopted by Japan during the last phase of the Late Kofun Period.

Korea

During the Late Kofun Period, the Korean Peninsula was still in the period called Three Kingdoms (300-668 AD). The three kingdoms were: Silla, Paekche, and Koguryo. There was also another group of small political entities known by the name Kaya (known in Japanese as Mimana) (Nelson 1993, 206). This little state has been interpreted by the Japanese sources as a Japanese colony during the Kofun period, but not in Korean sources (*Ibid.*, 207). Also during the state formation in Korea, the royal tombs were used by regional chieftains (*Ibid.*, 206).

Japan

It is generally accepted that the most glorious period for the Yamato kings was the 5th century, whereas the 6th century is believed to be characterised by some unsuccessful campaigns in Korea and disputes at court. All these unsatisfactory aspects led to the Asuka enlightenment and the reforms of the 7th century. The majority of information during these centuries of Japanese history stems from the historical source the *Nihon Shoki* which is, unfortunately, not very reliable due to a strong subjective vision of the facts. Firstly, as Barnes (2007) states, this

chronology was written after this period, in the first half of the 8th century. Therefore, facts and names of kings might be slightly different. Secondly, it is strongly based on the mythological genesis, thus not on real documents. Nevertheless, even if it is undated, it still has a chronology of the events based on the traditional Chinese sexagenary cycle (Barnes 2007, 89). The most reliably dated events are those from the 7th-8th century because of the frequent relation with the Chinese empire.

During the 6th century the Yamato court faced the expansion of the Korean kingdoms of Paekche and Silla toward the Yamato colony of Mimana. At this point Yamato established some kind of alliance with Paekche (Brown 1993, 145).

During the second half of the 6th century, Yamato and Paekche strengthened their alliance against Silla. Unfortunately Mimana was still incorporated into the kingdom of Silla. After 540 AD many artisans from the Korean Peninsula reached Japan, probably in connection with an exchange of official missions (Brown 1993, 158).

With the official entrance of Buddhism into the Japanese archipelago through Paekche gifts, Yamato court tended to learn from the continent instead of absorbing techniques of production and construction. Thus, scholars and books about religion and philosophy arrived from the continent (*Ibid.*, 159). During the 7th century, Silla and Chinese troops destroyed Paekche and defeated the Japanese presence. Silla unified the Korean Peninsula and the relations with Japan turned hostile until the 8th century (Brown 1993, 156; Farris 1998, 59).

The 7th century saw two predominant figures who led important innovations in both political and cultural spheres: the empress Suiko and the prince Shōtoku Taishi. The reign of Suiko has usually been viewed as coinciding with the Asuka period in its historical terms. The area where the palace and the royal tombs were placed was the Asuka area, nearby Nara. Asuka was the core of the political innovations of that period (Farris 1998, 104). During her reign, Suiko and Shōtoku Taishi sought to spread Buddhism all over the kingdom and build an imperial state on the basis of the Chinese model. Moreover, they sought to establish a “multi-religious system” by balancing Shintō, Confucianism and Buddhism.

Shōtoku promulgated the Seventeen Injunctions, a series of moral rules based on Confucianism-oriented and emperor-centred state ideology (Brown and

Mitsusada 1993, 181). Furthermore, Shōtoku promoted several missions to the Chinese court of the Sui, thus there was a great influence and exchange between the two courts (*Ibid.*, 181).

These first reforms were the basis for the more complex Taika reform, which aimed to centralize the imperial power. In order to accomplish this it was necessary to abolish the clan (*uji*) system. Therefore, a new system based on the tributary system was adopted, the clan (*uji*) was substituted by local governors and the emperor—who from the Seventeen Injunctions was named *tennō*—became the only one who could rule the lands and its inhabitants (Caroli and Gatti 2004, 21-22; Corradini 2003, 51-53).

Appendix 2: The historical situation in Kyūshū during the Late Kofun Period

Regarding the main region of interest of this thesis, the Kyūshū island, not much information is described in the historical sources. What is known is that Kyūshū was dominated by three different clans. The first clan—the Munakata clan—ruled the northern area from the Genkai Sea to the Tsukushi Mountains. This clan, according by the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki*, was believed to have familiar ties with the Goddess of Yamato. Moreover, she was worshipped in an island where archaeological evidence shows early and continuing interactions with Korea (Brown 1993, 149). The southern area of Kyūshū is delimited by the Kyūshū Mountains and by the Pacific Ocean. This territory was ruled in ancient times by the Kumaso and Hayato peoples (*Ibid.*, 149). The central area is situated between Tsukushi and Kyūshū mountains ranges. There is not much information regarding the ruling clan, but it is said that under the reign of Keitai, a clan leader from this area whose name is thought to be Iwai refused the orders of Yamato to send troops and supplies for an expedition against Silla (*Ibid.*, 149). According to the *Nihon Shoki*, Iwai had made a deal with Silla, thus Yamato's troops were sent to put the Kyūshū rebellion down (*Ibid.*, 149). Although Iwai was defeated, this event shows that in Kyūshū there were strong clans that were also very close to Korea. After Iwai's rebellion and his defeat, the Yamato court decided to create new royal estates (*Ibid.*, 152). That is to say that the Yamato king had the hereditary right to own pieces of land along with their inhabitants, buildings, and productions (*Ibid.*, 152). The majority of these royal estates were around Nara, but because of Iwai's rebellion, they were also set up in Kyūshū (*Ibid.*, 152). This shows that Kyūshū, even if far from the Yamato court, was an important and powerful centre which might have been ruled by powerful clans as well. This would also explain why many tombs have been found in this area.

Appendix 3: The decorated tombs tradition in the Yellow Sea sphere

The decorated tombs tradition began first in mainland China and Korea (Barnes 1993).

China

The core area of the birth of the decorated tombs is mainland China. The giant tombs began much earlier here than in the other areas of the Yellow Sea, around the 3rd millennium BC (Barnes 1993, 222). Paintings on the mainland China tombs began during the later Han period. During the Han period, the tombs included two or more rooms. The main chamber was used to inter the deceased whereas a sort of antechamber was considered a resting place for the spirit of the dead. The two rooms were connected by a short corridor (Kidder 1964, 110). Also during the Northern Dynasties, corridor and multi-chamber tombs were very common (*Ibid.*, 329, 331). In tombs from the 3rd century to the 6th century AD it is frequent to find an earthen cave pit with a passageway, and there are only few examples of painted tombs. Tombs from the 6th century-7th century are grouped into family cemeteries. Also, very common are grave courtyards and tombs with pitch passageways (*Ibid.*, 384). Even if decorated tombs were already present in China from the Han period, the most spectacular painted tombs are probably those dating back to the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD). Tombs during this dynasty have extended passageways and large rooms (*Ibid.*, 385). Another important feature in Tang imperial burials are the satellite tombs. These mounds have a double meaning: to show respect to members of the royal family and meritorious officials and at the same time to consolidate the power of the ruler (*Ibid.*, 404). In Tang tombs, paintings represent the Tang court in all its aspects: clothes, hair-style, and activities. Maps of constellations are also present during this period (Sullivan 1984, 129).

Korea - Koguryo

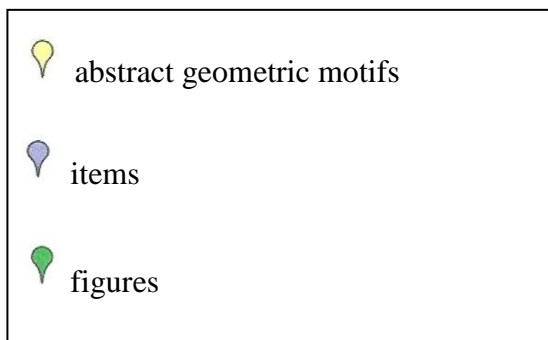
The first model which was transmitted in Korea was the tomb style used during the Han dynasty and later the subjects from the Tang decorated tombs. The former tombs have been absorbed into the Korean culture through the Lelang commandery. However, these tombs were not used outside Lelang for another three hundred years. This is probably due to a lack of control over the necessary

labour resources by the Korean chieftains (Barnes 1993, 223). From the 4th century AD, large mounds began to appear also in the Korean Peninsula, in the north-western area, reflecting a shift into the political elite. This aspect is reflected in some characteristics of the tombs: giant size, rich in grave-goods, and built in isolated areas. A second phase saw multiple stone-lined pit-burial tombs in the south-eastern area of Korea, Kaya and Silla. Characteristic of the Lelang territory and Koguryo are decorated tombs. These tombs present some formal architecture features: antechambers, pillars, and corbelled pillars (Barnes 1993, 225-226; Portal 2000, 46). Around seventy-six of the known Koguryo tombs present painted decorations on the walls of the inner chambers (Barnes 1993, 226; Portal 2000, 46). The subjects of the murals in Koguryo are the same as those from mainland China: an official portrait of the buried person usually in a formal pose.

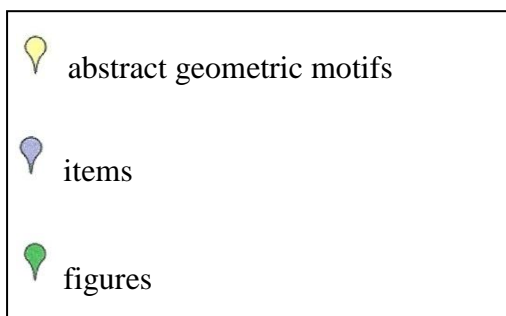
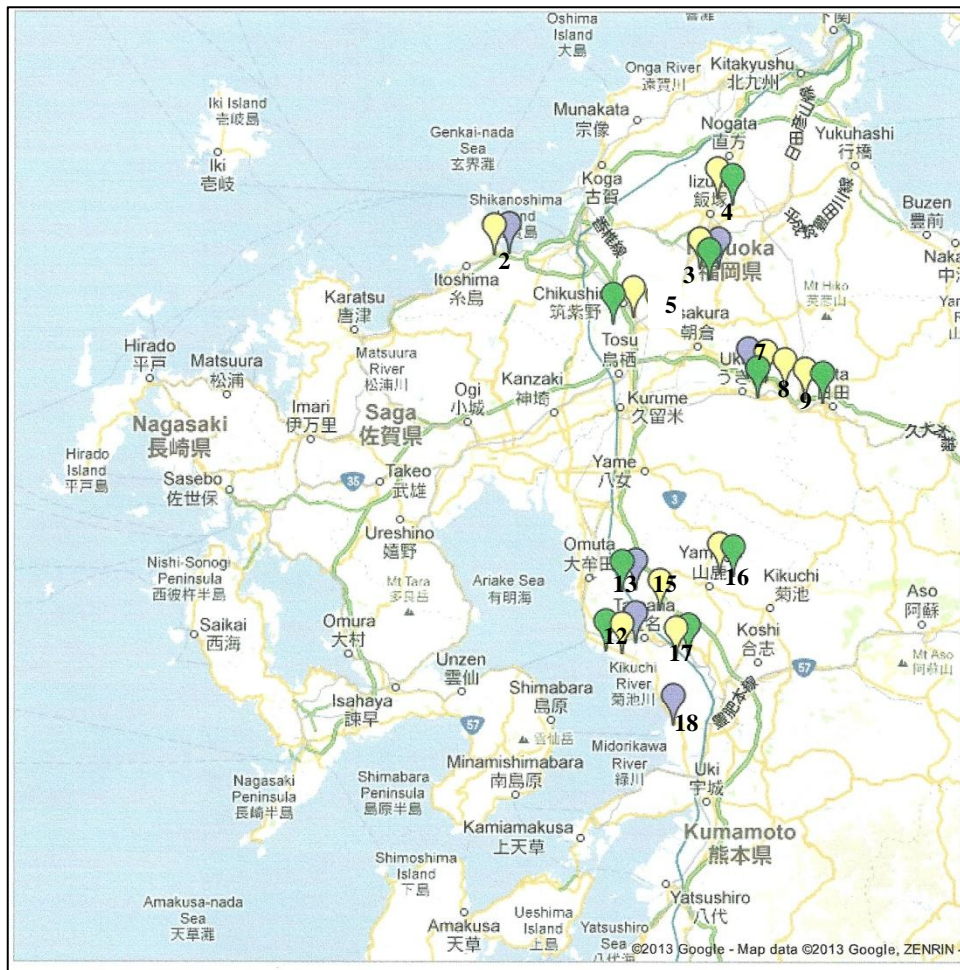
Other paintings show daily aspects of the Korean life of that time: Koguryo architecture, dress, entertainment, and religion. The main themes in Koguryo paintings are: those portraying the deceased, those illustrating the occupant's life, and those representing the Chinese animals of the four directions (Portal 2000, 49). Later tombs present a stronger Chinese influence even on the subject of the paintings: animals of the four directions on the walls, ceiling paintings of a white tiger and green dragon (*Ibid.*, 47). Similar patterns have been found in two painted tombs found in Japan, in the Asuka area: Kitora and Takamatsuzuka mounded tombs. Both tombs present typical Tang/Koguryo subjects, for instance: animals of the four directions, constellations on the ceiling, and a noble playing Polo (Kidder 1972, 247-248).

Appendix 4: Illustrations of the analysed finds

Map 1: Distribution during Phase I of the analysed patterns (abstract/geometric motifs; items; figures)



Map 2: Distribution during Phase II of the analysed patterns (abstract/geometric motifs; items; figures)



Map 3: Distribution during Phase III of the analysed patterns (abstract/geometric motifs; items; figures)

