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Introduction

Mark Hudson and Martine Robbeets

The essays collected in this volume explore questions relating to human movements and exchange across the diverse environments of Eurasia. The authors examine the ways in which humans over the last ten thousand years have innovated or exchanged practices related to food production to reshape and adapt to their varied environments. The research presented is set in the human niche, the context in which humans and their communities make their lives and where they share socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, demographic and ecological histories. Therefore, many of the chapters adopt an interdisciplinary perspective. A number of the chapters combine archaeology and linguistics, an approach which we call 'archaeolinguistics'. Other chapters utilise insights from ethnography, art history, and the analysis of historical texts. The chronological time frame is from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages.[1]

Human sociocultural niche construction has led to profound and wide-ranging impacts on the biosphere (Ellis 2015). Agriculture has been an especially important factor in generating these changes (Boivin et al. 2016; Stephens et al. 2019). The expansion of the human niche has been associated with language dispersals, sometimes through the migration of human populations, sometimes by trade and exchange. 'Exchange' has been an important concept in anthropology, but the term can cover a broad range of phenomena. In early anthropology, exchange involving the diffusion of ideas or objects was often understood as an alternative to migration. Such thinking was especially influential in East Asian archaeology through the work of Heine-Geldern (1937), Karlgren (1942) and others (see Anke Hein (2014) for an excellent overview of this research). Today, we are in the midst of something of a re-evaluation of these concepts. On the one hand, new research in ancient DNA is transforming our understanding of past migrations. At the same time, innovative concepts such as 'ancient globalisation' are changing the way we approach cultural interaction (see e.g., Vandkilde 2016; Autiero and Cobb 2022).

Exchange can also have a contemporary geopolitical dimension. Several of the chapters here discuss Central Asia and contacts between west and east. In a fascinating analysis of the 1980 Sino-Japanese TV documentary *The Silk Road*, Yin (2022) shows how China attempted to use the series to represent the regions of Central Asia under its control as part of a 'multi-ethnic state' and to emphasise the uniting role of trade—both past and present. Japan, for its part, tried to move away from its twentieth-century history of colonialism in the region, presenting the perspective of a traveller along the Silk Road.

Part One of the present volume focuses on the Neolithic and on how agropastoralism led to new adaptive niches for human societies. We use 'agropastoralism' as a cover term for practices involving plant cultivation and the raising or management of animals in varied combinations. Not all of the case studies in the volume raised animals. In Neolithic Jōmon Japan, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the dog was the only domesticated animal, although there is also growing evidence for the management of wild boar, including transport to offshore islands (Kawamura et al. 2016). Some Jōmon sites on offshore islands have produced remains of other possibly transported species, including raccoon dog and pheasant. In such cases, however, it is hard to be sure whether this represents a natural distribution, live transport by humans, or the introduction of pieces of meat from dead animals and birds. Agropastoralism sometimes involved population expansions—for example those modelled by the farming/language dispersal hypothesis—but in other cases was expressed through exploitation of the environment in novel ways. Both of these changes could, of course, occur at the same time (see e.g., Ethier et al. 2017). The legume cultivation and nut tree management in Neolithic Japan discussed by Nakayama in Chapter 2 would have had profound impacts on landscape ecology around Jōmon settlements (see Nakayama's Fig. 2.8). It is unclear, however, to what extent this led to population dispersals. By contrast, the dispersals hypothesised by David Bradley in Chapter 7 appear to have occurred *before* farming, but the precise background remains to be elucidated.

The first chapter in Part One, by Seiji Nakayama, shows how Jōmon societies in parts of the Japanese Islands began to cultivate several plants, though as mentioned he leaves open the question of associated population dispersals. Nakayama has been a leading figure in the archaeobotany of Japan for many years and his chapter here summarises his most recent research results. The question of whether the often quite complex societies of the Jōmon period possessed farming has a long history of debate (for

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overviews in English, see Pearson and Pearson 1978; Matsui and Kanehara 2006; Crawford 2008; Hudson 2020; Kawashima this volume). The new work by Nakayama and other scholars such as Obata (2016) makes it clear that plant cultivation was present, although the overall impact on Jōmon society requires further research. In Nakayama's synthesis model (Fig. 2.8), secondary vegetation around settlements includes a variety of economically useful plants, such as bracken, lilies, kudzu, soybean, adzuki bean, and nut producing trees. Forest clearance, burning and logging help to maintain and expand the area of secondary vegetation at the expense of the primary forest, leading in some cases to artificially created pure stands of chestnut trees.

In the following chapter, Takamune Kawashima discusses the role of stone tools in Neolithic Japan from the perspective of recent debates about the Anthropocene. This is a newly proposed unit of geological time, used to describe the period when human activity started to have a significant impact on our planet's climate and ecosystems (Ellis 2018). From Kawashima's perspective as an archaeologist, this relationship can be dated back over ten thousand years to the spread of cultivation and sedentism. Kawashima uses various archaeological and ethnographic studies of stone tools thought to be linked with forest clearance and plant cultivation. Axes, in particular, were key tools. Here, the focus is on chipped stone axes and adzes. Jōmon cultures also used polished stone axes, which are said to be stronger and easier to haft than chipped ones, though their functional role could be combined with a symbolic one given the attractive appearance of many polished axes (Bradley 1998: 44). Kawashima builds on the pioneering work of Japanese archaeologist Masaki Nishida to argue that the shift to greater sedentism, initiated by the Initial Jōmon phase, had such a significant impact on nature and society that it marks the beginning of the Anthropocene in Japan. Nishida (e.g., 1983) developed early analyses of the human niche in Japanese archaeology and it is exciting to see his work extended into Anthropocene studies in Kawashima's chapter. At the same time, there is also a need to consider the ways in which Jōmon societies attempted to resist the full-scale agricultural patterns already found on the East Asian mainland (cf. Hudson 2020; Hudson et al. 2021). The Japanese Islands were one of the last places in temperate Eurasia where full-scale agriculture was adopted, although this delay seems not to have had a significant impact on anthropogenic pathways in the archipelago (Hudson et al. 2022).

In Chapter 4, Martine Robbeets associates the three cases of linguistic interaction between Transeurasian and non-Transeurasian speech communities, discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 8, with genetic admixture events in Neolithic and Bronze Age Northern Asia and assesses them in the light of socio-economic interaction. The results indicate that contact with speech communities with economically less productive strategies—such as when farmers meet hunter-gatherers—leads to the dispersal of the dominant language, while interaction between populations with comparably productive economies, such as between farmers and farmers or farmers and pastoralists, encourages linguistic borrowing. At the end of her chapter, Robbeets sets out further questions for new research on the inter-relationships between languages, economies and human populations in Northeast Asia.

In Chapter 5, Bingcong Deng examines lexical borrowings related to agriculture, which are estimated to have taken place in the Neolithic and the Bronze Age between Sino-Tibetan and Transeurasian, two ancient speech communities in what is today northeast China associated with farming. As the ancestral languages involved have never been recorded, Deng applies historical-comparative linguistics to reconstruct their agricultural vocabulary. The expansion of agriculture from north China to the west and southwest has been the subject of several recent archaeological studies (Dal Martello 2022; Liu et al. 2022; Tang et al. 2022). Deng's analysis adds a valuable linguistic perspective on this question.

A similar approach is applied by Martijn Knapen in Chapter 6 for the reconstruction of Tungusic and Amuric cultural vocabulary, used by the ancestors of a small group of Tungusic speakers living in Manchuria and Eastern Siberia, and Nivkh speakers, living today in the lower Amur region and on Sakhalin. Knapen attempts to trace back the earliest interactions between Amuric hunter-gatherers and Tungusic farmers and to infer where they could have occurred. Despite the sometimes highly technical arguments presented by Knapen, his chapter shows very clearly how linguists go about dating changes in language forms. The Amur-Sakhalin region discussed in this chapter is relatively poorly known from an archaeological perspective. Archaeologically, we know more about the edges of the area discussed by Knapen, especially the Primorye and Hokkaido, raising the question of possible connections with respect to farming and other cultural features. Knapen's chapter shows very clearly the importance of triangulating linguistic data with information from archaeology and ethnohistory.

Chapter 7, by David Bradley, examines the hypothesis of a linguistic relationship between Sino-Tibetan, Yeniseian and Na-Dene. As detailed by Bradley, this hypothesis has been discussed in the literature for some time (see also Ruhlen 1998). Yet new archaeological and especially genetic research enables the author to expand our understanding of the problem. The hypothetical split of a Yeniseian/Na-Dene branch from Sino-Tibetan (see Fig. 7.3 in Bradley's chapter) must have been quite ancient, and is suggested by Bradley to have occurred at least 6500 years ago. Such a date is not necessarily incompatible with agriculture. Millet cultivation in north China began by around 8000 BP and agricultural societies were established there by 6500 BP (Stevens and Fuller 2017). In the fourth millennium BC, millet farming spread to both the Korean peninsula and the Maritime (Primoyre) region of the Russian Far East (Li et al. 2020). However, Bradley argues

that the languages concerned have no shared cognate vocabulary for any crops or domestic animals other than the dog. If this was a pre-farming dispersal, what caused such an apparently long-distance expansion? Further research is needed, but the proposed chronology suggests a possible link with the mid-Holocene climatic optimum (ca. 7000-5000 BP). The complex human prehistory of the Northern Eurasian Greenbelt and human movements therein is summarised in a recent paper by Uchiyama et al. (2020). How those movements connected to Holocene dispersals to the Americas is a subject for future work yet Bradley's chapter hints at fascinating new hypotheses.

In Part Two of the volume, the emphasis shifts to exchange between east and west across Eurasia in the Bronze Age and Middle Ages. How do we understand the geography of proto-globalisation in ancient East Asia? This question has been over-determined by Silk Road discourse, yet other perspectives exist and new research on the 'Global Middle Ages' is transforming the field (Heng 2021; Hermans 2020). Until the 1970s, the field of Chinese archaeology focused on the rise of civilisation in the Yellow River basin and its subsequent spread to other parts of China. This approach gradually began to break down through a new emphasis on local regions and their interactions (von Falkenhausen 1995). The 'Crescent-Shaped Cultural Communication Belt' proposed by Tong Enzheng has been one influential model in this respect (Hein 2014). More recently, the so-called 'Belt and Road Initiative' supported by the government of the People's Republic of China since 2013 has encouraged a new interest in the archaeology of long-range exchange by Chinese scholars (Storozum and Li 2020). This interest has even expanded to putative contacts between Alaska and Late Neolithic China (Qu 2014). Within Chinese archaeology, the whole topic of long-range interaction has become highly charged and fraught with political sensitivities in recent years.

In Chapter 8, Rasmus Bjørn begins Part Two with a detailed archaeolinguistic analysis of west Eurasian crops, livestock and technology in East Asia. To this end, Bjørn reconstructs interactions between speakers of Indo-European and Transeurasian languages in the Bronze Age when pastoralism was introduced from the western to the eastern steppes. While the steppe zone has long been considered as an important route of interaction between eastern and western Eurasia, recent research has also considered the role of the Northern Eurasian Greenbelt (Uchiyama et al. 2020) and the Inner Asian Mountain Corridor (Frachetti et al. 2017). In his chapter, Bjørn compares the role of the steppe and the Inner Asian Mountain Corridor in the spread of linguistic borrowings. Bjørn also notes the important synergy over the past decade or so between research in archaeobotany and historical linguistics.

The following three chapters then look at the archaeology of the northern and western borderlands of China. Chapters 9 and 10, by Jingming Zhang and Hui Wang, respectively, examine evidence for contact and exchange between China and western Eurasia across the steppes. Jingming Zhang does this from the perspective of gold and silverware. His analysis shows extensive technological and stylistic influences from the west over a long period. Gold was especially important in the nomadic cultures of the steppes since small yet highly precious items could be carried by an individual. The colour of gold represented durability and authority (Biran 2015: 4). Nevertheless, in the words of the title of Bunker's (1993) review article, gold in the ancient Chinese world has been seen as a 'cultural puzzle'. Jingming Zhang's chapter focuses on stylistic and technical considerations and contains little discussion of the social context of gold, a topic that has received some attention in Bronze Age studies in Europe (e.g., Herrero 2019), as well as recently in Han dynasty China (Wang 2021). Silver also has a long history from its first regular appearance in the archaeological record in West Asia in the fourth millennium BC, a topic recently treated by Susan Sherratt (2019).

Hui Wang discusses the archaeology of the foreign contacts of the medieval Liao dynasty, bringing in a fascinating range of materials, including watermelon cultivation and Buddhist beliefs. Wang makes extensive yet uncritical use of the term *hu*, found in early Chinese texts to refer to 'foreign barbarians' (see Di Cosmo 2002: 128-131 for a discussion of the origins of this word). One of Wang's research interests is the relationship between historical texts and archaeological problems, an issue with a huge literature in Europe with respect to terms like 'barbarian', 'Celts', and so forth. How views of 'western barbarians' in the Chinese dynastic histories can be combined with the archaeological record in a more nuanced fashion remains a topic for future research, yet Wang sets out aspects of the basic culture history in an approachable fashion.

In Chapter 11, Jie Zhang analyses Liao dynasty banquets and the drinking of liquor and tea as depicted in tomb murals. These murals, painted for the owners of the tombs, provide detailed scenes of upper class customs related to eating and drinking in the Liao. Jie Zhang's chapter also brings new information to the history of tea consumption, a topic covered exhaustively in a recent work by George van Driem (2019). The archaeology of alcohol consumption has become a popular topic in Chinese archaeology, though one which is sometimes accompanied by rather simplistic assumptions about ethnic customs. Thus, for example, Siyi Wang (2022: 461) informs us that 'The Jurchens were originally from very cold places where consuming alcohol helped them cope with the cold; therefore, the Jurchens had a long history of alcohol consumption'. Whether alcohol consumption was really higher in cold places in the past (or present) is an interesting empirical question, but here Jie Zhang shows the elaborate culture associated with drinking amongst Liao elites.

Chapters 9, 10 and 11 display the historiographic emphasis of Chinese archaeology (cf. von Falkenhausen 1995). While Chapter 11 considers the social context of

patterns of diffusion *within* the Chinese cultural sphere, Chapters 9 and 10 provide little analysis with respect to the historical background of the broader, international exchanges. At the same time, these chapters are lavishly illustrated with important materials not easily available in Western-language sources. The art historical focus of these three chapters differs from—yet complements—the other chapters in the volume, while leaving room for further archaeological and historical analysis of the cultural factors behind the trans-Eurasian interactions that are discussed.

In the book's final chapter, Claudio Pelloli looks at east-west contacts from the perspective of the acceptance of rice in Italy and the Mediterranean. Rice spread widely from its original centre of domestication in East Asia, though the processes behind that dispersal were complex and historically contingent (Fuller et al. 2017; Spengler et al. 2021). A number of historical records enable Pelloli to discuss the western spread of rice in some detail, though many questions remain. The chapter provides an interesting counterpoint to those by Deng and Bjørn who discuss the spread of crops from a primarily linguistic perspective. Pelloli's chapter is also of interest in the light of recent debates over ancient 'food globalisation' and specifically whether that process was 'bottom up' or 'top down' (Jones et al. 2011; Liu and Jones 2014; Liu et al. 2019). The evidence from Italy supports conclusions that peasants were often conservative but could transform their crops and economy when needed. Parker (2013: 638, citing McArdle 1978) notes that in the Tuscan village of Altopascio, peasants experimented with rice after one famine in the seventeenth century but reverted to other cereals soon thereafter and introduced maize only after the catastrophic harvest of 1710. (That bad harvest was likely connected to the *Grand Hiver* or 'Great Frost' of the European winter of 1708–1709). In Spain, the cultivation of maize is also said to have spread only after a famine, in 1630–31 (Parker 2013: 638). Pelloli's argument, based on careful citation of the historical literature, is that late medieval population growth in Italy encouraged diversification of agricultural crops and led to wider adoption of rice, which could be grown on previously 'marginal' lands.

Brought together, the chapters collected here provide a diverse series of detailed case studies which will be of considerable interest to specialists in the relevant fields, yet which also highlight the rich history of cultural contacts across Eurasia and the importance of inter-disciplinary research.

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