

Reconsidering the function of “wooden agricultural implements”

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Abstract: Though previous studies have concentrated on “wooden agricultural implements”, the author contests that this category is too vague and misleading. He contests that they fall into two categories based upon the type of construction they were used for, namely not just agricultural land management, but also non-agricultural earthwork construction, such as ditches and moats. Keeping this in mind, the author analyses the quantity and composition of the “wooden agricultural implements” of the Yayoi and Kofun Period on the Owari plain, Aichi Prefecture suggesting that most of them were not used for agricultural works but actually for digging ditches and moats. The result shows that the composition of functional types is different between those excavated from moats and ditches and those from rivers and valleys. The former, whose quantity is more than sixty percent of the total, consists of the types suitable for digging, while the latter, totaling less than twenty percent, consists of those suitable for agricultural work. The great amount of the wooden “digging” implements, especially in the two particular stages in the late Yayoi and the early Kofun Period, suggests that landscape development on a large scale was carried out throughout the Owari plain.

Keywords: Yayoi Period; Kofun Period; the Owari plain; wooden agricultural implements; wooden implements for earthwork construction.