

ARMIES AND ENEMIES OF YAMATAI

Japanese Warriors of the Yayoi Period, 300 BC - AD 300

Michael Fredholm Von Essen

Yamatai

The Yayoi period is sometimes regarded as the Japanese Bronze Age. This is not strictly true, as iron was in widespread use and Japan accordingly never had a true bronze age. However, the Yayoi period succeeded the stone-age Jōmon period, and was itself followed by the iron-dominated Kofun period, during which a new potent force entered Japanese history: the armoured cavalryman. The Japanese of the Yayoi period, in contrast, lacked horses, and the period was long seen as more peaceful than later centuries.

This was a mistake. Modern research shows that the Yayoi period saw considerable social stratification, Japan's first omnipotent ruler, and the emergence of the first organised Japanese state, Yamatai. The first standing army in Japan appeared as well, even though we know little of its numerical strength. The Yayoi period must have seen the first large-scale warfare in Japan.

The Yayoi period, named after the site where pottery characteristic of the culture was first found, moreover saw the first introduction of wet-rice cultivation in the Japanese islands and the first organised procurement and manufacture of bronze and iron tools, two events without which the military developments would have been impossible.

The Japanese of Yamatai were racially different from their predecessors, and most likely the result of a number of migrations from surrounding areas, notably the Korean peninsula (which also appears to have been the source of rice cultivation in Japan), but very likely also Taiwan and probably China as well.

The state of Yamatai is chiefly known from Chinese chronicles. The Chinese knew the Japanese as Wa. Yamatai is first referred to in the near-contemporary Chinese chronicle *Wei zhi*. Yamatai is described as a confederation of thirty countries or communities, ruled by a line of female rulers, possibly the first and most powerful of which was Himiko.

Archaeology has subsequently gathered vast amounts of remains from the Yayoi period, including from the site believed by some to have been Himiko's capital. We are accordingly in a good position to evaluate the appearance and armament, if not the actual organisation, of the Yamatai army.

The Chinese Chronicles

There are no indigenous Japanese literary sources from this early period. Our primary literary sources for ancient Japan are the chronicles of the Earlier and Later Han (*Han shu* and *Hou Han shu*, respectively, the latter compiled in AD 424) and the Wei (*Wei zhi*, compiled between AD 223 and 292). However, what may be the first authentic reference to Japan is a passage in the Chinese chronicle *Shan hai jing* ('Classic of the Mountains and Seas'), which states that the Wa were subject to the minor northern Chinese state of Yan in present Hebei province. This formula, commonly used in Chinese chronicles, meant that the Yan court had received Wa emissaries who had recognised the Chinese state as overlord in theory if not fact to acquire the products of Chinese civilisation, in particular swords, mirrors, jewels, and silk. As Yan lost its independence in 265 BC, the first contacts were presumably before this year. Yan is known to have had some dealings with the Korean peninsula, as Yan coins have been found there. Moreover, groups of refugees and colonists

also departed from Yan in the direction of the peninsula.

Traffic between China and Japan became increasingly common from the ascension of the Han dynasty in the late third century BC. According to the Earlier Han record, in the first century BC the Wa were divided among more than a hundred states, clans, communities, or tribes (the Chinese character *guo*, used in the chronicle, is too vague to distinguish between these concepts), of which more than thirty had maintained diplomatic contacts of sorts with China since the Chinese moved into the Korean peninsula in 108 BC. According to the Later Han chronicle, one of these communities, known as Na and thought to have been located in present Fukuoka prefecture, sent emissaries to the Han court at Luoyang in AD 57. The establishment of a Han colony in the Korean peninsula in the first century BC no doubt facilitated contacts. Archaeology confirms (through pottery) a Korean presence from about this time in the northern part of Kyūshū, one of the main Japanese islands, in settlements distinct from surrounding and otherwise typical villages with indigenous Yayoi pottery. This supports the likelihood of frequent traffic with the Chinese colony in Korea. Traffic flowed in both directions, as Yayoi pottery has also been found in the Korean peninsula. Moreover, T'al-hae, who became king of the Korean state of Silla around AD 57 (the time of the Japanese embassy to the Han court), according to Korean chronicles promoted relations with Japan. Legends state that T'al-hae himself came from islands beyond the eastern sea, possibly meaning Japan. It seems likely that the ascension of T'al-hae and the arrival of the embassy from Na were connected events.

Na was apparently one of the communities that subsequently united as Yamatai. According to the Wei records, Yamatai consisted of thirty countries, each perhaps governed by its own chief but under the overall rule of the female ruler Himiko. Among them are named Matura, Ito, the already mentioned Na, Fuya and several others. Yamatai was an organised state, as the Chinese knew the term. Taxes were collected, and there were distinctions of rank, with some men being the vassals of others. The chronicles also show that the Japanese, at least from the time of Himiko, had reliable channels of communications with the mainland and knew what was happening on the continent.

The Chinese chronicles enable us to reconstruct a chronology of the history of Yamatai and some of its predecessors.

Pre-265 BC	The first Wa emissaries or traders arrive at the Yan court in China.
AD 57	Wa emissaries from Na arrive at the Han court at Luoyang in China.
107	Wa emissaries again arrive at the Han court.
147	War ("Wa rebellion") breaks out among the Wa.
c.189	A probably teenage female ruler, Himiko, gains power over thirty Wa communities. This process ends the wars and marks the emergence of the state of Yamatai.
239	Himiko's emissaries arrive at the Chinese commandary of Taifang on the Korean peninsula, apparently in response to the fact that the Chinese

- state of Wei gained control over northern Korea in 238.
- 240 Chinese emissaries from Wei visit Yamatai.
- 243 Himiko again sends emissaries to Wei China.
- 247 Himiko again sends emissaries to Taifang, to seek assistance against Pimikuku, king of Kunu (the Japanese form of his name is unknown), explaining that enmity always prevailed between them. Whether Kunu was a rebellious province of Yamatai or a rival state is unknown, although Himiko's message supports the latter interpretation.
- c.250 Death of Himiko. A male briefly assumes power, but this causes a civil war and he is almost immediately replaced by another female ruler, Himiko's relative Iyo (or possibly Ichiyo or Toyo), a girl of thirteen.
- 266 The emissaries of a female ruler, perhaps Iyo, arrive at the Chinese state of Western Jin, apparently in response to the fall of Wei and the establishment of Western Jin as the ruling dynasty in 265.

The nature of Himiko's and Iyo's rule strongly suggests that their power was of religious rather than temporal origin. External and military affairs, for instance, were handled by Himiko's younger brother. Although Himiko must have had a powerful personality to stay on the throne for so long, it is possible that it was a fertility-related shamanistic rite rather than her personal power which at first raised her to power. This, at least, is suggested by the fact that Iyo, too, rose to power at such an early age. Although Himiko's age upon her ascension is unknown, her long rule suggests that she too must have been in her early teens.

Moreover, Himiko is described in the chronicle as "old and unmarried, and had devoted herself to magic, by her skill in which she gained favour with the people, who made her their queen." This description no doubt dates from the visit of the Chinese emissaries in AD 240, when Himiko must have been more than sixty years old.

The information on Yamatai culture provided in the Chinese chronicles is generally repeated in more or less verbatim form in each record, and almost certainly falls back on a single account, now lost, written by one of those Chinese who visited Yamatai in 240.

The Confederation of Yamatai

Japanese archaeologists have long disputed whether Yamatai was located in Kyūshū or Kinai (the region around Kyōto and Ōsaka). Archaeology leans somewhat towards Kyūshū, where numerous metal weapons have been found. However, a few decades later, by the end of the third century AD, the better known state of Yamato (ruled by the dynasty still reigning over Japan) was located in Kinai, a fact that strongly favours this area. Unfortunately comparatively few metal weapons have been found there, although bronze bells are common finds. A key to the puzzle must be the federated nature of the Yamatai state. The truth, I suspect, is that Yamatai was a confederation with territories in both Kyūshū and Kinai. It is nowhere said that the constituent parts of Yamatai were located in physical proximity, and archaeology has shown that the Yayoi colonised several different regions of Japan, some of which were successful and others that failed after a few decades. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Kinai settlements began as colonies from Kyūshū, and that the centre of government later removed there,

perhaps for reasons of Kinai being a recognised cult centre, a theory that could explain all the bronze bells. Another possibility is that Kyūshū due to its position with easy access to the continent rose first to power, but that once power was consolidated, it tended to move eastwards to land richer in natural resources and a more central location.

The problem is connected to the more fundamental question on why organised states such as Yamatai emerged in Japan. Wet-rice cultivation was extremely labour-intensive, and to be successful in addition demanded an organised procurement and manufacture of bronze and iron tools. This demanded leadership, and we can easily imagine how the first, probably elected leaders of a community in due time turned into hereditary rulers. Besides, successful wet-rice cultivation could support a steadily growing population, which in due time needed more and better land. As such land was located and occupied, and surplus rice and iron stored as wealth, the power of the ruler grew. Certain such rulers, for instance Himiko, sent emissaries to distant China and were recognised as local kings by the Chinese emperor. This further enhanced their prestige and power, and in due time a true state was established. The need for more and better land for cultivation also supports the theory on Yamatai moving its centre towards the east.

The similarities of the names Yamatai and Yamato should also be kept in mind. As the pronunciation of Chinese characters has changed over the centuries, it is always difficult to determine the original reading of a name only known from Chinese chronicles. Yamatai is the modern Japanese pronunciation of a name written *Ye-ma-tai* in Chinese characters, at the time of writing thought to have been pronounced Yamato in Chinese. This would support the theory that Yamatai and Yamato were the same. Japanese historians, however, still use the name Yamatai to distinguish the Yayoi-period Yamato state from the subsequent Kofun-period Yamato state, which may or not have been related to its Yayoi-period predecessor. Moreover, to add further confusion, it has recently been suggested that the original Japanese reading of the name in the Chinese chronicle may have been Yamai.

The same problem to some extent applies to Himiko's name. In the Chinese records, her name is written *Bei-mi-hu*, Pimiko or Himiko in Japanese pronunciation, which is generally understood to be the archaic Japanese title *himeko*, meaning "sun-daughter" or princess. This ties in well with the reputed ancestry of the Yamato imperial family with the sun goddess. The apparent absence of Himiko in later indigenous Japanese chronicles may be explained by her belonging to a different branch of the imperial family, perhaps subsequently defeated in the struggle for power. Besides, if Himiko was only her title rather than her name, it is not certain that we would be able to positively identify her real name in the Japanese chronicles, written several centuries after Himiko's reign.

The Yamatai People

The Yayoi Japanese, as seen in preserved burials, were physically different from the earlier Jōmon ("cord-mark", so named after a style of pottery) settlers of the Japanese islands, even though both were of what we today would call typical Oriental stock. The Yayoi Japanese were tall, gracile, and long-faced, while the Jōmon were shorter, more robust, and more round-faced. Today both types remain present in the Japanese population. Archaeologists have measured buried skeletons and worked out the following average heights for males:

Jōmon Period 159.2 cm

Yayoi Period 162.8 cm

Kofun Period 162.6 cm.

The Yayoi Japanese were accordingly the tallest, on average more than three centimetres taller than their Jōmon predecessors. If this difference does not look very impressive, it should be remembered that the averages are based on all skeletons dated to the period, whether of continental or indigenous stock. While the migrating Yayoi people from the continent after having reached Kyūshū and western Japan soon mixed with the indigenous Jōmon inhabitants, eastern Japan continued to be ethnic Jōmon, even though Yayoi culture penetrated there. Pure-blooded continental Yayoi Japanese were accordingly taller than the average for the period presented above. That the average height was reduced further in the subsequent Kofun period merely proves that the two peoples by then had mixed further, and that the indigenous Jōmon types were more numerous.

All Yamatai men, it seems, tattooed their faces and bodies. "The men, both small and great, tattoo their faces and work designs on their bodies," states a Chinese chronicle. Painted patterns were also common. A number of patterns of tattoos or body painting were no doubt in use, and Chinese records inform us that different patterns were used by different ranks. Judging from human-shaped clay figurines, many men had what appears to be several tattooed circles within circles on both cheeks, giving a spiral-like impression. Other tattoos or body painting, used during war, may have been in the form of protective designs thought to repel enemy weapons.

Clothes were simple and frequently consisted of only one or two pieces: a short skirt with small slits at the sides used as undergarment and perhaps a longer, sleeveless garment akin to a poncho worn above, reaching down to partly cover the undergarment. The upper garment was held together by a girdle, which gave it the rough appearance of a tunic. It had no collar but was simply cut straight at top. The most common material appears to have been linen. Most people would have worn clothes of natural linen, accordingly of a yellowish-white hue. Silk was also used to some extent, at least among the upper classes.

The Chinese chronicles agree that Wa men wore no hats. Instead they tied their hair in coiled plaits with a long headband (*hachimaki* in modern Japanese). A Wa woman wore her hair tied in a ponytail or swept back in a bun.

The Chinese records also point out that the Wa generally went barefoot.

Both men and women wore a variety of jewellery, if their means allowed. Among such jewellery we find lacquered shell bracelets, necklaces of wooden beads, claw-shaped 'curved jewels' (*magatama*) made of bone, horn, or stone, no doubt regarded as having magic properties, and occasionally jewels made of small blue cylindrical glass beads (*kudatama*).

Arms and Armour

Both iron and bronze weapons were used for war. It is generally believed that whereas iron weapons and tools were used for practical purposes, bronze artefacts were generally reserved for ceremonial use. Many bronze weapons were excessively thin and/or wide, and hardly useful as weapons.

The Han chronicle describes the appearance of the Yamatai army: "(The Wa) soldiers have spears and shields, wooden bows and bamboo arrows sometimes tipped with bone. The men all tattoo their faces, and adorn their bodies with designs. Differences of rank are indicated by the position and

size of the pattern. They use pink and scarlet to smear their bodies with, as rice powder is used in China." Later clay figures have traces of red painted in various patterns on the figure's face, confirming the Chinese account.

The Wei record also gives a brief description of the weapons used by Yamatai warriors, no doubt based on the same source used in the compilation of the Han chronicle. "When they fight, they use a dagger-axe (*kō* in Chinese; *ka* in Japanese), shield and a bow of wood. The bow is short in one half and long in the other. Their arrows are of bamboo, and the heads are of iron or bone." Again it is pointed out that all males were tattooed.

Archaeology has found numerous stone, iron, and bronze spearheads. The latter (known as *hoko* in Japanese) are long, frequently broad, and socketed. We know little of the length of the Yamatai spears, but they do not appear to have been very long. Stone spearheads were generally quite short, at least if they were of a utilitarian rather than ritual type.

The dagger-axe was ultimately of Chinese origin and remained based on older Chinese patterns, obsolete in China itself. It typically had a rib at the base of the blade, from which projected a flat tang. The tang was inserted into a slot in the wooden shaft, from which the blade extended at right angles. We know little about the length of the Japanese dagger-axe, but earlier Chinese versions may have been about a metre long. It was most likely used like a pick-axe. Yamatai dagger-axes were made of iron, bronze, or stone.

The bow was an important Yamatai weapon. The Yayoi bow was of the asymmetrical type used also later in Japan, even though the Yamatai bow appears to have been a wooden self bow. Archaeology confirms that arrowheads of both iron and bronze were used, as well as of chipped stone, although the latter may have been chiefly used for hunting. Large, heavy stone arrowheads have also been found. Bone arrowheads were also no doubt seen. That bamboo was used to make bows is quite likely.

Although the bow remained a popular weapon in Japan until recent times, another missile weapon used by the Yamatai armies, the sling, was destined to fall into oblivion. Slingshots made of fired clay or smooth stone pebbles are common finds in Yayoi sites, although they disappear after the Yayoi period.

As for sidearms, the nobility would use single-edged, straight swords, usually of iron although stone and bronze swords were also known. Most iron swords are of the ring-pommel type, with a one-piece blade and hilt ending in a ring. Fine but rather fragile-looking stone swords were also made, sometimes with hilts and pommels of wood or other materials.

Another sidearm was the knife or dagger. A beautiful bronze dagger has been found at Yoshinogari in Kyūshū, although it is hard to determine whether such daggers were of practical or merely ritual use. More common were no doubt iron knives of the ring-pommel type, and perhaps also hafted stone daggers. At least the latter (and no doubt also the former) came with wooden sheaths.

Ordinary stone axes were also used in Yamatai, although it is unknown whether they were used as weapons of war or mere digging tools.

Protective armour consisted of large shields and cuirasses made of wood. Shields were no doubt most common. Fragments of a roughly rectangular wooden shield have been found at Kitoragawa, Ōsaka. It was decorated with a red cross-like design in cinnabar. Others may have been adorned with spiral decorations in the shape of a shell. Such designs have been found both at Yayoi sites in Japan and in the Korean peninsula. Although Yamatai shields appear to have been rectangular and

indeed slightly tapered at the top, later shields were instead broader at the top, at least judging from surviving depictions.

Yamatai warriors also used wooden cuirasses. Fragments of a highly decorated, carved hardwood cuirass have been found at Iba, Shizuoka prefecture. These indicate that cuirasses could be coated with red and black pigmented lacquers. This particular piece may of course have been a noble's armour. It has also been suggested that this cuirass was only used for ritual purposes and not in war. Even so, it appears likely that simpler types of hardwood cuirasses were worn also in battle. Very similar wooden cuirasses were used by North American Indians long before contacts with Europeans. Ordinary Yamatai warriors may at least have used plainer wooden cuirasses, or conceivably wooden slat or rod armour which is also known from the American Northwest. However, lacquered wooden cuirasses cannot be ruled out, considering the general use of lacquer for decoration and protection in the following centuries.

As no helmet has been found, it has been suggested that the warriors used wooden helmets. Similar helmets were used among aboriginal tribes in Taiwan until about a century ago. South Chinese aboriginal tribes, who may well have been the ancestors of the Taiwanese aboriginals, may also have been the source of early cultural elements among the Japanese. The Japanese folklorist K. Yanagida in 1961 proposed traffic from the coast of southern China to southern Kyūshū through the Ryūkyū islands. The Yamato state of the Kofun period, perhaps in the early fourth century, had to fight several campaigns against a people known as Kumaso in the southern part of Kyūshū. Were these perhaps the descendants of the mysterious kingdom of Kuru? Or were they a people of a different origin, perhaps to be found among the South Chinese aboriginal groups? We are unlikely to find an answer soon.

There is no evidence of cavalry of any kind in Yayoi-period Japan. The Wei chronicle points out that there were neither cattle nor horses in Japan, and this appears to be confirmed by archaeology. Cavalry was only introduced in Japan following continental influences in the subsequent Kofun period, from which there is a wealth of evidence for cattle- and horse-raising.

Fortified Settlements

Japanese archaeologists have estimated that Himiko's capital must have been a moated compound laid out on a grand scale, with a large number of separate homes, audience halls, raised granaries, and towers. Such sites have been found, and the most promising of them, Yoshinogari in Kyūshū, was a very large settlement. Its 2.5 km long outer dry moat enclosed an area of forty hectares (a thousand by four hundred metres). An additional inner dry moat protected the central area. The moats were also protected by wooden palisades and up to twelve-metre-high watch towers.

Smaller Yayoi villages were also commonly fortified with dry moats and stockades. Some were built on hill-tops. These sometimes lacked water and were inconvenient for daily life, so may have been built as refuges during war.

Such hill-top villages were also occasionally the sites for a beacon system used as means of communication. Such beacon sites have been found in a number of locations. Archaeologists have tested them, and even in today's polluted air the beacons function as a chain, transmitting a warning or a message over a long distance. Smoke was used in day-time, while the fires themselves were visible at night.

So far, all located moated sites, including the well-known

sites at Ikegami, Yoshinogari (Saga prefecture), and Ōtsuka (Kanagawa prefecture), have been protected by dry moats. The moat is invariably dug in a V profile, originally about 3-4 metres deep and 5-6 metres wide, and outside the moat, the soil is piled high to form a protective rampart. One wonders why the moat is generally inside the rampart rather than outside. The outer rampart may have had a fence or palisade. The site at Asahi, however, had barricades of pointed sticks on both sides of the moat to protect from enemy attack.

The Yamatai Navy

We do not know whether Yamatai had a dedicated navy or merely controlled a number of merchant ships. Ships suitable for overseas voyages certainly existed. That the majority of the people who formed the Yamatai state or their ancestors originally had come by ship cannot be disputed. Furthermore, the Wei record shows that Japanese travelled to southern Korea for iron. This may be confirmed by the fact that at least so far, no Yayoi-period iron smelting sites have been found in Japan.

Contemporary illustrations show a number of craft that look like long canoes, rowed or paddled, perhaps by the traditional Japanese oar which is manned standing. If the details of the depictions can be trusted, such canoes might have had a crew of perhaps four rowers, or perhaps four on each side, making a total of eight. Both prow and stern seem to have been decorated with horns or perhaps animal heads. However, archaeology has also revealed the remains of larger vessels, made of massive dugout logs with sides, prows, and sterns built up of planks. Such ships were certainly capable of overseas travel. The entire prow of such a ship has been excavated in Yao city, Ōsaka prefecture.

Allies and Enemies of Yamatai

The Yayoi period was a time of armed conflict. In the tombs of the Yayoi period, more than a hundred skeletons with broken tips of stone arrowheads embedded in the bone have already been found. At Yoshinogari, one skeleton lacked its head, and at Sudare (Fukuoka), a stone arrowhead was inserted in the spine of a forty-year old man. Both must have been victims of war.

Archaeology alone does not explain the reasons for war. Migrating tribal groups may have caused resentment among those who formerly controlled the territory into which the migrants were intruding. Besides, to maintain and improve wet-rice cultivation, the Yayoi settlements had to obtain land, water, iron, and materials to make farming tools. Rice cultivation was a labour-intensive form of agriculture, but the amount of labour invested was counterbalanced by the high productivity, the primary reason why Japan's limited arable land is able to support so dense a population. The introduction of wet-rice cultivation resulted in rapid development of food production accompanied by an equally rapid population growth. Once accepted by a population, wet-rice farming set off a chain reaction of increased production, increased population, and the urgent need to develop new rice fields for the growing population, which again led to increased production. The shortage of land suitable for wet-rice cultivation and available water sources must have generated frequent conflicts between neighbouring settlements. Rice was moreover a valuable commodity, especially in times of a bad harvest, so wars may have been fought over stored rice supplies.

The first victims of the Yayoi Japanese in their quest for rice country were naturally the earlier Jōmon inhabitants of the islands, later known as, among other name variants, Emishi, a name probably meaning "man" in the native language. The

Emishi eventually became the ancestors of the Ainu in Hokkaidō, although no doubt also most of today's eastern Japanese should be regarded as their descendants.

That the Emishi still relied on a technologically less sophisticated hunter-gatherer economy does not necessarily mean that they were less capable in war or less sophisticated in organisation and military tactics. They were, however, fewer in numbers, as hunter-gatherers need more land area per head than agriculturists. In more recent centuries, Northeast Asian hunter-gatherers such as the Chukchi proved dangerous enemies to Russians, Japanese and North Americans alike. Besides, the Emishi lived in long-term sedentary settlements with large buildings of a ritual character even before the arrival of the Yayoi Japanese, and besides hunting and gathering to some extent relied on plant cultivation as a source of subsistence. They had less access to metals than the Yayoi Japanese, but theirs too was a highly developed society and the real difference between Yayoi and Jōmon was that rice cultivation brought a greater yield and accordingly was able to sustain a larger population. We must not see the Jōmon-period Emishi as "cave-man" stereotypes, rather as a tribal aboriginal society perhaps not unlike such groups that still exist in certain remote parts of Southeast Asia. The archaeologist K. Tsuboi in 1962 suggested that Jōmon society was controlled by elaborate rituals. Bows and other implements were often decorated with lacquer, displaying great skill. All evidence shows that Emishi society was highly developed, although in different ways from its Yamatai counterpart.

For Yamatai, the Emishi may have been less of a problem than other nascent Yayoi Japanese states. Yamatai itself was formed as the alliance of thirty different communities or statelets, in a confederation growing out of decades of war between different communities.

Other Japanese states, too, may have had female rulers. Later Japanese records mention wars between the imperial clan and hostile, female rulers in western Japan, which may be memories of the Yamatai wars. At least one of Himiko's enemies had a male ruler, identified in the Chinese chronicle which states that south of Himiko's country was the "Kunu country, where a king holds rule." Kunu, an independent state, was apparently not subject to Himiko's rule.

The armies of Yamatai may not have been restricted to operations on the Japanese islands. Some intriguing evidence makes it hard to completely rule out wars or raids against Chinese or Korean settlements.

We have already seen that there were contacts and ties between Yamatai and the mainland. Korean chronicles from Silla mention that Himiko sent envoys to Silla asking for assistance against her enemies. This ties in well with Himiko's request to the Chinese governor in the northern Korean commandary of Taifang for help against an enemy kingdom. Apparently no help was received. However, Silla chronicles also record a Japanese invasion in 249. Could this have been Himiko's revenge, or perhaps a punitive expedition by Himiko's enemies against her continental allies? Unfortunately, the dating of these chronicles is very uncertain.

Yet another, perhaps more far-fetched scenario involves the Chinese state of Wei. The archaeologist K. Imamura has suggested that the cause for the friendly relations between Wei and Yamatai was that China at the time was divided into the three countries of Wei in the north, Wu in the south, and Shu-Han in the south-west, each of which contended for the mastery of China. The rulers of Wei appear to have believed that Japan stretched southwards behind Wu and thus could unite in an

alliance against Wu, or at least to restrain Wu by keeping military forces within striking distance of the Wu border. Was Yamatai sufficiently powerful to play such a role on the mainland? It appears unlikely, but one should remember that Japan within less than a century successfully invaded Korea. An occasional Yamatai allied contingent within a Wei army or alternatively a Yamatai naval raiding party cannot be ruled out, although we have to stress that there is no evidence either to support or deny such an assumption. We simply do not have enough information at our disposal to evaluate the true strength of the Yamatai army.

Yamatai Army List

Being geographically far from the mainstream of wargaming, I have chosen to present the following notes for an army list in a format suitable to any rules set.

Warlord on foot, wearing wooden armour, armed with sword, bow and light spear/javelin and a large wooden shield, or sword, bow and dagger-axe.

Optional non-combatant priestess/queen in a Chinese two-horse chariot used as a sacred cart.

Optionally, a number of sub-generals and/or ally generals, armed as the warlord.

Bodyguards, except perhaps for the sword armed as the warlord or general in command of them.

Clan warriors, divided into:

- Spearmen with light spears/javelins, large wooden shields and wooden armour,

- Archers, some perhaps with wooden armour,

- Slingers,

or preferably (and my choice)

- Spearmen, archers, and the occasional slinger as above but in mixed units.

Skirmishers, armed with bows or slings.

Ships or river craft.

Fortified villages with wooden towers, dry moats and palisades.

We know nothing of the morale or level of organisation of the Yamatai army, although both should be reasonably high to reflect the fact that Yamatai fought numerous wars and united many of the other small states under her rule. Chinese records tell us that the Wa had distinctions of rank, and some men were vassals to others. It appears certain that Yamatai had a number of professional warriors, perhaps in the form of a large retinue under the personal command of the warlord. It is nonetheless extremely unlikely that they were trained as a unit rather than as individuals.

It is conceivable that Yamatai also could impress local but reluctant farmers armed with bows or improvised bamboo spears into the army, in the manner of later Japanese rulers. However, it appears more likely that such a clear division between farmer and clan warrior/noble had not yet emerged.

I have little experience with DBM, which seems to be the current favourite among wargamers, but it seems that the clan warriors should be classified as Warband (Ordinary) under these rules.

The possible appearance of a single Chinese chariot is supported by the archaeological find of metal pieces that may have come from such a vehicle. If so, it was most likely brought as a gift by the Chinese embassy in 240.

Those who indulge in fantasy wargames will notice that this army has a very high fantasy potential: a mysterious and initially very young shamaness, brave clan warriors, and no

doubt some very potent Stone Age magic. Contemporary Japanese have noticed this, too, and the Yayoi Japanese have been the inspiration of at least one highly successful animated film.

An Aboriginal (Jōmon/Emishi) 'Army' List

In the spirit of the Yamatai list above, I have endeavoured to also put together a few notes on what might have constituted the 'army' of one of the aboriginal tribes of Japan. We do not know what such a tribe might have called itself, perhaps it was some variant of *emishi*, *ebisu*, *emisu*, or *ezo*, words by some scholars believed to have been variants of the Ainu word for "man".

Warlord on foot, wearing wooden armour, armed with bow, light spear/javelin, and a stone mace or a captured or traded sword, perhaps but probably not with a large wooden shield.

Optionally, a number of allied chieftains, armed as the warlord.

Clan warriors: archers and spearmen in mixed units, possibly armed with chipped stone axes as sidearms and probably without shields.

Skirmishers, armed with bows and perhaps some slings.

River or coastal craft.

Being accomplished hunters, we cannot rule out the use of simple booby-traps, perhaps in the



with a white inner lining and a light yellow, long silk skirt. The skirt is tied with a white and pale green girdle, which extends below the upper garment, while the second girdle, across her waist and chest, is crimson and pale yellow. Himiko's jewellery and crown are made of bright bronze, except the upper layer of red beads of the necklace. The ribbons around her hair and waist are light yellow. The colour scheme is of course hypothetical but more likely than earlier reconstructions.

Figure 2. Warlord with dagger-axe and shield. It is perhaps unlikely that both were used at the same time. His hardwood cuirass is reconstructed from the find at Iba. It is painted with red and black lacquer. All spiral patterns are lacquered black, as well as some frames indicated as such in the drawing. His elaborate bronze dagger was found at Yoshinogari. The shield and shield pattern are based on a find from Kitoragawa. The dark cross-like design is lacquered red, while the shield otherwise appears to be of natural wood, or possibly some shade of white. Separate drawings show the cuirass from the side and rear.

form of hunting pits with sharpened bamboo stakes, to hamper an enemy advance. Such devices were at least used by aboriginal hunting parties.

Again we know nothing of their morale or level of organisation. Whether to classify the clan warriors under DBM as Bows (Ordinary), Auxilia (Ordinary), or perhaps Warband (the least likely choice) is anybody's guess; I would settle for Bows. Hordes (Fast) may form another possibility, as primitive hunters tend to fight as guerrillas. Aboriginal warriors would be extensively tattooed and wear clothes similar in style if not material (although some would certainly have been acquired by trade) to the Yamatai men. Later Japanese sources, perhaps less than objective, mention fur garments and arrows carried in the topknots of their hair.

The chipped stone axes may have been used as weapons, but they were probably more often used to dig for natural tubers such as Japanese yam.

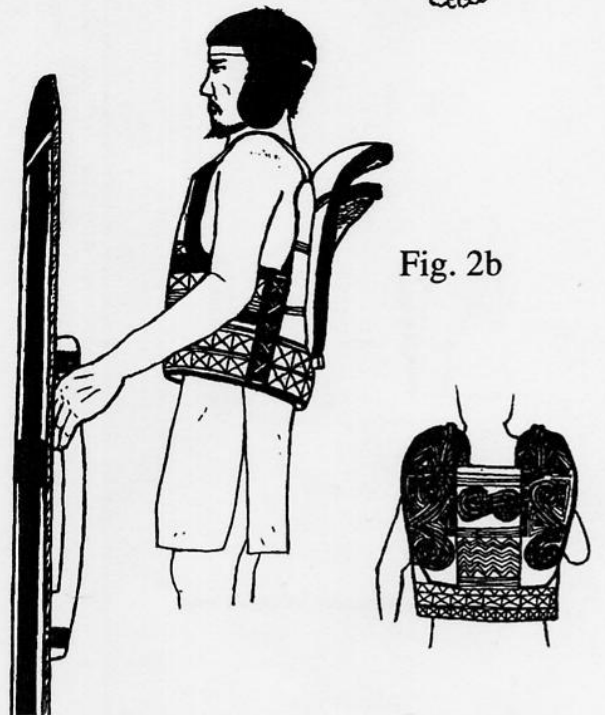
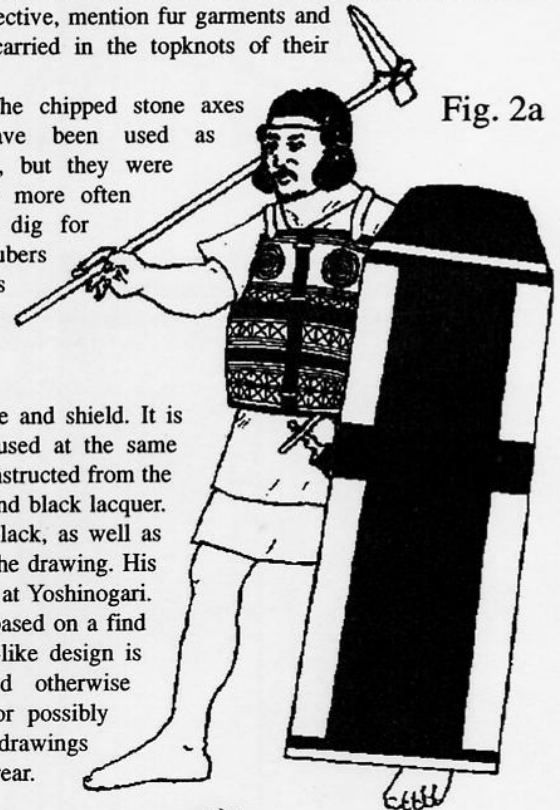


Fig. 3

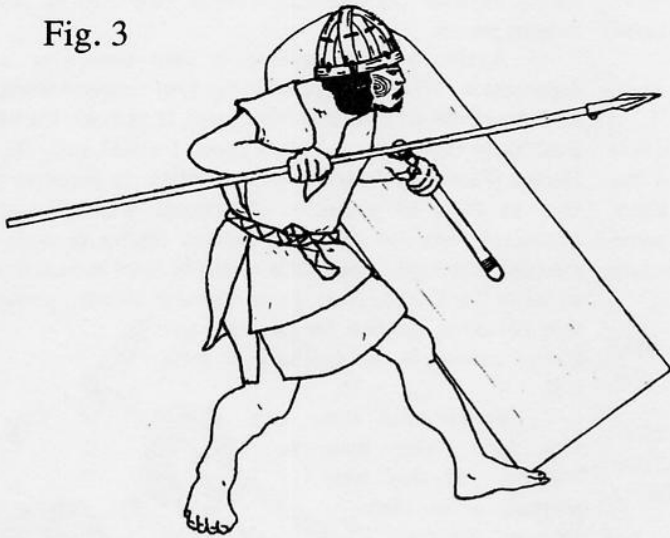


Figure 3. Clan warrior. He wears characteristic Yayoi-period dress of natural linen and a wooden helmet but no cuirass. His spear has a bronze spearhead, and the shield would have the same pattern as in Figure 2.

Fig. 4



Figure 4. Young women: Yayoi to the left, Jōmon to the right (from the Museum of Yayoi Culture, Ōsaka).

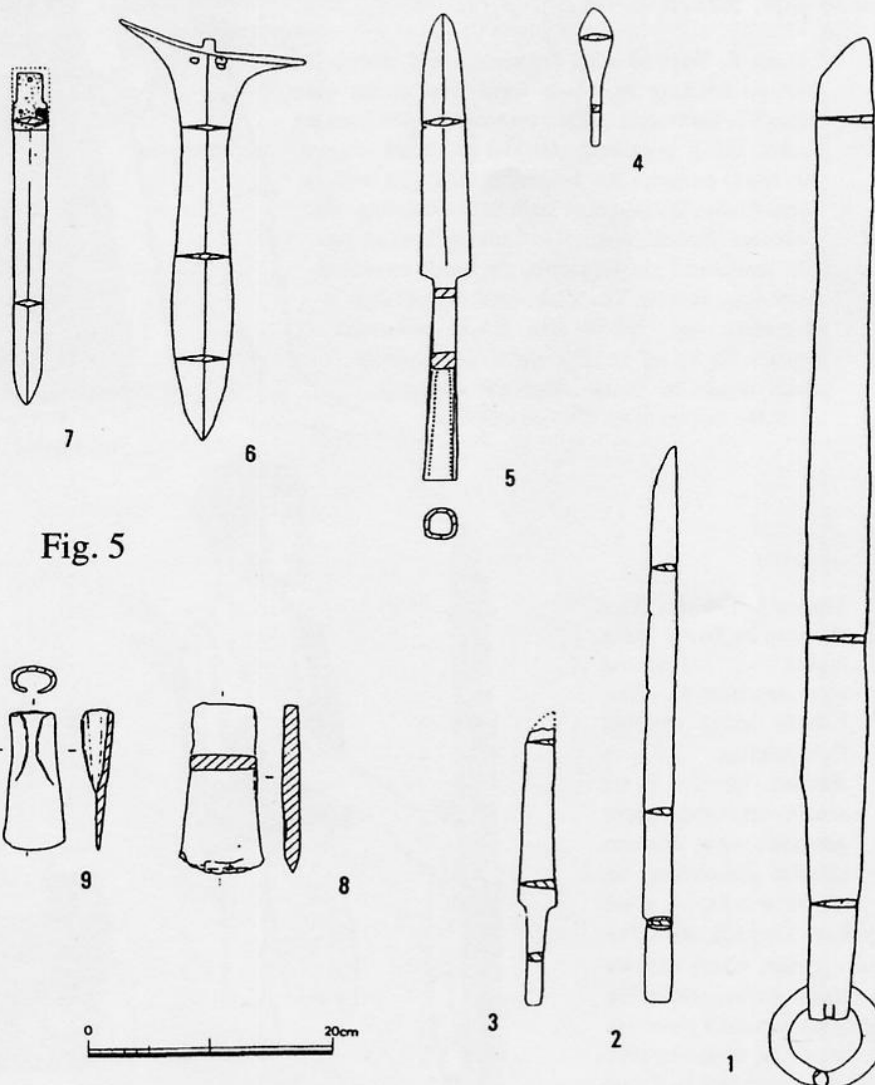


Fig. 5

Figure 5. Yayoi-period weapons and tools of iron: 1-3. sword, short sword, and knife; 4. arrowhead; 5. spearhead; 6-7. dagger-axes; 8-9. ordinary axes (after Kawagoe Tetsushi, *Yayoi jidai no tekki bunka* (Yayoi-Period Iron Culture), Yūzankaku, 1993).

Further Reading

Imamura, Keiji. *Prehistoric Japan: New Perspectives on Insular East Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.

Sansom, G.B. *Japan: A Short Cultural History*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, revised edition 1952.

Translations of the relevant parts of the Chinese chronicles can be found in Sansom, pp.18, 29-31.

(See Duncan Head's review of William Wayne Farris' book *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500-1300* in this issue's Review section...Ed.)

