

On the Problem of Cultural Links Between Jomon Population and Ainu People: In the Light of Decoration Traditions

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The problem of relationships between Neolithic Jomon culture and Ainu as native people of Japanese archipelago is actual and disputable one in modern archaeology and anthropology of East Asia. Our research considers this problem focusing the data on decoration and design traditions. The research base includes: 1 – pottery collections from Middle-Final Jomon sites, mostly of Tohoku region; 2 – the Dogu figurines from Middle-Final Jomon sites (after published materials); 3 – the objects of Ainu material culture - traditional costume, wood-carving utensils, and some others (after published materials).

Our research is concentrating on technical methods and structural principles of decoration compositions, the set of decoration-forming elements and ways of their combination. Important methodical approach is the applying of some terms of mathematical (geometric) knowledge to the descriptive characteristics of decoration compositions.

Significant resemblance between Jomon and Ainu decoration compositions is concerning to technical specification. Combination of different techniques and surface factures provides the effects of the emphasizing of basic graphical pattern in the contrast with homogenous phone infilling.

Main similarity of compositional structures of Jomon and Ainu decoration is the usage of symmetry of same types (rotational, mirror, transfer). Basic elements of Jomon and Ainu decoration are the spiral, straight line, circle, dot, hypocycloid (cusped) figures. The lasts are most specific for Jomon and Ainu arts and presented by certain images – deltoid (3-cusped figure), astroid (4-cusped figure), and others. Important feature shared by Jomon and Ainu decoration patterns is plastic involving of the elements providing the continuity and integrity of the composition. As a whole, comparative analysis of decoration traditions of Jomon culture and Ainu people allows to suppose close, probably genetic, links between the both.