Pigs in the Yayoi Period

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This paper examines the question of whether the "boars" excavated from the sites of the Yayoi period are domesticated pigs. My results show that, in all the 8 sites ranging from the Kyushu to the Kanto Districts from which many "boars" have been excavated, a considerable number of pigs are included. These pigs are characterized by a rounder occiput and wider buccal part than boars. Three or more types, ranging from larger to smaller sizes can be distinguished, so it seems there have been several types of pig. Judging from their physical characteristics, I think that the pigs of the Yayoi period were brought from the Chinese continent by foreigners, rather than being domesticated Japanese boars. In most cases, the crainial bones of the pigs were split lengthwise from the vertex, and this method of slaughtering has not been found from remains of the Jomon period. Furthermore, a large number of lower jawbones with a drilled hole have been excavated. Some examples show that a jawbone was treated ritually, by passing a bar through this hole. No examples are known of the lower jawbones of boars with drilled holes from the Jomon period, so the above treatment with a bar is characteristic of the Yayoi period. Judging from this fact, it seems that the pigs of the Yayoi period were used not only as food, but also for agricultural rites. Also, from the large number of pigs excavated from each site, it is supposed that a large number of foreigners came to Japan in the Yayoi period. In other words, the Yayoi period started not only with the transmission of rice culture and the tools for it, but with the whole life system of an agricultural culture with pigs brought to Japan by foreigners.