Bronze Cultures in Eastern Eurasia: the Origin of Yayoi Bronze Implements
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This article covers the origin and provenance of the Yayoi bronze culture from the viewpoint of multiple cultural spheres in eastern Eurasia after the second millennium B.C. In particular, the present article argues the origin and provenance of the slender bronze swords and spearheads of the Yayoi bronze culture in the course of the formation of Eurasian cultural spheres. First, the study provides a brief review of the development of bronze cultural spheres in Eurasia. With regard to the origin of the slender bronze swords, in the former half of the first millennium B.C., northern Eurasia had a series of Karasuk bronze daggers affected by the bronze daggers belonging to northern China. There also was a series influenced by the jiang bing type bronze spearheads (bronze spearheads with a hole in the shaft to install a handle) belonging to the Andronovo bronze culture. Both series were related to each other, mutually supplementing their partial elements. The present research determines that the origin of a series of Liaoning bronze swords, which slender bronze swords were derived from, was the above-mentioned bronze spearheads of the Andronovo bronze culture. Their influences spread out from Liaoxi through Shanxi to Liaodong, where shaft-less, stemmed bronze daggers were produced due to the lack of a soil molding method necessary for making socketed shafts. Combining these techniques with their traditional bone and stone swords, Liaodong people developed a series of Liaoning bronze swords. On the other hand, the present research indicates that the slender bronze spearheads were also derived from the bronze spearheads of the Andronovo bronze culture, which were introduced to the Yanshan and Liaoxi regions through Shanxi and then became a series of willow leaf-shaped bronze spearheads. Based on the above considerations, this study examines the origin of armament style. Whereas both long and short swords and spearheads were used in areas with horse-drawn carriages, short daggers and spearheads went mainstream in an area from Liaodong to the Korean Peninsula, where horses and carriages were rarely used. The latter became the origin of the armament style of the Yayoi bronze culture. Moreover, the study determines that the Yayoi custom of caching bronze ritual implements was originated from the custom of the northern Eurasia bronze culture in the second millennium B.C. that spread out to the Korean Peninsula through the Chinese northern region.

Key words: Eastern Eurasia, Early bronze culture, Yayoi bronze implements, Bronze swords, Bronze spearheads, Ritual implements