

The Medieval Archaeology of Korea: Its Conceptual Framework and Examples

*Hyunwoo Kim**

Introduction

It has been 15 years since medieval historian Ahn Byungwoo suggested the need for medieval archaeology in “A Study on the Development of Medieval Archaeology and the History of Koryō” in 2003.¹ Medieval archaeology has gradually become a familiar term to Korean archaeologists and historians since then. In 2017, the Korea Middle Ages Archaeological Society was founded, providing an official platform for research in medieval archaeology. However, despite the external growth of the field, it is difficult to say that research in medieval archaeology has intensified in Korean archaeology. Only a handful of studies on medieval archaeology have been published in major academic journals, and most of them end up focusing on chronology or regional aspects of the medieval period.

This becomes evident in the examination of the subjects and time periods explored in research papers that have been published in the *Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society*. Table 1 shows the classification of historical archaeological studies that were published from 1994 to 2018. Table 1. Classification of Studies on Historical Archaeology Published in the *Jour-*

* Seoul National University Museum

1 Ahn Byungwoo, “Chungsegogohagŭi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn'gu (A Study on the Development of Medieval Archaeology and the History of Koryŏ),” *Yŏksabip'yŏng* (Critical Review of History) 64 (August 2003).

nal of Korean Archaeological Society from 1994 to 2018²

Time period		Subject										Total	
		Form; chronology	Diffusion and acceptance	Advancement and migration	Exchanges	Function	Constructional analysis	Politics and society	Technology	Scientific analysis	Theories and methodology		Others
Proto-Three Kingdoms		10	2		1		2	1			1	2	19
Proto-Three Kingdoms to Three Kingdoms		4					2	1					7
Three Kingdoms	Koguryō	7	1				1		1				10
	Paekche	11	2		1	2	6	3	4	6		3	38
	Silla	17	3	1	1		5	5	2	5	1	1	41
	Kaya	10	1		4		5	1	2	1		1	25
	Whole of Three Kingdoms	9	1	1	3	1	2		4	1	1	2	25
Unified Silla		3						1	1				5
Parhae		1											1
Medieval	Koryō	1					1					1	3
	Chosŏn	3							1			2	6
	whole of medieval								1				1
Foreign	China	7	2						1			4	14
	Japan	2											2
Total		85	12	2	10	3	24	12	16	14	3	16	197

Of the total 412 studies, historical archaeological studies accounted for

- 2 Table 1 is a table of studies in the field of historical archaeology that have been published in the *Journal of Korean Archaeological Society* from 1994 to 2015, created by Lee Nam-Kyu, with my addition of studies published from 2016 to 2018.

Lee Nam-Kyu, “Hangmunjōk chōngūi kuhyōn-ül hyanghan Han'guk kogohakhoe-ūi chonghapchōk palchōn panghyang mosaek (Seeking the direction for the comprehensive development of the Korea Archaeological Society for academic justice),” *Han'gukkogohakpo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 100 (September 2016): 200, table 2.

about 48 percent (197 studies). Among them, only about eight percent (15 studies) dealt with Unified Silla (676-935), Koryŏ (917-1392) and Chosŏn dynasties (1392-1910). This is even fewer than the number of archaeological studies on China and Japan (16 studies). Considering that research on Japanese and Chinese sources have been conducted for comparative research on the Proto-Three Kingdoms Era or the Three Kingdoms Era, it would not be an exaggeration to equate historical archaeology in Korea to ancient archaeology.

Since Ahn Byungwoo,³ many scholars have asserted the need for medieval archaeological research and published studies to promote research in medieval archaeology, but the Korean medieval archaeology is at a standstill as of yet. I believe that a considerable part of the reason is that most such studies emphasize the justification for medieval archaeological research instead of offering specific methodologies or examples. This was inevitable, as research on medieval archaeology has not been accumulated, and most scholars who have asserted the need for medieval archaeological research were bibliographic historians rather than archaeologists, and therefore it was difficult for historians who were not in archaeology to provide specific examples or methodologies.

With this understanding, this paper aims to examine the current status of medieval archaeology in Korea and proposes research strategies with specific examples. First, I would like to define the temporal thresholds of medieval archaeology, study the characteristics of the medieval period, and discuss specific research strategies, topics, and methodologies using actual examples based on material sources and written records.

The Scope and Characteristics of Medieval Archaeology

In order to gain an understanding of the characteristics of medieval archaeology, it is necessary to identify the time frame of medieval archaeology.

3 Ahn Byungwoo, "Chungsegogohagŭi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn'gu"

ology and how it is being studied. In this section, I will first define the temporal delimitations of the medieval period in archaeology and examine the periodical characteristics of medieval archaeology derived from that time frame.

1. The Scope of the Medieval Period in Archaeology

People who come across the term “medieval archaeology” would, of course, think that it refers to archaeology that focuses on the medieval period in Korean history. Although scholars have varying opinions on the exact thresholds of the medieval period,⁴ it is generally considered that the time frame of Korea’s medieval period coincides with the Koryŏ dynasty.⁵ However, Korean medieval archaeology encompasses a much broader span of time with diverse proposed temporal delimitations.

Ahn Byungwoo was the first scholar to propose the need for medieval archaeology in Korea, and he tentatively defined the time frame for medieval archaeology from Unified Silla to Koryŏ and even the Chosŏn dynasty.⁶ As an expert who had a better understanding of the medieval period in Korean history than anyone else, he seems to have established such a broad time frame because he did not wish to place the Chosŏn dynasty in the modern era. He also hoped that this would help archaeological research in Korea, which was only focused on the time period prior to Uni-

4 There are several starting points of Korea’s medieval period, including the Three Kingdoms era, Unified Silla, late Silla to early Koryŏ, late Koryŏ to early Chosŏn, and the mid-Chosŏn dynasty (Yi In-jae, “Han’guk chungse-nŭn ōnje shijak-toeōnnŭn’ga (When did Korea’s medieval period begin),” *Nonjaeng-ŭro ingnŭn Han’guksa* (Reading Korean history through debates) 1 (Seoul: Yŏksabip’yōngsa, 2009)

5 Hong Yong Eui, “Han’guk chungsegogohak-ŭi shijak-kwa yŏn’gu tonghyang, kŭrigo kwaje (The beginning of Korean medieval archaeology, its research trends and issues),” *Yŏksawa Hyŏnsil* (Quarterly Review of Korean History) 103 (March 2017).

6 Ahn Byungwoo, “Chungsegogohagŭi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn’gu,” 244.

fied Silla,⁷ to expand beyond what is considered the medieval period in history.

After Ahn proposed a time frame for medieval archaeology, related studies proposed or used diverse temporal thresholds for medieval archaeology. In his archaeological study on craft production during the medieval period, Lee Nam-Kyu⁸ explained that the medieval period broadly encompasses late Silla to Chosŏn, and more narrowly the Koryŏ dynasty, further clarifying that in his paper he used the term medieval period to refer to the latter. His broad definition of the medieval period seems to have taken into consideration the temporal scope of the medieval period that is generally accepted in the archaeology community. Years later, Lee also established the direction for the development of the Korean Archaeological Society, in which he mentioned the advancement of medieval archaeology of the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties.⁹

Jung Eui Do¹⁰ was the first to attempt to identify the medieval period based on archaeological data. Since the tombs, fortresses, and pottery from the Koryŏ dynasty differed distinctly from those of Unified Silla (which precedes Koryŏ) and those of Chosŏn (which follows), he believed that it would be possible to set the Koryŏ dynasty as the medieval period in Korean history. In order to overcome the limitations of the dynastic periodization, Chŏng consciously began to use the term “medieval period” instead of “Koryŏ dynasty.” Currently serving as the chairman of the Korea Middle Ages Archaeological Society (KMAAS), founded in

7 Ahn Byungwoo, “Chungsegogohagŭi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn'gu”, 242-244.

8 Lee Nam-Kyu, “Archaeological Research Situation and Problems of Manual Industry in Medieval Korea,” *Han'guk chungsesa yŏn'gu* (The Journal of Korean Medieval History) 36 (August 2013), 41.

9 Lee Nam-Kyu, “Archaeological Research Situation and Problems of Manual Industry in Medieval Korea,” 219-221.

10 Jung Eui Do, “Chungsegogohag-ŭi chinjŏn-ŭl wihayŏ: kogoch'ŏrhakchŏk shidaegubullon (For the advance of medieval archaeology: the archaeo-philosophical time period division theory),” *Han'guk Kogohakpo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 100 (September 2016).

2017, Jung expressed in the greetings page on the society's website that it was not easy to identify the time frame of medieval period but the KMAAS wishes to gather and accumulate the results of archaeological research with the initial focus on the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties.¹¹

Hong Young Eui¹² proposed a time frame of the medieval period from the perspective of a bibliographic historian. Explaining that the medieval period generally corresponded to the Koryŏ dynasty, he asserted the necessity to establish the medieval period using material sources for the advancement of medieval archaeology. Although he did not provide specific evidence for his reasoning, he tentatively set the time frame of the medieval period from late Silla and early Koryŏ (9th century) to the first half of the Chosŏn dynasty (15th century).¹³

Although the discussions on the medieval period in archaeology are few in number, they have been progressing in a number of different ways. This is fundamentally due to the short history of medieval archaeology in Korea and the lack of accumulated research that would help identify the historical period. In addition, the medieval period defined by Ahn Byungwoo,¹⁴ the broad definition of the medieval period given by Lee Nam-Kyu,¹⁵ as well as the period of research that the Korea Middle Ages Archaeological Society defined not only include the Koryŏ dynasty but also Unified Silla and the Chosŏn dynasty, because all three historical time periods with a significant lack of archaeological research have been pulled together under the umbrella term the "medieval period."

It is a well-known fact that intimate exchanges and communication be-

11 Korea Middle Ages Archaeological Society (Han'guk chungse kogohakhoe) (http://kmaas.or.kr/modules/doc/index.php?doc=greet&__M_ID=148)

12 Hong Yong Eui, "Han'guk chungsegogohak-üi shijak-kwa yŏn'gu tonghyang, kŭrigo kwaje"

13 Hong Yong Eui, "Han'guk chungsegogohak-üi shijak-kwa yŏn'gu tonghyang, kŭrigo kwaje," 432, footnote 67.

14 Ahn Byungwoo, "Chungsegogohagüi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn'gu"

15 Lee Nam-Kyu, "Archaeological Research Situation and Problems of Manual Industry in Medieval Korea"

tween historians and archaeologists are necessary for the advancement of medieval archaeology¹⁶. However, that the archaeological definition of the medieval period is still too ambiguous, varies by researcher, and most importantly is different from what is considered the medieval period in history are likely to play a negative role in the communication between the two disciplines. Without the knowledge and understanding of medieval archaeology in Korea, it would be easy to misconstrue medieval archaeology as being the same as archaeology of the Koryŏ dynasty.

It is generally understood that, in foreign countries, archaeological history follows the tradition of historical periods used in history. In the United States, Columbus' discovery of the New World marks a new historical period, and archaeology that deals with this period is called historical archaeology¹⁷. In Europe, the period after the collapse of the Western Roman empire to the Renaissance is considered the Middle Ages, and archaeology of this period is called medieval archaeology¹⁸. This is similar to Japan as well. Medieval archaeology in Japan focuses on the medieval period in Japanese history, from the mid-eleventh century to the end of the sixteenth century, but also includes a century on either delimitations and therefore spans from the tenth to seventeenth centuries in order

16 Ahn Byungwoo, "Chungsegogohagŭi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn'gu"; "Archaeological Research and History on Goryeo period," *Archaeology* 6, no.1 (June 2007); Lee Nam-Kyu, "Han'guk chungsegogohag-ŭi hyŏnhwang-gwa kwaje (Current status and issues of Korean medieval archaeology)," *Han'guk maejangmunhwajae chosayŏn'gubangbŏmnon* (Methodology for the investigation and research on Korea's burial culture) 1 (Daejeon: Kungnimmunhwajaeyŏn'guso (National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage), 2005); Lee Nam-Kyu, "Archaeological Research Situation and Problems of Manual Industry in Medieval Korea," Hong Yong Eui, "Han'guk chungsegogohak-ŭi shijak-kwa yŏn'gu tonghyang, kŭri-go kwaje"

17 Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, "Introduction: the place of historical archaeology," in *Historical Archaeology*, edited by D. Hicks, and M. C. Beaudry. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

18 Pamela J. Crabtree, "Preface," in *Medieval Archaeology: An Encyclopedia*, edited by P. J. Crabtree, (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001)

to study the patterns of change from the ancient to modern times.¹⁹ Although not all foreign cases are correct, it is necessary to refer to the situations of archaeological communities abroad as Korea's medieval archaeology is just taking off.

In *Han'guk kogohak kangŭi* (A lecture on Korean archaeology),²⁰ which provides a general overview of Korean archaeology, there is an appendix titled, "The status and prospects of medieval and early modern archaeology." Placing the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties in medieval to early modern archaeology rather than medieval archaeology, seems to have been an attempt to use the time period divisions used in history to avoid possible confusion. In this context, for the advancement and expansion of archaeological research, it may be more advantageous to limit the temporal scope of medieval archaeology to the Koryŏ dynasty in accordance with the time period division in Korean history used by Jung Eui Do and in *Han'guk kogohak kangŭi*, similar to the cases of foreign countries. However, this time period division also creates disadvantages in Korean archaeological research. In 1988, Lee Heejoon already pointed out that there were barely any studies in Korean archaeology that focused on the periods after Unified Silla. At the time, introducing sources from Unified Silla and later was considered significant enough.²¹ Over 20 years have passed since, but the

Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties are still not given a full chapter in the general overview of Korean archaeology published by the Korean Archaeological Society and are only briefly dealt with in the appendix.²²

19 Maekawa Kaname, "Chūsei kōkogaku no genjō to kadai (Present status and issues of medieval archaeology)," *Chūsei sōgōshiryōgaku no teishō* (Advocacy of the study of comprehensive medieval sources), (Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 2003)

20 Han'guk kogohakhoe (Korea Archaeological Society), *Han'guk kogohak kangŭi* (A lecture on Korean archaeology) (Seoul: Sahoe p'yŏngnon, 2010)

21 Lee Heejoon, "T'ongilSilla ihu-ŭi kogohak (Archaeology since Unified ShillaSilla)," *Han'gukkogohakpo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 21 (December 1988)

22 The fact that *Yŏngnam-ŭi kogohak* (Archaeology in the Yŏngnam region), the most

Along these lines, if the time frame of medieval archaeology is limited to the Koryŏ dynasty, it is likely for archaeological research on Unified Silla and the Chosŏn dynasty, the time periods that preceded and followed the Koryŏ dynasty, to decrease even further, as those periods have not been properly established in the division of historical time periods. Although Unified Silla is included in the broader frame of Silla archaeology, research on Unified Silla has been limited, and research in the Chosŏn dynasty has even fewer research papers and lacks the essential focus that ties together the archaeology of this period, to the point the term “early modern archaeology” sounds alien.

Therefore, in spite of the concerns over communication with history, it would be best to follow the time frame of medieval archaeology proposed by Ahn Byungwoo,²³ from Unified Silla to the Chosŏn dynasty, considering the current conditions of Korean archaeology. This does not take consideration of the characteristics of the medieval period discussed in Korean history and is a simple time period division between the ancient and modern periods. The use of the term “medieval archaeology” occurred in the process of expanding archaeological research to the medieval period and beyond, considering that archaeological research on Unified Silla and later is still at an early stage. With the accumulation and intensification of archaeological research on Unified Silla and later periods in the future, I expect discussions on how to define the time frame of the medieval period in archaeology using material sources to take place in the future.

recent publication that presents the general overview of regional archaeology, presents various data and research on Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties is very encouraging. However, the book does not necessarily distinguish the two dynasties as the medieval period, and the two dynasties are discussed together in a single chapter. This shows that medieval archaeology is still lacking.

Yŏngnam kogohakhoe (Yeongnam Archaeological Society), *Yŏngnam-ŭi kogohak* (Archaeology in the Yŏngnam region), (Seoul: Sahoep'yŏngnon, 2015)

23 Ahn Byungwoo, “Chungsegogohagŭi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn'gu”

2. Characteristics of the Medieval Period in Archaeology

1) Period of Written Record-Based Research

If the time frame of the medieval archaeology is set to include Unified Silla, the Koryŏ dynasty, and the Chosŏn dynasty, what kind of characteristics does medieval archaeology have as a branch of archaeology? The reason we can use the term “medieval archaeology” to refer to archaeological studies of time periods with such different characteristics is because these periods have one thing in common—archaeological research has barely been conducted on these time periods. In other words, research on Unified Silla and later periods have been conducted with a focus on written records rather than material sources.

It is widely known that archaeology has mainly focused on the prehistoric and ancient times. This can be evidenced by the study entitled, “Laying the Foundation and Expanding the Horizons: Research Trends in Historical Archaeology from 2012 to 2013,” published in 2014. Stating that archaeological research is based on prehistoric archaeology, this article explains that there is a lack of written sources in Korea’s historical archaeology, and the situation is particularly dire for ancient societies.²⁴ As a result, this paper only presents excavated materials from the Three Kingdoms period and related studies that also focus on that era. Considering the author’s academic interests in ancient history, it is reasonable for him to focus on providing retrospections and prospects of historical archaeology. However, the fact that it only discusses the Three Kingdoms era despite the well-known fact that historical archaeology is not limited to the ancient times and includes the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties goes to show that there is still a lack of awareness of the need for archaeological studies on Unified Silla, Koryŏ, and Chosŏn, and that not enough research has been accumulated to rectify this situation.

24 Lee Han-Sang, “Construction of Foothold and Expansion of Horizon: Trend of study in historical archaeology during 2012-2013,” *Yŏksahakpo* (The Korean Historical Review) 223 (September 2014): 393.

Research on the time period spanning Unified Silla, the Koryŏ dynasty, and the Chosŏn dynasty has been based on written sources not only in history but also in archaeology today. Using written records or historical studies to explain the analytical results of material sources has been a common research pattern. The fact that written records are cited as main sources for interpretations of material sources in historical archaeology is paradoxical. Yet it happens frequently. In relation to this, Kim Gwancheol,²⁵ who analyzed the different ways scholars use written records in medieval history, raised the issue of excessive reliance on written resources. Unfortunately, this problem is difficult to avoid in the archaeology of the Three Kingdoms era. While archaeology has been making important contributions to our understanding of the formation of ancient states, it often ends up falling into step with written records. Not only that, some scholars have even advocated the combination of archaeology and history by using a model based on interpretations of bibliographic history to analyze archaeological data.²⁶

This kind of record-based understanding of material sources in historical archaeology is not unique to Korea. Because this kind of research not only makes archaeological research subordinate to written records but also limits the conceptual framework and issues for discussion to matters of historical interest, Champion²⁷ referred to this trend as the “the tyranny of the historical record.” Similarly, Moreland²⁸ also griped, “archaeology is the handmaiden of history.”

25 Kim Gwancheol, “A Study on the Korean Medieval Archaeological Research and Utilization of Literature Historical Materials,” *Han'guk chungsegogohak* (The Korea Middle Ages Archaeology) 2 (December 2017).

26 Lee Heejoon, *Silla kogohak yŏn'gu* (Study of Silla archaeology) (Seoul: Saheop'yongnon, 2007)

27 Timothy C. Champion, “Medieval Archaeology and the Tyranny of the Historical Record,” in *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Studies in Medieval Archaeology*, ed. Leslie Alcock. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 91.

28 John Moreland, “Archaeology and Texts: Subservience of Enlightenment,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35 (September 2006): 136.

This phenomenon is believed to have occurred due in large part to archaeologists' lack of training and experience in the textual nature of historical records,²⁹ which in turn makes archaeologists minimize the use of written records and turn to related bibliographic historical studies. Minimizing the use of written records suggest the lack of understanding of the characteristics of the time period, which leads to far-fetched interpretations that are not in line with related historical interpretations; and heavily relying on bibliographic historical studies most likely leads scholars to accept the opinions presented in bibliographic history papers.

Using archaeology to supplement bibliographic historical studies is important and necessary in that it expands the horizons of understanding in Korean history. The problem is that we have no need for archaeological research if the research topics and interpretations of material sources are trapped in the interpretations of historical documents and the understanding of bibliographic history, since such research would only end up repeating the research conducted from the written records. Therefore, it is necessary to seriously consider how medieval archaeologists can study this period, which studies have been primarily based on written records from the period.

2) Period of Unified Dynasties

It seems clear that there is a more fundamental difference between the period from Unified Silla to the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties, which could be described as the period of historical record-based research, and the Three Kingdoms era, which has been the focus of historical archaeology, aside from the abundance of written records in the former period. Unlike the Three Kingdoms era, when polities emerged from all over the Korean Peninsula and developed into nations, the post-Three Kingdoms era (beginning from Unified Silla) is marked by the dominance of a single

29 Kim Jong-il., "A Critical Review on Historical Understanding of Archaeological Data," *Han'guk Godaesa Yŏn'gu* (The Journal of Korean Ancient History) 52 (December 2008).

unified dynasty at a time.³⁰ This kind of historical situation is alien to Korean historical archaeologists, who are used to studying the rise of various polities.

I would like to briefly examine the status of archaeological research on the Three Kingdoms era, with a particular focus on Silla, which is related to Unified Silla. As I mentioned earlier, archaeological interest in Unified Silla is significantly low compared to the preceding period, which is rather ironic considering Silla archaeology is one of the densest areas in Korean archaeology. Research on tumuli and funerary pottery is central to Silla archaeology.³¹ Setting aside the usefulness and appropriateness of such research, in Silla archaeology, tumuli and pottery have been classified into extremely detailed chronological framework and are considered as sources that were used to control and unify regional communities across Silla. The homogeneity of the tomb system across the Yōngnam region as well as the coexistence of local characteristics in tumuli and pottery have been interpreted as indicators of Silla's indirect rule³² or of the existence of independent polities that were not part of Silla.³³ The

30 After Silla unified the Three Kingdoms, Parhae was founded to the north of the Korean Peninsula, marking the beginning of the North-South States Period. However, as access to resources in North Korean regions is extremely limited, it is very difficult for South Korean archaeologists to gain an archaeological understanding of Parhae. As a result, in Korean archaeology, Unified Silla is considered as a single, unified dynasty in Korea, just like the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties.

31 Choi Byung-hyun, "The Chronology of Late Silla Style Pottery," *Yōngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 59 (November 2011).

32 Ju Bo-don, "Maripkanshigi Silla-ŭi chibang'ongch'i (Silla's rule over local regions during the time of maripkan)," *Yōngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 19 (December 1996); Lee Heejoon, *Silla kogohak yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Saheop'yongnon, 2007).

33 Kim Doochul, "Chronological discussion of Silla tombs focused on the Southern tomb of Hwangnam Great Tomb," *Han'guk kogohakbo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 80 (September 2011).

A recent study that explained the various material cultures in the Yōngnam area as a process of Silla's social integration through the proliferation of burial rites, taking

vanishing of local characteristics on pottery found within the Yōngnam region following the discontinuance of the tumuli system in the early sixth century³⁴ has been interpreted as an indication of Silla's centralization and transition from indirect to direct rule across this region.³⁵ After the sixth century, archaeologists focus on the proliferation of Silla's material culture, particularly Silla pottery, following Silla's territorial expansion. Silla pottery, found in the Kaya territory,³⁶ as well as in the Han River area³⁷ and the Hosō area,³⁸ are considered to be indicators of

a step beyond trying to determine whether the various material cultures resulted from Silla's indirect rule or were polities that were completely different from Silla. This study has received attention as an alternative approach to the existing focus on nation-building research in archaeology.

- 34 Kim Yong-sung, "The high-mound tomb's system of Silla," *Yōngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 70 (September 2014).
- 35 Ju Bo-don, "Maripkanshigi Silla-ŭi chibang'tongch'i (Silla's rule over local regions during the time of maripkan)".
- 36 Lee Heejoon, *Silla kogohak yōn'gu* (Seoul: Sahoep'yōngnon, 2007); Hong Bo-sik, *Silla hugi kobunmunhwa yōn'gu* (A study of the tumuli culture in late Silla) (Seoul: Chunchugak, 2002)
- 37 Kang Jin-Joo, "A Study of Silla Potteries in Han River Area," *Sōnsawa Godae* (Prehistory and Ancient History) 26 (June 2007); Hong Bo-sik, "Sillat'ogi-ŭi Han'gangyuyōk chōngch'akkwajōng-e taehan shiron: Yongin Pojōng-ri Soshil punmyogun ch'ult'op'umŭl chungshimŭro (Comments on the settlement process of Silla pottery in the Han River area: focusing on the excavated artifacts from Soshil in Pojōng-ri, Yongin)," *Kijōngogo* (Kyōnggi Archaeology) 5 (January 2005), Kijōnmunhwajaeyōn'guwōn (Gyeonggi institute of cultural heritage); Hong Bo-sik, "Han'gangyuyōk Silla sōkshilmŭo-ŭi suyong-gwa chōn'gae (Acceptance and advancement of stone chamber burial in the Han River area during Silla)," *Kijōngogo* (Kyōnggi Archaeology) 5 (January 2005), Kijōnmunhwajaeyōn'guwōn (Gyeonggi institute of cultural heritage); Hong Bo-sik, "The Ruling method of Silla in the Han-river on Archaeological Data," *The Paekche Yonku* 50 (August 2008).
- 38 Yamamoto Takafumi, "The Spread of the Silla Influence into Hoseo Area from the View of Ancient Tombs," *Journal of the Hoseo Archaeological Society* 4-5 (August 2001); Yamamoto Takafumi, "Territory Shift of the Three Kingdoms at the Upper Stream Area of Namhan-River," *Han'guk Sanggosahakpo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 40 (May 2003); Park Bo-Hyun, "On the spread of Silla-

Silla's territorial expansion, and the proliferation of Silla earthenware reaches a climax with Silla's unification of the three kingdoms. This concludes the succession of traditional Silla archaeology, with the growth of Silla into a dynasty.

Silla archaeology, which attempts to create an extremely detailed chronological framework of excavated pottery, is based on the concurrent disposal of articles—certain relics that are disposed for certain reasons around the same time. However, the construction of tumuli came to a near stop after the unification of Silla,³⁹ making it impossible for archaeologists to excavate pottery from tumuli, which tend to maintain stable positions in time. Therefore, it would be impossible to archaeologically study Unified Silla by applying the same methodology used in Silla archaeology—using tumuli and excavated relics from tumuli.

In addition, Silla archaeology also differs from Unified Silla archaeology in terms of research topics. As we have examined previously, Silla's territory, which can be confirmed by the distribution of Silla earthenware, the characteristics of Silla elites indicated by tumuli excavations, and the relationship between the capital city of Kyōngju and local rulers are all used ultimately to understand Silla's political growth. Earthenware is considered an indicator of local communities and is prone to changes with time, and therefore has been recognized as important material data to examine the process of Silla's expansion. In the first half of the sixth century, the consistent style of pottery found in the Yōngnam region was regarded as a sign that Silla began to impose direct rule over the Yōngnam region as a whole, and scholars asserted that Silla's internal growth came to a stop while its external growth culminated in the unification of the Three Kingdoms. They further argued that the proliferation and standard-

culture in Hoseo Area,” *Yōngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 32 (June 2003).

39 Kim Yong-sung, “Silla kogohak sōsōl (An introduction to ShillaSilla archaeology),” in *Silla kogohak kaeron* (Overview of Silla archaeology) 1, edited by Central Institute of Cultural Heritage (Gwacheon: Chininchin, 2014)

ization of Silla pottery throughout the kingdom⁴⁰ indicates the completion of Silla's political growth. From such a perspective of Silla archaeology, there is no longer a need to examine Unified Silla archaeologically since the focus on Silla archaeology is on the process of dynasty-building and Unified Silla comes at the end of that process.

I believe this is the reason that research on Unified Silla has not been conducted despite the fact that Unified Silla is considered a part of Silla archaeology. Simply put, Silla archaeology mainly examines the formation and expansion of Silla through a detailed chronology of articles excavated from tumuli; however, since the construction of tumuli decreased significantly after the unification of the Three Kingdoms and the establishment of the state system across the Korean Peninsula, the research topic (the growth of the state) and the research material (tumuli) central to Silla archaeology have been lost. Considering that Unified Silla has been so neglected for the above reasons, it is hardly possible for archaeologists to have conducted research on the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties.

This helps us understand why medieval archeological research has been completely focused on identifying the changes in certain features or artifacts that are excavated from certain regions—it is because of the lack of contemplation on archaeologically studying the time period that followed the state formation period. Establishing temporal and spatial positions of material sources is extremely important for laying the foundation for archaeological research, but, unfortunately, Korea's medieval archaeology has been unable to move on from this approach and develop further discourse.

Research Direction and Strategies of Medieval Archaeology

In this study, I have tentatively defined the temporal scope of medieval

40 Hong Bo-sik, *Silla hugi kobunmunhwa yŏn'gu*.

archaeology to include Unified Silla, the Koryŏ dynasty, and the Chosŏn dynasty. Research on this period has been based on written records, and even archaeological research is conducted under great influence of written records and bibliographic research. In addition, as dynasty-building, which has been the primary focus of historical archaeology, does not occur in this period, there is remarkably low archaeological interest in this period.

Under such circumstances, vague hopes and expectations for the vitalization of medieval archaeology alone are not enough to spur the proliferation of research in medieval archaeology. The idea that medieval archaeology can provide new perspectives and interpretations of Korean history has been steadily proposed since the publication of Ahn Byungwoo's paper in 2003. However, it is still questionable whether the quality and quantity of medieval archaeological research conducted until now have reached a significant level. Everyone is well aware of the need for medieval archaeology in Korean history. Therefore the important questions are, what should we study and how?

1. Strategies for Medieval Archaeological Research

In Korean archaeology, there is a tendency to begin research by organizing and categorizing material sources rather than focusing on identifying and developing critical issues in the field. As a result, the chronology of material sources becomes the center of research, and, due to the lack of archaeological issues, it is difficult to move past the chronology of material sources and approach the past society through a means other than chronology. Therefore it is necessary to develop archaeological issues or identify new research topics. This is particularly important in medieval archaeology. Unlike the archaeological research of the Three Kingdoms era, which has been focused on the broad framework of state formation, medieval archaeological research encompasses Unified Silla, the Koryŏ dynasty, and the Chosŏn dynasty, whose characteristics differ drastically from those of the Three Kingdoms, making it difficult to find common

issues that apply to all three historical periods.

Ahn Byungwoo⁴¹ has roughly touched on the issues and research topics in medieval archaeology and explained that local history, urban history, life history, religion and faith, production and distribution, and trade history were some of the topics that have been proposed. Based on research in these areas, he believes that it would be possible to provide archaeological indicators for the time period divisions in history. Ahn's opinion is based on his expectation as a historian, and he believes it would be possible to use archaeology to make breakthroughs in topics and issues that were nearly impossible to explain or advance with existing historical records.⁴² A similar discussion surfaced again in an article written by Hong Young Eui,⁴³ which was aimed at reviving interest in medieval archaeology.

I believe the above proposals hold the key to the question: "What should medieval history study?" Medieval archaeology should research topics that are lacking in written records or difficult to explore with historical records but are possible to be explained through archaeology. Finding such research topics would require archaeologists to take strategic approaches so as not to be buried under material sources or historical interpretations. Even if archaeologists focus on research that inquires into certain material sources, if they discuss the periodical significance of the sources, it would become possible for their research to contribute to the study of Korean history through means other than the compilation of chronologies.

Such research should fundamentally begin from the understanding of the characteristics of written records and material sources. An intimate understanding of sources is essential, as it allows scholars to identify the limits of historical research via written records and establish research

41 Ahn Byungwoo, "Chungsegogohagüi palchön-gwa Koryösa yön'gu," 235-255.

42 Ahn Byungwoo, "Archaeological Research and History on Goryeo period".

43 Hong Yong Eui, "Han'guk chungsegogohak-üi shijak-kwa yön'gu tonghyang, kūrigo kwaje"

strategies, focusing on the kind of materials that should be used and the ways to approach the issues.

2. Characteristics of Archaeological Data

1) Historical Records and Material Sources

Since medieval archaeology focuses on the historical time periods that have been studied through historical records from those times, it is necessary to approach the study of the societies from those historical periods strategically, based on the understanding of the nature of historical records and material sources.

First of all, in terms of details, there is a huge difference between written records and material sources. For instance, no matter how lacking historical records are, the record of Samhan customs in “Dongyijön” (Biographies of Eastern Barbarians) in *Wisö* (Book of Wei) in *Samgukji* (Records of the Three Kingdoms) is much more detailed than what we can estimate from archaeological data. Not only that, it is difficult to find such specific details through material sources. Moreover, the societies of Unified Silla and later dynasties became much more complex compared to the prehistoric or ancient times accompanied by a dramatic increase in written records. As a result, it is impossible not to refer to historical records to gain a more specific understanding of the characteristics of that time frame in studying Unified Silla and the post-Unified Silla period. The same phenomenon has also been confirmed in historical archaeology overseas, where most scholars tend to have more faith in written records than archaeological materials and give more authority to written records.⁴⁵

However, as historical archaeology began to gain traction, archaeologists began to emphasize the importance of material sources as well as their superiority, asserting that written records were biased and did not

44 Babara J. Little, “Text-Aided Archaeology,” in *Text-Aided Archaeology*, ed. B. J. Little (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 1992), 5.

contain the whole past since they were created by and for social elites. Meanwhile, they argued that there is no intentionality in the remains of material sources and therefore are not biased.⁴⁵ This sentiment seems particularly prevalent in European and American archaeology communities and among those who work in the field.⁴⁶ This seems to be a backlash to the opinion of the historians who study written records and claim that “archaeology is the handmaiden of history.” A similar sentiment exists in the Korean archaeological circle as well. The end of the appendices to *Han’guk kogohak kangŭi* states: “Written records are passed down to us with the content that have been determined by people who left the records they wanted to leave for posterity, but archaeological sources are material evidences of people’s lives that have been left as is. In this sense, archaeological sources can paint a more accurate image of the past.

This perception can be interpreted as asserting the superiority of archaeology to history, but it is by no means true when we take a look at the current status of medieval archaeological research. If material sources are the almighty sources that explain everything about the past, we would already be studying medieval history with a focus on medieval archaeology. In studying the medieval period, it is important to understand the point that each are different types of records of the past, rather than thinking that either the written records or the material sources are a better reflection of the past.

Higham⁴⁷ stated that research purposes differ greatly between history and archaeology. He noted that while historians focus on people, politics, society and military systems, dialectic, and religion and ideology, archaeologists tend to study types of residence, function and development, trade, manual industries, material culture, food and diet, and microeconomy.

45 John Moreland, “Archaeology and Texts: Subservience of Enlightenment”.

46 Paul Courtney, “Historians and Archaeologists: An English Perspective,” *Historical Archaeology* 41, no. 2 (June 2007).

47 Nick J. Higham, “Archaeology and History,” in *Medieval Archaeology: An Encyclopedia*, ed by P. J. Crabtree, (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), 6

This difference in perspective reflects the different characteristics of material sources and written records. Therefore while it is possible for historians and archaeologists to have some similarities in their view and study of medieval history, their perspectives are more different than similar. However, this difference is what allows medieval archaeology to provide new perspectives and opinions on the understanding of Korean history from written records.

The idea that written records are inherently biased should not lead to the conclusion that material sources can explain everything about the past but instead signify that material sources can add to the understanding of written records and bring about new historical revelations. For this to be true, it is important for archaeologists to have an understanding of the bias of written records and contemplate the ways to correct this bias through archaeology. There are many different types of biases in written records, but the primary bias is a hierarchical one, resulting from the fact that the use of written scripts was restricted to certain social classes. In comparison, material sources have relatively less hierarchical bias, and therefore it is safe to say that they have been left by people in a wider spectrum. This makes it possible to archaeologically look into marginalized classes in history, allowing us to perceive “the small things forgotten”⁴⁸ or the material culture from the everyday life of ordinary people that does not appear in the written records from that time.

This means that not only the social elites but also the general public, who have so far been neglected, can come to the fore as agents of history. This is the point that I have been honing in on, among the various other research ideas that can be explored in medieval archaeology. Historians have also been focusing on this everyday life aspect that can be gleaned from archaeological data, trying to gain an understanding under the title of “life history.”⁴⁹ I believe that medieval archaeology is able to make a

48 James Deetz, *In small things forgotten: an archaeology of early American life* (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1996).

49 Chung Yeon-sik, “The present and future of historical studies of the Korean peo-

considerable contribution to historical research in this area.

An archaeological study that confirmed a trend in the general public in medieval Korea discussed the analysis of the hierarchy of lime-mortar burials during the Chosŏn dynasty. In the past, lime-mortar burials from the Chosŏn dynasty were believed to have belonged to *yangban* (elites). However, a comparison of the lime-mortar burials found in the large cemetery sites of Seoul and Gyeonggi Province and the lime-mortar burials that were confirmed to be *yangban*'s from historical records showed that the lime-mortar burials found in large-scale cemeteries differed considerably from *yangban*'s lime-mortar burials in terms of size and structure. Taking this and the fact that pit burials and lime-mortar burials had been built within cemeteries without particular distinction, it is highly likely that lime-mortar burials built in big cemeteries were constructed by commoners.⁵⁰

Beyond such a simple examination of hierarchy, lime-mortar burials also allow us to explore trends of the common people in the Chosŏn dynasty. In the Chosŏn dynasty, a society dominated by Confucianism, was the general public objects of edification and enlightenment or active consumers? Until now, scholars have regarded the general public solely as subjects of *yangban*'s Neo-Confucian edification when examining the relationship between Neo-Confucianism and the general public. However, the fact that lime-mortar burials, which are Neo-Confucian burials, have also been built by commoners allow us to examine the various reactions that appeared in the process of building lime-mortar tombs. Commoners' lime-mortar burials are diverse in terms of their form and use of lime. It is also possible that the people continued to struggle between the acceptance of neo-Confucian norms and their transformations. Although the archaeo-

ple's everyday lives," *Yöksawa Hyönsil* (Quarterly Review of Korean History) 72 (June 2009): 305

50 Kim Hyunwoo, "A Study on Social Class and the Diffusion of Lime-Mortar Burials of the Joseon Dynasty," *Han'guk Sanggosaakbo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 91 (February 2016).

logical study of commoners in the Chosŏn dynasty is a recent development, it provides various revelations on people's lives at the time. This is very much a promising area of research. The crucial factors would be, which archaeological sources should we use and how should we analyze them. As in the above case, strategically selecting areas that are necessary but difficult to access via the study of written records would be important for vitalizing research on medieval archaeology.

2) Contradictions in the Interpretation of Written Records and Material Sources

The above section focused on the relatively superior characteristics of material sources compared to written records. This section aims to discuss the differences or contradictions in historical incidents or social phenomena that can be gleaned from written records and material sources. I believe that even the differences and contradictions can provide an important insight at the starting point of research in medieval archaeology or in the understanding of Korean history. This is not an issue of choosing and selecting one or the other, and it is likely that new perspectives or aspects of the past society that had not been recognized previously will surface in the process of reconciling the differences the two types of data.

The easiest differences to determine and that could also be the starting point for medieval archaeological research are chronological differences between written records and material sources. In historical archaeology of Korea, in particular, historical events have been primary evidence used to pinpoint the time of change in material culture and determine the time period⁵¹. Under the methodology that is currently used to determine the time periods in Korea's medieval archaeology, it is impossible for temporal differences to arise between the written records and material sources. Problems have been raised regarding the tendency in archaeological re-

51 Kim, Jangsuk, "Chronology and Understandings of Formal Variability in Korean Archaeology," *Han'guk Sanggosaahakbo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 83 (February 2014).

search to directly link written records to material sources, but written records are still used as the main evidence in determining the chronology of material culture in the Korean historical archaeology. However, with the increase in the use of radiocarbon dating, there have been cases in which the traditional chronology, that was created based on written records, was found to be different from the absolute age. Therefore it is now necessary to address this issue.

One study examined the differences in the occupation period of Koguryō bastions in the Han River area between the written records and the results of radiocarbon dating. According to the *Samguk sagi* (Histories of the Three Kingdoms), Koguryō bastions in the Han River area began to be constructed around 500 and abandoned around 551 when Koguryō lost control of the Han River area due to the allied forces of Paekche and Silla. When radiocarbon dating provided results that differ from the written records, in many cases Korean historical archaeologists distrust carbon dating and even tend to use such difference as a proof of error in carbon dating.⁵² However, the results of the forty cases of carbon dating performed on the second bastion of Hongnyōnbong consistently revealed that it was built in the late sixth century, which made it difficult for scholars to discount the carbon dating results as errors. In consideration of the various circumstances, scholars provided an interpretation: After Koguryō lost its control of the Han River area, Silla took over the area and occupied the bastions for a little while. However, as the frontlines between Koguryō and Silla began to shift north, the strategic importance of the bastions that had once been occupied by Silla had strategic importance.⁵³ This provided an understanding of the occupation trends of Koguryō bas-

52 Choi Jongtaik, Lee Youngseon, Lee Jaeyong and Kim Jangsuk, "Radiocarbon dating and the historical archaeology of Korea: an alternative interpretation of Hongryeonbong fortress II in the Three Kingdoms Period, Central Korea," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 42, no. 1 (February 2017).

53 Choi Jongtaik, Lee Youngseon, Lee Jaeyong and Kim Jangsuk, "Radiocarbon dating and the historical archaeology of Korea: an alternative interpretation of Hongryeonbong fortress II in the Three Kingdoms Period, Central Korea".



Fig. 1. “Ch’ukhoegyōkgūnnaeogaedo (Diagram of the instructions to construct lime-mortar burials, 築灰隔及內外蓋圖),” in *Karye chimnam tosŏl* (Collected commentaries to the Family Rites, 家禮輯覽圖說)

tions in the Han River area that could never have been confirmed by the existing methodology used to determine the chronology.

In medieval archaeology, there were only a few cases in which absolute dating, such as radiocarbon dating, was used. However, because there is an abundance of source materials with inscriptions that specify time periods compared to ancient material sources, it is possible to examine the chronological differences of certain events between material sources and written records. One such example where differences have been noticed between material sources and written records is the time period in which lime-mortar burials were introduced to the Chosŏn dynasty. In the Chosŏn dynasty, a new tomb style called the lime-mortar burial was adopted with the acceptance of Neo-Confucianism. The method for constructing this style of mortuary practice was introduced in detail in *Chuja karye* (Family rites by Zhu Xi), and therefore lime-mortar burials can be considered to be Neo-Confucian burial (Figure 1). Therefore scholars have determined that lime-mortar burials were introduced around the same period when records of lime-mortar burials were written in historical records or when Neo-Confucianism was introduced to the Korean Peninsula. The first record of lime-mortar tombs in Chosŏn was from 1406, when people were ordered to build a lime-mortar burial for the funeral of a Chosŏn emissary. Based on this record, some have determined the beginning of the use of lime-mortar burials as 1406.⁵⁴ Another study estimated that lime-mortar

54 Pak Hyong-soon, “Chosŏn-shidae mudŏm yangshik (Tomb styles in Chosŏn dyn-

tombs were introduced to Korea at the same time *Chuja karye* came over to the Korean Peninsula in late Koryŏ, since there was a record about lime-mortar burial construction in *Chuja karye*.⁵⁵ All of the above assertions regarding the time lime-mortar burials were introduced have been based on historical circumstances and written records.

Until now none of the lime-mortar burials that have been dated based on inscriptions go back to late Koryŏ or early Chosŏn. The earliest one that was discovered is the burial of Munyanggun Yi Kyeyun, built in 1489 and the burial of Pak Kyŏnwŏn, which was constructed two years later in 1501. This means that material sources indicate that lime-mortar burials were built in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries, which is about a hundred years later than what had been estimated through written records. How can this difference between written records and material sources be reconciled? There is a possibility that lime-mortar burials began to be built in late Koryŏ or early Chosŏn with the introduction of Neo-Confucianism, but even if it had, only a few would have been constructed then. Also, while lime-mortar burials have not been found during this time period, there were stone burials that were built during this period (Figure 3). In addition, there have been records in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Veritable records of the Chosŏn dynasty) that stone chambers or stone coffins were created, rather than lime-mortar burials. In consideration of these facts, it seems that there was an attempt to introduce the lime-mortar burials in the early fifteenth century by the royal family, which failed. Since lime-mortar burials begin to appear afterward, around 1500, it is estimated that lime-mortar burials began to take root around this time rather than in the earlier times proposed based on written rec-

asty),” *Kŭmganggogo* (Kŭmgang Archaeology) 2 (Gongju: Chungchŏng munhwajae yŏn’guwŏn (Chungcheong Institute of Cultural Heritage), 2005).

55 Min So-Ri, “Research on the L.S.M.B in the Seoul and Gyeonggi Province South Korea during the middle and end of Joseon dynasty,” MA thesis, Korea University, 2008.

ords.⁵⁶

Considering the differences in written records and material sources, it would be difficult to claim that the introduction of the new lime-mortar burials coincided with the introduction of Neo-Confucianism. Even the *yangban* class, who brought in Neo-Confucianism, seem to have been hesitant about constructing lime-mortar burials that had been presented in detail in *Chuja kirye*. Lime-mortar burials only came to be constructed in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries when the *yangban* class began to internalize Neo-Confucianism.

This paper only discussed the difference in chronology that can result from comparing material sources to written records, because it is relatively easier to recognize. However, with the vitalization of medieval archaeological research, contradictions between written records and material sources will begin to surface in various ways. Researchers should not pick sides but explain and interpret the contradictions, based on the characteristics of each source. As in the example above, such differences or contra-



Fig. 2. A tomb estimated to be a royal tomb from the Chosŏn dynasty (King Sejong's first tomb)⁵⁷

56 Kim Hyunwoo, "A Study on the Chronology of Lime-Mortar Burials of the Joseon Dynasty," *Hanguk Kogohakbo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 85 (December 2012).

57 Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation, *The Preliminary and Excavation Reports of*



Fig. 3. Stone tomb of Yi Wŏnjŭng (estimated to have been constructed during the reign of King Sejong, collected when changing the burial ground)⁵⁸

dictions in sources actually contain the possibility of enhancing the understanding of the past society, and therefore these are areas that medieval archaeology should strategically focus on and examine.

3) Understanding of the Site Formation Process

Previously, I have examined the relationship between written records and material sources in order to establish the direction of research in medieval archaeology. I now discuss the possibility of distortions in material sources, which are expected to be less biased than written records. The idea that material sources are relatively less biased than written records is only a theoretical one. In reality, material sources go through various natural and cultural transformations until they become archaeological materials through excavations. These transformations that material sources become subjected to are called the site formation processes.

The site formation process theory surfaced in the criticism of the so-

sites become known as the King Sejong's First Tomb (old Yeongneung), Report of Research of Antiquities 214 (Seoul: Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation, 2010)

58 Kim Hyunwoo, "The Chronology and Changing Nature of the Lime Mortar Burials of the Joseon Period," *Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology* 10 (2016), National Museum of Korea: 77.

called “Pompeii premise,” which had been implicitly employed in the archaeology community. The Pompeii premise is simply that archaeologists have tended to treat their finds as if they are moments frozen in time.⁵⁹ In the process of the past context of material culture transforming into the archaeological context, changes occur in the artifacts’ form, location, frequency, and associated pattern due to the impact of natural and cultural factors. As a result, it is highly likely that the material sources that archaeologists discover could be considerably different from the past context.⁶⁰ Natural transformations refer to decomposition, deposition, and erosion, while cultural transformations refer to the type of disposal and the impact of human behavior that is directly or indirectly involved in material sources after disposal. As for cultural transformations, Deal⁶¹ studied Mayan communities and examined the process in which discarded pottery becomes archaeological data (Table 2).

Table 2. Factors that Affect the Formation of Pottery Assemblage According to the Stage of Occupation of Settlements (revision of Deal 1985: 251, Fig. 4)

Preabandonment Stage	Systemic context		Archaeological context
	Abandonment Stage	Postabandonment Stage	
Provisional discard Maintenance Dumping Loss	Abandonment speed Return status	Scavenging Collecting Shortcutting Children’s play Dumping	Archaeological Assemblage

This kind of contemplation on site formation processes should be conducted more carefully in medieval archaeology. Starting in the Unified

59 Michael B. Schiffer, “Is There a ‘Pompeii Premise’ in Archaeology?,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1985).

60 Michael B. Schiffer, *Formation Process of the Archaeological Record* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987)

61 Michael Deal, “Household Pottery Disposal in the Maya Highland: An Ethnoarchaeological Interpretation,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 4 (December 1985).

Silla period, communities were formed and centered around aboveground buildings, where artifacts were easier to scatter. In addition, there is a complex overlapping of relationships due to the renovations and repairs. Therefore, interpreting the excavated material sources without a close inspection of site formation processes can likely bring about misconceptions or an incorrect awareness about the past.

For instance, it is generally understood that Unified Silla's political stability in the eighth century led the state to abandon military fortresses, while the political confusion in the late Unified Silla and early Koryŏ dynasty led to powerful local clans' active occupation of the fortresses. Maro Fortress in Gwangyang is a major site that shows the pattern of the occupation of fortresses in Unified Silla.⁶² Within the structure of Maro Fortress, only the artifacts from late Silla and early Koryŏ dynasty have been found. As a result, archaeologists explained that the fortress had been abandoned in the eighth century and reoccupied after the ninth century. However, a reexamination of the site based on site formation processes revealed that the final stage of occupation was reflected in the structures, where the artifacts of the previous periods had been continuously removed through maintenance and repair, while many artifacts from the eighth century have been found in the rainwater collecting facilities within the fortress, where artifacts were assumed to have been consistently deposited during occupation periods. Therefore, Maro Fortress in Kwangyang was found to have operated consistently instead of being abandoned in the eighth century⁶³. The new revelation not only showed that the fortress was consistently in operation but also allows scholars to post new questions about the intensity of fortress occupation and the

62 Lee Dong-hee, "Later Baekje Remains in Jeollanam-do Region and their Historical Characteristics," *Han'guk Sanggosaakbo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 87 (February 2015).

63 Kim Hyunwoo, "Occupation Pattern of the Fortresses of the Eastern Jeonnam Region and the Powerful Local Families of the Late Silla to Early Goryeo Period," *Han'guk Gogokakbo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 108 (September 2018).

change in occupiers in relation to the political situations at the time.

In this way, examinations of the basic formation process of archaeological sources alone allows scholars to think outside the existing convenient or implicit understanding of sources and establish a foundation for more probable interpretations of the past. Therefore archaeologists must look for, control, and use the possible variations that might have factored into the formation processes of material sources. This is considered common sense in archaeology yet many times goes unexamined in reality that I am compelled to assert that thorough examinations of the formation processes contain the possibility of deriving new interpretations. In addition, the site formation process theory is characteristically the same as source criticism in history, and therefore not only archaeologists but bibliographic historians who wish to utilize material sources must be aware of it.

Conclusion

Medieval archaeology in Korea covers a broad period from Unified Silla to the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties. The medieval period in archaeology, which seems to be an awkward mixture of distinctly different time periods, can be summed up as the unified dynastic period, and this period has been studied in the past with a focus on written records. During this period, unified dynasties, which had not been studied in Korean historical archaeology, ruled the Korean Peninsula at length. Unfortunately, not many archaeologists are interested in this period of Korea and well documented historical research functions as a framework that helps analyze archaeological phenomena. Under these circumstances, archaeology has been limited in its scope of research to finding out the temporal and spatial position of material sources.

However, research in medieval archaeology cannot be conducted solely on its own merits. It requires its own strategy and methodology. This paper began with an examination of the characteristics of historical records and archaeological data and specifically proposed research strategies and

directions for medieval archaeology, such as strategic approaches to the areas that are relatively weak in bibliographic history, the adjustment of interpretational differences between material sources and historical records, and the reassessment of the process of building archaeological data. Based on this, I also presented specific examples to prove that medieval archaeology can provide new insights into Korean history.

The methodologies and examples that have been presented in this paper might not all be correct, but it is clear that they have proposed new perspectives in the understanding of Korean history. Moreover, the vitalization of research in medieval archaeology will provide an important opportunity to expand the horizons of historical archaeology, and furthermore Korean archaeology. Currently, Korea's historical archaeology is absorbed in exploring "state formation" as a topic and only looking at one aspect of past society. Therefore this is the time for medieval history to break out of the box, diversify research topics, and accordingly develop various research methodologies.

It is also important that medieval archaeologists not bury themselves under material sources. Archaeological research cannot be conducted using material sources alone. Only with an understanding of the trends and contents of related bibliographic historical research based on a broad examination of related studies will medieval archaeologists be able to avoid simply repeating the conclusion of bibliographic historical research and provide new perspectives and opinions on Korean history. This will be a difficult feat for archaeologists who have not been trained or do not have experience in bibliographic historical research. Therefore, intimate exchange and communication between archaeology and history will be of great importance in the future.

Works Cited

1. Korea Middle Ages Archaeological Society (Han'guk chungse kogohakhoe) (<http://kmaas.or.kr>)

2. Kang, Jin-joo. "A Study of Silla Potteries in Han River Area." *Sönsawa Godae* (Prehistory and Ancient History) 26 (June 2007)
3. Kim, Gwangcheol. "A Study on the Korean Medieval Archaeological Research and Utilization of Literature Historical Materials." *Han'guk chungsegogohak* (The Korea Middle Ages Archaeology) 2 (December 2017).
4. Kim, Doochul. "Chronological discussion of Silla tombs focused on the Southern tomb of Hwangnam Great Tomb." *Han'guk kogohakbo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 80 (September 2011).
5. Kim, Yong-sung. "Silla kogohak sösol (An introduction to Silla archaeology)," in *Silla kogohak kaeron* (Overview of Silla archaeology) 1, edited by Central Institute of Cultural Heritage. Gwacheon: Chininchin, 2014.
6. _____. "The high-mound tomb's system of Silla." *Yöngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 70 (September 2014).
7. Kim, Jangsuk. "Chronology and Understandings of Formal Variability in Korean Archaeology." *Han'guk Sangosahakbo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 83 (February 2014).
8. Kim, Jong-il. "A Critical Review on Historical Understanding of Archaeological Data." *Han'guk Godaesa Yön'gu* (The Journal of Korean Ancient History) 52 (December 2008).
9. Kim, Hyunwoo. "A Study on the Chronology of Lime-Mortar Burials of the Joseon Dynasty." *Han'guk Kogohakbo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 85 (December 2012).
10. _____. "A Study on Social Class and the Diffusion of Lime-Mortar Burials of the Joseon Dynasty." *Han'guk Sanggosahakbo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 91 (February 2016).
11. _____. "Occupation Pattern of the Fortresses of the Eastern Jeonnam Region and the Powerful Local Families of the Late Silla to Early Goryeo Period." *Han'guk Gogokakbo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 108 (September 2018).
12. Min, So-Ri. "Research on the L.S.M.B in the Seoul and Gyeonggi Province South Korea during the middle and end of Chosön dynas-

- ty.” MA thesis, Korea University, 2008.
13. Park, Bo-Hyun. “On the spread of Silla-culture in Hoseo Area.” *Yŏngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 32 (June 2003).
 14. Pak, Hyong-soon. “Chosŏn-shidae mudŏm yangshik (Tomb styles in Chosŏn dynasty).” *Kŭmganggogo* (Kŭmgang Archaeology) 2. Gongju: Chungchŏng munhwajae yŏn’guwŏn (Chungcheong Institute of Cultural Heritage), 2005.
 15. Yamamoto, Takafumi. “The Spread of the Silla Influence into Hoseo Area from the View of Ancient Tombs.” *Journal of the Hoseo Archaeological Society* 4·5 (August 2001).
 16. _____. “Territory Shift of the Three Kingdoms at the Upper Stream Area of Namhan-River.” *Han’guk Sanggosaahakpo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 40 (May 2003).
 17. Ahn, Byungwoo. “Chungsegogohagŭi palchŏn-gwa Koryŏsa yŏn’gu (A Study on the Development of Medieval Archaeology and the History of Koryŏ).” *Yŏksabip’yŏng* (Critical Review of History) 64 (August 2003).
 18. _____. “Archaeological Research and History on Koryŏ period.” *Archaeology* 6, no.1 (June 2007).
 19. Yŏngnam kogohakhoe (Yeongnam Archaeological Society). *Yŏngnam-ŭi kogohak* (Archaeology in the Yŏngnam region). Seoul: Saheop’yŏngnon, 2015.
 20. Lee, Nam-Kyu. “Han’guk chungsegogohag-ŭi hyŏnhwang-gwa kwa-je (Current status and issues of Korean medieval archaeology).” *Han’guk maejangmunhwajae chosayŏn’gubangbŏmnon* (Methodology for the investigation and research on Korea’s burial culture) 1. Daejeon: Kungnimmunhwajae yŏn’guso (National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage), 2005.
 21. _____. “Archaeological Research Situation and Problems of Manual Industry in Medieval Korea.” *Han’guk chungsesa yŏn’gu* (The Journal of Korean Medieval History) 36 (August 2013).
 22. _____. “Hangmunjŏk chŏngŭi kuhyŏn-ŭl hyanghan Han’guk kogo-

- hakhoe-üi chonghapchök palchön panghyang mosaek (Seeking the direction for the comprehensive development of the Korea Archaeological Society for academic justice)." *Han'guk Kogohakpo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 100 (September 2016).
23. Lee, Dong-hee. "Later Baekje Remains in Jeollanam-do Region and their Historical Characteristics." *Han'guk Sanggosaahakbo* (Journal of Korean Ancient Historical Society) 87 (February 2015).
 24. Yi, In-jae. "Han'guk chungse-nün önje shijaktöeönnün'ga (When did Korea's medieval period begin)." *Nonjaeng-üro ingnün Han'guksa* (Reading Korean history through debates) 1. Seoul: Yöksabip'yöngsa, 2009.
 25. Lee, Han-Sang. "Construction of Foothold and Expansion of Horizon: Trend of study in historical archaeology during 2012-2013." *Yöksahakpo* (The Korean Historical Review) 223 (September 2014).
 26. Lee, Heejoon. "T'ongil Silla ihu-üi kogohak (Archaeology since Unified ShillaSilla)." *Han'guk Kogohakpo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 21 (December 1988).
 27. _____. *Silla kogohak yön'gu* (Study of Silla archaeology). Seoul: Sahoep'yöngnon, 2007.
 28. Chung, Yeon-sik. "The present and future of historical studies of the Korean people's everyday lives." *Yöksawa Hyönsil* (Quarterly Review of Korean History) 72 (June 2009).
 29. Jung, Eui Do. "Chungsegogohag-üi chinjön-ül wihayö: kogoch'örhakchök shidaegubullon (For the advance of medieval archaeology: the archaeo-philosophical time period division theory)." *Han'guk Kogohakpo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 100 (September 2016).
 30. Ju, Bo-don. "Maripkanshigi Silla-üi chibangt'ongch'i (ShillaSilla's rule over local regions during the time of maripkan)." *Yöngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 19 (December 1996).
 31. Choi, Byung-hyun. "The Chronology of Late Silla Style Pottery." *Yöngnamgogohakbo* (Yeongnam Archaeological Review) 59 (No-

- vember 2011).
32. Ha, Daeryong. "The Social Implications of the Grave Goods Composition of Silla Burials." *Han'guk Kogohakbo* (Journal of the Korean Archaeological Society) 101 (December 2016).
 33. Hong, Bo-sik. *Silla hugi kobunmunhwa yŏn'gu* (A study of the tumuli culture in late Silla). Seoul: Chunchugak, 2002.
 34. _____. "Sillat'ogi-ŭi Han'gangyuyŏk chŏngch'akkwajŏng-e taehan shiron: Yongin Pojŏng-ri Soshil punmyogun ch'ult'op'umŭl chungshimŭro (Comments on the settlement process of Silla pottery in the Han River area: focusing on the excavated artifacts from Soshil in Pojŏng-ri, Yongin)." *Kijŏngogo* (Kyŏnggi Archaeology) 5 (January 2005), Kijŏnmunhwajaeyŏn'guwŏn (Gyeonggi institute of cultural heritage).
 35. _____. "Han'gangyuyŏk Silla sŏkshilmyo-ŭi suyong-gwa chŏn'gae (Acceptance and advancement of stone chamber burial in the Han River area during Silla)." *Kijŏngogo* (Kyŏnggi Archaeology) 5 (January 2005), Kijŏnmunhwajaeyŏn'guwŏn (Gyeonggi institute of cultural heritage).
 36. _____. "The Ruling method of Silla in the Han-river on Archaeological Data." *The Paekche Yonku* 50 (August 2008).
 37. Hong, Yong Eui. "Han'guk chungsegogohak-ŭi shijak-kwa yŏn'gu tonghyang, kŭrigo kwaje (The beginning of Korean medieval archaeology, its research trends and issues)." *Yŏksawa Hyŏnsil* (Quarterly Review of Korean History) 103 (March 2017).
 38. Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation. *The Preliminary and Excavation Reports of sites become known as the King Sejong's First Tomb (old Yeongneung), Report of Research of Antiquities 214*. Seoul: Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation, 2010.
 39. Maekawa, Kaname. "Chūsei kōkogaku no genjō to kadai (Present status and issues of medieval archaeology)." *Chūsei sŏgōshiryōgaku no teishō* (Advocacy of the study of comprehensive medieval sources). Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 2003.
 40. Champion, Timothy C. "Medieval Archaeology and the Tyranny of

- the Historical Record,” in *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Studies in Medieval Archaeology*, edited by D. Austin and L. Alcock. London: Unwin Hyman, 1990.
41. Choi, Jongtaik, Lee, Youngseon, Lee, Jaeyong and Kim, Jangsuk. “Radiocarbon dating and the historical archaeology of Korea: an alternative interpretation of Hongryeonbong fortress II in the Three Kingdoms Period, Central Korea.” *Journal of Field Archaeology* 42, no. 1 (February 2017).
 42. Courtney, Paul. “Historians and Archaeologists: An English Perspective.” *Historical Archaeology* 41, no. 2 (June 2007).
 43. Crabtree, Pamela J. “Preface,” in *Medieval Archaeology: An Encyclopedia*, edited by P. J. Crabtree. New York: Garland Publishing, 2001.
 44. Deal, Michael. “Household Pottery Disposal in the Maya Highland: An Ethnoarchaeological Interpretation.” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 4 (December 1985).
 45. Deetz, James. *In small things forgotten: an archaeology of early American life*. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1996.
 46. Hicks, Dan and Beaudry, Mary C. “Introduction: the place of historical archaeology.” in *Historical Archaeology*, edited by D. Hicks, and M. C. Beaudry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
 47. Higham, Nick J. “Archaeology and History.” in *Medieval Archaeology: An Encyclopedia*, edited by P. J. Crabtree. New York: Garland Publishing, 2001.
 48. Kim, Hyunwoo. “The Chronology and Changing Nature of the Lime Mortar Burials of the Joseon Period.” *Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology* 10, National Museum of Korea, 2016.
 49. Little, Babara J. “Text-Aided Archaeology,” in *Text-Aided Archaeology*, edited by B. J. Little. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 1992.
 50. Moreland, John. “Archaeology and Texts: Subservience of Enlightenment.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35 (September 2006).
 51. Schiffer, M. B. “Is There a “Pompeii Premise” in Archaeology?.” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1985).

52. _____. *Formation Process of the Archaeological Record*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987.

〈Abstract〉

The Medieval Archaeology of Korea: Its Conceptual Framework and Examples

Hyunwoo Kim

The level of research in Korean medieval archaeology is considerably low in comparison to its importance. This is inevitable since there is only a short history of research of this period. However, more fundamentally, this is due to the lack of a thorough review and assessment of the conditions and status of the Korean medieval archaeology as well as the lack of research strategies and methodologies. Under such perception, this paper aims to present the conceptual framework of Korean medieval archaeology with concrete examples. First, I determined the temporal scope of medieval archaeology and explored its characteristics. Then, based on the characteristics of material sources and written records, I discussed the specific research strategies, topics, and methodologies with actual examples. Through this, I was able to confirm that medieval archaeology has the potential to provide new perspectives and methodologies not only in Korean history but in Korean archaeological research.

Keywords: historical archaeology, medieval archaeology, medieval period, methodology, material sources, and historical records

〈국문초록〉

한국의 중세고고학: 그 개념적 틀과 사례들

김현우 (서울대학교박물관)

한국 중세고고학은 그 중요성에 비해 다른 고고학분야에 비해 연구의 수준이 높지 않다. 이것은 짧은 연구사로 인해 발생하는 불가피한 문제이기도 하지만, 보다 근본적으로는 한국 중세고고학의 여건과 현황에 대한 면밀한 검토 및 진단과 그에 기반한 연구 전략과 방법론의 수립이 부족했기 때문이라고 판단된다. 이러한 인식 아래에 분고는 한국 중세고고학의 개념적 틀을 구체적인 사례와 함께 제시하고자 하였다. 우선 중세고고학의 시간적 범위를 설정하고 그 성격을 파악하였다. 이후 물질자료와 문헌자료의 성격에 기반하여 구체적인 연구 전략, 주제, 방법론을 실제 사례와 함께 논하였다. 이를 통해 중세고고학은 한국사 뿐만 아니라 한국고고학 연구에 새로운 시각과 방법론 제공할 수 있다는 점에서 그 잠재력을 확인하였다.

주제어: 역사고고학, 중세고고학, 중세, 방법론, 물질자료, 문헌자료