

# 岡山大学

OKAYAMA UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR  
THE DYNAMICS OF  
CIVILIZATIONS



OKAYAMA  
UNIVERSITY

GLOBAL GATE FOR LEARNING



GUIDE BOOK 2022

## Message from the director



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to exert unprecedented influence over our daily lives and the nature of our society. While scientific research on transmission prevention and vaccine development is being advanced to overcome this global crisis, attention is also being increasingly given to the effects of the pandemic on areas that traditionally fall under the umbrella of the humanities and social sciences, such as social relationships, values, cultural customs, and the economy.

From the emergence of humans to approximately 10,000 years before present, the small-scale and dispersed nature of groups precluded the outbreak of pandemics. Infectious diseases only started to pose a significant threat to humans following the start of agriculture and animal domestication and the subsequent increase in population, formation of cities and states, and appearance of settlements with populations in the tens to hundreds of thousands. While artificialization of the natural environment through agriculture and animal domestication, the development of technology, the creation of new worldviews and values, and other such uniquely human phenomena (=civilization) brought a new prosperity to humanity, they also brought about various problems, such as warfare, environmental degradation, discrimination, and poverty.

These various issues facing modern society were born at the intersection of humanity, society, technology, and the environment. Searching for individual causes of each respective aspect of the current situation is unlikely to provide a long-term perspective leading to a fundamental solution. Against this backdrop, the Research Institute for the Dynamics of Civilizations aims to establish a framework for interdisciplinary research both within the humanities and social sciences and with the field of natural sciences in order to elucidate the nature of human history in ways that would not otherwise be revealed through narrower approaches.

MATSUMOTO Naoko, Ph.D.  
Director

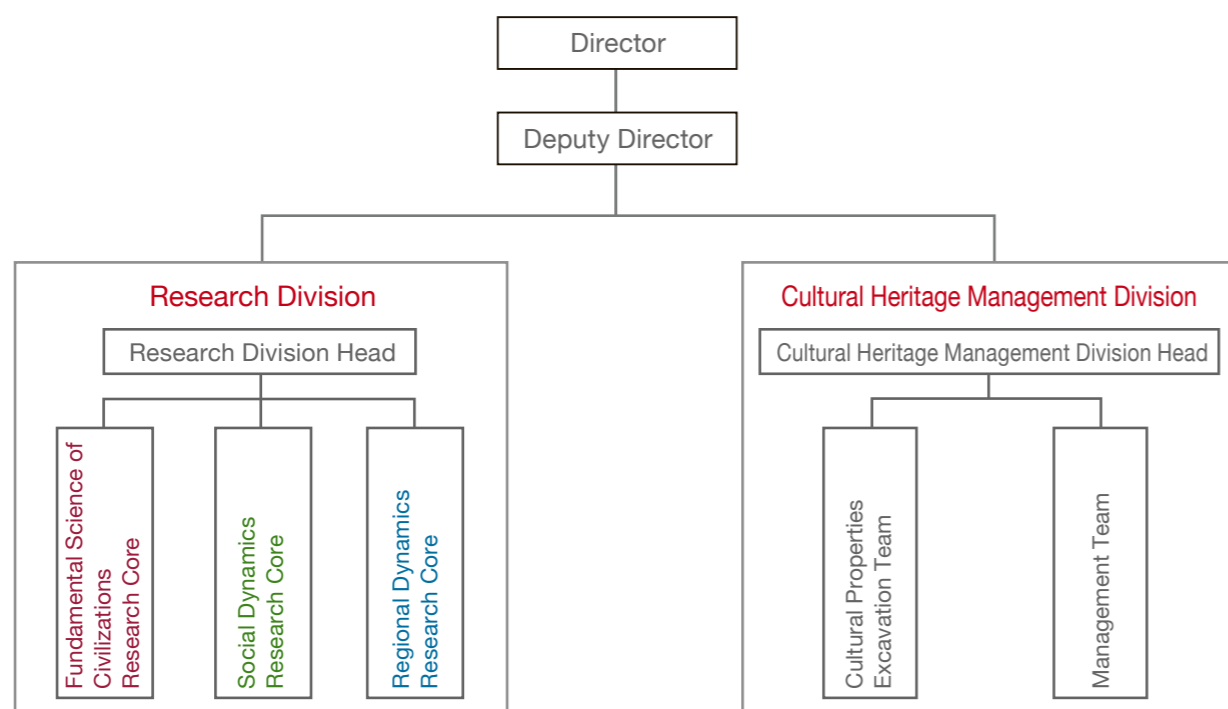
Research Institute for the Dynamics of Civilizations, Okayama University

## Mission

### Connecting different disciplines, regions, and time periods to realize new research in the humanities and social sciences

The study of the dynamics of civilizations is a new discipline that was created in order to reconsider the various issues facing modern society within the framework of human civilizations and contribute to the construction of a sustainable society using the knowledge attained through inquiry into the past and a focus on local regions.

## Organization



## The three research cores of the institute



### Long-Range Analysis

#### Fundamental Science of Civilizations Research Core

The emergence of humanity and the formation of civilizations

An archaeology without borders that reveals the history of humanity  
Humans and the environment  
Historical understanding of regional formation

### Middle-Range Analysis

#### Social Dynamics Research Core

Social complexity and the creation of regional society

Family, region, and the state as systems of survival  
Disasters and the resilience of local communities  
Social transformation and gender

### Short-Range Analysis

#### Regional Dynamics Research Core

The Setouchi region as a microcosm of Japanese society

The sustainability of regions, markets, and institutions  
The continuity and discontinuity of local cultures  
The future of communities as ushered in through art

The institute aims to establish an interdisciplinary research hub centered primarily on the humanities and social sciences by facilitating the organic collaboration among researchers from both inside and outside the university through various research projects and the formation of an international network.

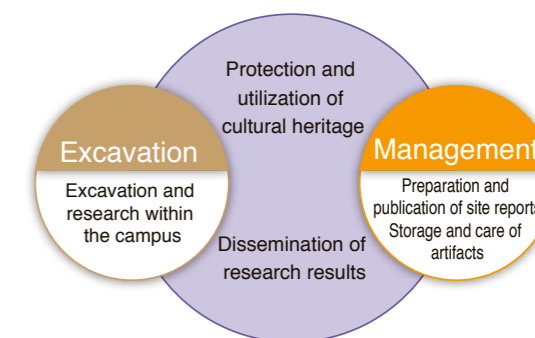
Working in close coordination with the Okayama University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the institute aims to foster individuals who can produce new knowledge, give back to society, and succeed on both the local and international stages.

## Cultural Heritage Management Division

■ **Overview**/Successor to the Okayama University Archaeological Research Center, the Cultural Heritage Management Division implements surveys, pursues conservation, conducts research, and promotes the utilization of cultural heritage within Okayama University, with a particular focus on the archaeological excavation, research, and management of buried cultural property. Additionally, it widely presents the results of these activities to the public and endeavors to utilize its findings within the community.

■ **History**/The excavation of buried cultural property within Okayama University began with the attendance of archaeologists from the Okayama City Board of Education at construction on the Shikata Campus in 1978, with observational and trial excavations conducted by Okayama Prefecture and Okayama City continuing until 1982. Preparation of a system for the protection of archaeological sites within the university began in earnest the same year, resulting in the creation of the Office of Archaeological Excavation in 1983 for the purpose of ensuring both the smooth construction of university facilities and the protection of buried cultural property. In November 1987, it was subsequently reorganized into the Archaeological Research Center, conducting excavations of and research on buried cultural property within the university, publishing reports of its findings, managing excavated artifacts, and periodically holding exhibitions. Following integration into the Research Institute for the Dynamics of Civilizations, it will continue carrying out these tasks, in addition to enhancing its research activities in line with the goals of the institute.

■ **Organization**/The Cultural Heritage Management Division operates under the specific guidance of a council of faculty members belonging to the Research Institute for the Dynamics of Civilizations. Additionally, archaeological excavation within the campus is conducted as a university-wide operation and excavation and research are carried out under the guidance of a committee for the excavation of buried cultural property. Under the Division Head (professor) and Team Leader (associate professor) are four assistant professors and five technical assistants. While duties are divided between the Cultural Properties Excavation Team and the Management Team, all members cooperate to protect and promote the cultural heritage of the university and endeavor to widely disseminate the results of their activities.



## Long-Range Analysis

### Fundamental Science of Civilizations Research Core

The emergence of humanity and the formation of civilizations

An archaeology without borders that reveals the history of humanity

Humans and the environment

Historical understanding of regional formation



The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan (Mexico)

- MATSUMOTO Naoko [Cognitive Archaeology, Gender Archaeology]
- SUZUKI Shintaro [Bioarchaeology, Maya Archaeology]
- SEIKE Akira [Japanese Archaeology]
- UEMURA Genki [History of Philosophy, Contemporary Philosophy]
- RYAN Joseph [Japanese Archaeology, East Asian Archaeology]
- KIMURA Osamu [Japanese Archaeology]
- YAMAGUCHI Yuji [Archaeology]
- SUGIYAMA Saburo [New World Archaeology, Anthropology]
- IIZUKA Yoshiyuki [Petrology, Scientific Analysis of Artifacts]
- SHIKAKU Ryuji [West Asian Archaeology]
- SUGIYAMA Nawa [Mesoamerican Archaeology, Zooarchaeology]
- TSUKAMOTO Kenichiro [Mesoamerican Archaeology]
- PAREDES Federico [Social Archaeology]
- KUPPRAT Felix [Maya Archaeology]
- VÁZQUEZ Verónica [Maya Archaeology]

Embracing a long-term perspective on the emergence and dynamics of civilizations, the Fundamental Science of Civilizations Research Core aims to elucidate the unique characteristics of humans that allowed them to bring about the rise of civilizations and the various factors that led to their subsequent ebb and flow. It seeks to investigate universal issues that will contribute to the creation of a sustainable society, such as how agriculture, a major turning point in human history, began and how humans have responded to cyclic climate change.

To accomplish these goals, this research core places particular emphasis on interdisciplinary research. In addition to nondestructive analysis (including X-ray computed tomography and muon radiography) and bioarchaeology, collaboration with researchers from both inside and outside the university hailing from a variety of fields, such as geoscience, chemistry, botany,

genetics, and physics, is advanced in order to develop new research methods enabling the reconstruction of society and the environment from the archaeological record and to conduct simulation- and GIS-based analysis and modelling.

In addition to the Setouchi region of Japan, Mexico, Guatemala, and other regions of Mesoamerica are situated as a central research field. International research on the dynamics of civilizations across diverse environments has the capacity to reveal the historical processes by which regions are formed, the essential nature of humans that led to the emergence of civilizations, and the mechanisms behind the diversity of culture and society. Ultimately, this research core strives to answer the fundamental question of the humanities: What does it mean to be human?

## Middle-Range Analysis

### Social Dynamics Research Core

Social complexity and the creation of regional society

Family, region, and the state as systems of survival

Disasters and the resilience of local communities

Social transformation and gender



A market in Luang Prabang (Laos)

- NAKATANI Ayami [Sociocultural Anthropology, Gender Studies]
- IMAZU Katsunori [Ancient Japanese History]
- OKUBO Noriko [Japanese Art History, Ukiyo-e]
- TOKUNAGA Seiko [Medieval Japanese History]
- MATSUMURA Keiichiro [Cultural Anthropology]
- MITSUMOTO Jun [Archaeology and Museum Studies]
- HIGASHINO Masanobu [Early Modern Japanese History]
- IWASAKI Shiho [Japanese and Chinese Archaeology]
- NOZAKI Takahiro [Japanese Archaeology]
- KAWAMOTO Naomi [Cultural Anthropology]
- SAWAYAMA Mikako [Women's History in Japan]
- HIGA Natsuko [Anthropology]
- MUROYAMA Kyoko [Early Modern Japanese History]

Following their spread across the globe, humans adapted to new environments and created unique cultures, thereby leading to increasingly complex social systems. In the face of growing problems plaguing modern society, we are pressed to question their root causes and elucidate the processes by which these various problems arose and evolved.

The Social Dynamics Research Core combines a middle-range temporal axis with a spatial axis encompassing various cultures and languages to illuminate how social systems and human relations—families, local regions, states, religions, social rank and class, gender, intergroup relationships, etc.—have evolved together with environmental and population change throughout the course of recorded history.

Reconsidering the relationship between humans and between humans and nature, this research core questions how a diverse and sustainable society can be realized going forward.

Reconfiguring the various boundaries once drawn according to traditional values, we aim to clearly demonstrate the significance and necessity of presenting and sharing the human trajectory from past to present.

Research projects currently underway include “Fundamental research on historical consciousness and historical material science supporting local society”, “Multi-disciplinary approaches to sex/gender: Categorization revisited”, and “Practical study on the socialization and utilization of cultural resources through the application of ICT technology”. In addition to pursuing interdisciplinary research with scholars from diverse fields, we are advancing joint international research in order to elucidate social dynamics in line with the existence and lifeways of all humanity.

## Short-Range Analysis

### Regional Dynamics Research Core

The Setouchi region as a microcosm of Japanese society

The sustainability of regions, markets, and institutions

The continuity and discontinuity of local cultures

The future of communities as ushered in through art



Remains of the refinery power plant on Inujima (Okayama)

- TSUMORI Takayuki [Global Logistics Analysis]
- KITAGAWA Hirofumi [Economic Geography (Urban and Industrial Geography)]
- TENG Jian [International Input-Output Analysis]
- NISHITA Yosuke [Strategic Management]
- FUJII Wasa [Sociology]
- IWABUCHI Yasushi [Local Politics, Civic Engagement]
- TENNOJIYA Tatsumasa [Accounting]
- TOKI Masahito [Labor and Employment Law]
- FUKUSHIGE Satoko [Administrative Law, Public Property Law]
- SATO Jumpei [Economic History of East Asia]
- TASHIRO Kouki [Administrative Law]
- MATSUOKA Hiroyuki [Modern Japanese History]

The Regional Dynamics Research Core considers the world of the past 200 years—broadly, the “modern age”. This period witnessed the formation of nation-states and their people until the 1980s, after which the rapid advance in globalization led to either their subsequent dissolution and dismantling or conversely to a reactionary strengthening of nationalism. Globalization, the significant increase in the spatial mobility of people, things, money, and information, can lead to inter-localization—the creation of a cross-border network connecting cities and regions. Therefore, in order to understand the phenomenon of globalization that characterizes the modern age, it is necessary to analyze the nature of regional society and inter-local networks.

Inter-local networks are created through markets, and

markets function by means of various systems set in place to support them. These systems have been developed based on cultures unique to each region. Meanwhile, globalization brings about the transformation and integration of the various systems, cultures, and technologies cultivated within each region. Corporations, individuals, governmental bodies, and other players operate within these transformations and systems, create and maintain this order, and bring about change. Through a comprehensive and multifaceted consideration of markets, systems, cultures, technologies, and the players concerned, this research core analyzes the mechanisms behind the creation, formation, dissolution, dismantling, and strengthening of people and their identity owing to globalization and the role and nature of regional society therein.

## International joint project: BEyond ARCHAEOlogy

BE-ARCHAEO is an international collaborative research project between the natural and social sciences receiving funding from the RISE program under the European Union's Horizon 2020 program, which constitutes a central pillar of the EU's science, technology, and innovation policy. It is carried out through the partnership of six European research institutions and private companies represented by the University of Turin Department of Chemistry, with Okayama University as a primary partner institution. Researchers from both the natural and social sciences from Okayama University participate, led by MATSUMOTO Naoko, director of the Research Institute for the Dynamics of Civilizations.

With a focus on Japan's ancient state formation period and a field centered on the Kibi region of the Kofun period, this project aims to cultivate a new understanding of history and develop new specialized technology based on the innovative results born through the international and transdisciplinary exchange of advanced knowledge and technology. The European archaeologists and scientists participate in the archaeological excavation of the Tobiotsuka mounded tomb (Sōja City, Okayama Prefecture) carried out by the Okayama University Department of Archaeology and jointly conduct advanced scientific surveys and collect and analyze samples. The analyses of the samples collected at the excavation are conducted in cooperation with Japanese scientists, including those serving as concurrent faculty of this institute. Through additional analysis of the considerable amount of archaeological materials in the university's collection and from related regions, this project aims to elucidate the nature of Kofun-period rituals, technology, interregional relationships, and social change.

The innovative results achieved through this project will be presented to the public in FY 2022 at the Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo in Shimane Prefecture, utilizing the latest in information science and digital technology.

BE-ARCHAEO participating institutions

University of Turin Department of Chemistry (Italy); University of Lisbon Department of History (Portugal); TecArt (Italy); TerraMarine (Greece); International Research Institute for Archaeology and Ethnology (Italy); Visual Dimension (Belgium); Okayama University Research Institute for the Dynamics of Civilizations (Japan)

<https://www.bearchaeo.com/>



Scientific analysis of excavated artifacts



© MARCO MEROLA / BeArcheo project  
Joint excavation of the Tobiotsuka mounded tomb

## Cultural Properties Rescue Project

Okayama Shiryo Net has partnered with the national Shiryo Net and the Inter-University Research Institute Network Project to Preserve and Succeed Historical and Cultural Resources, an initiative headed by the National Institutes for the Humanities (lead organization: Rekihaku), Tohoku University, and Kobe University, in order to advance restoration activities for the materials damaged in the torrential rains that affected western Japan in 2018.

It is our goal to rediscover local culture and contribute to the creation of a new regional society by preserving and utilizing local historical materials, which are often lost to disasters. Utilizing (1) a historical material science approach to undesignated, privately stored cultural property and local historical heritage, (2) mathematical models using digital technology, and (3) new methodologies in the humanities including scientific analysis and conservation science, we aim to produce new research on regional history in order to reconsider the relationship between natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, epidemics, and adverse weather, and people's daily lives in line with the reality of local society.

By cooperating with universities participating in the national Shiryo Net initiatives, we aim to understand the mutual relationship between community and consciousness (both everyday and historical) and develop an educational program to cultivate individuals able to contribute to the construction of a diverse, open, and resilient regional society.

Following the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995, historians, cultural heritage management specialists, museum affiliates, and citizens of the city of Kobe banded together to create the Historical Resource Network in an effort to rescue and protect the historical and cultural materials stored in private houses. Eventually, similar organizations appeared and spread across the country to protect local heritage from disaster. Based at Okayama University, Okayama Shiryo Net was started in 2005 to create a preventative network in operation before disaster strikes—the first of its kind in Japan. The Research Institute for the Dynamics of Civilizations is also committed to active participation in these initiatives.



Treatment to stabilize damaged materials

## The Setouchi Project

Over the past 30 years, fragmentation (segmentation of the production process and cross-border decentralization) has rapidly increased accompanying the global formation and integration of information systems and logistics systems. Patterns of industrial agglomeration have changed significantly, with emerging cities and regions experiencing rapid and unprecedented growth and hypertrophy on the one hand, and the decline of formerly high-agglomeration cities and regions and the stagnation of mid- and low-agglomeration cities and regions on the other.

In this research project, we pursue multifaceted analyses of the acceleration mechanisms and structure of low functional agglomeration and decentralization in the Setouchi region—an aggregate of stagnating and declining mid- and low-agglomeration cities and areas—considering the markets, legal systems, culture, and the various players operating therein. Additionally, we consider the spatial and historical characteristics through a comparison with other countries and regions (including Taiwan, China, Korea, Australia, France, and Vietnam). Furthermore, we consider the conditions and factors leading to the sustainability of low-agglomeration areas by analyzing the manifestation of the latent core competence of these areas and the possibility of the construction of a new inter-local network connecting them.

In addition to members of the Regional Dynamics Research Core, members of the Graduate Institute of Japanese Political and Economic Studies of Tamkang University in Taiwan have also participated in this project since FY 2021. The Japan-Taiwan joint international symposium held online in March 2022 facilitated discussion concerning the conditions for and issues surrounding the sustainability of regional society. In addition to enhanced dialogue, we aim to broaden the countries, regions, and research facilities with whom we maintain cooperative relationships.



Cargo in a container terminal in Tamashima, Mizushima Port



Oyster rafts floating off the coast of Hinase, Okayama

## Archaeological sites within the university

There are several archaeological sites within Okayama University: The Tsushima-okadai site on the Tsushima campus, the Shikata site on the Shikata campus, and the Fukuro site on the Misasa campus.

As of FY 2021, 71 archaeological excavations have been conducted at Okayama University: 40 at the Tsushima-okadai site, 29 at the Shikata site, and two at the Fukuro site. Results of these excavations have been published in numerous site reports, including 21 for Tsushima-okadai, 16 for Shikata, and one for Fukuro.

### The Tsushima-okadai site

In addition to being one of the most well-known Jōmon settlements of Western Japan, findings from this site have greatly contributed to clarifying the development of paddy fields from the Yayoi through the Early Modern period. It holds additional significance as a wartime site, having been utilized as a Japanese army camp in 1907.



Excavation of an Early Yayoi-period paddy field

### The Shikata site

This site has provided invaluable information concerning the development of settlements from the Middle Yayoi period onward and in particular the structure of sites from the ancient and medieval periods. It is also well known for the discovery of archaeological features and artifacts related to the Shikata manor, a private estate of the Fujiwara regents.



Settlement dating to the Middle to Late Yayoi period

Located on the northern and southern ends of the Okayama Plain, the Tsushima-okadai and Shikata sites are the subject of ongoing archaeological excavation and research. It is particularly noteworthy that, even though these sites are located in an urban setting, a significant extent of each site has been excavated, allowing a fuller understanding of the ancient history of this region and revealing its cultural diversity. Particular emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary joint research with the natural sciences, including geoenvironmental analysis through coring surveys, analysis of unearthed seeds and wooden objects, and dating of features and artifacts.

### The Fukuro site

This site was discovered in 1997 during construction at what is now the Institute for Planetary Materials. Features and artifacts have been discovered dating from the end of the Initial Jōmon period, approximately 8000 years ago, through the medieval period, revealing for the first time the history of the Misasa area.



Containing all other colors, black is used for the institute's symbol to represent the birth of interdisciplinary research from the foundation formed by the three research cores.



University Mark

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