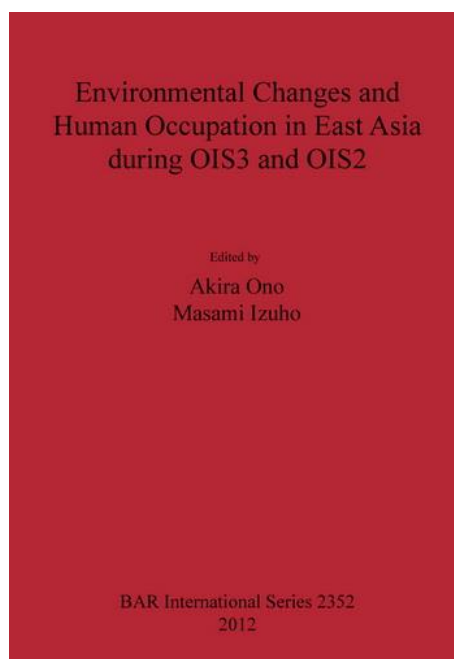

Book review: Environmental Changes and Human Occupation in East Asia during OIS3 and OIS2

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Environmental Changes and Human Occupation in East Asia during OIS3 and OIS2

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This book represents the proceedings of presentations from the session “Quaternary Environmental Changes and Humans in Asia and the Western Pacific” at the symposium “Quaternary Environmental Changes and Humans in Asia and the Western Pacific,” held from 19 to 22, November 2007, in Tsukuba, Japan.

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This book consists of 10 articles. Among them, six articles report the latest information about environmental data during Oxygen Isotopic Stage 3 (OIS3) and Oxygen Isotopic Stage 2 (OIS2) in East Asia, such as pollen analysis, carbon dating, terrestrial mammal fauna, and so on. Since these articles do not generally focus on lithic studies, they will not be mentioned here. The last four articles are about the chronology and technology of lithic assemblages in Northeast Asia.

First, Anatoly Kuznetsov discusses the origin of microblade industries in Northeast Asia during OIS2. He arranges information about the distribution, chronological data, and environmental settings of microblade industries in Northeast Asia and Siberia. He points out that the spread of reindeer during the Sartan period was related to the origin of microblade industries and concludes that the oldest data on pressure flaking and composite tools are from southern East Siberia, about 20,000 BP, according to current evidence.

Second, Yongwook Yoo discusses the chronology and technology of Paleolithic assemblages in the Imjin-Hantan River area, Korea. He arranges the history of research in this area, and points out the problems of previous studies. Yoo presents new data from dating of Paleolithic sites, and re-evaluates geological and archaeological site formation process in this area.

Third, Kazutaka Shimada discusses the earliest archaeological records of obsidian use and the emergence of modern human behavior in Japan. He explains assemblages of the Middle Paleolithic and the Initial Stage of the Upper Paleolithic, and how obsidian use changed alongside the development of lithic technology in Initial Stage of the Upper Paleolithic.

Finally, Masami Izuhō, Fumito Akai, Yuichi Nakazawa and Akira Iwase discuss the chronology and lithic technology of assemblages in Upper Paleolithic Hokkaido, during OIS3 and OIS2. First, they explain about the paleoenvironment in Hokkaido. Second, they choose 13 sites which are representative of Upper Paleolithic Hokkaido, and divide them by reduction strategy into four categories: (1) Small flake, (2) Flake, (3) Blade, and (4) Microblade. They summarize the information about these sites, such as geochronological context, carbon-14 dating, composition of raw materials and tool types, sources of raw materials, and reduction sequence, and compare differences among those categories. They present the latest data obtained from the sites excavated by the authors and discuss the results of the geochronological and technological analyses. Third, they show the connections between changes in climate and in lithic assemblages. The most important result of their research reveals the temporal correspondence between lithic industries and floral and faunal groups. They also note that hunter gatherers changed their lifeway and hunting strategies as their floral and faunal environment changed. This article is one of the first to report to researchers in other countries about the flake industry of the Early Upper Paleolithic and up to the microblade industry of the Late Upper Paleolithic of Hokkaido.

In summary, all of the articles in this volume offer and discuss the latest information about currently popular topics in archaeological research in East Asia. The articles of lithic study and those of environmental data are complementary to each other. This book makes important contributions to our understanding of respective sites, lithic industries, and the environmental changes in this area during OIS3 and OIS2.