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Drodzy Czytelnicy.

Niniejszy specjalny zeszyt *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 zawiera cztery artykuły napisane przez studentów doktoranckich z polskich i czeskich ośrodków akademickich. Teksty te przedstawiają wyniki ich studiów oraz pracy badawczej.

Tematyka artykułów jest szeroka. W niniejszym zbiorze znajdą Państwo tekst literaturoznawczy o wątkach homoseksualnych w twórczości japońskiego pisarza Hori Tatsuo (Veronika Abbasová), artykuł poświęcony symbolice śmierci w kulturze Japonii oraz szeroko rozumianego Zachodu (Agnieszka Pączkowska), pracę językoznawczą traktującą o problematyce podmiotu w języku japońskim (Patrycja Świeczkowska) oraz tekst na temat związków archaicznego języka japońskiego i języka Koguryō (Vit Ulman). Wszystkie teksty pochodzą z lat 2014-15.

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Dear Readers,

This special edition of *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 contains four articles written by PhD candidates from Poland and Czech Republic. They present results of their original studies and research.

The subject area of the papers is very diverse. Veronika Abbasová explores the motif of homosexuality in literary works by Hori Tatsuo. Agnieszka Pączkowska discusses symbolism of death in Japanese and broadly defined Western cultures. Patrycja Świeczkowska and Vit Ulman contribute with papers from the field of linguistics. Świeczkowska elaborates on the problem of subject in the Japanese language and Ulman discusses relations between archaic Japanese and Koguryō languages. All papers were submitted for publication in 2014-2015.

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読者のみなさまへ

この季刊誌「*Silva Iaponicarum 日林*」特別号には、チェコとポーランドの大学に在籍する日本学博士候補者の論文を収録しました。各論文は、著者の学業と研究活動の成果をまとめたものです。

論文のテーマは、多彩です。本号に収録されているのは、ヴェロニカ・アバソヴァ氏(Veronika Abbasová)による、堀辰雄の文学における同性愛モチーフをめぐる文学史研究、アグニエシカ・ポンチコフスカ氏(Agnieszka Pączkowska)の、日本と広義の西洋の文化における死の象徴を主題にした論文、パトリツィア・シフィェチコフスカ氏(Patrycja Świeczkowska)が、日本語の主語を取り上げた言語学研究、ヴィト・ウルマン氏(Vit Ulman)が著した古代日本語と高句麗語の関連に関する論文です。いずれの論文も、2014〜2015 年に執筆されました。

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　　2016 年 9 月　クラクフ・ポズナニ・トルン・ワルシャワ・久喜

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Veronika Abbasová

The Portrayal of Homosexuality and Queer Elements in Hori Tatsuo's *Les Joues en Feu*

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes Hori Tatsuo's short story *Moyuru hō* (*Les Joues en Feu*), focusing on how the author dealt with the topic of male homosexuality in the story. First I give a brief overview of history of stories dealing with the same topic, emphasizing the transition of the focus from iro to ai, and I proceed to introduce Hori and his works. Then I provide a close reading of the story, concentrating on its plot, characters and language. In my analysis, I use the findings of queer theory to find "queer elements" in the story (i.e. places where the binary oppositions of gender and sexuality are blurred) and concepts such as marginalization developed by G. Pflugfelder.

KEYWORDS: Japanese literature, Hori Tatsuo, homosexuality, queer theory

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how male homosexuality is treated in the short story *Moyuru hō* (*Les Joues en Feu*, 1932) written by the Japanese modernist writer Hori Tatsuo, and whether it contains any elements that we could call "queer". I approach this as part of my dissertation, which concentrates on the analysis of how several Japanese modernist authors describe male homosexuality while utilizing some of the methods of queer theory. The reason I focus on these writers – including Hori – in particular is that I consider their works to be a missing link between the old homoerotic tradition of Japanese literary past and the new popularity of romantic gay stories catering to predominately female audience, i.e. the genres *shōnen ai* and *yaoi*.

Queer theory, based on Derrida's deconstruction, argues that the separation of population to men and women or homosexuals and heterosexuals does not cover all nuances of gender and sexual identities. In queer theory, gender and sexuality are not perceived as inborn and unchangeable characteristics, but as socials constructs, the paradigms of which are constantly developing. We may define queer elements as *"**gestures or analytic models** which dramatize incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desires"* (Jagose 1996: 3). In other words, queer elements are the parts of the story where

binary oppositions are deconstructed. Such queer elements can be of course found in variety of literary fiction; it is however especially meaningful to look for them in works that have chosen homosexual relationships as their main focus.

Such is the case of Hori's story, which focuses on erotic relationships between adolescent boys. By the time the story was written, the topic of homosexuality was already well-treated in Japanese literature. We encounter it already at Mori Ōgai's *Vita Sexualis* (1909), a description of a young man's sexual awakening, which was banned as obscene soon after its publication. The boys in the boarding house are separated into two groups, the "soft" one whose members prefer the company of women, and the "hard" one that prefer men. The boys' relationships do not stay platonic – on the contrary, the sexual side of these relationships was much stronger than the emotional one. For example, the protagonist describes how a group of older students tried to rape him and how he has to live in a state of constant vigilance so he is not attacked again, and that he even walks around armed.

The subject-matter of homosexual relationships between boys has continued to appear in Japanese literature, though rarely has it been treated in such a blatantly sexual way. It usually sublimated into stories about platonic, pure and innocent first love. This is connected with the changes undergone by Japanese literature, where the ideal of platonic love (*ai*) imported from Western Christian thought has been gaining prominence, replacing the older concept of physical love (*iro*). It was promoted already by Tsubouchi Shōyō in his ground-breaking critical anthology *Shōsetsu shinzui* (The Essence of the Novel, 1885), in which he laid out the demands for a modern Japanese novel, among which he also stated an emphasis on a "higher form of love" – *ai*. This for him meant not only mutual attraction, but also respect and a deep feeling pointed at the soul of the loved one, not just on their looks (Saeki 2011: 73-6).

Tsubouchi's concept of love grew in popularity and we find a lot of works where platonic love represents the ideal, for both homosexual and heterosexual relationships. For example, in the Edogawa Rampo's novel *Kotō no oni* (The Demon of the Lonely Isle, 1929-1930), the following statement is made by the main character after his first sexual intercourse with his (woman) lover:

> When we spent the second night in the same hotel, our relationship stopped to be a dreamlike, nothing but beautiful young love (Edogawa 1987: 15).

The carnal side of the relationship diminishes its beauty. Similarly, when the protagonist in Kawabata's novel *Izu no odoriko* (The Dancing Girl of Izu, 1926) finds out that the dancer he felt attracted too is much younger than he thought – still just a child – he is not disappointed. Far from it, he feels relief because after his discovery he is able to feel a more ideal love for her, untouched by carnal desires.

Platonic love is also celebrated in Kawabata's novel *Shōnen* (The Boy[1], 1948-9[2]), which deals with the author's memories of his relationship with his classmate Kiyono. We find such stories, which are often autobiographical, in the works of other writers, such as the aforementioned Edogawa Rampo[3] or less known authors Yamazaki Toshio or Tachibana Sotō.

Hori Tatsuo (1904-1953) is a representative of European modernism in Japanese literature, most closely connected with the *shinkankakuha* (new sensationalism) school. During his high school studies, Hori started to express his interest in literature. First he familiarized himself with Japanese poetry, from which he was intrigued the most by the poems of Hagiwara Sakutarō, but soon he discovered European literature, especially French. He made his first translations from French. Hori was a great admirer of not only Western literature, but also Western way of life. He spent his holidays at Karuizawa mountain town, the favorite resort of English and German tourists. It was Hori's fascinated observation of beautiful foreign women that led him to writing his maiden work, a short story called *Rūbensu no giga* (Fake Rubens, 1930). His first novelist success was *Sei kazoku* (Holy Family, 1930), inspired by the author's relationship with two women poets, mother and daughter, and reflecting on Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's suicide. Another important work is *Utsukushii mura* (A Beautiful Village, 1933), a plotless novel whose endeavor to capture a fine web of memories related to a certain place in free poetic form results in it often being compared to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time.* This is not a coincidence, as Hori's letters prove that he indeed drew inspiration from Proust. In Karuizawa Hori met with Yano Ayako, who was convalescing there from tuberculosis, and became engaged to her in 1934. Unfortunately, in the following spring her health took turn for worse. In July she became a patient in a convalescent home and Hori joined her there to take care of her, and also because he

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[1] Neither the title nor the contents make it clear whether the word 'shōnen' is meant to be in singular or plural. D. Keene translates the title as 'Boys', but I think that it designates only the narrator's lover Kiyono, so I chose singular.

[2] According to Kawabata, this story was written much sooner, between 1916 and 1918.

[3] In *Rampo uchiakebanashi* (Rampo's Confession, 1926).

caught the disease himself [4] . Despite all his efforts, Ayako died in December of that year. This relationship lead Hori to write the novel *Kaze tachinu* (The Wind Has Risen), which was serialized between 1936 and 1938. In 1941 he published a Mauriac-inspired novel *Naoko* about a woman who is dissatisfied with her marriage. At that time his new-found interest in older Japanese literature made him render several Heian period texts into modern Japanese. In 1944, after a severe bout of coughing blood, Hori stopped writing, and he died nine years later in 1953 (Keene 1984: 685-708**).**

The story *Moyuru hō* was written in 1932, early in Hori's career, but it already contains elements typical for his oeuvre – the topics of platonic, aestheticized love and sickness and death and a language rich in metaphors. Let us now summarize the plot of the story, which is a first person narration of an adolescent boy describing his first erotic experiences. The protagonist starts to study at high school and live in a boarding house. There he meets two boys, an older student Uozumi, who is a sturdily built discus thrower, and a fragile, pretty Saigusa, who is very popular among older students.

The protagonist and Uozumi get close, when the protagonist watches a bee pollinate some white flowers he doesn't know. Out of "childish cruelty", the main character picks a pollinated flower and crushes it between his fingers. While he then continues his stroll in the garden, he is sought out by Uozumi, who offers him to watch something in a microscope in the school laboratory. The protagonist agrees, because he wants to gain the friendship of the unapproachable, yet admired discus thrower. However, when they lean over the microscope together, he notices Uozumi watching him with a longing expression that reminds him of the bee and white flowers. He apologizes and leaves, which is the end of the episode.

Then we learn about the new student Saigusa, who joins the protagonist's class. Saigusa possesses a fragile beauty, which attracts older students as well as the protagonist, who notices that Saigusa always leaves for the common dormitory well before the others. The protagonist himself usually goes to sleep much later, but one day he has a sore throat and goes to bed early. He catches Uozumi sitting on Saigusa's bed. He lies on his own bed, which is placed next to Saigusa's, and Uozumi leaves.

When the protagonist complains to Saigusa about his sore throat, Saigusa touches his forehead and wrist, which makes the protagonist's heart beat faster. Some days later the situation is repeated. The protagonist has a sore throat and goes to bed early. However, this time Saigusa is not in the

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[4] But even before that Hori struggled with weak health, as he suffered from pleurisy.

dormitory. When he comes back and the protagonist asks him where he went, Saigusa says that he went for a walk, but the protagonist doesn't believe him. Then there is a narrative gap. The main character states that his and Saigusa's relationship has overstepped the line of friendship. Uozumi, on the other hand, has become even more unapproachable, puts all his energy into discus throwing and finally leaves the school before the mid-term examinations.

Summer holidays come. The protagonist and Saigusa go on a week-long trip to the coast. When they are spending the first night at an inn, the protagonist spots a strange scar on Saigusa's back, and learns that it was caused by spinal tuberculosis. He succumbs to an overwhelming desire to touch this scar.

Next day the two boys reach a fishing village, where they meet a group of local girls. Both are intrigued by the girl with the most beautiful eyes and they try to get her attention. Only Saigusa succeeds in doing this, as the girls laugh at the protagonist's remark and he is humiliated. He sees a malicious expression on Saigusa's face and feels hatred towards him.

They leave the place, both in poor mood. Aloud they blame the bad weather, but they are both aware that their love is ending. There follows a sad goodbye, after which they will never meet again. For some time, Saigusa writes "what might be called love letters" to the protagonist, but their recipient gradually ceases to respond. Later he learns that Saigusa has fallen ill, and in December of that year he reads a notice of his death, which leaves him unmoved.

Some years later he himself falls ill and enters a convalescent home, when he meets a young boy who reminds him of Saigusa. When, in the final lines of the story, he sees on the boy's back a scar caused by spine tuberculosis, similar to Saigusa's, he is deeply agitated.

The name of the story *Moyuru hō* – Les Joues en Feu (literary "burning cheeks") was probably inspired by a poetry collection of the same name written by the French poet Radiguet (*Les joues en feu,* 1920). The French inspiration did not end with the name. The whole topic of homosexuality might have been taken from contemporary French literature, where it was quite in vogue in the 1920s, especially because of the writings by Marcel Proust and André Gide. The basic plotline of *Moyuru hō* was taken from another French work, a novel *Le Grand Écart* (The Big Jump, 1923) written by Jean Cocteau, which also dealt with a love triangle between schoolboys. However, Cocteau's novel is written in a completely different manner. What Hori barely suggests or hides with a metaphor, Cocteau says directly. For example, where the athlete Stopwell (Uozumi's model)

refuses the attentions of Petitcopain (who shares some characteristics with Saigusa), he advises him: "It would be better if you went out with girls. Behind the Pantheon, you can get one for fifty centimes" (Cocteau 1923:35). Petitcopain heeds this advice and catches a venereal disease; such a development is inconceivable in Hori. In his works, sexuality is always hidden, e. g. by a metaphor of pollinating or a raspy voice.

In his use of language, Hori was inspired by both the Japanese aesthetic tradition with its emphasis on the expressivity of the unsaid, and the French modernists (especially Proust[5]), and his works are marked by a great degree of aestheticization of reality, poetic expressions and sublimity. He prefers to express himself with metaphors, like in this passage:

> A honeybee, dusty with pollen, flew up from a great riot of pure white flowers I did not know, blooming in the corner of the garden. I thought I would watch and see to which flower the honeybee carried the pollen clustered on his legs, but he appeared indecisive and not about to settle on any of them. At that moment, I sensed that every one of the flowers was coquettishly arching her styles in a stratagem to entice the bee to herself. (Hori 1989: 30)

The honeybee pollinating flowers functions here as a metaphor of budding sexuality; the erotic is also alluded to by the unusually raspy voice of the girl and the titular burning cheeks, which could, however, express also innocence, shame, fever of the sick and on the other hand a demonstration of a young, burning life – they end up being a rather ambivalent symbol.

The two objects of the protagonist's desire – Saigusa and the village girl – are reduced to two images: Saigusa into his tuberculosis scar (*I stroked the curious ridge on his spine as I might a piece of ivory*, ibid. 33) and the girl into her raspy voice (*All the same, when fragments of a strange rasping voice came drifting to me from time to time, I was deaf to all else*, ibid. 35). The reduction is so complete that for the protagonist the absence of the scar equals the absence of his love: he doesn't care for Saigusa's love letters and even the notice of his death doesn't move him. However, when he sees a similar scar on other boy's back many years later, he is profoundly agitated.

This sublimity in regard to erotic relationships is present in other Hori's works as well. In the short story *Kao* (Faces, 1933), the affection between

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[5] There are numerous studies trying to ascertain the exact scope of Proust's influence on Hori's stories, e.g. Woo 2004 or Takeuchi 2006.

characters (along with their desperation and search for comfort) is expressed by a scene where they lie on each other and rub each other's faces. We find similar expressions of love in Hori's perhaps best known novel *Kaze tachinu* (The Wind Has Risen, 1936-8), which is based on his autobiographical experience, as it tells a story of a man who falls in love and becomes engaged with a girl named Setsuko, who suffers from tuberculosis, and stays by her side as her health gradually worsens – which is exactly what happened to Hori and his fiancée Yano Ayako. We are reminded of *Kao* in the following scene:

> "What is going on?" she asked doubtfully. "Nothing," I said with a wink and then I slowly bent over her, and impatiently pressed my face to hers. "You're cold," she said and moved her head a little with her eyes closed. Her hair gave a faint smell. I don't know how long we lay like this, feeling each other's breath and rubbing our cheeks together (Hori 1950: 107).

Other expressions of love we encounter in this novel include hand-holding and kisses to the ill woman's hair and forehead. What is stressed here is, just like Tsubouchi would have welcomed, the perfect understanding between the souls of the two beloved – they spend long spells of silence just gazing into each other's eyes, without the need for words. Finally they even reach a state when they do need each other presence to feel the other – when the protagonist takes a walk in the wood by himself, he can still hear Setsuko's voice in his mind.

Now let us go back to *Moyuru hō* and look more at the way it depicts homosexuality. As we saw before, the topic of erotic relationships between adolescent boys was relatively well used at the time – unlike that of relationships between adult men, which was quite tabu. The reason is as follows: in this type of stories about platonic love between boys, whose location is usually the purely masculine environment of all-boy schools and boarding houses, we meet with one kind of the so-called literary marginalization, discussed by G. Pflugfelder v *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality In Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950*: restricting homosexuality into the period of adolescence as a natural phase of sexual experimentation between young people in the gender-separated educational institutions. As other types of marginalization, Pflugfelder gives restricting homosexuality into the past and peripheral areas, such as Kyūshū (Pflugfelder 2007: 207). Martin C. Putna, who focuses on homosexuality

in Czech literature, also describes the various strategies used by the authors writing on homosexuality. Putna sums the historical and geographical marginalization under the single heading of "stylization methods": "The author talks openly about the issue, but transfers it from asymptomatic civilian present into distant, "romantic" eras and environments, where homosexuality may seem "more acceptable" to the reader" (Putna 2011: 89).

Apart from the above, we can also find a marginalization of the homosexual character as sick, delirious, not completely sane; this partly happens in Hori's story, because the protagonist first becomes close to Saigusa when he has fever, and their relationship was preceded by the following vision:

> I opened the bedroom door without a forethought. It was pitch-black inside, but suddenly a strange shadow in the form of a large bird was thrown on the ceiling by the light of my candle. It flapped about eerily, as if in a fierce struggle (Hori 1989: 32).

Saigusa is also sick – he suffers from spine tuberculosis and eventually succumbs to the disease. Here we encounter another motive, which just like marginalization shows the impossibility of integration of the homosexual character into society – the motive of the homosexual's death. As observed by Monica B. Pearl:

> "There is a legacy of gay literature, both before the AIDS and since, in which a gay character dies unnaturally or prematurely: a veritable epidemic of gay deaths that are not due to AIDS" (Pearl 1999: 20).

The typical example of this motive is the homosexual character of Moroto in the abovementioned novel *Kotō no Oni*. During the story, Moroto tries several times to seduce the main character, the male narrator Minoura. However, apart from this, Moroto also selflessly helps Minoura solve and avenge the murder of his fiancée and saves Minoura's life, at the price of endangering his own. The novel ends with Minoura's marriage to the younger sister of the deceased fiancée and a letter, in which Minoura learns about Moroto's demise due to an unknown disease, which is ironic because Moroto made it safely through many life-threatening adventures. It could, however, hardly be otherwise – the novel's ending creates a

heteronormative idyll, in which there is no place left for the homosexual character.

The fact that marginalization of homosexuality takes place in *Moyuru hō* brings the story much closer to social reality, and with it to the necessity of dealing with gender roles and sexual identities, than its highly aestheticized and symbolic language would otherwise lead us to believe. The story is in fact being queer in that it is intriguingly playing with the constructions of masculinity and femininity, which can be best observed on the character Uozumi, whose affection the protagonist refuses. On one hand, this refusal might be caused by the protagonist's fear of the carnal nature of Uozumi's desire, which shows itself when the protagonist catches Uozumi and Saigusa in the bedroom (we learn only that Uozumi was sitting next to Saigusa's bed; the rest is one again unsaid, left to reader's imagination). J. D. Rucinski in his analysis of the story interpreters the strange shadow on the ceiling in this manner: "Uozumi is lust incarnate as his shadow flaps eerily on the ceiling" (Rucinski 1977: 124). But the carnality is not all there is to Uozumi; it is important to note that he wears a "mask" hiding his homosexuality:

> I had already noticed a peculiar transformation in his face. Whether it was due to the bright light of the laboratory or to his having removed his mask for once, the flesh of his cheeks was oddly slack and his eyes were deeply bloodshot. A faint smile, like a girl's, kept flickering on his lips. For some reason, I thought of the honeybee and the strange white flowers of the garden (Hori 1989: 31).

Mask wearing is a typical motive of homosexual literature, both in Japan and worldwide, leading to it sometimes being described as the literature of masks and signals[6]. Let us mention just the probably most famous Japanese literary work dealing with the subject of homosexuality, Mishima's novel *Kamen no kokuhaku* (Confessions of a Mask, 1949). The outwardly very masculine Uozumi is expected to conform to his male gender role. When he violates this role by a "girl's smile" and a behavior that reminds the protagonist of the flowers coquettishly enticing the honeybee to pollinate them[7], in other words, when Uozumi takes off his mask and the protagonist sees Uozumi's true self, he leaves and loses interest in Uozumi's friendship.

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[6] For example Keilson-Lauritz 1991.

[7] In the English translation, this aspect is emphasized because the translator refers to the honeybee, which of course has no gender in the original Japanese, with the masculine pronoun.

On the other hand, the village girl first entices the protagonist by a feminine attribute – beautiful eyes – but his erotic desire is stirred by her rasping voice, which is in sharp contrast with her feminine beauty. The girl is also bold – she is not timid when an unknown boy speaks to her, and she doesn't think much of mocking him.

This is another example of queerness, as the binary opposition of masculinity and femininity and together with it the opposition of hetero- and homosexuality is clearly blurred: it is true that the protagonist transfers his sexual desire from a male object to a female one, but the female objects appeals to him most by its masculine attributes.

What is left is the character of Saigusa, who is described as a slender boy of fragile beauty with fair to translucent skin and rosy cheeks; however, the protagonist never accuses him of effeminacy. When meeting the girls, Saigusa asserts himself actively, is the first to establish contact while the protagonist hasn't overcome his shyness yet. After they part, Saigusa sends the protagonist love letters. The protagonist claims that he later had many erotic relationships with women (which is once again expressed metaphorically: *In the course of those years, how many very the strange voices I heard!* ibid. 36). When Saigusa and the protagonist say their goodbyes at the train station, Saigusa presses his face against the window pane and unwittingly clouds it with his white breath, thus disappearing from the protagonist's sight. This episode foreshadows his death, which takes him out of our sight as well: we do not know what direction would have his development taken, whether he, too, would have transferred his desire to women, or continued in relationships with men. The opposition between homo- and heterosexuality is not only blurred, but made unknowable. Saigusa himself thus becomes the main queer element of the story.

Conclusion

We have seen that Hori's story shares common features with other Japanese literary works dealing with homosexuality: it is a portrayal of a platonic relationship between boys in school environment, which is one type of marginalization, restricting homosexuality to adolescence. Also frequent (and not just in Japanese literature) are the motives of the death of the homosexual character and mask wearing. As queer elements in the story we might denote the blurring of gender and sexual boundaries in case of Uozumi and the village girl and the protagonist's relationships with them, and finally the impossibility to trace such boundaries in case of Saigusa.

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Agnieszka Pączkowska

Origins and Interpretations of a Skeleton as a Death Symbol in Christian Western European and Japanese Societies

ABSTRACT

Skeleton is easily recognizable as a symbol and one might think that its meaning is simply obvious. Naturally it is associated with death and lifeless human bones. Despite that, skeleton's interpretations as a supernatural being may vary depending on cultural and religious movements that influenced them. In Christian Western Europe and Japan, people imagined it to act as a living person. The Europeans interpreted skeleton as a personification of an abstract idea of dying, the individual persona, the Death. On the other hand, the Japanese saw it as a vengeful soul that sought vengeance on people who harmed them.

KEYWORDS: skeleton, taboo, *ukiyoe*, *danse macabre*

Introduction

Death being universal for all living creatures is associated with symbols that nowadays are common for most civilizations, such as a human skeleton or a skull. But as transparent as this allegory is, the origins and meaning may vary greatly in different cultures depending on their mainstream religions and philosophies. This article is an attempt to interpret and compare the meaning of a skeleton as a symbol of death in Christian European and Japanese cultural circles. For instance, in European circle of Christianity, the theology treated death as a separation of body and soul. After demise, one's spirit was to reside in heaven, hell or purgatory while corpse was to decay buried underground until their reunion at the Last Judgment. Although Park (2010) declares that the emphasis was put on the fate of one's soul rather than body, as Binski (1996) notices, due to the history of crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ physical death was always in the core of Christianity. Human corpse, being the only vivid evidence of someone's passing, became the first symbol of death in a long process of taming this abstract idea, which ended in creating a fully shaped individual – the Death herself[1] depicted as a living skeleton. This idea became very popular in late medieval France and it spread to other Western

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[1] Here Death is assumed as a female character. The problem of gender in personification of Death is not discussed in this paper. For more information see Guthke 1999.

European countries and was even adopted by diverse Christian European cultural circles in Northern and Eastern Europe (Faxon 1989: 33). On the other hand, in Japan problem of death was covered in a mist of confusion and fear. The moment of passing was very vague, and the afterlife was imagined as a journey of the soul to other realms. Native practices were to separate the living from the dead, thus treating the corpse as pollution. This belief escalated under the influence of Buddhism, defining the image of human body as a source of sufferings. For those reasons images of skeletons generally representing corpses were to warn against the traps of fleeting world. However in nineteenth century, skeletons started to appear in *ukiyoe*, interestingly enough, depicted as living creatures, characters from world of supernatural.

Although dead body was associated with death as its clear sign in analysed cultural circles, some questions concerning interpretations of the skeleton symbol in Japan and Christian Europe arise. Why did it emerge and start to move? How different was the meaning behind the rattling human bones? Having in mind the answers may deviate depending on the disciplinary categorization, it was taken into account that within such categories there are diverse or even competitive explanations. For this reason the meaning of a skeleton is limited to the popular[2] beliefs circulating in presented times of history. They are based on interpretations made by scholars, clerics, writers or common people, all influenced by now separated scholarly disciplines of religion, philosophy and medicine. As a source material serve notable works of religious and secular art (church murals, tombs, illustrated scrolls, woodblock prints). There are also references to literature (historic chronicles, sacral poems, military and folk tales, breaking medical treaties) that shows signs of conceptualization of the body-death relationship, which eventually lead to creation of the skeleton as a supernatural being. European part concerns mainly the process of personification of death as an individual persona depicted as a moving skeleton with focus on motifs of the Three Dead and the Three Living, *transi* tombs and *danse macabre*. The Japanese part centres on the notion of pollution of death and its influence of perception of human remains and the dead. Such views are compared to the most significant depictions of skeletons in *ukiyoe*.

The purpose of this study is to give a better understanding of a skeleton as an allegory of death and to emphasise the differences between the person

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[2] Here I understand it as commonly available and/or accepted. By popular beliefs I mean those that go beyond boundaries of one classification or those that are a result of two different overlapping concepts.

of Death and the phenomenon of death rooted in different cultural circles. It should be brought to attention that cultural circles have a great impact on interpreting symbols, even when they seem obvious or one dimensional.

Personification of Death in Medieval Christian Europe

For origins of a skeleton as a personification of death[3], we should look back into the late medieval times, when society was being fed by Catholic Church's preachers with infamous quote *memento mori* (remember that you will die). Clergy used this Latin verse to warn people about the attachment to worldly goods, sometimes followed by showing the listeners an actual human skull to stress the vulnerability of life (Clark 1950: 94). It was supposed to encourage devotees to live modestly in preparation for death, when she comes to visit[4]. The Church was describing 'good death', as when the dying had prepared spiritually (confession, Holy Communion) and greeted the end with peace and acceptance. Additionally, he should have disposed of his material affairs, apologized to those he had harmed and donated to the church. (Park 2010: 28). This concept of necessity of preparations before facing consequences after death[5] was based on the belief in difference of dying and being dead – a result of theological separation of body and soul (Binski 1996: 70). In other words death occurred when the immaterial soul left the material body, a process that was both immediate and invisible. What's worth mentioning is that in the same time laypeople understood the process of life and death as a simple metaphor of an oil lamp and aging as a process of drying and eventually cooling (Park 2010: 33). It did not end in the moment of dying, but continued as corpse was decomposing and turning into a skeleton. They believed that life force was left in the body and it could feel or move, e.g. it could start bleed in the presence of one's murderer (Ibid. 34). A soul could also linger near the body for quite some time, especially if an individual had met a sudden, violent end (McTavish 2010: 29). Church tried to fight so called superstitions by stating that corpses could be animated only by demons. It also advocated the doctrine of purgatory, which was later

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[3] It is impossible to analyse all motifs interpreting death in late Middle Ages in one article. For this reason I will focus on themes connected directly to representations of death as a skeleton.

[4] The motif of death-the-visitor appeared for the first time in a poem written by monk Hélinand de Froidmont (1160–1230) *Les Vers de la Mort* (*Verses on Death,* 1193–1197). Death is depicted as she travels to different places to make people aware of an inevitable end. Through this rhetorical device, persona advises his friends to prepare for the end of life, what he sees as a sign of a common sense (Kurtz 1934: 12).

[5] It was established as an official dogma in 1336 by pope Benedict XII, who clarified that immediately after death each individual human being would face a particular judgement and be sent to hell, purgatory or heaven (Shuster 2002:17).

established in the twelfth century. The Church encouraged devotees to pray for the dead and donate money in exchange for rituals that could lessen the deceased's time in the purgatory. This kind of help was believed to be powerful not only in the wake of one's death, but also a long time after it, what aided to establish a long-lasting bond between the living and the dead (Ibid.: 29). Still the clergy could not compete with a popular belief that under the right circumstances corpses could rise from graves and walk among the living (Park 2010: 34)

The notion of death as a companion became much stronger with the outbreak of Black Death plague in XIV century[6]. In the perils of epidemic and through constant contact with dead bodies, the presence of death was felt more than ever. The catastrophic atmosphere can be felt in writings of Angelo di Tura (XIV century), a chronicler from Siena.

> "It seemed that almost everyone became stupefied seeing the pain. It is impossible for the human tongue to recount the awful truth. (...) And so many died that all believed it was the end of the world" (Gottfried 2010: 45).

Among many interpretations of death, which were amplified by this experience, there were a few that could be called mainstream, as they became popular in different parts of Europe and were incorporated into local traditions. All of them emerged separately, but coexisted in people's imagination; they were Three Dead and the Three Living, *transi* tombs, and most notable *danse macabre*. These themes accentuate the physical side of dying, as there are strong traces of morbid fascination of a decomposing human body, hence the so-called macabre effect. The earliest one, the Three Dead and the Three Living was trending in France and Germany, but could also be found in England, Italy and Spain (Gertsman 2010: 26). Although there are many versions of the story, its origins can be found in a thirteenth century poems[7] about three young men encountering three corpses (Aberth 2013: 227). The dead teach the living of the fleeting nature of life and the need of remorse for one's actions. In miniatures from listed countries dated back to early fourteenth century, they are usually portrayed as three corpses in different stages of decay, the last one being

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[6] According to the most recent findings the cause of the outbreak was a transmitted by flies bacterium found in rodents. Probably it spread from China to Europe by sea trade. The plague was most dangerous in 1348, 1360, 1373 and 1382. It is estimated that 1/3– 2/3 of population of each territory, where Black Death appeared, was annihilated (Kurtz 1934: 15; Binski 1996:126).

[7] The exact origins remain a mystery, as many versions of the poem exist in different languages. More in Gertsman 2010.

almost skeleton-like. What's notable is that corpses are main characters so they are entirely visible, what gives an impression that the topic of death is addressed directly. The message behind this metaphor could be read: *we are, who you'll become* (Byrne 2012: 24). This defines the connection between the living and the dead as their own doubles, what is best seen in a miniature from *Book of hours* (France, 1480-90): the three living are a pope, an emperor, and a king standing in front of corpses, all wearing matching crowns.

The concept of doubles was continued in *transi* tombs, which were found mostly in Northern Europe, but were popular in France as well (Gertsman 2010: 29). It was a two-part tombstone consisting of an engraved image of the deceased with a sculpture of his decomposing body underneath. Here the decaying corpse is used as a focus on the physical side of human death, shown in contrast with the peaceful double above it e.g. tomb of Richard Fleming in Lincoln Cathedral (d.1431) or one of Henry Chichele in Canterbury Cathedral, (d.1443). It seems that this motif corresponded well with sermonizing rhetoric of the Church and the sensation of passing life felt by medieval society (Burham 1989: 182). It could be said that *transi* was a step forward to bringing to light the cadaver as a representation of an equalising death, especially that the top effigy showed the deceased equipped with earthly belongings and status symbols, while his double underneath was bleak and stripped off such tokens.

The character of death took its final form in the most popular motif *danse macabre* (Dance of Death), which greatly contributed to the process of personification of death. As a phrase it first appeared in literature in 1376 in a poem by Jean le Fèvre *Respit de la mort* (*Respite from Death*), but as a whole the origins of *danse macabre* remain a mystery[8] especially that not many murals survived the passage of time (Byrne 2012: 101). The truth about nature of life and death[9] was hidden in a depiction of representatives of all social classes dancing with their own dead doppelgängers. Because a preaching monk often appears in front of the dancing procession, it is believed that it was strongly connected to the Catholic Church, probably

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[8] There are many concepts regarding the origins of *danse macabre*, especially from the perspective of dance perception by the Church, e.g. the story about dancers from Kölbigk in Magdeburg diocese from *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493). Still there are no actual remarks stating that *danse macabre* was inspired by supernatural events like dead waking up from the graves to dance or real gatherings of members of all social classes who came to one place to perform (Clark 1950: 106-107).

[9] In medieval lore death was a lengthy process that began at birth. The body was a creation of God and remained connected with a microcosm of God's creation, meaning that the environment and the community of humans were the version of the same. All people suffered the same vulnerability to assaults of the world enduring the uncertainty of life (Raber 2010: 102-104).

responsible for spreading it through sermons across Europe as its traces can be found in France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Baltic countries and British Isles (Faxon 1989: 33; Clark 1950: 94). The effect of this motif was unquestionably magnified by life-sized figures dominating from the walls above viewers. *Danse macabre* can be interpreted as a visual complementation of Christian sermons concerning death, especially for illiterate part of society – after all a picture is worth a thousand words. The oldest known artistic representation of *danse macabre* was found at Parisian Holy Innocents' Cemetery (1425)[10]. It showed thirty-one figures arranged in a hierarchal order from the Pope to the Hermit, being caught in a dance with their dead doubles. A very similar portrayal was found in St. Mary's Church in Lübeck titled *Lübecker Totentanz* by Bernt Notke (1435-1509)[11] and depicted twenty-one figures dancing with their dead partners to the music played by a leading corpse on flute. In both cases the picture was complimented by short poetic verses about dying. The dancers seemed to be connected by an unbreakable bond just like life and death. However it was the death making humans dance, stressing that the latter had no other choice but to submissively obey in one continuous motion (Gertsman 2010: 65).

Based on early portrayals, at first it weren't dancing skeletons, but dried corpses with visible bones, what corresponds with other motifs depicting Death as a human cadaver (Kurtz 1934: 179). Yet most of known *danse macabre* visualizations emerged at the turn of fourteenth and fifteenth century, which compared to earlier pieces, show a slow change in perception of death as a character. Skeleton as a dancer appeared for the first time in Italian Oratorio dei Disciplini Clusone *Danza macabra* (1485; Faxon 1989: 33-34). What is special about this mural is that it combines three death motifs: the Triumph of Death[12] combined with The Three Living and the Three Dead and *danse macabre*. Three skeletons, one wearing a crown and two aiming weapons at people, are standing on a coffin of two popes[13] surrounded by people kneeling before them and baring gifts as if they were begging for mercy. Below this scene is a typical Dance of Death. Yet the idea of representing death as a skeletons seems to be very young and not popular in other European circles at this stage: in Berlin's St. Mary's Church's *Danse Macabre* (ca. 1490) the living are

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[10] Destroyed in XVII century, but preserved in a woodcut edition from 1485 by Guyot Marchant (?-?).
[11] Also destroyed but preserved in photographs.
[12] This motif was mostly popular in Italy and depicted Death as an apocalyptic figure taking lives of terrified humans (Gertsman 2010: 25).
[13] A probable reference to the Great Western Schism 1378-1418.

dancing with a skinny corpses with no faces or marked bones; in French Kermaria-an-Isquit (ca. 1490) dancers are also dried cadavers, yet could be easily mistaken for skeletons.

Introduced motifs took a role of moral compass in late Middle Ages. Those murals embedded in strictly religious surroundings were mainly artistic visualizations of moralistic speeches. They mocked and reversed the social hierarchy by stressing the equality of human beings in the eyes of Death, but in the same time pointed out the necessity of suitable preparations before entering the afterlife (Gertsman 2010: 164). However, their message changed as death and its influence on life took a different shape and meaning in late Renaissance.

Inheriting from previous epoch, early moderns thought that the body reflected the state of the soul and *vice versa*. The holistic physiology imagined the body as a microcosm connected with the environment and stemmed from the ancient medicine of Galen's (129-200/216) humorism[14] (Raber 2010: 103). Yet, the relationship between the living body and the dead corpse remained unsettled. The moment of death was still ambiguous. The ability to determine death was also lacking, as it was difficult to distinguish it from the state of comatose (Johnson 2010: 185). The further questions concerning the nature of body, its remains and one's self were open to interpretations in the changing environments of science (professionalization of medicine), theology (Reformation) and humanities.

The Renaissance forthcoming changes can be observed in a set of woodblock prints *Der Totentanz* (1538), created by Hans Holbein (1497-1543). The prints originated in Basel during 1522-1526, were printed around 1526 and published twelve years later, delayed probably due to the satire character of art. It is also possible that the printers feared the reaction to such frolic interpretation of death (Kurtz 1934: 191). Although they were commercially successful and reprinted countless times, very little is known about the author's inspiration and artistic process. It is possible that Holbein modelled his woodcuts on a poem *Le Mors de la Pomme* (ca. 1470) complimented with miniatures depicting Death in a similar manner seen in Holbein's designs[15]. Not only the circumstances of creating the woodblocks are unknown, but also it is difficult to establish the intentions of the author. Because the prints emerged in the age of Reformation, they

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[14] Galenic holistic theory of medicine was based on four fluids of the body: black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm. It involved a complex set of interactions between the balance of each of humors with diet, activity, and even climate. More in Raber 2010: 103.

[15] More in Kurtz 1934: 56.

could be interpreted as Protestant, but the final tone highly depended on the Catholic or Protestant verses that accompanied them[16].

Still it is undeniable that historians marked Holbein's prints as the breaking point in the depiction of Death (Clark 1950: 3). The artist broke from the tradition of extensive murals, publishing his version in a book, what lessened the overwhelming effect of size but in the same time brought in the aspect of viewer's intimate reception (Gertsman 2010: 174). He dropped the convention of a dance procession and instead he focused on showing individuals in their own typical surroundings, making each scene a single act of death. Interestingly, a similar concept appeared in thirteen-century *vado mori* poems written in different European languages (Aberth 2001: 215). In verses people with various social background repeated the words *I go to die* after they had described their own personalised death, appropriate for one's position or occupation. Even though comparable in concept, the difference was that Death herself is not present during laments of soon to die individuals (Gertsman 2010: 37). *Der Totentanz* could be interpreted more as an explanatory guide to the character of Death than a moral reminder to feel remorse. Holbein starts with Creation and the Fall of Man, an allusion to death being a result of the Original Sin, continues with *memories* of interactions with different human beings and ends on the Last Judgement. These powerful pieces show an unmerciful skeleton that perfectly blends with surroundings as she picks victims individually. Death knows how to make the living suffer and chooses carefully how to take away the attributes each person is attached to, e.g. steals a crown from a king, etc. Skeleton does not only dance and play the music, but takes a very active role in ending humans' life: he surprises and aggressively pulls the prey away from their loved ones, disrupting their daily routines. This depiction shows passing to be more of a sudden moment, than a long process of preparation for the end. For this reason it could be assumed that Holbein focused more on the terrible fate of human beings, who need to part with life they became accustomed to; every living person looks shocked and unprepared to leave the world of ease and prosperity, asking the Death for a little bit more time. This interpretation of a an unwanted, but inevitable companion continued in later periods, while science

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[16] The first edition of woodblocks was published by Trechsel brothers, who were devoted Catholics. The plates were accompanied by Catholic verses and an essay written by Catholic cleric Jean de Vauzelles (1495 – 1563). On the other hand in 1542 Frellon brothers published in Lyon a Protestant version of woodblocks enclosed with essays written in a Protestant tone. Catholic theological faculties banned this edition, while the first one was allowed to circulate. More in Gertsman 2010: 172-173.

contributed to popularization of the skeleton as an image of Death and pushed the personification process to its last stage (Burham 1989: 182).

Autopsies were already conducted in antiquity and Middle Ages[17], but they became more frequent in modern period (McTavish 2010: 17). The practitioners were very vocal about their discoveries and eagerly published medical descriptions of human bodies filled with detailed illustrations of dissected corpses (McTavish 2010: 27; Broomhall 2010: 75). It could be said that the dead body was put on the display. In 1543 Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) published *De humane corporis fabrica*, a book on human anatomy, which became the most influential work in Renaissance on this subject. It was a very expressive work due to almost artistic poses of the dissected body. His study was based on actual autopsies, and their results discredited the theories of Galen (Broomhall 2010: 90). The flourishing anatomy research, new information about workings of the body, and new theories about wellness and disease continually formed new ways of interpreting the human body. However, it must be noted that the understanding of medicine wasn't free from the evolving humanities as they intertwined with each and changed under each other's simultaneous influence. It was their interaction that shaped insights concerning the human body and corpses (Ibid.: 73). It means that not only professional physicians, but also artists, clerics, ordinary people were exposed to transforming medical discourse and had a saying in how they wanted this problem to be seen. The Catholic Church regulated the holy nature of human body by the cult of saints' relics and miraculous healings caused by divine intervention. By this the clergy spread their ideas on what was curable through nature, or what was a result of God or Satan's doing (Ibid.: 78). The connection between the dead and living was still sustained by the purgatory concept. On the other hand the Protestant Church challenged these beliefs and tried to limit the ritualization of death. The dead were still remembered and praised, but the corpse was viewed more as flesh and bones with some remnants of the one that passed away. This corresponded well with new medical discourse, because it made the dissections more acceptable (McTavish 2010: 29-30). During the Renaissance people were exposed to diverse concepts of understanding the human body before and after death. However, by the end of the period the rationalization of body discourses slowly specified the connection between the dead and the living, which resulted in separation of the body from the environment and its

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[17] Autopsies were a part of medical training, but this practice was not used as fundaments of anatomical knowledge. Dissections were rare and were built from reading, memory or ancient texts (Salmón 2010: 79).

construction as an individual system, different from the abstract idea of one's self (Raber 2010: 104)

People of the Renaissance were exposed to diverse approaches towards the understanding of human body as the professional ideas overlapped with theological beliefs. But the strengthening notions of body and soul division with science solving the mystery of a human body influenced people's imagination and Holbein's design of Death was taken to the next level as paradoxically naked bones were gifted with life (Ariès 1985: 184). Death started to be represented by an individual persona, an active skeleton instead of dried corpses symbolizing the idea of being dead. Although it overtook the role of medieval *memento mori*, the incorporated into a daily routine of living Death, became less sacred, but more lay and common in the same time (Schuster 2002: 18). The skeleton was an echo of popular beliefs concerning the possibility of resurrection, but the Renaissance ideals gave it a new modern twist. It was taking an active role in people's everyday life, making fun of them, wearing their clothes, and falling in love with beautiful women. Death existed on the verge of what's visible and invisible. She had her own characteristic features like sardonic smile or sarcastic expression of the eyes (Ariès 1985: 176). This image was continued in later epochs as the motif of Death as a skeleton remained strong and popular. It was used as a reminder of the transient nature of human life, but also a comical relief in political satires (Ibid.: 193). All of that made the death more perceptible and less petrifying. As a result of personification, death wasn't covered with a mist of mystery or fright. People came around the idea of dying but not in the way preachers intended them to. Certainly mortals could feel the fragility of life, but they transformed the fear inflicted by Church into passion towards life (Faxon 1989: 34).

Unlikeable Death

While Europeans were trying to understand death through rationalization of the human body, Japanese had an entirely different coping mechanism rooted in their own syncretic world of supernatural[18]. Since the emerging

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[18] The first chronicles of Japan were created in 712 and 720. By that time the imperial court was under the influence of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, which were imported to Japan between third and sixth century. It is possible that Chinese culture was a great inspiration for Japanese mythology and history, thus they might contain not entirely native beliefs. Moreover, at first the imperial court accepted mentioned philosophies, so it is possible that the chronicles do not mirror indigenous beliefs, but rather aristocratic ones as the continental influence spread to the rest of the society centuries later. It is not impossible to think that some ideas could have reached the ordinary people earlier, but it is difficult to find any sustainable evidence.

of primitive practices it was believed that many spirits, including the dead, surrounded the living (Hori 1983: 30). The belief in their presence in human world was possibly linked to adaptation of Chinese philosophy *yīn yáng* concept of dualistic soul, according to which the spirit was divided into light and dark elements and would disintegrate after one's demise: *yáng*-soul would go to the other world, while *yīn*-soul would remain on earth (Scheid 2004: 213). What's more, in case of an unexpected death such apparition would attach itself to the place of one's demise, causing unexplainable phenomena, e.g. eerie noises, occurrences or even misfortune if the spirit was vengeful[19] (Yokoyama 1997: 29). On the other hand the spirit could protect their living ancestors and encounter other souls leading to interpretation of death as another stage of existence (Niwa 1992: 86). Nonetheless the topic of death was rather avoided, what was mirrored in not so many, yet bleak or vague, afterlives seen in early chronicles or literature[20]. All in all different superstitions freely mixed with each other changing the views on death mystics.

While the metaphysical side of dying was left for many interpretations, the physical side was rather disregarded. In comparison to soul, body was treated merely as its vessel and would lose its value after death (Ibid.: 90). Such neglect probably has roots in *shintō* beliefs, according to which gods did not tolerate impurities like death. Offended by defiled humans, they would curse people and send deathly diseases or natural disasters (Katsuda 2003: 4). The oldest written trace of treating death as corruption in native beliefs can be found in *Kojiki*. As specified in the myth, Izanagi yearning to see his wife Izanami, after she had died while giving birth to god of fire, went to a cave believed to be a passage to the underworld. The beautiful goddess appeared as he was calling her, yet urged him to leave her alone. Infatuated Izanagi didn't listen to her warnings, and crossed the invisible border between the worlds. Suddenly he saw a true face of his wife – a disgusting corpse devoured by worms and surrounded by evil spirits. Izanagi ran away and during the last lovers' quarrel, enraged goddess promised her ex-husband to kill one thousand men every single day, thus

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[19] The last one stems probably from Chinese idea that if dead had not been buried properly, they would become an evil force in the afterlife (Hori 1983: 43).

[20] In *Kojiki* (*Records of Ancient Matters*, 712) there is a description of a dark place called *yominokuni* (yellow springs), while in *Nihonshoki* (*The Chronicle of Japan*, 720) there are references to a dualistic soul concept. Moreover in *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves,* 780) it can be observed that death was considered a new stage of life, but addressed indirectly as a passing to a far beyond land in clouds or mountains (Ebersole 1992:81). It is probably a reference to the belief that mountains were abode of the dead or the belief that mountains were the meeting ground between this world and the next, predicated upon the tradition that the after world existed in some place beyond mountains (Hori 1983: 151).

bringing death to human realm (Kotański 1986: 57). What's interesting for this study is that as soon as Izanagi returned to the world of living, he performed purifying rituals. Firstly, an invisible line marked with a stone by Izanagi separates two worlds stressing the difference between them. This contrast is very deep and shown in a changing perception of Izanami's appearance: beauty turned into ugliness, what could be read the beauty of life turned into the ugliness of death. Such graphic distinctions and the presence of a line can be interpreted as a will of Japanese people to separate themselves from deathly matters. Secondly this excerpt shows the idea of necessity to cleanse oneself after coming into direct contact with death, what could be read as a proof of viewing the dead as impure[21].

The aversion to human body was deepened under the influence of *Inyōgogyōsetsu* (Theory of Yīn Yáng and the Five Phases, 770 BC)[22] according to which, hurting the body, even to heal it, would result in disturbing the balance of universe and devastating consequences. For this reason medics rejected surgeries along with autopsies and relied mainly on internal medicine (Bowers 1998: 9-11). Such attitude led to lack of knowledge concerning the physical end and gave free space to create even more death superstitions, e.g. observing body everyday to confirm one's demise (inability to determine death), belief that decomposing body was a reflection of soul leaving the body (imprecise definition of death) and an idea of possible resurrection (Niwa 1992: 90-91). Considering mentioned notions and views of corpse impurity, it is not surprising that it was ordinary to throw remains away in the streets without any proper burial. This custom can be found on an illustrated scroll called *Gakizōshi* ('Scroll of Hungry Ghosts', twelfth century). It shows different funeral rites[23] from late Heian period. Among them, there are left in an open coffin remains being devoured by an animal; two thrown away bodies, a skeleton and

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[21] Still it is impossible to certainly say that this myth proves defilement's concept to be native. Some scholars doubt its indigenous nature stating that the oldest chronicles have some undeniable traces of Chinese culture influences, and later more definite concepts of death pollution were based mainly on *yīn yáng* and Buddhism (Faure 2003: 68).

[22] *Inyōgogyōsetsu* was based on a belief that the universe was composed of five main elements: wood, water, earth, fire and metal. In Chinese medicine each element corresponded to other symbols like colours, seasons, cardinal direction, body organs, parts, fluids, taste, etc. If one of the elements was in imbalance, it resulted in symptoms of a particular disease and was treated as an outside manifestation of lack of harmony. It originated in China and was imported to Japan between fifth and sixth century.

[23] The proper burial system called *danka* was established in the beginning of XVII century and people were enforced to belong to one of Buddhist temples, as it was the only possibility of a legal burial.

scattered bones being sucked by *gaki*[24], all believed to be common for lower social classes (Nakamura 2011: 216). The impact of Buddhism not only intensified the pollution of corpses, but also shifted it to the human body itself. Monks believed that looking at a rotting body would cause suffering of one's soul and were against leaving bodies in plain sight (Ibid.: 219). For them flesh and bones were impure and treated as symbol of earthly attachments. Reflection of such frame of mind is art of *kusōzu* (Nine Stages of Decay), which originated in traditional Buddhism and became popular in Japan in thirteenth century. It was a very detailed (anatomically incorrect) study on process of a decomposing body: from shedding skin, through loss of blood, to naked bones turning into ashes. Although skeleton appears in these pieces of art, it is clear that it should be interpreted only as human bones, what is indicated by their portrayal as motionless remains. Monks used *kusōzu* as a didactic warning against the attachments towards worldly goods and impurity of a living body. It is safe to assume that by that time people knew about a skeleton hidden inside their body and treated it as something obviously associated with death, but of a human shape. This presumption seems reasonable from the perspective of historical events of Japanese middle ages. It was a period of political instability, uproars, conflicts, wars, famine and epidemics. Aside from bodies of the deceased thrown away in funeral rites, even streets were filled with corpses of those who died in warfare or due to epidemic outbreaks (Ibid.: 217). Such circumstances must have had an impact on contemporary society, but the topic of physical death still wasn't addressed in any different way. The responsibility of such dealings fell on *hinin*[25], an outcast group already deemed as impure.

It would seem that negative attitude towards human body would change in the wake of late eighteen-century anatomical discoveries. Sugita Genpaku (1733-1817) and Maeno Ryōtaku (1723-1803) went even as far as risking pollution and taking part in an actual autopsy[26] to confirm the accuracy of European medicine, before translating and issuing the first non-Chinese

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[24] *Gaki* are spirits from a world one degree above hell. They are supernatural beings, who have been cursed with an insatiable hunger for a specific substance e.g. blood, feces, human corpses. More in Wilson 1992.

[25] *Hinin* was an outcast group of people tainted with impure occupations (connected to death), e.g. human remains disposal, executioners, butchers, tanners, etc. Originally they were isolated because of leprosy.

[26] The autopsy took place in 1771 at Kozukaharakeijō, place of executions in Edo, and was conducted by *hinin*. For centuries they had a constant access to dead bodies and had a vast knowledge about human body – they knew the position of organs, where to cut bones or how to attain bile used as a medicine for gastric problems. Sometimes regular doctors, who did not want to touch dead bodies, employed them as helpers.

anatomy atlas titled *Kaitaishinsho* (*New Text on Anatomy*, 1774)[27] (Ishida 1988: 226). Although their publication convinced many Japanese scholars to pursue western sciences in Nagasaki, doubts concerning invasive and radical methods arose. No matter how many may have supported the idea of conducting autopsies, the actual act was too overwhelming for Japanese scientists who were still in the strong grip of earlier mentioned superstitions and death impurity. Instead of praxis, scholars and artists settled for copying European atlases that became a very useful source of knowledge thanks to western realistic style of painting (Screech 1997: 76). New manners allowed to genuinely depict the surrounding world what inspired artists to create graphic illustrations of the omnipresent spirits that Japanese feared for centuries (Yokoyama 1997: 17). Those magical beings called under new collective name *yōkai* (supernatural apparition)*,* were turned into a sort of entertainment as characters of different shapes and personalities (Komatsu 2003: 50). On account of that creators gained their painting experience while copying medical illustrations, it is not surprising that a figure of a skeleton started to appear in art*,* where it was introduced artistically as an individual supernatural creature. However the idea of a skeleton as not only human remains, but a source of paranormal qualities, was present to some extent in people's imagination long before Edo period. It is difficult to definitely establish origins of this concept, but a hint can be found on Tsukioki Kunitoshi's (1839-1892) *Picture of Taira Kiyomori seeing hundreds of human heads* (1890) and Utagawa Hiroshige's (1795-1858) *Picture of Taira Kiyomori seeing ghosts at Fukuhara* (1845), which refer to a graphic description from *Heike Monogatari* (thirteenth century):

> "(...)[Taira Kiyomori] saw in the courtyard hundreds of skulls rolling and springing over one another, making grating sounds as they moved. (...) Then all the skulls gathered together, and united into one mountainous skull, perhaps forty-five meters high, that seemed to fill the whole courtyard. From within this huge skull came the light of millions great eyes. They seemed to be eyes of living men as they glared steadily at Kiyomori" (Kitagawa 1989: 299).

This passage is interpreted as a punishment from the vengeful spirits of Minamoto clan, who changed Taira Kiyomori's (1118-1181) garden into a landscape filled with skulls staring angrily at him (Isao 2001: 88). Here

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[27] The actual title was *Kaibōgakuhyō* (*Anatomy Tables*) and was a Japanese translation of a Dutch translation of Adam Kulmus' (1724-1800) *Anatomische Tabellen*.

human skulls are clearly associated with dead restless souls with desire to inflict harm. Such spirits were present in documentary records since the end of Nara period (710-794) under the name of *goryō*. At first they were understood as vengeful spirits of noble persons who had died in political intrigues and came back to haunt their wrongdoers[28] (Hori 1983: 71). Later under the impact of Buddhist spirit of equality they were reinterpreted, as a result of anyone's clear desire for vengeance on deathbed or an accidental death under unusual circumstances (Ibid.: 43). In this case skeleton seems to be a dramatic visualisation of *goryō*; it combines the fear of death and human remains with anticipation of terrible revenge and its consequences. Variation of a skeleton-avenger can be found on Katsushika Hokusai's (1760-1849) printing titled *Kohada Koheiji*[29] (1831). *Ukiyoe* depicts a scene where an almost decomposed tituliar man is peeking through a curtain raised with his claw-like bony fingers preparing himself to haunt his cheating wife and her lover, both responsible for Kohada's murder (Kabat 1999: 213-215). Motif of revenge appears also in *Princess Takiyasha summons a skeleton spectre to frighten Mitsukuni*[30] (1844) by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1862), where a giant skeleton is used as an instrument of vengeance and power. The princess uses it to avenge death of her father and crash men, who invaded his castle (Ōtakinenbibijutsukan 2011: 249). In these contexts skeleton, treated as *yōkai*, was probably an interpretation of a mad soul that came back and took a shape of human bones or resurrected one's own remains to frighten and punish enemies.

On the other hand in popular didactic folk tales from *Konjaku monogatarishshū* (*Anthology of Tales from the Past,* eleventh century) appears a motif of a skull with an intact pink tongue inside, which could recite sutras after one's demise. It could be interpreted that sutra if recited repeatedly would engrave itself in one's mind, heart and even bones to continue on living after one's death causing supernatural phenomena (Eubanks 2011:159). This motif was supposed to show deep devotion of a

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[28] The most infamous *goryō* is the one of Sugawara no Michizane (845-903), a powerful politician who was outmanoeuvred by his rivals and exiled to Dazaifu in Kyūshū, where he died in loneliness. After his death, the imperial palace was struck by lightning, the capital experienced plague, drought and floods, and old enemies of Sugawara's suddenly died. To propitiate his spirit, he was deified (Hori 1983: 115).

[29] Kohada Koheiji is a character from Santō Kyōden's story called *A Weird Story of Revenge in the Swamps of Asaka* (1803).

[30] Princess Takiyasha was a daughter of Taira no Masakado (?-940), a descendant of noble lineage from Emperor Kammu (737-806), who settled in the provinces of eastern Japan. He led the insurrection (939-940) against central government and called himself new emperor, but was decapitated in the end. The printing is a depiction of the legend, when rightful emperor's official Ōya no Mitsukuni comes to Masakado's residence in Sōma to search for remaining conspirators.

dead person and convince readers that Buddhist sutras had powers to cleanse and animate something as polluted as human bones and turn it into something holy. Corresponding to this theme is Maruyama Ōkyo's (1733-1795) ink wash painting *Picture of a Skeleton Practicing Zazen on the Waves* (1787). *Zazen* was considered a cleansing ritual for body and soul to free oneself from attachments to this world and impurity of human body – in other words everything what skeleton symbolized. This meaning is emphasised by the presence of water, which has purifying qualities in Japanese tradition (Fuchūshi Bijutsukan 2010: 78). In both cases cleansing religious practices are contrasted with polluted human body, where the greater power of Buddhism overcomes the corruption of remains. Different angle, but also immersed in Buddhism, can be found in an illustrated scroll with elements of prose and poetry known today as *Ikkyū gaikotsu* (*Ikkyū's Skeletons*, 1457)[31]. The alleged author was a Buddhist monk Ikkyū Sōjun (1394-1481) from Kyoto, who created this piece in times of earthquakes, fires, famines, epidemics, streets cluttered with corpses, skeletons, carcasses of animals with riots and feudal warfare in the background (Franck 2004: 69). Judging from such horrors it is quite possible that everyday reminders about an inevitable death inspired Ikkyū Sōjun to confront this topic artistically (Ibid.: 70). Complemented with lively graphics, the story shows a monk, who in a dream encounters skeletons mimicking human behaviours as if they were alive. The protagonist engages in a conversation with one of them, what is a vehicle for expressing philosophical observations about the meaning of life and death. Ikkyū Sōjun maintains a didactic manner throughout his work by criticising people, including monks, for their interest in wealth and earthly goods and stresses the pointlessness of attachment to the fleeting world (Ibid.: 78). He also reveals that death may seem distant to a living person, but a skeleton is already underneath his skin and turning into one is inevitable (Ibid.: 72-75). Regardless, the motif of skeletons engaged in different occupation appeared on *ukiyoe Skeletons' life* (1881) by Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831-1889). His work is filled with roughly twenty detailed portrayals of skeletons interacting with each other and doing common activities of living people, e.g. drinking, eating, dancing, fighting, celebrating, calligraphing, playing the instruments, etc. The artist probably tried to show different emotional states (Kyōgoku 1998: 141-143).

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[31] First edition's probable date.

The Meaning of Bones

In Europe as in Japan, although in different moments of history, similar medical discoveries influenced the creation and appearance of a moving skeleton. In both cases it became a noticeable presence in death symbolic, but there are few differences that will be issued in two aspects.

Firstly, it is a perception of a skeleton in relation to death beliefs and religion. Naturally both cultures created their own concepts of death rooted in local traditions, but certain ideas surrounding it e.g. notion of a soul, separation of body and soul, possible resurrections or presence of dead spirits holding back to their earthly body were common. The main dissimilarity laid in the perception of physical death and its impurity. In Christian Europe so as in Japan a skeleton was obviously associated with death as a tangible evidence of what happens with human body after one's demise. But contrary to Japanese, Europeans rejected the idea of its pollution, mainly cause of their belief in saints, whose remains were used as reservoirs of magic and protection (Park 2010: 35). In Japan the negative attitude towards corpses was nurtured for hundreds of years and even in seventeenth century there was an obligatory ruling called *shokuerei*, which was essentially an official ban on direct contact with impurities, *inter atalia*, dead bodies (Nakagawa 2009: 167-169). In both cases mainstream religions played a great role in perception of human remains. Christianity and Buddhism used them to influence behaviour of the devotees and exploited human bones as a vehicle to inflict the fear of dying, trying to convince people that the only remedy was in spiritual rituals and preparation. Although different in realization, frightening portrayals of remains were a warning against the traps of materialistic fleeting world. In Europe the clergy tried to show the importance of preparations for the afterlife during sermons filled with *memento mori* symbolic, and their visualizations in *danse macabre*; in Japan similar function was fulfilled by Buddhist *kusōzu*. Both served as a moral reminder of an inevitable death, but in European construal the dead were not only depicted, but they were given their own voice. They interacted with their own living doubles and represented the same future for all, despite one's social and material status. Thanks to this death gained a new meaning of the ultimate equalizer. Certainly a similar message of all men being equal can be found in *Ikkyū's skeletons*, but it was envisioned a little differently. In *danse macabre* it was death that was stripping people off symbols of their material life making them the same. However in monk's scroll it is emphasized that all living people were equal, because underneath the skin they were all skeletons, which eventually everyone is destined to become. For this reason drawings

of moving skeletons may not to be interpreted as resurrected human remains, but living beings, which were bared to bones to stress the equality of humans' fate. All in all both examples shared a clear the message from skeletons: *we are, what you will become*.

Secondly, it is a nature of a skeleton as a supernatural being. Skeleton as the sign of someone's past existence was believed to be a reservoir of mystic powers. Obviously it was associated with the spirits of dead, but in European culture skeleton became the Death herself. The idea of contrasting life and death as doubles was slowly replaced by new concept of representing death as an individual person. She could not only freely enter the world of living, but also steal what was dear to them. Interestingly it seems that the more Death was painted the more real as a person she was. With time she gained more human traits and even tried to impersonate the living, interact with them, almost as if she was longing to the life she was supposed to take. In a way death was a complete opposite of existence, but in the other as a person she was very similar to humans.

Although such personification of death didn't emerge in Japan, a skeleton was an expressive representation of dead souls that took this particularly startling form to fulfil their desire of vengeance. They also were to torment and even take lives, but victims' death was a result of spirit's personal revenge on people who had wronged them. It was not a natural way of things to end, but a mean to pass judgement. European Death was not to judge her targets; she was a neutral being not aligned with heaven nor hell. Yet on the contrary to Europe, the more *yōkai* were printed, the less real they seemed. Artists by giving them faces and portraying in a similar to human world setting caused the inhabitants of supernatural world to loose its malefic impact on reality and became a fiction. It was a trick to make *yōkai* identifiable, what naturally turned the fear into laughter (Kabat: 1999: 16). Skeletons were also used as a fun factor. In Japanese language rattling bones make a sound called *katakata*, which is presumed to be very amusing. Many skeletons, like in Kawanabe Kyōsai's prints, were to generate this loud sound in people's imagination and make them laugh (Ibid. 213-215). In Europe artists confronted Death with values like love, youth, beauty what was supposed to intensify the macabre, a combination of black humour and grotesque (Kurtz 1934: 225).

Conclusions

Analysed societies experienced traumatic times of plague, famine and natural disasters. It was a natural reaction for people to revaluate their lives in the face of peril, especially when dead were literally lying in the streets.

Overwhelming fear of dying, sensation of fragility of life and melancholy caused societies to find some coping mechanisms that would help them survive. In both cases people turned to supernatural world to find peace and in the uncertainty of human kind's existence. This situation was used by mainstream religions to gain influence on people, but also to popularize values and ideas typical for each faith. The influence of Christianity and Buddhism (echoed by native taboo of death) can be observed in the way of thinking about human body and corpses. The first put human body as a topic of interest in writings about martyrs' and Jesus Christ's death, while treated the remains as a possible source of positive supernatural power that could bring blessing to believers. Beside religious influences, European societies' also bore a rather positive and curious attitude towards body judging from the reaction to anatomy discoveries and art inspired by them. This affirmative attitude might have been inherited from the antiquity, when the human body was not only cultivated in a sense of athletic physicality, but also as a site of soul that is vulnerable and must receive concern (duBois 2010: 109). On the other hand Buddhism regarded bodies as a root of pollution and a sight of a decomposing corpse was to bring sufferings on one's soul. Skeleton was stripped off these qualities only under the influence of western culture that was used as a buffer to reintroduce it as a visible character in popular art. However its supernatural qualities were interpreted differently. Most importantly, in Europe a skeleton was not only associated with physical death but became a personification of the abstract idea of dying and was imagined as an unbiased soul collector. Death became a person, modelled after human skeleton. This made her not only very recognizable and distinctive as an individual, but also allowed space for creativity in interpretation of her as a phenomenon and a persona. In Japan it was considered as a restless soul, later *yōkai*, a representation of a revenge seeker. Skeleton was a shape that clearly pointed at the nature of a spirit, but its intentions varied depending on one's will. It was not thought of as the Death, but associated with death. As obvious as it is, it was natural that the skeleton became a part of death symbolism. At one point people from discussed cultural circles got used to the view of body decomposing in a plain sight, and it was a common knowledge that skeleton was the last stage of its existence. Aside from medical history, appearance of a skeleton outside anatomy atlases was inevitable. The process of incorporating it into art was a daring way to reflect on the nature of life and death, body and corpse, visible and invisible aspects of human existence. Yet while for Europeans it was a method of taming the abstract idea of dying and accepting Death's

inevitable companion, for Japanese it was coming eye to eye with what they feared for centuries.

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Subject in Japanese. Definitions and Dilemmas

ABSTRACT

The notion of subject has been absent in Japanese linguistics up to the 19th century. At that point it was introduced to Japanese scholars by their European colleagues and as a result, the descriptions of subject in Japanese bear a striking resemblance to those in European languages, mainly English. This is despite the fact that Japanese comes from a vastly different language family and as such its linguistic phenomena are obviously bound to be different. This paper provides a commentary about the practice of describing the subject in Japanese with criteria created for European languages. Several approaches to defining the Japanese subject are discussed, mainly those of Ōkado Masayuki, Mikami Akira and Kanaya Takehiro. Their opinions are presented together with some insights about the fallacies, mistakes and inconsistencies resulting from applying faulty methods in their research. The paper concludes with a summary of the discussed issues and some suggestions for further handling of the topic.

KEYWORDS: subject, Japanese linguistics, Mikami Akira

Introduction

The notion of subject has been well defined in numerous European languages. According to the European linguistic tradition, the subject is the element identifying what the speaker is talking (i.e. predicating) about. The predicate conveys in an overt manner the facts or hypotheses about the subject of a sentence. Usually the subject is the theme of the sentence[1], therefore in most cases it precedes the predicate in the syntactic structure[2]. In the terms of logic, the subject has traditionally been associated with the specific term and the predicate with the broad, universal term expressed in the sentence. Another distinction is semiotic, where the subject is the topic of the sentence and the predicate is the comment on the topic[3]. Halliday further defines the subject as 1) something that given information refers to, 2) something being talked about and 3) the agent of the activity described in the utterance. Most subjects do not fulfill all three criteria, resulting in

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[1] Lyons 1977: 501.
[2] Ibid.: 649.
[3] Lyons 1991: 148.

the differentiation between a psychological, grammatical and logical subject respectively[4].

The notion of subject is probably among the hardest to define in Japanese linguistics. In fact, before the Meiji era (1868-1912) the idea of subject was completely absent in Japanese grammar system[5]. It was not until the second half of the 19th century that it had been introduced to native scholars in Japan[6], mostly due to its prominence in European languages. It has been adopted into Japanese linguistics ever since, although, as I will demonstrate below, the fervent discussion concerning its nature is yet to be concluded.

Today Japanese grammar taught in schools (so-called "school grammar") includes the division of parts of speech into dependent and independent, the latter being further divided into inflected and uninflected. The independent uninflected parts of speech fall into two groups: those that can function as a subject of a sentence and those that cannot[7]. This shows that the idea of the subject has indeed become an integral part of the Japanese linguistic system. And yet controversy still surrounds the very definition of the Japanese subject. I will argue that these problems stem from the fact that the majority of Japanese works is inspired by studies conducted on English. Since the very notion of subject in Japanese has been borrowed from European linguistics, many scholars attempt to define it with the use of criteria appropriate for European languages, especially for English. Furthermore, the inspiration from English grammar seems to be prevalent in the research on the topic of the Japanese subject.

This paper presents how this works in practice and provides a commentary on the inconsistencies that result from such an attitude. The discussion will refer to studies provided by Ōkado Masayuki, Mikami Akira and Kanaya Takehiro, as they exemplify the most common fallacies in researching the Japanese subject.

The article starts with the comparison of English and Japanese in respect to the definitions of subject provided by Ōkado Masayuki. Ōkado gave a threefold definition of a subject in English and attempted to construct a parallel definition for a subject in Japanese[8]. This article includes his discussion concerning each part of the definition, which is based on

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[4] Halliday 1994: 30-32.

[5] Kanaya 2002: 86-87.

[6] Kanaya 2004: 8, 11; other notions introduced to the Japanese grammar system include the nominative case and grammatical agreement, although it is controversial whether they can be rightfully applied to describing a Japanese sentence.

[7] Kindaichi et al. 1995: 171.

[8] Ōkado 2008: 45, 68, 70, 72.

semantic, syntactic and morphological criteria at once. At the end of that section there is a short mention of Ōkado's description of honorific agreement in Japanese, which he equates to the subject-verb agreement observed in European languages.

The next section deals with the theory of Mikami Akira, who suggested the abolition of subject in Japanese linguistics. Mikami argued that in contrast to European languages, a subject is not an indispensable part of a Japanese sentence. In fact, the alleged Japanese subject fails to fulfill the criteria universally provided for defining a subject and does not even correspond to the subject in English. Mikami claims that this is a clear sign that the notion of subject is redundant in Japanese linguistics.

The last two sections are devoted to the analysis of Mikami's theory given by Kanaya Takehiro. Kanaya supports Mikami's proposition and provides further evidence for its validity. The first section includes his general opinion on abolishing the notion of subject from Japanese linguistics. The second section presents a detailed description of one of his arguments for Mikami's theory. It concerns the syntactic structure of sentences with adjectival predicates: in contrast to European languages a predicative adjective in Japanese does not need a copula and, consequently, a subject to form a fully grammatical sentence Thus a Japanese subject does not fulfill the necessary criteria (provided for English) of being indispensable in a sentence and therefore is not needed in Japanese linguistics. This section presents a particularly noteworthy fallacy in describing the Japanese subject and therefore has been separated from the previous one, even though both sections refer to the ideas provided by Kanaya Takehiro.

Some Introductory Remarks

This article includes an example comparison of the English and the Japanese subject, but only because there is an abundance of works applying this comparative method when defining the Japanese subject. It is not meant to validate describing the Japanese linguistic phenomena in relation to English. On the contrary, the main intent of the article is to show the fallacies in such practices. Numerous works have been written in which the Japanese linguistic phenomena are described in relation to English – and solely to English, which in turn results in misguided theories and conclusions. In fact, there is no need to hold English as the model language, not only due to the vast differences between English and Japanese, but also because English is by no means representative among the languages of the world. It will become apparent that although this method of research is

widespread among Japanese scholars, it is fairly misleading and can hardly
be justified.

Moreover, the various approaches to the Japanese subject will not be
assessed, as this would exceed the topic of this article. Consequently, no
definite solution will be given. Nevertheless some comments will be
provided to show the inaccuracies born from applying the described
methods.

The transcriptions of Japanese examples adhere to the standards of the
Hepburn romanization system, as it is clear to both Japanese language
users and readers of other specialties.

Ōkado – Direct Import of English Subject Criteria to Japanese

While attempting to describe the Japanese subject in comparison to English,
some scholars provide misleading definitions. Most common fallacies
include mixing the semantic, morphological and syntactical criteria into
one definition and reducing the notion of nominative case to its subject-
denoting function. Moreover, many researchers ignore the fact that in some
respects Japanese and English have vastly different characteristics.

One of the scholars who demonstrates some of the above fallacies in their
definition of the Japanese subject is Ōkado Masayuki. The definition is
based on a description of the subject in English, which, according to Ōkado,
is threefold, employing all semantic, syntactic and morphological criteria:

1. the agent of the verb;
2. the element at the beginning of the sentence;
3. the nominative element[9].

Ōkado used these criteria to define the subject in Japanese, although there
is no clear justification for doing this. It seems that the English criteria
were applied to Japanese automatically and uncritically. The resulting
definition of the Japanese subject is presented below:

1. the agent of the verb;
2. the element at the beginning of the sentence;
3. the element marked with the particle wa[10].

As Ōkado's analysis showed, even in the English language, which as a
positional language has strict grammar rules, defining the subject of a

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[9] Ōkado 2008: 11.
[10] Ibid.: 47.

sentence in a precise manner proves to be difficult, as none of the three elements of the definition is sufficient. The analysis of the English subject is beyond the scope of this article, but a detailed description can be found in Ōkado (2008: 11-45). The conclusion of that analysis is that there is at least the need to specify the criteria to accurately describe the subject[11]. Despite those difficulties, Ōkado's attempt to define the subject in Japanese is based on the definition for English, although the problems that arise are roughly the same for both languages. The issues concerning Japanese are presented in the next paragraphs.

As can be seen in example 1 below, not all predicates in Japanese take an agent argument, so the subject of such and many similar sentences is not an agent. In such situations the semantic criterion is invalid[12]:

1. *Kare wa nihongo no kyōju desu.*
(彼は日本語の教授です。).
('He is a professor of Japanese.').

The syntactic criterion is similarly useless, as many sentences in Japanese start with an element that can hardly be described as the subject:

2. *Yonaka no ichiji ja, mō yatteru mise mo nai shi naa.*
(夜中の一時じゃ、もうやってる店もないしなあ。).
('There's nowhere open at one in the morning.')
3. *Tsumari, kono Iwasakisan ga egaita n desu ne.*
(つまり、この岩滝さんが描いたんですね。).
('So this Mr. Iwasaki drew it, right?')[13].

Before delving into the analysis of the morphological criterion let us give a short description of the thematic particle *wa* and the nominative[14] particle *ga*. Traditionally both *wa* and *ga* are associated with the notion of subject in Japanese. *Wa* is used to mark the thematic element and to separate it from the rest of the sentence[15], thus creating the typical Japanese sentence pattern of theme-rheme[16]. *Ga* has the function that can be described as

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[11] Ibid.: 45.
[12] Ibid.: 48; all the English translations were provided by Ōkado.
[13] Ibid.: 48.
[14] At his point it should be noted that not only *ga* can mark the nominative element. Other particles with this function include *nara* (a variant of the thematic particle), *koso* (the emphatic particle) and *mo* (the distinctive particle).
[15] Moriyama 2009: 107-108.
[16] Kiyose 1995: 20-21, Iori 2002: 90-91.

similar to the nominative nominal suffixes found in European languages (in fact, Japanese particles can be thought of as suffixes attached to the otherwise uninflected nouns). Although the two particles are separate both in form and function, in many cases the nominative element is also the theme of the sentence.

The morphological criterion in Ōkado's definition states that the subject in Japanese is the element marked with the particle *wa*. This is incorrect, since *wa* can be combined with a variety of other particles, such as *ni* (the punctual particle), *kara* (the ablative particle) or *de* (the instrumental particle). Usually they form two-element combinations, like *ni wa*, *kara wa* or *de wa*. Only when combined with the nominative particle *ga* or with the accusative particle *o* does *wa* stand by itself, since *ga* and *o* are omitted in such cases. This shows how varied the functions of *wa* can be. It marks the theme, not the subject of a sentence and therefore the assumption that it can be associated only with the subject is wrong[17]. Shibatani, who discusses Japanese particles on the syntactic level in general, notes that particles like *o* and *ga* belong to the group called *case particles* (*kakujoshi,* 格助詞) and *wa* belongs to *adverbial particles* or *modal particles* (*kakarijoshi,* 係助詞). The second group affect the entire predication, not only the preceding noun, as with case particles. It can be concluded then that *wa* does not denote the subject as its basic function, but rather stands as a modal element for the whole sentence, which places it on a different level than particles like *ga* and *o*[18]. One must also remember that according to the corresponding part in the definition for the subject in English, the subject is the nominative element, which has the Japanese counterpart in the element marked with *ga*. Thus the element identified as the subject would be the one marked with *ga* rather than *wa*[19], provided that imitating the definition for English would be appropriate in the first place.

Apart from fulfilling the above criteria, Ōkado's eventual definition for the Japanese subject[20] tries to account for the fact that in English there is a morphological agreement between the subject and the predicate (albeit only in the third person). Ōkado gives the example of Japanese sentences containing honorific forms of the predicate and – optionally – other elements in the sentence. The honorific transformation is triggered when speaking to (or of) someone of a higher vertical rank[21] and includes all the

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[17] Ōkado 2008: 60-61.
[18] Shibatani 1990: 333-334.
[19] Ōkado 2008: 64.
[20] Ibid.: 68; a similar definition was provided by Tsukada Hiroyasu in: (Tsukada 2001: 39).
[21] Martin locates the honorific expressions on a coordinate system, which has the plain-polite(-deferential) spectrum as the horizontal Y-axis and the spectrum of humble-neutral-exalted as the

elements that have a semantic or pragmatic connection with the person. For example, if the person of a higher vertical rank performs an action, the corresponding verb will be in its exalted form. If the speaker performs an action in relation to the person of a higher vertical rank, the corresponding verb will be in its humble form. Consequently, there are many cases in which honorific verb forms relate to the agent of the sentence. According to Ōkado, this agreement between the presumed subject and the predicate, which can be observed on the morphological level, serves as proof that Japanese, similarly to English, does have subject-verb agreement, albeit it is achieved by different means[22].

The analysis above is an example of Japanese scholars relying on the definitions provided for English when describing their native language. As has been stated, such practices seem to be prevalent in Japanese linguistics. However, the resulting definitions are misguided and present fallacies enumerated at the beginning of this section, especially the overlooking of the differences between Japanese and English. Ōkado did not account for the characteristics of Japanese predicates (the semantic criterion) or the Japanese sentence structure (the syntactic criterion), but uncritically followed the English example. He even attempted to draw parallels between English and Japanese on the morphological level so that the definition for English could fit the Japanese language with only slight changes. As a result, the description of the Japanese subject that he provided seems forced and is ridden with errors. This demonstrates how excessive reliance on English as the model language can lead to flawed conclusions in research on Japanese.

Mikami – the Abolition of Japanese Subject

Some studies on the Japanese subject based on comparisons to English go beyond a simple definition in their conclusions. Perhaps the most outstanding example of such research is the theory presented by Mikami Akira[23]. He not only described the subject using the criteria for English, but proceeded to argue that since they do not fit the Japanese language, the notion of subject should be abolished from Japanese linguistics.

Mikami Akira provided a definition of subject as the nominative element that usually stands before the predicate and forms with it a particular

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vertical X-axis. The plain-polite spectrum is called *the axis of address* and concerns the speaker's attitude towards the addressee. The humble-neutral-exalted spectrum is called *the axis of reference* and concerns the speaker's attitude towards the subject of the utterance (Martin 1964: 408-409). The change that Ōkado discusses here is the shift along the axis of reference.

[22] Ōkado 2008: 72.
[23] Mikami 1972, Mikami 2009.

relation: it marks the agent of the predicate or functions similarly to an agent for predicates that do not express activity. The relation between the subject and the predicate can be observed in the agreement between them with respect to grammatical person[24]. Such a definition seems generally accurate for the English language, but not for Japanese[25]. Mikami claims that the influences from European languages caused the notion of subject to be uncritically introduced to Japanese linguistics[26], even though the grammatical subject-predicate relation as the basic sentence type is not universal to all languages[27]. According to Mikami, the subject as described above does not exist in the Japanese language and thus he suggested the abolition of subject in Japanese linguistics (*shugo haishiron*, 主語廃止論)[28].

Mikami noticed that while in English both the subject and the predicate are important sentence elements, in Japanese only the predicate is crucial[29]. The minimal sentence structure in English includes a subject and a predicate, however, as Mikami's analysis shows, in Japanese the only indispensable element is a predicate[30]. This conclusion contradicts the existence of the subject-predicate relation in Japanese, and what follows, the existence of the subject itself[31]. The basic sentence pattern in Japanese is represented not by the subject-predicate structure (*shujutsu kankei*, 主述関係), but by the theme-predicate structure (*daijutsu kankei*, 題述関係)[32]. The relation between the subject (if it exists) and the predicate is no different than the relation between the predicate and any of its other arguments[33].

Mikami further notes that the English word *subject* semantically corresponds to the Japanese word *daimoku* (題目), meaning *theme*[34]. In most cases the theme indeed does function as the subject in Japanese[35], but this is not a rule[36]. The theme is marked with the *wa* particle and if any,

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[24] Koike 2001: 18.
[25] Ibid.: 18.
[26] Mikami 2009: 19.
[27] Mikami 1972: 29.
[28] Koike 2001: 18.
[29] Mikami 2009: 241.
[30] Ibid.: 241.
[31] Ibid.: 239.
[32] Masuoka 2007: 24.
[33] Mikami 1972: 97.
[34] Ibid.: 33, Mikami 2009: 187.
[35] Mikami 1972: 30.
[36] Ibid.: 29. Mikami goes as far as basing the identification of the theme and the subject in Japanese sentences on their English translations (which do not differentiate between the two)

this very element in the sentence should be called the *subject*[37]. However, Mikami claims that it would be difficult to maintain both *theme* and *subject* in the linguistic vocabulary of one language[38], especially since the term *subject* would need redefining, so it would be better to simply remove the notion of subject from Japanese linguistics[39].

As one can easily deduce from this reasoning, Mikami relied heavily on the English definition of the subject. The criteria he presented at the beginning of his analysis were provided for English, so it is not surprising that they might not be accurate for Japanese. Yet Mikami argues that this disparity between the two languages serves as proof that the notion of subject is redundant in Japanese. It should be noted, however, that the very reason Mikami wanted to abolish the term *subject* in Japanese was that he did not deem it appropriate to imitate English. At the same time, such an imitation was the reason he built his theory in the first place. He claimed that Japanese is fairly different from English and so it does not need a *subject* in its linguistic system as English does, but the basis for this theory lays nowhere else but in comparing English and Japanese. Since the definition of the subject provided for English does not match Japanese, the *subject* in Japanese does not exist. What Mikami did at the beginning of his analysis was basically attempting to imitate English linguistics (even calling the initial position in a sentence the traditional position for a subject [40]), the practice that he later deemed unnecessary himself. Beginning with a comparison between the two languages seems reasonable, however matching the criteria constructed for one language to the other appears unfounded. It might be better to attempt finding a definition for the subject unique for the Japanese language, which is incidentally in the same line of thought as attempts to provide a unique solution for Japanese in the form of excluding the notion of subject from its linguistic system.

Kanaya – Further Justification for Mikami's Theory

Perhaps one of the most ardent supporters of Mikami's theory is Kanaya Takehiro, who presented his own analysis of the term *subject* in Japanese as well as some commentary on the topic. Kanaya provides four criteria for identifying the subject in a sentence:

(Mikami 1972: 31). This further shows how much he relies on the descriptions provided for English.
[37] Mikami 2009: 187.
[38] Mikami 1972: 100-103.
[39] Mikami 2009: 187.
[40] Mikami 1972: 43-44.

1. It is indispensable in basic sentence structures.
2. Usually it stands at the beginning of the sentence.
3. It determines the form of the predicate with regard to grammatical person (conjugation).
4. It is marked with a specific case (nominative)[41].

As Kanaya's further analysis shows, none of the above are appropriate to describe the subject in Japanese and consequently, in line with Mikami's proposal, he suggests that this notion should be abolished in Japanese linguistics[42]. However, it is apparent that Kanaya, as well as Mikami, relies on the definitions provided for English and as such his analysis is prone to the same fallacies as Mikami's theory.

At this point it seems appropriate to note that, as was mentioned previously, even in English it is not possible to precisely define the subject[43]. The subject in English takes various forms and various positions in a sentence, although these inconsistencies do not lead to proposals of abolishing the notion of subject from English linguistics. It is difficult to understand why such an approach would be applied to Japanese. When constructing the definition of a subject for Japanese the scholars did attempt to imitate the English language, however they seem to have overlooked the allowances made in the very same English definitions.

There is one other aspect to this phenomenon, namely the belief that some arbitrary characteristics of various languages are universal. Often Japanese is regarded as an exception to these characteristics. Usually such theories are nothing more but observations about different features of those languages with comparison to Japanese. However, as will be presented in the next section, the conclusions drawn from those observations can be unfoundedly far-reaching.

The Subject and Adjectival Predicates
Kanaya gives a complex analysis of Mikami's theory. He quotes André Martinet, who claimed that if some element is inextricably connected to the predicate, it is the subject of the sentence (except for sentences in imperative mood or with omitted elements). If such a connection is absent,

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[41] Kanaya 2002: 62.
[42] Ibid.: 64-66.
[43] Miura 2008: 21, Ōkado 2008: 45. There exists however a thorough research provided by Keenan, who constructed a hierarchy of "subjectivity" in the form of a list of thirty various characteristics associated with the subject. According to him, different languages prioritize different characteristics or even possess their own unique features that can be connected to the notion of subject (Keenan 1976: 306-307, 311-323).

that element is not the subject, but just an argument of the predicate, whatever its morphological form or syntactic position may be[44]. Martinet stated this in regard to the Basque language, however Kanaya generalizes it to all languages[45]. He notes that there is no such connection in Japanese between the nominative element and the predicate. This stands in contrast to European languages, which allegedly require a subject to even form a sentence[46]. Meanwhile a full Japanese sentence can take the form of a single predicative adjective, as in 4. below:

4. *Oishii!*
(おいしいー！).
('How tasty!')[47].

English or French adjectives supposedly need a copula to function as predicates while the copula itself requires a subject to determine its morphological form[48]. In other words, the subject is indispensable due to the necessity to determine the form of the copula.

It has to be noted, however, that in European languages adjectives decline as opposed to conjugate, so they require a conjugating copula as an auxiliary element to form a full sentence (in a manner fairly similar to Japanese non-predicative adjectives). Japanese predicative adjectives conjugate by themselves and thus a copula becomes redundant. Furthermore, in Japanese the form of a predicative adjective (or any predicate, for that matter) is not dependent on the subject or the nominative element as any morphological agreement in grammatical gender, number or person is absent in the language[49]. It is not surprising then that example 4, consisting of a predicative adjective, does not include a copula and consequently a subject[50].

Furthermore, it should be noted that, as many other elements in Japanese, the subject can be omitted from the sentence and this is not limited to adjectival predicates. Ōkado notes that the subject of a predicate is present

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[44] Kanaya 2002: 58.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.: 73.
[47] Ibid.: 60.
[48] Ibid.: 61.
[49] It should be noted that Kanaya discusses the grammatical agreement as it is commonly understood in reference to European languages (such as English or French). It has to be considered in separation from the honorific agreement described by Ōkado.
[50] Apart from those remarks, Kanaya failed to notice that *Oishii!* is a form of describing personal experience and as such can only take a 1st person subject. Because of this, explicitly stating the subject is redundant.

in both English and Japanese, although only in English it must be present on the phonetic level[51]. Finally, in Japanese most predicates do take an argument being the agent or functioning similarly to the agent (for example for adjectival predicates), with only a few exceptions. As a standard feature of the Japanese language, this argument does not need to be phonetically realized for the sentence to be grammatically correct.

Kanaya's reasoning serves as another example of attempting to describe the Japanese language using the criteria for English. The features of English that are absent in Japanese can hardly be an argument for abolishing the notion of subject from Japanese linguistics; it is not surprising that two unrelated languages display different linguistic phenomena. Kanaya's description is therefore little more than an observation concerning different characteristics of Japanese and European adjectives.

Summary of the Presented Theories

This article included theories presented by Ōkado Masayuki, Mikami Akira and Kanaya Takehiro respectively. Together they provide examples of the main issues concerning the definition of subject in the Japanese language .

The first theory showed the tendency to perceive the subject in Japanese through the lens of the English language. Although very few characteristics of the English subject apply to the subject in Japanese, scholars continue to make attempts to describe the Japanese subject as if it were similar to the English one.

Mikami's theory, based on a comparison between English and Japanese, culminates in the proposition of abolishing the notion of subject from Japanese linguistics, as its existence seems forced and unjustified. Mikami argues that English is vastly different from Japanese and so the linguistic phenomena from the former do not necessarily appear in the latter. However he failed to notice that his own definition of the Japanese subject was based on the criteria applying to English, therefore it could not possibly be accurate for Japanese. The suggestion to abandon the notion of subject would be much more justified as a conclusion if Mikami's analysis consisted only of researching the subject in Japanese, without comparisons to other languages. If, however, one insisted on imitating the English definition for a subject, they should also note that the various difficulties encountered when attempting to define the subject in English have never become the ground for the suggestion that the notion should be abandoned altogether.

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[51] Ōkado 2008: 84.

Following Mikami's theory this article presented a commentary provided by Kanaya Takehiro, who gives further evidence supporting Mikami's proposition. However, the omission of the subject in sentences with adjectival predicates can hardly serve as such, because it is caused by different characteristics of Japanese and English adjectives rather than by the actual absence of the subject. The requirement for the subject to be phonetically realized is a feature of English and can not be used as an argument when discussing the Japanese language.

Conclusions

It can be observed that many Japanese scholars perceive the English language as canonical, although this view is completely unfounded. Moreover, once the criteria from English linguistics are applied, it is not always done in a consistent manner, as can be seen in the review of Mikami Akira's theory. It seems that some characteristics of the English subject become highlighted while other are arbitrarily ignored in favor of the hypothesis at hand. Some of those characteristics are unjustifiably generalized to other languages; perhaps this happens because English has become today's world's lingua franca, but this fact is hardly relevant to the conducted research.

The notion of subject has long been present in European linguistics. Introducing it to Japanese linguistics solely for the purpose of imitation might indeed seem unjustified. The arguments for different theories should be based on the analysis of the Japanese language itself. Comparison with European languages, especially English, is a good starting point for research, but ultimately cannot become key argument in the discussion on the subject in Japanese. English and Japanese come from different language families, so it is difficult to understand why one should be used as a model for the other. As Mikami observed, the structure of a Japanese sentence is different than that of an English sentence and the subject functions in a different way. Perhaps it would be a good idea to tailor the linguistic tools to account for the characteristic features of Japanese rather than forcefully applying criteria made for other languages. As could be observed in this article, such methods are often misguided and should be applied with care, if at all.

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Vit Ulman

The Language of the Koguryo State: A Critical Reexamination

ABSTRACT

The main topic of this paper is the ancient language of the state of Koguryo, one of the three states vying for dominance in the Korean peninsula during the first millennium CE. Even though this language is very badly attested, there have been attempts to analyse it and link it to other languages, the best known work on this topic is most probably Christopher I. Beckwith's book *Koguryo: The Language of Japan's Continental Relatives.* This book contains a wide-ranging analysis of the extant material focusing on the possible connection to the Japanese language, but it has been criticized for being flawed in some aspects. This paper critically reviews Beckwith's book while attempting an independent analysis of the extant material from the Korean chronicle *Samguk Sagi*. The material consisting of old place-names from the Korean peninsula is being closely scrutinized, taking into account mainly the geographic distribution and the frequency in which the cognates to the Japanese language appear. The aim of the paper is to try to answer the following questions: Is it possible to say that the language attested in *Samguk Sagi* is related to Japanese? Is it the Koguryo language? Is it actually only one language?

KEYWORDS: Koguryo language, Japonic languages

Introduction

This article was inspired by a rather well-known book titled *Koguryo: The Language of Japan's Continental Relatives* by Christopher I. Beckwith, first published in 2004. The book was a publishing success, and there was even a second edition printed in 2007. Beckwith's book is the most widely accessible work on the nature of the language of Koguryo and its relation to Japanese, and admittedly contains many interesting ideas. However, certain parts of it, especially the used methodology and the conclusions drawn about the ethnic origins of the Japanese people appear to be flawed in some aspects. These perceived flaws spurred the author of this paper to search for more information on the topic and eventually lead to the publishing of this paper in which the existing research on the Koguryo language and the extant material itself will be critically examined.

The Language of Koguryo

The language of Koguryo, a state situated in the north of the Korean peninsula (37BC-668AD), has received attention of various scholars of various nationalities at least in the last 100 years. The point that makes it intriguing is that different relations with many different modern languages have been attributed to it by various researchers. This ancient language shares similarities to Old Japanese according to some scholars, according to others to Altaic languages in general, and also, of course, to Korean. The basic problem when analyzing such relationships is that the Koguryo language is very badly attested. Most of the extant lexis stems from the famous Korean chronicle Samguk Sagi written in the 12th century. Samguk Sagi is supposed to have taken its material from older chronicles, and the parts most pertinent to this research are the chapters on geography. These chapters mostly focus on the old toponyms used before the reforms of the 7th century when the old place-names were replaced by new Chinese names. The original names were written first phonetically using Chinese characters, and then a Chinese name with an equivalent meaning was attached to them. Such structure of the source material poses another problem: Ascertaining the correct phonetic value of the Chinese characters at the time they were added to the indigenous name. The fact that the phonetic transcription can differ in date and source is a further complication when analyzing this material. Some have attempted a complex analysis, but were widely criticized for it (like aforementioned Beckwith 2004). The aim of this article is to reinterpret this data and to analyze it in relation especially to the Japonic languages. The author of this paper does not claim to have anything more than a basic knowledge of the Korean language so this side of the matter will be left to the ones better equipped for it. The question of origin of the language of the Koguryo state is, of course, inherently laden with political booby traps as it has been manipulated with by various nationalists on both sides of the Tsushima strait. Nevertheless, this paper is an attempt to look into the matter without any preconceptions. It should be taken as it is: As a linguistically based analysis focused on the extant data.

Another problem of much of the research on Koguryo language is the widespread tendency to conflate the ancestors of Koguryo and Japanese people with various archeological cultures. This is a logical fallacy typical of many who try to push a nationalist agenda or just want to come up with a new theory. The facts are that we do not have any data that would allow us to connect older archeological cultures to the later (still hypothetical) Koguryo-Japanese people. (The shared material culture does not

necessarily mean shared identity or language. By the same logic we would be all members of the: 'Jeans-McDonald's culture' and we would all be speaking 'American.') Therefore no such a theory will be postulated here.
Throughout the whole paper we will be inevitably dealing with the Altaic theory, as it tries to genetically connect most of the languages spoken in the northeastern Asia. This paper will leave also the question whether this theory is correct or not unanswered. Answering it demands a great amount of research and critical examination which it does not always receive. However, it is very hard to deny that the languages customarily grouped into the Altaic family (Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Korean, and Japanese) are structurally very similar. Such similarities can be essentially caused by two things:

1) Genetic relationship
2) Close and prolonged contact.

Genetic relationship is self-explanatory, but let us look at the theory of contact. For such a wide ranging conversion to happen, this contact had to be very intensive or very, very long. And for such a contact, certain amount of time and space is required. In other words, speakers of those languages have to live very close to each other. In such a case we have to ask: Where did this conversion occur? It would require proto-Japanese, proto-Korean, proto-Tungusic etc. being situated somewhere close to each other, and as it surely did not happen in the Japanese archipelago, it had to occur somewhere on the continent. Korean peninsula is the land closest to Japan so it would be the logical place for the Japonic speakers to pass through. Therefore it is probably the right area to search for remains of any proto-Japonic or para-Japonic languages, whether we agree with the Altaic theory or not. Beckwith's approach to the issue is very interesting as he agrees that the Koguryo language is related to Japanese, but he is strictly opposed to the Altaic theory or to finding any typological similarities shared among Japanese and other northeast Asian languages!

Koguryo and Japonic Languaes
All these problems notwithstanding, the need of a language family in the northern East Asia is quite evident. There are many languages that share structural similarities, but the linguists still have not agreed on a solution. The main problem of the Altaic theory is the lack of lexical cognates. Its proponents argue that the Altaic family is older than the Indo-European and the Finnougric, and therefore it is harder to find extant cognates, and

instead they focus on the grammatical similarities and on the verb morphology. (Starostin 2003: 235). Their opponents argue that any perceived similarities are a result of parallel development caused by proximity, in other words that these languages form a sprachbund. Some actually discount even that (Beckwith 2004: 184-194), but then we would be left with many languages sharing key features for no apparent reason.

The theory that the Koguryo language is related to the Japonic languages is not the only one that has been proposed. There is another theory that Silla, Koguryo and Paekche shared the same language which was nothing else than simply Old Korean. Vovin in his article "Koguryo and Paekche: Different Languages or Dialects of Korean?" tries to defend this theory based on an analysis of the borrowings from Korean in Jurchen and Manchu, old Korean poems and textual evidence from words he considers to be borrowed from Paekche to Old Western Japanese. Some of his arguments could be considered valid, some could be disproved. It appears that there are indeed words and grammatical characteristics borrowed from Korean to Jurchen/Manchu, but Vovin does not account for the fact that this contact did not necessarily have to take place directly in (and during the age of) the kingdom of Koguryo. Jurchen is essentially first attested in the second half of the 12th century. Even if we discount the theory that Koguryo was linguistically Korean, there are still almost 5 centuries during which speakers of Jurchen and Korean probably shared a common border. His evidence for Paekche language being Korean based on one *hyangga*[1] poem seems rather anecdotal. The poem was supposed to be written by a man from Paekche who came to Silla to see a beautiful princess. From that Vovin infers that this man and the locals could communicate, and therefore people in Paekche did speak a dialect of old Korean. However, there is no reason why that man from Paekche could not have learned Korean as his second language, or even more probably, he did not actually compose this poem. The most valid is Vovin's critique of the Paekche lexis in Japanese based on the lack of such words in Ryukyuan. However, this critique already concerns Paekche after it was forced to shift south from its original land. Therefore his theory that the Para-Japonic language attested in Samguk Sagi was at that time already a vanishing substrate language is possible, but again not proven.

There are also arguments that the language attested in Samguk Sagi is not in fact a single language but a whole mix of languages. As Koguryo was most probably not a single ethnic unity, there were various peoples living in its borders. Some of them must have been speakers of various Tungusic

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[1] An old Korean poem.

languages (tribes as Mohe), or Chinese, or maybe of some languages that vanished in the process of history. That is the problem with such ancient multi-ethnic empires.

Some Korean scholars (for example Toh Soo Hee 2005) object to the use of toponyms from Samguk Sagi as a proof of the Koguryo language as they come from the area that was the original (or at least early) Paekche territory. Therefore, according to them, it does not represent the Koguryo language, it is supposed to represent the early stage of the Paekche language. Such concerns of course make our analysis even more difficult. It is hard to ignore these voices as the Paekche kingdom changed its location during the first millennium and it was not the only one to do so. The borders shifted many times in the time between the beginning of the common era and the year 668 when Silla more or less united the peninsula. Beckwith counters with the argument that he analyzes even place names north of the river Yalü, and the independent analysis for this paper shows that there indeed seem to be a few vaguely Japonic names in the north (鉛城–乃勿忽 /*Nəjmutxwət namari?/[2], 節城–蕪子 /*Muə tsɨ/tsi fushi?/ etc.) which means that Toh Soo Hee's theory, however compelling, does not seem to be conclusive.

The Analysis of Extant Place Names and Problems

Let us move our attention to the analysis itself. In this paper an independent analysis based on the reconstructed pronunciation of Early Middle Chinese (EMC) by Pulleyblank as it is in his *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation* (Pulleyblank 1991) will be used. This reconstruction was chosen because it is one of the most detailed reconstructions available, and it is probably temporally the closest to the time when the Koguryo names were written down as it is based on the early Tang rhyming table *Qieyun*. It is true that Beckwith provides quite a detailed account of each extant place name and of his own reconstruction of his "Archaic Northeastern Middle Chinese." However his reconstruction is very dubious because he reconstructs this dialect of Chinese on basis of the same toponyms he then interprets through this reconstruction. Such approach devalues his work and he is rightly criticized for it by some of the reviewers of his book (Pellard 2005). It appears that in places his reconstruction is made so it fits his attempts to extract Japonic words, but, as we will see, sometimes it actually obscures the etymology. There is his tendency to render most of the stops and nasals in the coda of the Chinese

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[2] Could be also Korean *nab*.

syllables as /r/, for example the word for 'tree' transcribed as 斤 (EMC /*kɨn/) is read by Beckwith as /*kɨr/, character 忽 meaning 'fortress, town etc.' (EMC /*xwət/) is rendered as /*χuər/. This characteristic is supposed to be an archaism handed down from Old Chinese. (Beckwith 2004: 99-101) However, most of the modern reconstructions of Old Chinese do not posit an /-r/ final at all (among them Baxter 1992). Therefore, there was probably no final /-r/ to inherit at all. To make a concession here, the finals were quite often not that important as they frequently did not exactly fit the transcribed language. We cannot expect the transcribers to be too exact. We also do not know who decided those words would be written in this way. It is quite possible the original scribe was not a native speaker of Chinese, or that he was not a native speaker of the Koguryo language, possibly both. It is Beckwith's assumption that these are tightly fitting transcriptions, among other things, that is leading him astray.

Sometimes it is hard to determine if we should ignore the finals (as they were ignored when the characters were used in *ongana* reading in Japanese), or if we should ignore only some of them (Later in history the Chinese finals /-p/, /-t/, /-k/ were faithfully copied by the Japanese, but not the final /-ŋ/.) or if it is necessary to count with all of them.

Another problem is the character 尸: this character, in Japanese read as *shikabane,* was for some time considered to be read as /lir/, /l/, /r/ etc. (Beckwith 2004: 99) However, this is a mistake because it has never been read that way, it was quite regularly read as /*ɕi/ or later as /*ʂi/. Schuessler in his reconstruction of Late Han Chinese renders it as /*śi/ (which in his transcription is equivalent to /*ɕi/) We can be sure that it was read /*ɕi/ around the year 400 CE when it was used in the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit word *śīla* (in Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra). Quite ironically, Beckwith himself first criticized this mistake, and then he repeated it in his own reconstruction of the so-called "Ancient Northeastern Middle Chinese." Beckwith's rationale for this is that he considers the character 隣 in Yulingun 有隣郡, which is the Chinese rendering for 于尸郡, to be a phonetic imitation of 尸. However, there is no external evidence for this; it may as well be a simple translation or a completely unrelated name. This old mistake has again obscured the etymology in some cases. The name of a town Huagseong 朽岳城 was originally 骨尸押[3] /*Kwətɕi ʔaip/ʔɛːp/, the first part of the name is suspiciously similar to the Japanese word *kuchiru* 朽ちる. It is true that

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[3] The last character actually looks like 土+甲, but let us presume that it is actually a mistake, the pronunciation would not be really different anyway.

this was read probably as something like *kutiru* in Old Japanese, however, we can see that /t/ in front of high vowels is consistently transcribed as an affricate in morphemes attested in Samguk Sagi.

Let us have a look at the language itself. Most of the place names come from the central part of the Korean peninsula, from the old provinces Hanju 漢州, Sagju 朔州 and Myeongju 溟州. A handful of words come also from the north, beyond the Yalü river.

As a part of this analysis, the total of 130 place names have been transcribed from Samguk Sagi using Pulleyblank's reconstruction. According to this analysis, 26 of these consist predominantly of morphemes with Japanese cognates. Further 40 toponyms contain at least one morpheme that is possibly related to Japanese. The rest is indecipherable or obviously related to other languages. Even including place-names that are missing either the old name or its Chinese translation, the ratio of words containing possible Japonic morphemes is slightly over 50%. In a few instances the morphemes can be related to both Japanese (JP) and Korean (KR):

EMC reading	JP cognate	KR cognate	Meaning
/*maɨj/mɛ :j/	*mizu*[4]	*mul*	'water'
/*pa tsʰia/	*wata* (OJ *pata*)	*bada*	'sea'
/*maɨj/mɛ :j (ɕi)/	*nira* (OJ *mira*)	*maneul*	'leek'
/*ʔɨa/	*i* (OJ *wi*)	*u* (from *umul*)	'well, spring'

The most problematic of these morphemes is the last one because it appears in two very similar place-names 泉井口縣 and 井泉郡/泉井郡 that would be rendered as 於乙買串 /*ʔɨa ʔit maɨj/mɛ :j kwaɨn/kwɛ:n/, respectively 於乙買 /*ʔɨa ʔit maɨj/mɛ :j/. In case of the second name, the scribes were not sure about the order of the characters which makes distinguishing between the similar morphemes /*ʔɨa/ and /*ʔit/ difficult. Here we consider the variant 井泉 to be the most probable one because then the vowels in these words fit the proposed reconstruction of proto-Japanese, and it is also more probable syntactically. The morpheme /wi/

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[4] Probable vowel raising /*medu>midu>mizu/.

'well' is reconstructed to be the product of /*ɨy/ which would fit quite close to /*ʔɨa/, the morpheme /*ʔit/, especially standing in front of the morpheme for 'water/river' /*maɨj/mɛ :j/ seems very close to the word *izumi* (OJ[5] *idumi*) agreeing in vowel and even in the final /-t/!

The ration for words with predominantly cognates of Japanese was the highest in Hanju 漢州, followed by Sagju 朔州, then Myeongju 溟州 and the lowest north of Yalü. Including also words possibly containing a morpheme decipherable as Japanese, the ranking would be similar, only Sagju 朔州 would come first, followed by Hanju 漢州. This partially reinforces Toh Soo Hee's theory mentioned earlier.

Here is the list of morphemes most probably related to Japanese[6]:

Character	Rec. EMC	JP Cognate	Meaning	N. of toponyms
買	/*maɨj/mɛ :j/[7]	*mi*, *mizu*	'water; river'	11
蜜	/*mit/	mittsu	'three'	1
要(隠)	/*ʔjiawʔɨn/	*ya*, *yanagi*	'poplar; willow'	1
忽次 古次	/*xwət tsʰi*kɔtsʰi/	*kuti*	'mouth'	4
伏斯	/*buwk siə/si/	*pukasi*	'deep'	1
于次	/*wua tsʰi/	*itu*, *itutu*	'five'	1
呑/旦	/*tʰən/tan/	*tani*	'valley'	4
内米	/*nwəjmɛj/	*nami*	'wave; rough w.'	1
德	/*tək/	*towo*	'ten'	1
古斯	/*kɔ siə/si/	*kujika*	'water deer'	2

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[5] Old Japanese.

[6] There are a few more but I did not include them to this list as they are even more tentative.

[7] The morpheme *mi* 'water' probably underwent vowel raising in Japanese **medu>midu* (Frellesvig and Whitman 2008)

烏斯含	/*ʔɔ si ɣəm/ɣam/	*usagi*	'rabbit'	1
功木	/ *kəwŋməwk/	*kuma*	'bear'[8]	1
達	/*dat/[9]	*takai*	'high; mount.'	14
難(隱)	/ *nan(ʔin)/	*nana*	'seven'	1
仇	/*guw/	*ko* (*kua*)	'child'	1
沙伏	/*ʂɛ:/ ʂai buwk/	*sabi*	'red (JP 'rust')[10]	1
內/奴	/*nwəj/nɔ/	*no*	'land'[11]	4
烏	/*ʔɔ/	*i, ushi*	'cattle; boar'[12]	4
斤	/*kɨn/[13]	*ki, ko*	'tree'	3
冬	/*tawŋ/[14]	*toru*	'to take'	1
伊	/*ʔji/	*iru*	'to enter'	1

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[8] Some would consider this word a culture word typical for the whole of northeast Asia.

[9] The final here is problematic.

[10] Using the word for 'rust' as a name of color and vice versa is not unique, i. e. *red* and *rust* in English and other Germanic languages, *zrzavý* 'red haired' and *rez* 'rust' in Czech etc.

11 This might actually be two, albeit related, morphemes: /na/ and /no/, no was /*nwo/ in OJ. It might be also related to the Manchu word *na* 'land'. The character 野 is used as a *kungana* character for both /no₁/ and /no₂/ so there might have been an alternation.

[12] This morpheme is interesting because it connects both Japanese words *inoshishi* and *ushi*. *Inoshishi* can be analyzed as /i/-/no/-/shishi/ (the meat of /i/) which was a word originally used also for deer, *inoshishi* then became synonymous with the animal it came from. *Ushi* is a word that could be hypothetically divided into /u/-/si/, /si/ being a suffix. The phonetic correspondence for /*ʔɔ/ and ModJ *ushi* seems to be quite regular as the Koguryo /ɔ/ or /ə/ correspond to ModJ /u/ in most cases. Such vowel heightening is also proposed for Japanese by some scholars (Frellesvig and Whitman). There is also an attested alternation between /wi/ and /u/ in some cases which could explain this phenomenon.

[13] The back vowel actually fits some modern reconstructions of proto-Japanese (Frellesvig 2010: 45). *Ki* 'tree' was an *otsu* syllable which Frellesvig reconstructs as /*kwi/. This should according to Frellesvig lead to the proto-Japonic form /*kɨy/.

[14] Vowels are problematic in this case, the character 冬 is later reconstructed as /*təwŋ/ which would be more fitting as pJ /*ə/ turns into OJ /o/. This character could actually represent a two-syllabic word in Koguryo.

Many of these words are some of the most basic and stable in the vocabulary of human languages, appearing in various versions of the Swadesh list. (water, high, three, seven, mouth...) Swadesh lists are very useful for an overview, but in many cases they are not an ideal tool for ascertaining a relationship. They do ignore many location/culture specific words that tend to be very old and to survive very long – words for domestic animals, higher numbers, etc. Therefore they can sometimes lead us astray when comparing languages. The second half of the Koguryo words are such basic words missing from the Swadesh list: (bear, rabbit, water deer, poplar), these words would have no value for comparison of languages that developed in places where these organisms are missing, but in northeast Asia they should be some of the most stable. Personal pronouns are missing from this list as they do not usually appear in place-names.

If Koguryoic[15] was a Japonic or Para-Japonic language (or a language in any way related to Japanese), these would be the words it would still share with Japanese at this stage of history as they are the most stable. More specialized vocabulary could have been already completely replaced or just lost in attested Japonic languages, and therefore unintelligible. We know that (proto-)Japonic had to be in place in what is nowadays western Japan already for at least a few centuries by the time these toponyms were written down and replaced. The names in *Gishi Wajinden* 魏志倭人伝 (first half of the 3rd century CE) are demonstrably Japonic as Bentley has shown in his paper. (Bentley 2004) Therefore, Japonic speakers had to be in Japan even earlier than that, already separated from Koguryoic by the sea. At least since that time, Koguryoic and Japonic would have been evolving separately. The example of *Gishi Wajinden* also shows us what difficulties one faces when trying to reconstruct a language from such a small corpus. Even though names attested there are Japonic, it does not mean we really understand all of them (especially the titles of rulers and chiefs).

There is one Koguryo place-name worth commenting on – 難隱別, translated as 七重(縣), and its phonetic reconstruction is /*NanʔɨnPiat/piat/. The morpheme seven is quite transparent and has been one of the strongest proofs that Koguryoic is related to Japonic languages. The rest of this name is more complicated. For now let us put aside the second morpheme /*ʔɨn/ and focus on the last /*biat/ or /*piat/. Even its translation

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[15] If the language attested here can be called Koguryoic.

as 重 makes it suspiciously similar to /e/, the OJ[16] /*pye/ layer. Beckwith also notices this similarity (Beckwith 2003: 134), but again reconstructs it with /a/ final /-r/. It can be argued that it is not necessary and we can possibly ignore the final and reconstruct it simply as /*pia/ which would be in line with the reconstructed pJ form /*pia/. This reading is even more probable because as Bentley mentions this classifier was used in OJ not only for fabric, but also for fences, snow and even clouds (Bentley 2001: 74)

Finally we should take a look at the grammatical (or synsemantic) morphemes attested in the place-names. These are possibly:

Characer	EMC reading	N. of toponymes
隱	/*ʔɨn/	2, none in primary position
斯	/*siə/si/	15, none in primary position
乙	/*ʔit/	10, once in primary position[17]
次	/*tsʰi/	10, none in primary position
尸	/*ɕi/	11, none in primary position

Generally we can say there are two types of similar morphemes: 1) /*ʔɨn/ and /*ʔit/, 2) /*tsʰi/ 次, /*si/ 斯 and /*ɕi/ 尸. In the case of the group 2 we could set /*tsʰi/ apart from the others because it appears also in final positions of the place-names unlike /*si/ and /*ɕi/. Is it possible that /*si/ and /*ɕi/ are actually just two different ways how to write one morpheme?

Another question is of course the function of these morphemes. It is possible that some of them are just derivative morphemes used to create words out of some autosemantic morphemes. Let us first look at the group 1. These morphemes seem almost identical if we remove the final /t/ or /n/. We are left with /ʔɨ/ or /ʔi/ if we are to believe the reconstructed vowel quality. The glottal stop could just point to the fact that these morphemes constituted their own syllable, similarly to Japanese particles. It is true we do not have nowadays a particle i in Japanese, there are similar particles in

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[16] Old Japanese.

[17] /ʔit ʔa tan/ 乙阿旦縣 子春縣 This place-name is not recognizable, actually it is markedly different from most others, which means it is either in other language or it could be just mistranslated. The last morpheme tan would point to the meaning valley.

Korean (the marker of nominative case *i*) and also in Manchu (where it actually forms the genitive case very similar to the modern Japanese particle *no* (Gorelova 2002: 175-182), which would point to a relationship with these languages regardless of one's opinion of the Altaic theory. There is also a rather mysterious suffix /-i/ which is supposed to have been at the end of many words in Old Japanese (Bentley 2003). This has been proposed to be an old accusative marker (Miller), an active marker in a vestigial active/passive alignment system (Vovin) (Frellesvig 2010: 131). Beckwith claims that it is related to the Old Japanese marker *na*. However, he does not present any compelling evidence for such a statement. Of course, there is a possibility we are actually talking about two different morphemes in which case the preceding pertains mostly to the morpheme /ʔit/.

The morpheme /*si/ again seems to be some kind of a marker of the genitive case. It is also the most frequented one; it appears in both toponyms with confirmed etymology and without. The morpheme /*ɕi/ on the other hand appears mostly in names that are not entirely clear. The problems related to the reconstruction of the Chinese character 尸 have been already mentioned earlier.

There is a derivative morpheme shi used as a derivative suffix in adjectives in Japanese, which Beckwith notes could be a cognate to the suffix /*si/. This Japanese suffix can be used for derivation of adjectives from almost all types of words (although admittedly mostly from verbs, but also nouns). Of course, this theory is speculative. However, as adjectives appear very often in attributive constructions where they are dependent on nouns (in case of Japanese and other Asian languages in front of the head word), it is possible that some kind of reanalysis happened. From e. g. noun + genitive or attributive particle + head noun to adjective (stem + derivative morpheme) + head noun. In contrast to Beckwith's position, this analysis shows that this Japanese morpheme could be possibly a cognate to both /*si/ and /*ɕi/. The reason for the claim that the character 尸 represents a genitive/attributive marker (or possibly a derivative morpheme) is that it does not appear word-initially, it does not appear at the end of a place-name (which makes the derivative morpheme theory less likely), and in most cases it could be subtracted, and the place-name would still fulfill the limit for at least one syllable for a morpheme (The only two names that break this rule are /Mog-eunseong/=/*driawɕi xwət/ 木銀城=召尸忽 and /Yulingun/=/*wuaɕi/ 有隣郡=于尸郡. However, this character does not have to always represent said morpheme. It would be improbable for a language to use a syllable just for one derivative morpheme and no other.)

Beckwith also proposed a genitive/attributive marker /*Nəy/ 乃 as a cognate of the Japanese, but he actually has almost no evidence for it. (Beckwith 2003: 118) There are just 4 attested place-names containing this morpheme, three of which cannot be considered to have this morpheme, because the character is in the word-initial position (/Yeonseong=*Driaw ɕi xwət/鉛城＝乃勿忽, /Sigseong=*nəjxwət/息城＝乃忽) or in the final position (/Usuju=*ʔəkənnəj/ 牛首州＝烏根乃). That leaves just the toponym /Huanghyo=*kwətnəjkɨn/ 黃驍＝骨乃斤 where it could be a suffix or a particle, but we cannot reconstruct such a morpheme on basis of a single word because it may as well be a part of the first morpheme 'yellow' 黃 or the second morpheme 'strong' or 'good horse' 驍. To postulate a genitive/attributive marker under such conditions can be only called highly unscientific.

This analysis shows that there are some Japonic cognates in the Koguryo place-names in a state that can be characterized as:

1) These cognates seem to reflect Japonic morphemes before they underwent vowel raising.

2) There are examples fitting the proto-Japonic reconstruction by Frellesvig and Whitman.

3) The OJ plosive *t* is represented as an affricate in front of high vowels (sometimes also in front of /*ə/)

The language attested in these names seems to be indeed of the SOV type. The character of the names points at a left-branching language. Therefore it appears to be typologically similar to many other languages in northeast Asia considered by some to be the members of the Altaic family. If it is really related to Japanese or if it at least was in a prolonged contact with proto-Japonic, we can say that this contact with and/or split from Japonic had to happen before the Old Japanese stage of the language.

Conclusion
This paper has been an attempt to reexamine and reanalyze the extant place-names of the Koguryo state. It has become evident through this analysis that there are some morphemes that appear to be cognates to basic Japonic morphemes. Unfortunately, only a part of these place names can be deciphered using Japonic languages.

When we consider this corpus as a whole, we will find out that transparent Japonic names are quite frequently finished with a morpheme we do not recognize from any form of Japonic, these are mostly /*xwət/ 'fort, town'

/*paʔi/ 'crag, rock, mountain' or /*ʔaip/ʔɛːp/ 'peak'. Therefore it is quite possible that the Japonic parts of toponyms are old names from a substrate language that have been appropriated by the new rulers. (And yet again it also does not mean that they really have been.) Maybe these words are Japonic and we just do not recognize them as such. It is a red thread running through this paper that for some conclusions we just do not have enough data. That is where in case of some researchers the opportunity for pure conjecture appears. Here we have tried to avoid such logical fallacies and to approach the topic anew. However, there are still many questions that remain to be answered. Can we really say if the language of Koguryo was Japonic? No, but there is evidence such language may have been spoken within the borders of the Koguryo kingdom. (Here we have to specify if we mean the language of the ruling class because there were probably many languages spoken in Koguryo.) Was it a substrate language already dead or dying out? Possibly, because it is not attested later, however this could have happened after the unification of the peninsula by Silla. Is the language in this paper in fact Early Paekche? It is plausible as the concentration of Japonic-like morphemes is high in the original territory of the Paekche kingdom, but they are not found only there.

The last question that we can answer comes back to the very beginning of this paper. Was Beckwith right? Or maybe to what extent was he right? Even though some of the approaches Beckwith uses and conclusions he comes to are highly dubious, it is evident that some of the presented material represents a language that was either related to Japanese or was in a prolonged contact with it. However, if we do not find more usable textual evidence, it will be probably impossible to give a definitive answer to any of the other questions.

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