

Significance of a Measured Drawing

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Archaeological artefacts provide a great deal of archaeological information.

For example, look at this photograph.

This is a type of pottery from Japan known as *Sueki* (earthenware). From this small piece of earthenware, we may obtain a lot of information, including:



“*Sueki*” pots (8th–9th century)

- (1) What techniques were used to make it? (Fabrication techniques)
- (2) What was it used for? (Usage)
- (3) Where in Japan was it made? (Place of production)
- (4) When did the production start and when did it end? (Historical age)

However, **such information cannot be obtained by simply looking at the archaeological artefact. It can be understood only through close observation.**

It is widely accepted that obtaining actual measurements is a very important part of observation. This is because the goal of such measurements is to precisely draw on a sheet of paper what is understood based on direct observation of the morphological characteristics and the remaining vestiges of the object.

In the field of archaeology, measured drawings are important as a means for communicating information about an archaeological artefact to others. In fact, rather than describing measured drawings as “important,” it might be said that “there is no other way.”

The design, signs of use, etc. may be communicated to others by taking photos, rubbings, etc. These approaches do seem to have their uses, but **relying exclusively on photos often greatly weakens one’s powers of observation.**

When studying an archaeological artefact, there is no better means of understanding changes in shapes and fabrication techniques than a measured drawing. It can be said that this is the only way to capture such changes. In particular, sectional drawings are the best way to understand the characteristics and morphological changes in artefacts.

The first time you try to draw the actual measurements of an artefact, you may tear the paper through repeated redrawing, draw dirty lines, and produce a messy drawing. Some people may have an artistic sense and produce a somewhat neater drawing. However, **a measured drawing that lacks the power**

of observation is meaningless in terms of archaeology; it is simply a picture with an archaeological subject.

Using your own hands to record what you have observed is a very significant exercise, and this is what makes such work memorable. The learning that is achieved through drawing is more memorable than that achieved through simply looking. Don't expect to be able to draw well from your first attempt. Even if you can't create a good drawing now, you will improve with practise. In addition, the key to becoming good at creating measured drawings is **developing an interest in the artefact as the subject of your study.**

What I have suggested here will be useful for you in the future. I hope you will work tenaciously on it.