

Abstract

Name of thesis: Elusive Treasures - Natural resources in *Izumo Fudoki*

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Izumo fudoki, compiled in 733, is a book that describes Izumo Province, a region in Japan. Written on behalf of the imperial court by men closely linked to the province itself, the book provided a very detailed description of the administrative structure and the geography of Izumo Province. *Izumo fudoki* also gives great importance to explaining the etymology behind many local names in the province. Within this framework many plants and animals are mentioned. *Izumo fudoki* names more than 200 species.

The present thesis analyzes these natural resources. It has determined what resources *Izumo fudoki* actually refers to, divided the resources according to their contexts in *Izumo fudoki*, related them to taxation and different usages, and given an answer to why the natural resources were mentioned in *Izumo fudoki*.

Since much of the analysis consists of comparing *Izumo fudoki* to other contemporary works, the main problem encountered is that much material from 8th-century Japan has disappeared. Even so, numerous documents survive and their consultation has rendered the analysis fruitful. In particular it has revealed that the resources in *Izumo fudoki* often appear in only one context. Resources that appear in a context, called group (1) in the thesis, were often used as tax revenue in 8th-century Japan. This was very seldom true of resources mentioned in another context, called group (2) here. It thus seems probable that resources in group (1) were used by the province-office to pay its taxes to the court. Even though they were not used as tax revenue, most of the resources in group (2) had tangible uses in 8th-century Japan, and a plausible view is that these resources were used by the province-office on a local level. Many of the plants mentioned in group (1) were medicinal plants, while resources in group (2) were mostly used as alimentation or as practical materials.

During this inquiry the thesis also answers other questions. It has determined for whom *Izumo fudoki* was compiled, how the resources were preserved, and who benefited from them. The relation between Izumo Province and the court has been examined, and the view of nature presented in *Izumo fudoki* has been investigated.

Keywords: History, Japan, Izumo, Kumano, Kidzuki, Natural resource, Taxation, Medicinal plant, Genmei, Shōmu, Hiroshima Izumo Omi, Kanatari Miyake Omi, Local government, Local mythology, Ōkuninushi, Yatsuka Mizu Omitsuno, Susano, *Fudoki*, *Izumo fudoki*, *Engishiki*, *Mokkan*, *Manyōshū*, *Honsō wamyō*, *Wamyō ruijūshō*, *Kuni no miyatsuko*, *Kōji*.