

# The Importance of Bronze and Jade

During the Kofun period (250-645AD), polities on the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago were involved in a complex network of trade, and diplomacy. Alliances were built, rituals were accomplished, and power was demonstrated through specialized displays of wealth. Two of the important materials for these displays were bronze, and jade (jadeite + nephrite = jade). The change in trade and distribution of these bronze and jade artifacts over time tells us how power was shifting throughout East Asia.

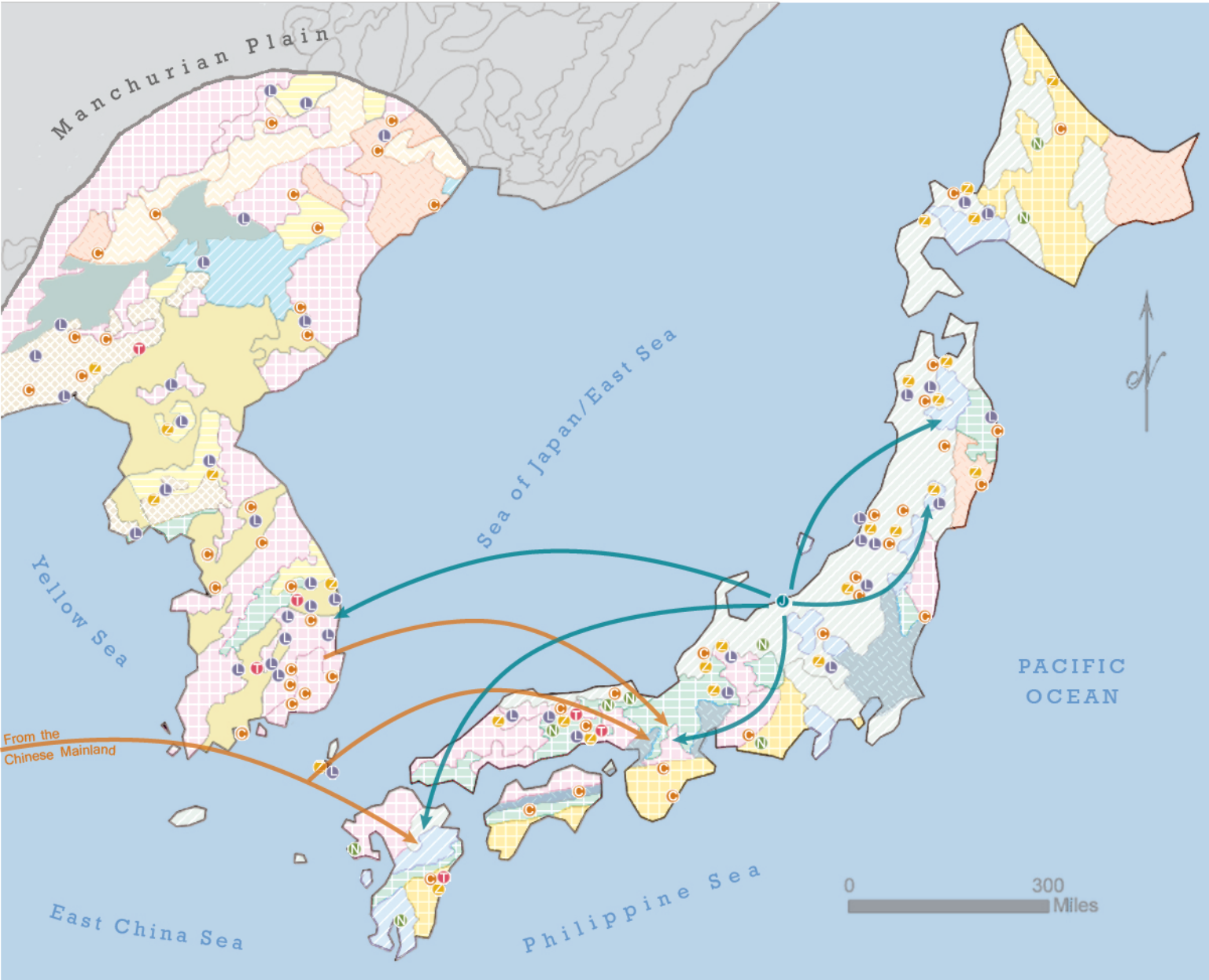
## Elements

- Copper
- Zinc
- Tin
- Lead
- Jadeite
- Nephrite

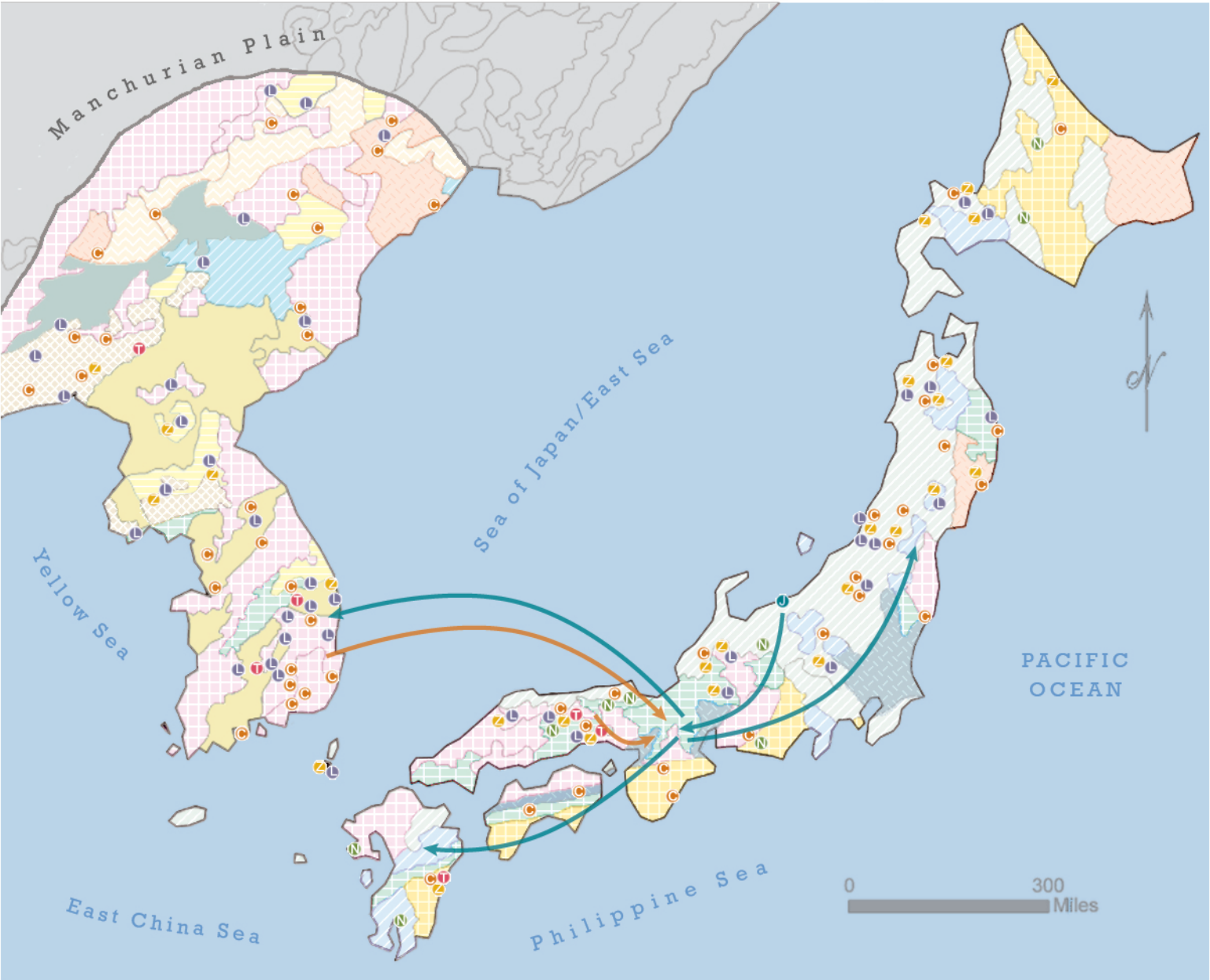
Although the common copper alloys are often all called 'bronze', in fact, the different combinations of copper + alloy produce different metals.



Early Kofun Period (250-400AD)



Late Kofun Period (500-645AD)



Map by Lauren Glover. Projection: Asia South Lambert Conformal Conic. Centered at 135.48°E. Sources: Teraija & Okumura. 2003. Geological Map of East Asia. Geological Survey of Japan, Ibaraki. United Nations. 1979. Mineral Distribution Map of Asia. ESCAP. New York. Flowmaps extrapolated from: Mabuchi, et al. 1985. "Lead Isotope Approach to the Understanding of Early Japanese Bronze Culture." Archaeometry 27(2): 131-160. Warashina. 2005. Economic Archaeological Research into Jade Product Distribution and Exchange. Tomiyama, Tomiyama University. Barnes. 2007. State Formation in Japan: Emergence of a 4th-century ruling elite. Oxon, Routledge. Chihara.1999. "Jadeite in Japan." Journal of the Gemmological Society of Japan 20: 5-21.