

Medieval

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In the past few years, diversification of studied subjects and directions is remarkable in the study of Japanese medieval archaeology.

As city and village study has always been a field for interdisciplinary research, this year saw many research conferences attended by document historians and archaeologists. On the other hand, research of village sites stayed low-key although it had been popular in relation to epoch theory of the medieval.

Castle study has always been active and many symposia were held. Especially in Bungo-funai, which used to be the headquarters of the Otomo Clan, a feudal lord in the Warring States period, multiple large-scale excavations were conducted and research results were actively presented.

It can be said that the study of religious sites, especially mountain temples, is the most active field of medieval archaeology in recent years. An interdisciplinary study group was inaugurated in this field, actively promoting compilation of study examples, and there are steady results based on local research. Currently there are various issues being discussed, giving an impression of a lack of focal points. However, it is expected that issues will be organized through further exchanges of information.

Pottery and ceramic study was the field that became the foundation of the Japanese medieval archaeology for material and academic history. Although it seems less active than other research fields, there were studies striving for solving distribution structures for both pottery and ceramics. However, they are quite different in methods of approach. As pottery was regarded as a commodity not to be distributed, the latest pottery study tries to evaluate transportability in elements such as shapes and manufacturing methods; whereas ceramic study stresses examination of peripheral regions such as small islands and Southeast Asian ceramics, as it is trying to enlarge the extent of discussion on distribution theory by solving regional aspects and data. It can be said that they stand on opposite viewpoints, looking inward and outward. If these standpoints are correct, the so called distribution base is important to connect the two studies. However, the current

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archaeological recognition of distribution bases is clustered to elements such as geological environment and uniqueness of archaeological sites. In the future, evaluation of archaeological sites based on artifacts is necessary from the viewpoint of uniting pottery and ceramic studies.

Other than these, progress of stone monument study was remarkable. It seems that for a long time stone monument study was placed between art history and archaeology. However, research based on archaeological methods has increased in the past few years, and the viewpoint of stone monuments as archaeological data is becoming more firm.

In the end, as an overall trend, special attention should be given to activities of study groups. It has been about 20 years since medieval study gained a certain place in the Japanese archaeology, backed by activities of study groups. However, due to generation change of archaeologists, some study groups are facing difficulties to continue. It is one of the issues for Japanese medieval archaeology to focus on assembling and nurturing of the younger generation, such as undergraduate and graduate school students.