Transitions in Kozane Byōdome Shōkaku-tsuki Helmets and Their Significance

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The purpose of this study is to examine the period of manufacture of the kozane byōdome shōkaku-tsuki (lamellar riveted and beaked) helmets found in the Marozuka Tomb. In my analyses I undertook a typological classification based on the manufacturing technology of the forepart of the kozane byōdome shōkaku-tsuki helmets, and through an analysis of the various attributes identified the manufacturing stages of each type. By noting the artifacts co-occurring in the tumulus with each type of kozane byōdome shōkaku-tsuki helmet, it was found that the manufacturing stages of the these helmets can be divided into three stages. The first stage is the old phase of style III, the second stage is the newer phase of style III, and the third stage is the newest phase of style III along with all the other styles of IVa, style IVb, and Va. The types of the kozane byōdome shōkaku-tsuki helmets from the Marozuka Tomb were recognized as falling into the transitional period from the second to the third stage, and they are conjectured to have been manufactured during the middle part of the mid-Kofun Period (middle to late fifth century).

The manufacturing stages of the kozane byōdome shōkaku-tsuki helmets shift within the chronological range of the early to late fifth century. Through an analysis of the kozane byōdome shōkaku-tsuki helmets it was possible to identify the introduction of riveting techniques for the manufacture of iron armor and the process of their adoption. Within that process, even though there was continuity with the manufacturing techniques of the old kawatobi (leather-laced) helmets, a shift to the easier techniques of making the new byōdome helmets and their shapes is revealed. Behind the change in shape of the kozane byōdome shōkaku-tsuki helmets can be discerned a connection with the manufacturing techniques of the mabisashi-tsuki (visored) helmets. The analytical method and investigative point of view used this study can be applied to a study of the yokohagi-ita byōdome shōkaku-tsuki (horizontal plated and riveted beaked) helmets. By maintaining an awareness of the transitions in the mabisashi-tsuki helmets and yokohagi-ita byōdome shōkaku-tsuki helmets, it is possible to comprehensively investigate the transitions in helmets employing riveting technology. This is the major result by which this study may be evaluated.

Keywords: Marozuka Tomb, Shōkaku-tsuki (beaked) helmet, analysis of attributes, riveting techniques, fifth century