Introduction and Transformation of Advanced Technology: A Case Study of Unglazed Kyoto-style Earthenware Produced in Eastern Japan at the Beginning of the Medieval Period

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This article examines unglazed earthenware produced in provincial areas in the 12th and 13th centuries by drawing inspiration from earthenware produced in Kyoto (referred to as "unglazed Kyoto-style earthenware") from the perspective of forming and shaping techniques to analyze the introduction and transformation of unglazed Kyoto-style earthenware in eastern Japan. This analysis is conducted on collections of unglazed Kyoto-style earthenware and other objects unearthed from four sites and seven wells or their structural remains in Hiraizumi, Kamakura, and Nirayama to identify distinct forming and shaping techniques and categorize them by location. Then, these characteristics are examined from a quantitative point of view to determine similarities and differences and compared with Kyoto’s forming and shaping techniques.

The results indicate that each of the regions developed some techniques different from those of Kyoto. This analysis also reveals differences in forming and shaping techniques between the regions. It is unlikely that the forming and shaping techniques were systematically transferred from Kyoto to eastern Japan when unglazed Kyoto-style earthenware was introduced to the latter. Rather, local potters seem to have adapted their own production techniques to imitate unglazed earthenware made in Kyoto while observing the techniques of Kyoto’s unglazed earthenware artisans.

Key words: unglazed Kyoto-style earthenware, Kyoto, eastern Japan, technique, transfer, Samurai ritual