

BIJUTSUSHI

Journal of Japan Art History Society

196 Vol. 73, No. 2 pp.157–174

NABARA, Hiroaki. The Virgin of the *Immaculate Conception* by Alonso Cano in the Cathedral of Granada: The Relationship to the Lectern

The sculpture of the Virgin of the *Immaculate Conception* (1655–1656), at present conserved in the sacristy of the Cathedral of Granada, is one of the most important works by Alonso Cano (1601–1667), the famous seventeenth-century Spanish painter, sculptor and architect. The blue mantle of the Virgin shows a diagonal movement from her right leg upward to her left shoulder, and its deep uneven drapery expands around her right waist. The contours widen at the waist and taper off toward the feet, forming a characteristic spindle shape. With this innovative form of the Virgin, Cano established a new type of representation of the Immaculate Conception that had a great influence on later Spanish artists.

Cano's statue of the Virgin was planned to be placed in the tabernacle on the music lectern of the cathedral choir; this was during a time in Granada when belief in the Immaculate Conception flourished. The lectern was located on the central axis of the cathedral and had been designed by Cano himself. Previous studies have only discussed the relationship between the sculpture of the Virgin and the position of the lectern. The spiral movement of the Virgin's mantle, the sense of floating and the vertical emphasis of the image have been associated with the position of the lectern's tabernacle which was viewed from below on all sides in the center of the choir. However, when we look at the features in Cano's other works depicting the Immaculate Conception, and the ornaments and architectural design of the lectern, it is possible that the image of the Virgin and the lectern as a whole were closely related to this theme.

The sculpture of Virgin in the cathedral resembles Cano's own paintings of the same subject dated around the same period, especially in her spindle-shaped form and the treatment of the mantle drapery. These paintings followed the iconography of the Immaculate Conception that would become established in the seventeenth century. However, his depictions are characterized by an entire composition consisting of a spindle-shaped Virgin floating among clouds and angels holding flowers, plants or other objects without the conventional earthly landscape. In fact, the angels planned by Cano on the lectern have been associated with those depicted under the Virgin's feet in his own paintings.

Thus, this article reveals that Cano would have been not only conscious of the relationship between the Virgin's form and the lectern's position, but would have also intended to create the entire composition of the Immaculate Conception as he had depicted in his own paintings, three-dimensionally on the lectern with the spindle-shaped Virgin and the angel ornaments. In addition to these angels, other motifs and features of the lectern, such as the white lily decorating the plates that hold the choir books, the architectural design of the tabernacle to hold the Virgin image, and the crucifix at the top, would have theological associations with the Immaculate Conception, although these relationships have not been addressed in the past studies. The image of the Virgin in the tabernacle, and the lectern with its ornaments and architectural features, would have been devised in conjunction to represent the Immaculate Conception.

THE JAPAN ART HISTORY SOCIETY

March 2024

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