

BIJUTSUSHI

Journal of Japan Art History Society

196 Vol. 73, No. 2 pp.175–199

KUSUNE, Keiko. Andrea Sacchi's *The Three Magdalenes* : The Representation of Magdalena Hayashida, Martyr of Arima

The Three Magdalenes (c. 1632-33, Uffizi), a painting by Andrea Sacchi, depicts an extremely rare subject. According to Bellori's manuscript, it depicts St Mary Magdalene, Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi, and a martyr named Magdalene, "Queen of India, or China." Recently, Di Monte suggests the third Magdalene to be "Magdalena (Magdalene) Hayashida," a Japanese woman martyred in 1613 in Arima. This paper confirms this suggestion using Charlevoix's text (1736), letters sent to the Pope from Japanese Christians (1620-21), and Lope de Vega's text (1618). It also examines this work from a new perspective of the relationship between Urban VIII and Japanese Christians, and suggests new iconographic sources.

The third woman in the painting wears a crown and holds burning coals in her right hand. By the 1630s, ten Japanese women named Magdalena had been martyred by burning. Magdalena Hayashida of Arima (in Nagasaki) was the only young virgin whose body was kept in Macao after she was martyred. Charlevoix's text says that Urban VIII presented her relic to the Carmelite monastery in Florence, an event for which a painting of the three Magdalenes was made. It seems almost certain, therefore, that she is the woman in Sacchi's painting.

According to Vieira's *Carta annua de* 1613, Magdalena held "brasas" (burning things) in her hands during the execution and raised them above her head. Later, Morejon and other authors described this action as "placing them on her head like a crown," and in the Italian edition of *Carta*, the Spanish word "brasas" was translated into "carboni" (coals). This explains why Sacchi painted her with coals and a crown. One of the three river-gods represented in a preparatory drawing may symbolize the Arima River that flowed near the place of her martyrdom.

Urban VIII had beatified Pazzi in 1626, but not Magdalena Hayashida. So, this work illustrates the Pope's strong interest in the Catholic missions in Japan. The aforementioned Vieira arrived in Rome from Macao in 1626 and gave the Pope letters from Japanese Christians. *Triunfo de la fee*, written by Spanish poet Lope de Vega, may have been read by the Pope after his nephew Francesco Barberini returned from Madrid in 1626; this text described Magdalena as an important martyr. The Pope, who aimed for a worldwide mission led by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, seems to have chosen this Japanese martyr to be represented in Sacchi's work.

The iconographic sources of this work may be prints by Sadeler and Van Lochem, but it is possible that Sacchi also used some images of Porcia, since Magdalena was compared to her in *Triunfo*. Porcia, a famous Roman woman who committed suicide by swallowing hot coals when her husband died, had been depicted by many artists. Thus, in Sacchi's work, Magdalena was "Romanized," and represented as a figure suitable for veneration by European Catholics.

THE JAPAN ART HISTORY SOCIETY

March 2024

All rights Reserved, Copyright © The Japan Art History Society