

Judge's Commentary

YAMAGATA, Miyuki

Hans Memling's *Diptych of Jean du Cellier*: The Crossbow Guild of St. George in a Chivalric Context

This article analyzes the iconography of Hans Memling's *Diptych of Jean du Cellier* in terms of the social and cultural background of its commissioner, spice merchant Jean du Cellier. According to Yamagata, du Cellier was related by marriage to a powerful aristocratic family at the Burgundian court, and while a commoner himself, was inclined towards the chivalric culture. Memling's work is thus a pictorial representation of the commissioner's self-image as a chivalric practitioner.

Yamagata based her argument on the fact that Jean du Cellier was a member of the Crossbow Guild of St. George. This historical fact was previously noted in research by Albert Janssens, and Yamagata developed her iconographic interpretation of the work from that basis. In earlier studies, the image of St. George depicted in the background of the diptych's right panel was connected to du Cellier's family. Here, however, Yamagata has linked the representation to du Cellier's activities in the Crossbow Guild. Further, the figure of du Cellier, kneeling facing the Madonna and Child, who is in turn surrounded by female saints, is an image of du Cellier as a chivalry practitioner. Yamagata further indicates that the other saint depicted in the background of the right panel, John the Evangelist, was one of Jean du Cellier's patron saints, along with St. John the Baptist. These are fascinating indications about the two saints in the background, given that they are also related to the article's central premises, such as the identification of the commissioner.

Yamagata discusses, and provides richly imaginative analysis of, diverse points to make her case, from the iconographic origins of the "Madonna and Child surrounded by female saints" motif, to the interpretation of the plant motifs depicted, the selection of musical instruments depicted, and the liturgical function of a diptych painting. Some of her arguments hold together better than others, but overall her broad discussion in support of her theory successfully presents an extremely fascinating interpretation. She is to be greatly congratulated on her skill as a writer, as demonstrated by her ability to create a comprehensive thesis that synthesizes the seemingly diverse, myriad elements related to the work.

While room remains for further examination and interpretation of the target work within the chivalric construct, the article overall adroitly reveals the potential for new interpretations, and we can anticipate that it will greatly stimulate future discussion. The article is easy to read, and is filled with fascinating iconographic interpretation details.

For these reasons, we hereby award the Bijutsushi Prize to Yamagata Miyuki for her efforts and achievements in this article.