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“Imperio e libertà”: elogio imperiale e culto mariano nella decorazione pittorica del Sodoma per la Cappella degli Spagnoli

This article is an extremely enterprising experiment in reading and interpreting the painting decoration in the Cappella degli Spagnoli in Siena's Santo Spirito church, painted in 1530 by the painter Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known as Il Sodoma. Working from past stylistic and iconographic methodologies, the author expanded the consideration of the work in terms of the close connection between it and the social, political and religious context of the period. The author focuses on the adroit compositional arrangement of such opposites as old and new, authority and liberty, and the sacred and profane. This study reaches the novel conclusion that in this work can be read the dual sentiments of the Sienese citizens of the day towards their "patron" Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and towards Spain.

Matsubara's methods, as expected, start from an analysis of the paintings and an examination of inscriptions and primary sources in order to clarify the work's original symbolism and function. In that sense, Matsubara draws a line between his work and the recent trend towards a "meta-history" approach to art history. And yet, Matsubara's method is not limited to the empirical art historical approach of the past. Rather it incorporates a range of new research methodologies, such as semiology, textual theories, symbol theories, reception theories, historical anthropological theories, and micro history methods. Using his own unique digests of these various methods, Matsubara experimented with drawing them into his analysis and the reading of the work in question. More so than for any other reason, this article was

highly praised by the judging committee because the author approached his specific subject after a full methodological reflection and consideration.

The period in Italy addressed by Matsubara in this article was an extremely turbulent time in terms of religion, politics and arts. Further, it was a time in which Italy's relationships with other European countries were particularly complicated. The complex intermingling and conundrum formed by the interstices of art, religion and politics was the most fascinating theme in 16th century Italian art, and we can anticipate that in the future Matsubara will continue to refine his methodologies and that by using both historical and theoretical viewpoints, deepen his interpretation through the consideration of an even greater number of specific examples.

The committee hereby awards the *Bijutsushi* Article Prize to this article.