

Judge's Commentary

KAWAMOTO, Mayu

***The Martyrdom of St. James* by Navarrete el Mudo – Painted Tears and the Sacristy in the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial**

This extremely compelling essay offers a novel interpretation of *The Martyrdom of St. James*, a major work by Juan Fernández de Navarrete (or El Mudo), an important court painter of Philip II, king of Spain. In spite of its importance, there is a dearth of historical materials on the work and it has not been widely studied. In her study of this work Kawamoto used a previously rarely noted detail as her starting point, and through an examination of the religious practices conducted in its setting and the uses of the space, successfully clarified the painting's original devotional function.

First, Kawamoto focused on the tears that appear beneath St. James' eyes, thus indicating her own superb eye for detail that can only be noticed by examining the work in person. She then discussed the work's connection to Netherlandish painting, which stands in addition to previously noted sources in Italian painting. The expression of the saint's face, particularly the depiction of tears, can also be seen in Rogier van der Weyden's *The Descent from the Cross* and *The Crucifixion*, works also in El Escorial that Navarrete had restored. Then she detailed how Navarrete's borrowing from Van der Weyden can be seen as intentional.

This painting was originally created to adorn the temporary sacristy that was briefly set up during the building of the monastery of El Escorial. However, Kawamoto indicates that the tears that appear on several of the paintings installed in the completed sacristy are in line with Philip II's vision for the space. She indicated that this depiction of tears had special significance in Philip II's circle, entreating God for his intercession, while also clarifying their devotional function in a monastic sacristy, namely the significance of the clergy's tear-stained penitence. Kawamoto's essay is extremely convincing, her arguments underscored by her quotation of references to tears in the letters sent by Fr. José de Sigüenza, the prior of El Escorial at the time to Philip II, and other documents, along with her consideration of the sacristy's function for the clergy. While length may have made such inclusion difficult, this essay might be all the more fleshed out by a consideration of the painting's connection with Italian art of the period, particularly that of Rome and Naples.

This essay can be highly praised as the product of superb art historical research, thanks to the author's highly original focus, which she then developed through her dynamic and imaginative approach.

For these reasons, we hereby award the Bijutsushi Prize to Kawamoto Mayu for her achievements in this article.