

# MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN ART HISTORY IN JAPAN

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to summarize the historical and current situation of Medieval European Art History studies in Japan. I start from the dawn of European Studies in Japan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and follow the long path taken by Medieval Art historians in Japan, through Japan's defeat in World War II and later economic growth. Finally, I briefly comment on the general situation of the Humanities and some aspects of Medieval Art History in present day Japan, when the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt.

## KEYWORDS

Art History, Medieval Studies, Japan, Historiography, Medievalism.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Historia artis, Studia mediaevalia, Iaponia, Historiographia, Medievalismus.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The objective of this article is to outline the historical and current situation of Medieval European Art History studies in Japan<sup>2</sup> and to describe some principal problems that Japanese medievalists face.<sup>3</sup>

I start from the dawn of European Studies in Japan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when modernization of the country began. I follow the long path that Medieval Art historians in Japan have taken, through the nation's defeat in WWII and later economic growth. Then, I introduce a roster of current Medieval Art historians who belong to Japanese universities and contribute actively to this field. Finally, I briefly comment on the general situation of the Humanities and some aspects of Medieval Art History in present day Japan, when the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt.

## 2. Dawn of Art History in Japan: Meiji Restoration and the Foundation of Modern Educational Institutes

Before referring to Medieval European Art History in Japan, let us take a look at the westernization and modernization of Japanese society that began at the end of the Edo era and reached full swing after the Meiji Restoration (1868). It was during the early Meiji period when new notions of Western origin such as “fine arts” were imported and the corresponding new Japanese words were invented.<sup>4</sup> Modern educational systems were introduced then, too, and among the new schools we find the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (*Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō*), founded in 1887. Okakura Tenshin (also known as Okakura Kakuzō, 1863-1913), the head of the School from 1890, is considered the first lecturer of “Art History” in Japan, in the European sense of the term. Although he did not publish his lectures, his students left us

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1. This article is part of a research program (18K00160), funded by Japan Society for the promotion of science KAKENHI.

2. The transcription of Japanese personal names to the Latin alphabet is often confusing and problematic. In this paper, names are presented in the normal Japanese fashion, for example, surname first and given name second. In the notes, however, a comma is inserted between the last name and the first name, according to the “Norms for publication” of this journal. The translation of Japanese titles is made by the author, in cases where the publication does not contain titles in European languages.

3. Previous works dealing with these subjects include: Tokita Darling, Masuyo. “Report from Japan: Medieval Art Historians and Collections”. *International Center of Medieval Art Newsletter*, Winter 3 (1996): 8-9; Tsuzumi, Midori. “Nihon ni okeru seiyo chusei shahon sashie kenkyū (History of the Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts Studies in Japan)”. *Memoirs of the Faculty of Human Development University of Toyama*, 5/1 (2010): 151-160.

4. As to the origins of “Hakubutsukan (Museum)” and the concept of “Bijutsu (Art)” in Modern Japan, see: Tseng, Alice Y. *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan. Architecture and the Art of the Nation*. Seattle-London: University of Washington Press, 2008: 18-38.



some lesson notes<sup>5</sup> and we know that he divided his lectures into two categories: “Japanese Art History” and “Western Art History”.

John Clark points out that the Japanese Art History field was constituted in the 1890s and 1910s by the publication of the official “History of Japanese Art”, a research journal, and so on.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that the aforementioned first official Japanese Art History was first prepared by Japanese authors in the French language, to be distributed at the Universal Exposition at Paris held in 1900, and then translated into Japanese in the ensuing year.<sup>7</sup> As for Western Art History, it took more time for the first book to appear; it was in 1904 when Iwamura Tōru published the first volume of his *Seiyō bijutsushi kaname (Essentials of Western Art History)*, that treated, in fact, only Italian painting history.<sup>8</sup> It was miscellany from various occidental books rather than original research, as the author himself declares in the prologue. Two years later, *Tōyō bijutsu shōshi (A Brief Oriental Art History)* written by Ōmura Seigai was published<sup>9</sup> setting down the three principal fields of Art History in Japan. That is, Japanese Art, Oriental Art, and Occidental Art.

Some characteristics of Art History in Japan formed during this period remain current. The first of those characteristics is a methodology centered on artists, focused on the analysis of styles, transitions, and relationships between artists, considering social context, and based on the *a priori* assumption that Art History can be separately established in each country, though recent trends in Global History and Global Art History have weakened this last tendency.<sup>10</sup> The second characteristic is that the Japanese followed the hierarchization of arts which dates back to the founding of Fine Arts academies in many European countries during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Japanese imported and internalized this set of values according to which the art of painting ranks at the top, followed by sculpture, with the craft arts at the bottom. A prominent example is the already mentioned first official Japanese Art History, whose table of contents mirrors this three-tiered system. The last characteristic is the separation between Art History and the History of Architecture. In the lectures at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, it seemed that little, if any, attention was paid to Architecture. Instead, it was duly taught at the Imperial College of Engineering (*Kōbu Dai Gakkō*), founded in 1873 and directly attached to the Ministry of Engineering,

5. Kinoshita, Nagahiro. “Bijutsushi wa ika ni kakarete kitaka (How Art History has been written? Writing Art History in the Meiji 20s and 30s)”. *Geijutsu / kattō no genba: Kindai nihon geijutsu shisō no kontekusuto (Art / Site of Conflicts. Context of Modern Japanese Art Thought)*, Iwaki Ken’ichi, ed. Kyoto: Kōyō Shobō, 2002: I, 32.

6. Clark, John. “Okakura Tenshin and Aesthetic Nationalism”. *Since Meiji. Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868-2000*, J. Thomas Rimer, ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012: 212-256.

7. Commission Impériale du Japon, ed. *Histoire de l’art du Japon: Ouvrage Publie par la Commission Imperiale du Japon a l’Exposition Universelle de Paris*. Paris: Maurice de Brunhoff, 1990 (Teikoku Bijyutsukan Kōhon).

8. Iwamura, Tōru, ed. *Seiyō bijutsushi kaname. Itaria kaiga no bu (Essentials of Western Art History, Italian painting)*. 3 vols. Tokyo: Gahōsha, 1904: I. The following volumes treat Italian sculpture and Italian architecture.

9. Ōmura, Seigai. *Tōyō bijutsu shōshi (A Brief Oriental Art History)*. Tokyo: Shinbi Shoin, 1906. This book was based on lectures held at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1905.

10. Kinoshita, Nagahiro. “Bijutsushi wa (How Art History...)”: 46.



where some professors invited from the United Kingdom, led by a British architect, Josiah Conder (1852-1920), introduced the conceptualization of buildings in the Western way. The study of Architectural History then started among the Japanese architects who had been the first graduates of the college, followed by their pupils. Because of this historical state of affairs, the History of Architecture is mainly taught in Engineering faculties in Japan today, while art historians belong to faculties of Letters or Humanities, regardless of the time and region *foci* of their research.

### 3. Formation of Art History Academism and the First Western Art Historians in Japan

In this manner was Art History born in Meiji-era Japan (1868-1912), although it was still undifferentiated with art criticism, private hobby, and the political and cultural diplomatic tools of the state. It took almost an additional half century to be established as a discrete academic discipline in the modern sense of the word. Between the 1910s and the 1950s, Art History courses were established in some universities and academic organizations such as the Japan Art History Society, with journals related to these institutions being founded. Also, national research funds were initiated, and research content became increasingly more empirical.<sup>11</sup> These systems promoted the birth of professional scholars in the field of Art History.

However, unlike Japanese Art, which Japan has, naturally, in abundance, there was no way to study Western Art other than by going abroad. Only very wealthy people could afford the expense of studying abroad, though excellent students and researchers had some opportunity to cross the seas as recipients of a government-funded scholarship or as staff members of some well-endowed Japanese universities or museums. Let us take a short look at four scholars of the first generation to experience the “grand-tour” and become active in the realms of education and cultural administration after returning to Japan.

Sawaki Yomokichi (1886-1930) visited Europe from 1912 to 1916 with a scholarship from Keio University, a leading private university founded by Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), one of the early Japanese advocates for modernization and educational reform. Sawaki first went to Munich. There he attended the lectures of Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) at the University of Munich and won Wassily Kandinsky’s friendship. Then, he moved to Paris, Florence, and Rome while studying Italian Renaissance Art, making good use of his proficiency in German, French, Italian and English. After his return to Tokyo, his interests changed to

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11. Ōta, Tomoki. *Shakai to tunagaru bijutsushigaku: Kingendai no akademizumu to media goraku (Art History studies connected to society. Modern and Contemporary Academia and Media/Entertainment)*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2015: 11.



Ancient Greek Art. He took the position of professor at his *alma mater* and conveyed the scientific method of Western Art History to Japanese students.<sup>12</sup>

Dan Inō (1892-1973) was born as the first son of an executive of the Mitsui business conglomerate. He made a major tour of Europe, the United States, Greece, and Egypt from 1918 to 1921 as a research trip: the Imperial Museum of Japan entrusted him with the task of inspecting Western museums, and so he visited 109 museums in 10 countries. He attended a lecture by Henri Focillon at the University of Lyon and visited Bernard Berenson in Florence and Benedetto Croce in Naples. After having returned for only three months, he set out on another tour as a member of a European and American business inspection group. From 1923 he gave lectures on Art History at the Imperial University of Tokyo, but resigned his position in 1931 because of illness. He then dedicated his time mainly to his family business and political activities, although he continued to be involved in international cultural exchanges and occupied an important position in the *Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai* (KBS, Center for International Cultural Relations) and in the Japanese committee for Universal Expositions.<sup>13</sup>

The last two art historians of the first generation are Kojima Kikuo (1887-1950) and Yashiro Yukio (1890-1975). Both were known for their outstanding academic achievements, but also for their skill in painting. Before studying abroad, they gave lectures on Art at universities, taught European languages, and published criticism on Contemporary Art. In 1916, they took over co-editorship of *Bijutsu shinpō*, one of the leading art journals of the time, with an emphasis on historical art, ranging from the Italian Renaissance to nineteenth-century France.<sup>14</sup> Kojima left for Europe via the United States in 1921 and became affiliated with Heinrich Wölfflin in Germany. After his return, he taught at the Imperial University of Tohoku and at the Imperial University of Tokyo. Though his work spans a wide range of times and regions, from Ancient Greek to Contemporary European and Japanese Art, his most important contribution may be his research on Leonardo da Vinci.<sup>15</sup> Coincidentally, Yashiro Yukio went to Europe in the same year as Kojima. He studied chiefly in Florence with Bernard Berenson (1865-1959)<sup>16</sup> and became a renowned Renaissance Art

12. Sawaki, Yomokichi. *Bijutsu no miyako (Cities of Arts)*. Tokyo: Nihon Bijutsu Gakuin, 1917 (re ed. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964, 1998); Sawaki, Yomokichi. *Seiyō bijutsushi kenkyū. Girisha no bu (European Art History: Greek Art)*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1932; Sawaki, Yomokichi. *Seiyō bijutsushi kenkyū. Runesansu no bu (European Art History: Renaissance Art)*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1931.

13. Dan, Inō. *Itaria bijutsu kikō (A Journey through Italian Art)*. Tokyo: Shunyōdō, 1922; *Dan, Inō Gaikan Ōshū geijutsushi (History of European Art)*. Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1932.

14. Hirayama, Mikiko. "Japanese Art Criticism. The First Fifty Years", *Since Meiji. Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868-2000*, J. Thomas Rimer, ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012: 257-280.

15. Kojima, Kikuo. *Seiyō bijutsukan meguri (Western Art Museum Tour)*. Tokyo: Zauhō Kankōkai, 1935; Kojima, Kikuo. *Reonarudo kenkyū (Study on Leonard da Vinci)*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1952 (re-edited in 1986).

16. See: Online exhibition "Yashiro ad Berenson. Art History between Japan and Italy". 9 July 2022 <<http://yashiro.itatti.harvard.edu/>>.



specialist thanks to the publication of his *Sandro Botticelli*.<sup>17</sup> He went back to the position of ‘professor’ at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (*Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō*), but is better known in the second half of his life for his achievements in the protection and conservation of Japanese Ancient Art works and their presentation in Western countries. In this vein, he participated in the establishment of the Art Research Institute (presently the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties or *Tōkyō Bunkazai Kenkyū-jo*, commonly known as *Tōbunken*) and, among other institutions, took direction of this Institute and the Museum of Japanese Art *Yamato Bunkakan* in Nara.

Besides these four scholars, we have to mention the pioneering legacy of a foreign specialist in Christian Iconography. It is a well-known fact that the Japanese government invited more than 2,000 specialists from Europe and the U.S. to promote the modernization goals of the Meiji period. We find an example in Edoardo Chiossone (1833-1898), an Italian engraver and painter who was hired as a foreign advisor to the government, which urgently needed Western engraving techniques to make paper currencies and postage stamps in the Modern (that is, Western) style. But, as foreign Art History did not address this kind of technical need, there was no official interest in bringing such scholars to Japan. So, it was by accident—a fortunate accident for this country—that the first female German Doctor of Theology<sup>18</sup> came here in 1926 because of her marriage to Miura Akira, a Japanese architect who had studied in Germany. After her husband’s premature death, she decided to remain, and introduced Christian Iconography studies to Japan. The name of Anna Miura-Stange (1894-1967) is still alive in the prize given for outstanding studies on Christian Art written in Japanese. The Anna Miura-Stange prize is administered by Rikkyo University (Saint Paul’s University), where she taught in her later years.<sup>19</sup>

Christianity has never acquired as many believers in Japan as it did in Korea, but it can be said that there is a diffuse interest in (or at least an awareness of) the religion and its culture among Japanese, and even if somewhat vague and superficial, this fascination has played an important role in the pervading popularity of Western Art. We cannot forget the contribution of Christian missionaries to the educational field of modern Japan, especially regarding female schools and colleges, where they filled a gap; boys were prioritized in the modernization of the national education system.

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17. Yashiro, Yukio. *Sandro Botticelli*. London: Medici Society, 1925, with a second edition in 1929. 9 July 2022 <<http://yashiro.itatti.harvard.edu/botticelli>>; “The ‘Oriental’ Character in Italian Tre- And Quattrocento Paintings”. *East and West*, 3/2 (1952): 81-87. 9 July 2022 <<http://yashiro.itatti.harvard.edu/oriental-character>>.

18. Miura-Stange, Anna. *Celsus und Origenes: das Gemeinsame ihrer Weltanschauung nach den acht Büchern des Origenes gegen Celsus: eine Studie zur Religions- und Geistesgeschichte des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1926.

19. The official name of this prize is “[The] Tsuji Shōichi and Anna Miura Memorial Academic Award”. Tsuji Shōichi was a pioneer in the study of Western Music in Japan and the father of Byzantine art historian Tsuji Shigefumi. This prize is given every other year to a study of Christian Music and Art. As to the list of past awards, see: <[https://www.rikkyo.ac.jp/news/2021/11/mknpps000001ryzw-att/no34\\_tuji\\_miura.pdf](https://www.rikkyo.ac.jp/news/2021/11/mknpps000001ryzw-att/no34_tuji_miura.pdf)>.



Between 1870 and 1890, while only 8 national and municipal female secondary schools were created, 45 were founded by missionaries (mixed-gender education was not popular till the post-war period).<sup>20</sup> Most female missionary schools still exist, and many do not limit acceptance to the faithful. On the other hand, many churches, both Catholic and Protestant, run kindergartens —again, open to the general public. Thus, a certain closeness to Christian culture has been cultivated among Japanese people since the Meiji era.

#### 4. The First Japanese Art Historians Specializing in European Medieval Art

While the first generation of Western Art historians in Japan were interested in a wide range of European Art —from Antiquity to the Avant-garde—, the specialization of research fields advanced throughout the Western academic world, and so followed Japanese researchers born in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first Japanese medievalist in Art History may be Yoshikawa Itsuji (1908-2002), who went to Paris in 1933, started to study the Romanesque mural paintings of Saint-Savin sur Gartempe under the direction of Henri Focillon in 1935, and presented his doctoral dissertation in four years.<sup>21</sup> After that, he went back to Japan via Afghanistan and India, and received professorships, first in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (*Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō*), and later in Tokyo University, where he trained many students.

Despite the storm of ultranationalism in the days of the Asia-Pacific War (1941-1945) that made it difficult to pursue Western studies, young researchers interested in European Art History never disappeared. After the surrender of Japan in 1945, the survivors returned to their studies, and some received the opportunity to go abroad. It is important to note that not only was overseas travel prohibited for Japanese under the Allied occupation of Japan that ended in 1952, the ban was not lifted until 1964. Virtually the only way to exit the Japanese archipelago was through fellowships like the *Monbushō* Fellowship for Japanese Scholars and Researchers to Study Abroad (a Program by the Japanese Ministry of Education for full-time professors —terminated in 2004—) or fellowships offered by foreign governments such as France or Germany.

Sawayanagi Daigorō (1911-1995), one of Kojima Kikuo's pupils, specialized in Greek and Roman Art, especially in funerary art.<sup>22</sup> Yanagi Munemoto (1917-2019) devoted himself to the study of a wide range of artistic phenomena, inheriting his love of art from his father Yanagi Sōetsu (also known as Yanagi Muneyoshi, 1889-

20. Ishii, Noriko. "Higashi ajia no amerika josei senkyōshi to gurōbaru hisutorī (American Women Missionaries in East Asia and Global History)". *Gurōbaru hisutorīzu. Nashonaru wo koete (Global Histories. Beyond the "National")*. Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 2018: 217-242.

21. Yoshikawa, Itsuji. *L'Apocalypse de Saint-Savin*. Paris: Éditions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1939.

22. Sawayanagi, Daigorō. *Girisia no bijutsu (Greek Art)*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964; Sawayanagi, Daigorō. *Attika no bohi (Gravestones of Attica)*. Tokyo: Gurafusha, 1989.



1961), the founder of the *Mingei* (folk craft) movement in Japan in the late 1920s and 1930s. Munemoto studied in France and Belgium and his books covered topics ranging from Ancient Oriental art, like the Rock Sites of Cappadocia, to the French painter Georges Rouault (1871-1958), but here we should refer to his texts about the Romanesque Art of France and Spain.<sup>23</sup> Mayekawa Seirō (1920-2010) chose the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich for his research stay and opened a path for academic studies of Albrecht Dürer and Northern Renaissance Art in Japan.<sup>24</sup> In studies of the History of Architecture, Iida Kishiro (1924-) stands out for his research on French Gothic architecture in Japan and for his contribution to the conservation of architectural and cultural heritage.<sup>25</sup>

## 5. The Generation Born in the 30s and 40s

Following the first generation, those born in the 30s and 40s experienced difficult war years in their childhood, but developed an interest in Western Art over time and broadened their fields of expertise.

Among them, some scholars were fascinated by Byzantine Art and Early Christian Art. Tsuji Sahoko (1930-2011) became a pupil of André Grabar (1896-1990) at the Sorbonne from 1957 and presented her doctoral dissertation *Étude iconographique des reliefs des portes de Sainte Sabine à Rome* in 1961. It should be underlined that she continued publishing her articles on the formation of the Christian iconography during the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages in French, even after her return to Japan. But she wrote in Japanese, too. She produced 5 books and 50 articles in Japanese about Early Christian Art, Byzantine Art, and Romanesque Art, in the fields of illuminated manuscripts and mural paintings.<sup>26</sup>

It was pure coincidence that another scholar of the same generation dedicated to Byzantine Art had the same surname. The other member of the “Double Tsuji”, Tsuji Shigebumi (1933-) decided to go to Princeton University to study under the direction of Kurt Weitzmann (1904-1993). He presents his research about Late Antiquity, Byzantine, Medieval Art, and Christian iconography, both in

23. Yanagi, Munemoto. *Yanagi Munemoto Chosakusen (Selection of writings of Yanagi Munemoto)*. Tokyo: Yasaka Shobō, 2005-2011: 6 vols..

24. Mayekawa, Seirō. *Dyūrā (Albrecht Dürer)*. Tokyo: Iwasaki Bijutsusha, 1970; Mayekawa, Seirō. *Zwei Dürerprobleme*. Konstanz: Leo Leonhart, 1984.

25. Iida, Kishiro. *Goshikku kenchiku no ribu vōruto (Gothic Rib Vault)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1989.

26. Tsuji, Sahoko. “Nouvelles observations sur les miniatures fragmentaires de la Genèse de Cotton: cycles de Lot, d’Abraham et de Jacob”. *Cahiers archéologiques*, 20 (1970): 29-46; Tsuji, Sahoko. *Koten sekai kara kirisutokyō sekai e: hoshō mozaiku wo meguru shiron (From the Classical World to the Christian World. An Essay on Pavement Mosaics)*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982.





Japanese and in English.<sup>27</sup> He is very active, even after his retirement from Osaka University in 1996, where he taught for almost twenty years, and he continues his surveys on how to narrate stories in the visual arts.

Takahashi Eiichi (1932-2007), too, pioneered Byzantine Art studies in Japan and carried out field surveys of the architecture and mural paintings of Orthodox churches, particularly in Greece and the former Byzantine Empire.<sup>28</sup> He trained many pupils, not only in this field but also in broader studies of Western Art, as a professor in the Art History department of Waseda University, one of the biggest private universities in Tokyo. The author was one of his students in his final years.

In the same generation, we should not forget the names of Katsu Kunioki (1934-), who studied in the University of Göttingen and Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich for his research on German Renaissance Art,<sup>29</sup> and Nagatsuka Yasushi (1936-2013), who took interest in Medieval Art as an undergraduate thanks to the lectures of Yoshikawa Itsuji and Yanagi Munemoto, and obtained a PhD from the Sorbonne in 1964.<sup>30</sup>

The specializations and travel destinations of the following generation were varied, too. Koshi Kōichi (1942-) went to Vienna to study with Otto Pächt (1902-88) and Otto Demus (1902-1990). He is well known for his long-term research results on the wall paintings of St. George at Oberzell on the island of Reichenau, published in Germany.<sup>31</sup> Besides which, he has nurtured a new generation of disciples in Tokyo University of the Arts (formerly Tokyo Fine Arts School). Nagasawa Takashi (1944-2021) specialized in Byzantine manuscript illumination while he was in Strasbourg. Natori Shirō (1942-2005) stayed at Poitiers, Paris X Nanterre, and at the Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana in Rome to study Early Christian Art.<sup>32</sup> The New Testament Iconography Study seminar he started at Rikkyo University is still held every year at Christmas-time by the Medieval Art historians currently teaching there -Kato Masue and Kuroiwa Mie-, and continues to be a valuable forum for graduate students and researchers.

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27. Tsuji, Shigebumi. *The study of the Byzantine Gospel illustrations in Florence, Laur. Plut. VI 23 and Paris, Bibl. Nat. Cod. Gr. 74*. Princeton: Princeton University (PhD Dissertation), 1967; Tsuji, Shigebumi. *Idea no yadori: koten kodai bijutsu kara bizantin bijutsu e (The Dwelling of Ideas. From Classical Antiquity to Byzantine Art)*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1976.

28. Takahashi, Eiichi. "Bizantin bijutsu (Byzantine Art)", *Sekai Bijutsu Dai Zenshū, Seiyōhen (Grand World Art Collection: Occidental Art)*, Yanagi Munemoto, Eiichi Takahashi, Shigebumi Tsuji; Yasushi Nagatsuka, eds. Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 1997.

29. Katsu, Kunioki. *Seiyō bijutsushi ronkō: Hoppō yōroppa no bijutsu (The History of Western Art. Art of Northern Europe)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2006.

30. Nagatsuka, Yasushi. *Les églises byzantines en Laconie et dans ses environs: recherches sur leurs architectures et leurs fresques*. Paris: Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (PhD Dissertation), 1994.

31. Koshi, Koichi. *Die frühmittelalterlichen Wandmalereien der St. Georgskirche zu Oberzell auf der Bodenseeinsel Reichenau*. Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1999.

32. Natori, Shirō. *Chichūkai toshi kikō: kodai kirisutokuyō bijutsu wo tazunete (Mediterranean City Tour: Visit to Ancient Christian Art)*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005.



## 6. Universities and Medieval Art Research in Post-War Japan

Japan's imperialism left deep scars in Asia, while World War II devastated Japan itself. However, after the war, Japan's democratization policy was promoted under the direction of the U.S. occupation forces, and the economic boom caused by the Korean War around 1950 brought Japanese society out of post-war chaos and into a period of high economic growth lasting almost 20 years from 1954 to 1973. Japan succeeded in becoming a member of the Group of Five (later Group of Seven) and was internationally recognized for its economic power.

Then, after a period of stable growth from 1973 to 1991, when the bubble economy collapsed, Japan entered a long recession, from which it has not been able to escape for 30 years. Incidentally, I belong to the generation that spent its teenage years in the era of the bubble economy, and experienced firsthand how all the enthusiasm of that time vanished as we grew up.

The first important thing for the History of Western Art, or more broadly for foreign studies in Japan, was the aforementioned liberalization of overseas travel in 1964. Against the backdrop of euphoric economic growth, it became possible for ordinary people to travel and study abroad. The second important factor was the increase in the number of universities, in the percentage of students going on to higher education, and the resulting increase in the number of academic positions, developments that were made possible thanks to widespread economic growth.

The Japanese university system began with the establishment of the University of Tokyo as a national institution in the Meiji era. According to statistics of "Japan's Modern Educational System" published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology,<sup>33</sup> there was only one university until 1896, with a student population less than 2,000. By the end of World War II (1945), there were 48 universities with about 10,000 students. This was followed by 346 universities and more than one million students in 1966. Currently, there are 803 universities in Japan, of which 86 are national, 98 are prefectural or municipal, and 619 are private, making private universities the overwhelming majority in terms of numbers.<sup>34</sup> The percentage of students who go on to high school is 83.8%, and the percentage who go on to university (undergraduate) is 54.9%, which means that more than half of 18-year-olds go on to university. The current number of students approaches 3 million. Of these, 44.5% are female, but the ratio of male to female students varies greatly depending on the faculty. The percentage of female faculty members, on the other hand, is still only 26.4%. The number of universities with Art History departments is limited, but Western Art History specialists can find employment at universities as instructors of Liberal Arts courses or foreign language courses.

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33. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. "Centennial history of the Japanese school system. Annex" (in Japanese). <[https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/others/detail/1317930.htm](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/others/detail/1317930.htm)>.

34. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. "2021 Basic School Survey Press Release" (in Japanese). 22 November 2021 <[https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20211222-mxt\\_chousa01-000019664-1.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20211222-mxt_chousa01-000019664-1.pdf)>.



Another important place of employment for art historians is in museums. Unfortunately however, works of Western Medieval Art rarely entered Japanese museum collections even during the economic bubble period, and there were (and still are) few special exhibitions held of these. For this reason, specialists in Western Medieval Art have not been sought after as museum curators, unlike specialists in Japanese Art History, Eastern Art History, and Western Modern and Contemporary Art. However, this is not to say that there are no European Medieval artworks in Japanese museums. I will mention only two ensembles here.

The first is the Naitō Collection, which was donated to the National Museum of Western Art (Tokyo) in 2016. It consists primarily of 140 illuminated manuscript leaves from various European countries (England, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and Spain) across the 13<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> centuries that Dr. Naitō Hiroshi (1932-) assembled over 30 years. Some parts of the collection have already been exhibited three times. A color illustrated book containing part of the collection has already been published,<sup>35</sup> and a catalog covering the entire collection is currently being compiled.

The second is the Suma Collection, formed by Suma Yakichirō (1892-1970), who was stationed in Spain as Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary during World War II. The total number of items in the collection is estimated to have been close to 2,000, but only some of them were returned from Spain after the war, and the full picture of its magnitude is still unknown. Through donations, the Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum now holds about 500 pieces. The collection includes Spanish medieval altar plates, but unfortunately only a few of them are of high quality and in good condition.

Why would someone born in Japan between the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup> century become interested in the Art of the Western Middle Ages, given a context where there is almost no chance to come into close contact with Medieval Art works, and where there is not a large Christian population? Since there are no statistics available, the following is just my personal opinion about the reasons for this apparently unexpected interest in things medieval.

First of all, as mentioned earlier, it can be stated that the proportion of Christian schools in Japan's education sector is very high relative to the proportion of believers. Such schools run early childhood education to higher levels, not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. It is therefore plausible to think that there are at least a certain number of Japanese who become familiar with Christian culture and art, even if they do not become believers.

Secondly, the influence of novels, manga (comic), television, movies, and games set in or inspired by the European Middle Ages should be mentioned. In particular, the inestimable influence of manga, a genre that has expanded rapidly since the 1970s. Some of them are cheesy fantasies, but there are also many historical stories based on careful research. For example, Sōryō Fuyumi's manga featuring the young

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35. Nakada, Asuka, ed. *Moji to e no shō uchū. Kokuritsu sei'yō bijutsukan shozō Naitō korekushon shahon rifu sakuhin sen (Microcosms of words and images: manuscript leaves from the Naito collection in the National Museum of Western Art)*. Tokyo: National Museum of Western Art, 2020.



Cesare Borgia became a hot topic with its brilliant drawings and counsel provided by Hara Motoaki, a professor specializing in Dante Alighieri.<sup>36</sup>

As the third point of contact with Medieval Art, we should not forget the existence of a variegated series of world art books, produced with excellent printing technology. The first series covering selected masterpieces in Japan was the 36-volume *Sekai Bijutsu Zenshū* (*Complete Works of World Art*) published by the Heibonsha publishing house between 1927 and 1930, which contained about 4,800 illustrations of Japanese, Oriental, and Western artworks, and which received a nominal subscription of 125,000 copies.<sup>37</sup> The most recent collection projects are Shōgakukan's 47-volume *Sekai Bijutsu Dai Zenshū* (*Grand World Art Collection*, 1992-2001) and the same company's 20-volume *Nihon Bijutsu Zenshū* (*Complete Works of Japanese Art*, 2012-2016), which was published to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publisher. These large-format books are expensive, but in the Shōwa era (1926-1989) not only the upper echelons of society, but also middle-class families bought this kind of publication because they gave to their owners a marker of high-level cultural education, along with encyclopedias and upright pianos. In recent years, the number of common households buying these books has probably decreased, but school libraries and local libraries remain recipients of these series. However, it is unclear whether such large-scale publishing projects will continue in Japan in the future, now that paper book production has entered a period of decline.

Finally, a decisive stimulus might come in the form of a site visit and direct viewing of art works and monuments. As we have already mentioned several times, for many Japanese who experienced economic growth in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, overseas travel became an affordable, if extravagant, pastime and pleasure. Studying abroad also became more and more accessible.

## 7. Toward the 21st Century

In Japan, at least in the field of the Humanities and the Social Sciences, a doctorate had for a long time not been considered essential to access a university teaching and research position. A PhD in the Humanities was rather a commendation for decades of research. However, at present, it is already one of the requirements to be met by young candidates, as a result of university system reform started by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in the 1990s, prompted by the growing globalization of the academic world.

Incidentally, and curiously, there is no system of homologation for foreign degrees in Japan, a legacy of the Meiji era: at that time, any degree awarded by a foreign

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36. Sōryō, Fuyumi. *Chēzare: hakai no sōzōsha* (*Cesare. Il Creatore che ha distrutto*). 13 vols. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005-2022.

37. Ōta, Tomoki. *Shakai to...*: 51.



university (European or American) was considered not only valid but especially prestigious.

Today, ostensibly, a doctorate from any country, foreign or Japanese, is treated as being of equal value. However, as in other countries, if one wants to obtain a position at a university, the candidate needs to have as many outstanding achievements as possible, and it is desirable that these include papers or books written in a foreign language, especially in English. Therefore, some Japanese academic associations publish their bulletins in other languages as well as in Japanese.

As to academic associations, by the way, there is no one specialized in Medieval Art History. In the field of Art History, the biggest may be *Bijutsushi Gakkai* (the Japanese Art History Society) with more than 2,200 art historians covering every period and geographic area.<sup>38</sup> Another important society is *Bigakukai* (The Japanese Society for Aesthetics) with 1,600 members involved in scholarship related to aesthetics and art in the broad sense, including music, drama, dance, and film.<sup>39</sup> Researchers of Architectural History usually belong to other societies, such as the Society of Architectural Historians of Japan.<sup>40</sup> As a meeting point, there are also other interdisciplinary societies, such as *Collegium Mediterranistarum* (founded in 1977)<sup>41</sup> or the Japan Society for Medieval European Studies (since 2009).<sup>42</sup> Some associations focus on a specific region/country or language area to be studied (for example, the *Société franco-japonaise d'art et d'archéologie*<sup>43</sup> or the *Asociación (Japonesa) de Historia del Arte Español y Latinoamericano*<sup>44</sup>). As is widely known, Japan's population continues to decline, and most of these societies face the problem of dwindling membership. How to maintain these societies and whether there is a need to do so should be discussed in future.

## 8. Current Japanese Researchers in European Medieval Art

In this section, we list some specialists of Medieval Art in present day Japan. My intention is not to make an exhaustive roster, but only to show the diversity of researchers in this limited field of the Humanities, so it is an incomplete and totally subjective list. Given space limitations, we have had to exclude emeritus professors and young researchers who are just starting their academic and professional careers. We mention mainly senior tenured university professors, arranged alphabetically by family name. In parentheses is the name of the university where he/she is currently

38. Japanese Art History Society. <<https://bijutsushi.jp/jahs-english.htm>>.

39. Bigakukai (The Japanese Society for Aesthetics) <<https://www.bigakukai.jp/english/>>.

40. Society of Architectural Historians of Japan (in Japanese) <<http://www.sahj.org/>>.

41. Collegium Mediterranistarum (in Japanese) <<http://www.collegium-mediterr.org/>>.

42. Japan Society for *Medieval European Studies* <<https://www.medievalstudies.jp/aboutEN/>>.

43. *Société franco-japonaise d'art et d'archéologie* (in Japanese) <<https://sfj-art.org/>>.

44. *Asociación de Historia del Arte Español y Latinoamericano* (in Japanese) <<https://ahael.blog.ss-blog.jp/>>.



working. If that person obtained a doctoral degree, we have added the name of the university before the slash. In the footnotes, we quote a very limited number of their works, due to space limitations. The selection is solely at the author's discretion; had the researchers themselves made the selections, the list would surely have been quite different.<sup>45</sup>

- Early Christian Art and Archaeology: Kato Masue<sup>46</sup> (Tokyo University of the Arts / Rikkyo University); Miyasaka Tomo<sup>47</sup> (Hirosaki University); Narasawa Yumi<sup>48</sup> (Université d'Aix-Marseille / Josai University); Yamada Jun<sup>49</sup> (Seinan Gakuin University).
- Byzantine Art: Asano Kazuo<sup>50</sup> (Aichi University of Education); Masuda Tomoyuki<sup>51</sup> (Thessaloniki University / Waseda University); Takiguchi Mika<sup>52</sup> (The Courtauld Institute of Art / Meiji University).
- Romanesque Art: Asano Hitomi<sup>53</sup> (Ochanomizu University / Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University); Kanazawa Momo<sup>54</sup> (Tokyo University / Tama Art University); Ogata Kiwako<sup>55</sup> (Université Libre de Bruxelles / Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts).
- Gothic Art: Kimata Motokazu<sup>56</sup> (Paris I / Nagoya University); Takano Yoshiko<sup>57</sup> (Seisen University).

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45. The following site launched by the National Institute of Informatics is useful for finding out about researchers affiliated with Japanese research institutions: <<https://researchmap.jp/>>.

46. Kato, Masue. "Chūsei shoki rōma kyōkai ni okeru josei no shokumu to sono hyōshō ni tsuite (The Role and Visual Representation of Female Clergy in the Roman Catholic Church during the Early Middle Ages)". *Medieval European Studies*, 11 (2019): 8-30.

47. Miyasaka, Tomo. "Kirisutokuyō kōkogaku kara kodai makki kōkogaku e: via ratina katakonbe eno aratana shiten (From Christian Archaeology to Late Antique Archaeology. A New Frame to Via Latina Catacomb in Rome)". *Medieval European Studies*, 5 (2013): 5-28.

48. Narasawa, Yumi. *Les autels chrétiens du Sud de la Gaule: 5e – 12e siècles*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.

49. Yamada, Jun. "Due nuove pitture del cubicolo 'dei Sei Santi' nel cimitero di Domitilla". *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 84 (2008): 473-504.

50. Asano, Kazuo, ed. *The Island of St. Nicholas. Excavation and Survey of the Gemiler Island Area, Lycia, Turkey*. Osaka: Osaka University Press, 2010.

51. Masuda, Tomoyuki. *Bizantin seidō sōshoku puroguramu ron (Byzantine Church Decoration)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2014.

52. Takiguchi, Mika. "Some Greek Gospel Manuscripts in the British Library: Examples of the Byzantine Book as Holy Receptacle and Bearer of Hidden Meaning". *The Electronic British Library Journal*. 2011. <<https://bl.iro.bl.uk/concern/articles/aa90d57f-cfb4-4e7a-aa4f-c6e2eb3a0cbc?locale=en>>:1-16.

53. Asano, Hitomi. *Supein romanesuku chōkoku kenkyū. Santiago junrei no jidai to bijutsu (Spanish Romanesque Sculpture Study. The Age of Santiago Pilgrimage and Art)*. Fukuoka: Kyūshū University Press, 2003.

54. Kanazawa, Momo. *Romanesuku bijutsu kakumei (Romanesque Art Revolution)*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2015.

55. Ogata, Kiwako. *Kyōkai no kaibutsu tachi. Romanesuku no zuzōgaku (Monsters in church: The iconology of the Romanesque)*. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2013.

56. Kimata, Motokazu. *Gosikku no sikaku uchū (The Visual Universe of Gothic)*. Nagoya: Nagoya University Press, 2013.

57. Takano, Yoshiko. *Sei yohane den no mado. Katarogu (Répertoire des vitraux du Moyen Age figurant la Vie de saint Jean l'Évangéliste en France et en Angleterre)*. Tokyo: Acca Company, 2014.



- Studies on Illuminated Manuscripts: Komada Akiko<sup>58</sup> (Paris IV / Jissen Women's University); Kuroiwa Mie<sup>59</sup> (Tokyo University / Rikkyo University); Maekawa Kumiko<sup>60</sup> (Paris IV / Dokkyo University); Tanaka Kumiko<sup>61</sup> (Bunsei University of Art); Tsuzumi Midori<sup>62</sup> (Nagoya University / Toyama University).
- Northern Gothic Renaissance and Early Flemish Art: Akiyama Akira<sup>63</sup> (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg / Tokyo University); Aoyama Aika<sup>64</sup> (Tokyo University of the Arts / Dokkyo University); Hirakawa Kayo<sup>65</sup> (Kyoto University / Kyoto University); Imai Sumiko<sup>66</sup> (Keio University / Osaka Ohtani University); Kigawa-Schlecht Hiromi<sup>67</sup> (Waseda University / Seisen University); Koike Hisako<sup>68</sup> (Kokugakuin University); Sato Naoki<sup>69</sup> (Seijo University / Tokyo University of the Arts); Tanabe Mikinosuke<sup>70</sup> (Tokyo University of the Arts); Yasui Ayumi<sup>71</sup> (Kanazawa College of Art).

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58. Komada, Akiko. *Les Illustrations de la Bible historique: les manuscrits réalisés dans le Nord*. Paris: Université Paris iv-Sorbonne (PhD Dissertation), 2000.

59. Kuroiwa, Mie. "Working with Jean Pucelle and his successors: the case of the Saint Louis Master (Mahiet?)". *Jean Pucelle: innovation and collaboration in manuscript painting*, Kyunghee Pyun; Anna D. Russakoff, eds. London, Turnhout: Harvey Miller, 2013: 111-129.

60. Maekawa, Kumiko. *Narrative and Experience-Innovations in Thirteenth-Century Picture Books*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2000.

61. Tanaka, Kumiko, ed. *Mokushiroku no bijutsu (Arts of the Apocalypse)*. Tokyo: Chikurinsha, 2016.

62. Tsuzumi, Midori. *Yutorehito sihen sashie kenkyū (Studies on the Images of the Utrecht Psalter Illustration)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2006.

63. Akiyama, Akira. *Dyūrā to meisei. Geijutsuka no imēji keisei (Auf der Suche nach dem Ruhm. Dürer's Self-fashioning)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2001.

64. Aoyama, Aika. *Dyūrā no henrei jidai. Shoki sobyō no kenkyū (Dürer's Itinerant Period: A Study of Early Drawings)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2009.

65. Hirakawa, Kayo. *The Pictorialization of Dürer's Drawings in Northern Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2009.

66. Imai, Sumiko. "Propagation of 'Model': The Donne Triptych by Hans Memling and the Reception of Early Netherlandish Arts in England". *Journal Aesthetics*, 25 (2021): 11-23.

67. Kigawa-Schlecht, Hiromi. "Antoniusu wo kurushimeru nowa dare ka. Risubon no sanrenga wo yomitoku (Wer sind die Peiniger des heiligen Antonius?: Versuch einer Deutung des Lisaboner Triptychons)". *Bulletin of Seisen University*, 66 (2019): 17-47.

68. Koike, Hisako. *Shi wo mitsumeru bijutsushi (Death and Representation: from Antiquity to Late Middle Ages)*. Tokyo: POLA Research Institute of Beauty & Culture, 1999 (re-edited: Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2006).

69. Sato, Naoki. *Fanshī pikuchā no yukue. Eikoku bijutsu ni okeru 'kawaii' no tanjō to tenkai (Fancy Picture-The Origin and Developments of 'kawaii' Art in the British Art History)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2022.

70. Schuster, Eva; Tanabe, Mikinosuke, eds. *Totentanz: vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart: eine Ausstellung ausgewählter Werke der Graphiksammlung "Mensch und Tod" der Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf*. Ulm: Süddeutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000.

71. Yasui, Ayumi. "A Woodcut by Sebald Beham". *Print Quarterly*, 34 (2017): 421-427.



- Italian Art: Kojima Yoshie<sup>72</sup> (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa / Waseda University); Mizuno Chiyori<sup>73</sup> (Kyoto University / Aoyama Gakuin University); Yakou Hisashi<sup>74</sup> (Hokkaido University).
- History of Architecture: Bojo Toshinaru<sup>75</sup> (Tokyo University / Chiba Institute of Science); Higaya Junichiro<sup>76</sup> (Tokyo University / Tohoku University); Ito Yoshihiko<sup>77</sup> (Tokyo University / Tokyo Metropolitan University); Kato Koichi<sup>78</sup> (Tokyo University / Tokyo University); Nishida Masatsugu<sup>79</sup> (Tokyo University / Kyoto Institute of Technology).
- Studies on Religion and Art History: Hosoda Ayako<sup>80</sup> (Heidelberg University / Niigata University).

## 9. The Pandemic and Its Influence

In my opinion, we cannot deny that Japan at this moment, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, is a country in a long and gradual period of maturity or even decline. The effects of declining birthrates and diminishing economic strength are becoming increasingly evident in universities and, consequently, in the field of Art History.

On a personal note, the author comes from a middle-class family. It was not necessary for me to work immediately after graduating to bring money into my household, but it was definitely the granting of various scholarships that enabled me to study abroad for years. When such financial aids are curtailed, the study of Medieval Art History, which requires many years of study, will be available only to a small elite group, as was the case before World War II.

The biggest problem is that academic relations between Japan and the West have so far been conducted on an individual, rather than an institutional level. If young, outstanding students do not follow in the footsteps of their seniors, the

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72. Kojima, Yoshie. *Storia di una cattedrale: il Duomo di San Donnino a Fidenza: il cantiere medievale, le trasformazioni, i restauri*. Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2006.

73. Mizuno, Chiyori. *Imēji no chisou. Runesansu no zuzou bunka ni okeru kiseki, bunshin, yogen (The strata of images: miracle, substitute and prophecy in Renaissance imagery)*. Nagoya: Nagoya University Press, 2011.

74. Yakou, Hisashi. "Tra il gotico e l'antico: Pietro Cavallini e gli affreschi ridipinti del convento di Santa Chiara a Napoli". *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 16 (2010): 179-186.

75. Bojo, Toshinaru; Bojo, Gabriela Tomoko. *Gosikku daiseidou no kenchiku kōshō (Gothic Cathedral Architect)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2020.

76. Higaya, Junichiro. *Seiki runesansu no kodai kenchiku no kaishaku (The Interpretation of the Ancient Architecture in the High-Renaissance)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2008.

77. Ito, Yoshihiko. *Supein shoki chūsei kenchikusi ron (Spanish Early Medieval Architecture)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2017.

78. Kato, Koichi. *Toki ga tsukuru kenchiku. Rinobēshon no seiyō kenchikushi (Architecture in Time: Survival of Buildings through History and Social Change)*. Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2017.

79. Nishida, Masatsugu; Guerreau, Alain. *Furansu kuryunī chihō no romanesuku kyōkaidō kenchiku gun (A l'ombre de Cluny, les églises romanes en Bourgogne du Sud)*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2019.

80. Hosoda, Ayako. *Darstellungen der Parabel vom barmherzigen Samariter*. Michael Imhof Verlag, 2002.





exchange that has been fostered until now will cease. In this sense, the impact of the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine—which has just begun and has no end in sight—on the studies of Medieval Art History in Japan is immeasurable. The inability or increasing difficulty for Japanese nationals to visit Europe and the United States as casually as they did in the past is not only a major blow to active researchers' surveys of artworks and materials, but also discourages young students from studying abroad on a long-term basis.

Am I being overly pessimistic? Perhaps I am. I have to admit that in Japan there is a very deep accumulation of translation activities conducted by scholars as part of their research and education, in addition to their own writings, and it is also true that "learning" about European Medieval Art is possible with Japanese-language literature alone, if only for undergraduate-level reports and graduation theses. In the meantime, the custom has been to improve one's foreign language skills in undergraduate and master's degrees, and to conduct "research" using foreign language sources in the master's program. There may be no other country outside of Europe and the United States that has such a large store of publications on European Medieval Art.

The COVID disaster has led to an increase in online sessions of academic events, and materials and documents are becoming increasingly digitized in many places. Nevertheless, study abroad, or at least research travel, remains a must for professionals or aspirants in this field. How to pass on to the next generation the assets that have been accumulated so far, including translations into Japanese and exchanges with European specialists and research institutions, will be a medium- to long-term challenge for Japanese Medieval Art historians in the years to come.

